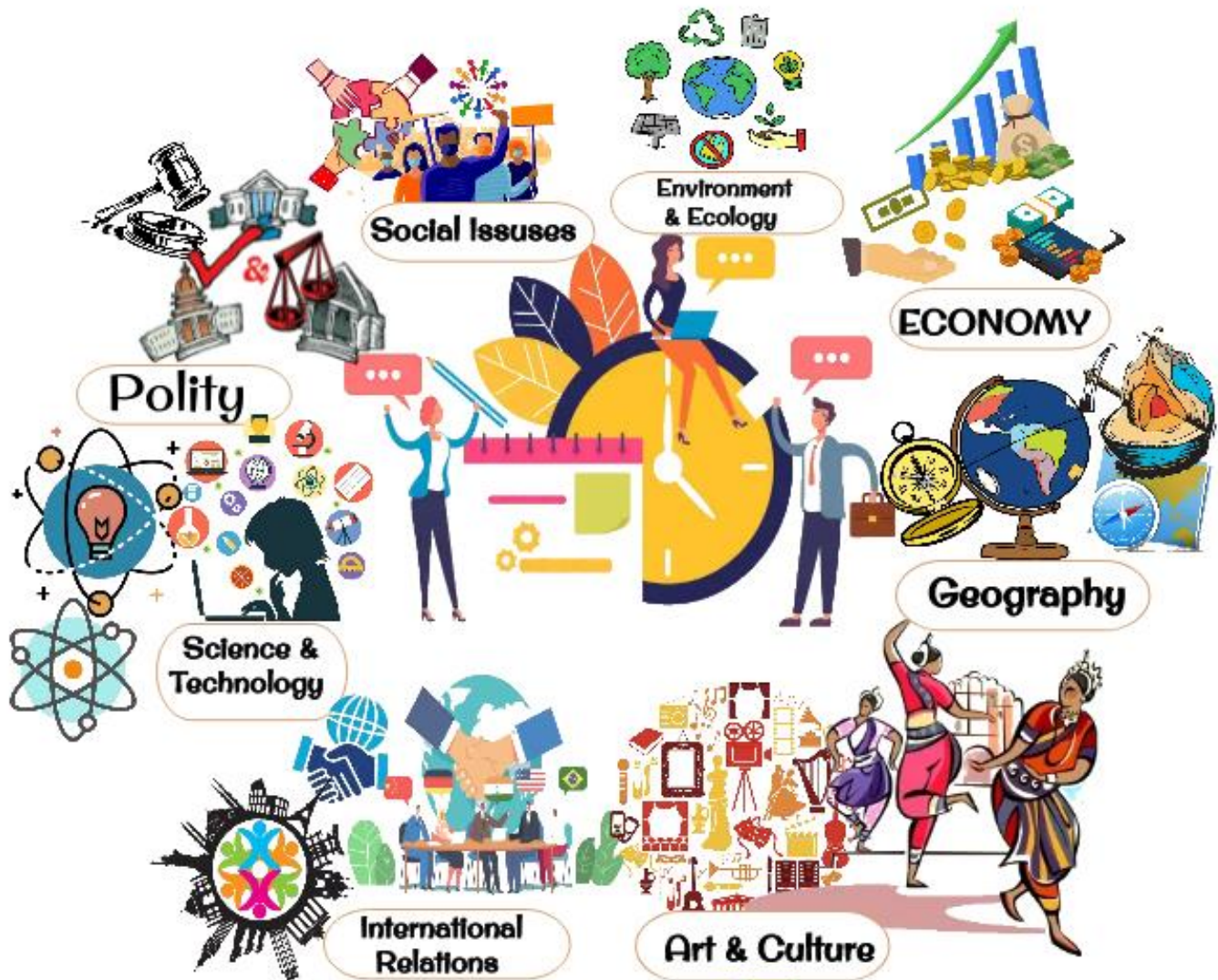




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# ABOUT OUR DIRECTOR

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Ojaank Shukla is a **UPSC Mentor, Social Entrepreneur,** and Philanthropist, who is making waves in the education sector. He is the managing director of the renowned "**Ojaank IAS Academy,**" a Delhi-based institute that has gained a lot of love and respect in a short span of time. Also he has won the prestigious award "For Directing **Best IAS Academy 2019-2020**"



**Ojaank Shukla**

and "**ET Leadership Excellency Award 2022**". And **Awarded by Bihar Governor in Excellence in Education Sector in 2023**. He believes that UPSC is not just an exam of knowledge but of personality, and he strives to inculcate these qualities in his students. His Youtube Channel named IAS with Ojaank Sir has over **2.3 Millions Subscribers**. And His **motto** is **innovation in Education**. The YouTube channel "**IAS with Ojaank Sir**" is primarily dedicated to **Hindi Medium** students who desire to make their career in Civil Services. He creates content for both Hindi and English medium students. Ojaank Shukla is also a **Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)** Coach. He has a unique approach to teaching that helps students to retain concepts for a long duration.

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## 1. Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP)

**Context:** Senegal is the fourth nation to sign the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) agreement, joining South Africa, Indonesia, and Vietnam. The agreement hopes to secure Senegal 5 billion euros in fresh funding.



### What is Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP)?

- JETP is a financial tool designed to aid developing nations in switching from energy systems based on fossil fuels to those that are clean and renewable.
- By tackling both the social and environmental dimensions of the energy transition, JETP seeks to close the gap between developed countries that are less dependent on coal and wealthy, emerging nations.

### JETP Mechanism and Social Considerations:

- JETPs offer money to poor nations so they can stop using coal and switch to sustainable energy.
- Plans for JETP must take into account social factors, such as protecting impacted communities and creating work possibilities.
- A equitable energy transition must include the creation of new employment, upskilling of existing workers, and reskilling of workers.

**Funding Sources and Donor Pool:**

- Grants, loans, and investments are all possible sources of JETP funding.
- Key participants include the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (GFANZ) Working Group and the International Partners Group (IPG).
- Japan, the USA, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, the EU, and the UK are among the nations represented in the IPG.
- The international and national development banks and financing organisations make up the GFANZ Working Group.

**JETP Success Stories:**

- At COP 26 Glasgow, South Africa became the first nation to sign a JETP with a financial commitment of USD 8.5 billion.
- At the G20 summit in Bali, Indonesia unveiled the JETP, receiving an initial 20 billion USD in public and private funding.
- Vietnam joined the JETP project and received a 15.5 billion USD initial grant over the next three to five years.

**Prospects for India's Participation:**

- Although discussions over a JET-P agreement with India are still underway, no decision has been made.
- The intricacy of India's coal-based power system and loan finance are among the difficulties.
- India wants favourable circumstances with no room for error in terms of development and energy security.

Source: The Hindu



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## 2. Intergovernmental Negotiations Framework (IGN)

**Context:** For the first time ever, webcasts of the Intergovernmental Negotiations Framework (IGN) sessions, which aim to restructure the United Nations Security Council, are now available.



### What is IGN?

- A variety of nation-states working together inside the UN to progress the UN Security Council (UNSC) reform is known as the Intergovernmental Negotiations framework (IGN).
- This article gives a summary of the IGN's membership and emphasises the development of consensus among its participants.

### Evolution of the Reform Agenda:

- Since 1993, there have been discussions on the need to restructure the UN Security Council. Subsequent studies on the topic were released in 2001 and 2007.
- You may look up the UN General Assembly's current agenda for this topic online.

### Composition of the IGN:

- The IGN consists of several international organizations representing different perspectives on UN Security Council reform, including:
- African Union
- G4 nations (Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan)
- Uniting for Consensus Group (UfC), also known as the "Coffee Club"

- 69 Group of Developing Countries
- Arab League
- Caribbean Community (CARICOM)
- Each group presents unique positions regarding the reform of the UN Security Council, reflecting the diverse interests and perspectives of its member states.

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**Establishment of Consensus:**

- The "oral decision" endorsing the "elements of convergence" declaration was accepted by the UN universal Assembly on July 27, 2016, by way of universal acclamation.
- This proclamation described the current state of the agreement reached at the time by the IGK members.

Source: Indian Express

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### 3. SCO Summit 2023

**Context:** In the current geopolitical environment, the next virtual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which will be hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is of utmost significance. Former Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer and ambassador to a number of nations Ashok Sajjanhar offers his thoughts on the occasion and its likely results.



#### What is SCO?

- SCO was established as a global organisation in 2001.
- Its main objectives are to encourage member state collaboration and regional stability.
- The Shanghai Five mechanism, which was founded in 1996 to settle border issues and foster confidence between China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, is where the SCO had its start.
- In 2001, Uzbekistan became a member of the group, which resulted in the creation of the SCO.

<b>Member States</b>	China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan
<b>Objectives</b>	Promote regional security, stability, economic cooperation
<b>Cooperation Areas</b>	Political, security, economic, cultural
<b>Security Cooperation</b>	Joint military exercises, counter-terrorism operations, intelligence sharing
<b>Economic Cooperation</b>	Trade facilitation, investment, infrastructure development
<b>Key Bodies</b>	SCO Summit, SCO Business Council, Interbank Consortium of the SCO
<b>Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)</b>	Coordination of anti-terrorism efforts
<b>Dialogue Partners</b>	Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, Mongolia, among others
<b>Observer States</b>	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, among others
<b>Outreach and Engagement</b>	United Nations, ASEAN, CIS, and other regional/international organizations

#### Significance of the Meeting during the Russia-Ukraine War:

- Important world leaders including Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chinese President Xi Jinping, and Russian President Vladimir Putin are anticipated to attend the meeting.
- President Putin will have the chance to assess the waning influence and importance of Russia, notably in the Central Asian nations, at the summit.
- The diminished significance of Russia's presence in the area may signal the urgent need for an end to the current war between Russia and Ukraine.

#### India's Strategic Autonomy and Self-Assuredness:

- The recent fruitful visit to the US by Prime Minister Modi underlines the development of India-US ties.
- India's involvement in the SCO while keeping close ties with the US highlights its strategic independence and self-assurance.

**Impact of PM Modi's Statement to Mr. Putin:**

- With his declaration that "this is not the era of war," Prime Minister Modi demonstrated India's ability to interact with President Putin.
- India's role as a mediator between Russia and the West was made clear in the statement, which also aided in achieving the Bali G20 summit declaration.

**Implications for India-China Relations:**

- The India-China border conflict is unlikely to be affected by the virtual meeting right now.
- There have been several rounds of negotiations between China and India, but there hasn't been much progress in critical areas like de-escalation and disengagement.
- During the negotiations, India is likely to underline its resolute stance against cross-border terrorism.

**India's Opportunities at SCO:**

- India seeks to strengthen relations with Central Asian nations and has historical and cultural links to several of them.
- India's interaction with these nations after the fall of the Soviet Union was hampered by its lack of direct access through Pakistani territory.
- The SCO membership of India provides opportunity for engagement at various levels and for deepening ties with Central Asian nations.

**Conclusion:**

India has a huge chance to interact with important regional entities and raise its profile and prominence in Central Asia during the SCO virtual summit.

India's interests will be advanced, commercial relations will be strengthened, and investments in the area will be encouraged by the summit's outcomes, which include the approval of papers on various topics.

Source: The Hindu



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## 4. Iran Joins SCO

**Context:** During the virtual summit of the alliance, Prime Minister Modi welcomed Iran as the newest member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Iran's membership has long been debated, and current geopolitical changes have made it more pertinent than ever.



### About SCO:

- The SCO, established in 2001, aspires to improve interregional cooperation in Central Asia's war against terrorism, separatism, and extremism.
- The SCO had eight members, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and the Central Asian republics of Russia, China, India, and Pakistan.
- Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, Nepal, Turkey, and Sri Lanka are Dialogue Partners, while Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, and Mongolia are Observers.

### Importance of Iran's Membership:

- The JCPOA, which was signed in 2015, paved the way for Iran to join the SCO.
- As a result of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, China's influence in the region has the potential to grow.
- Iran has made an effort to forge stronger connections with countries other than its longtime ally Russia, including Saudi Arabia and building a border market with Pakistan.

**Geopolitical Implications:**

- China benefits from Iran's energy resources and cooperation in sectors like oil as it works to balance the US.
- By recruiting allies inside the SCO, including eventual full membership for Belarus, Russia seeks to bolster its influence.
- India must delicately strike a balance between its expanding relationship with the US and their common commitment to democracy and the authoritarianism of China.

**India's Balancing Act:**

- Significant defence and technology agreements between India and the US have boosted bilateral ties while highlighting shared democratic ideals.
- India and Iran have long-standing business connections, with the import of crude oil being the main activity.
- The shifting alignments between India and the US and its longstanding connections to Iran present difficulties as the SCO's dynamics change.

**Conclusion:**

The inclusion of Iran in the SCO is a reflection of the region's shifting geopolitical environment and the growing regional influence of China and Russia. India must balance its relationships with the US and its long-standing connections to Iran while managing the shifting dynamics of the SCO.

Source: Indian Express



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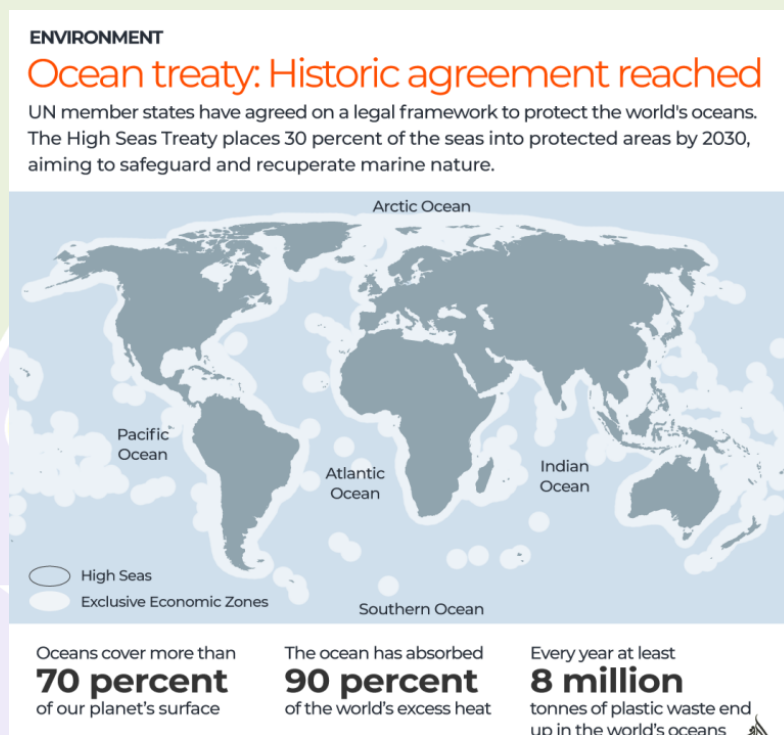
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## 5. High Seas Treaty

**Context:** The UN ratified the High Seas Treaty, also known as the Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), on June 19. Following the creation of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) and the Fish Stocks Agreement (FSA), it became the third agreement under UNCLOS.



### High Seas Treaty:

- In 2002, the notion of safeguarding the maritime environment first surfaced, and by 2008, the requirement for an agreement had been realised.
- A Preparatory Committee was established by the UN General Assembly in 2015 to write the treaty.
- The treaty was adopted in 2023 as a result of intergovernmental conferences (IGC).
- The goal of the pact is to use international collaboration to adopt global laws for the preservation of marine life outside of state borders.

### Key Provisions of Treaty:

- To preserve the oceans from human activity, the treaty creates marine protected zones.
- A "three-quarter majority vote" is required to decide on protected zones in order to avoid sabotage by a small number of parties.



- The agreement requires that parties share scientific data and financial gains through a "clear house mechanism."
- Information on marine protected areas, marine genetic resources, and area-based management techniques are all freely accessible thanks to this approach.
- The treaty places a strong emphasis on increasing capacity and utilising maritime technology for environmental impact assessments.
- Standards and recommendations will be developed by the Scientific and Technical Body to help nations with limited resources conduct evaluations.

**Challenges and Controversies:**

- During talks, there was disagreement about how information about marine genetic resources should be shared and exchanged.
- Discussions centred on information sharing oversight and potential obstacles to bioprospecting research.
- The employment of words like "promote" or "ensure" in many sections of the treaty, especially in relation to benefit sharing, provoked contentious discussions.
- The necessity for clauses permitting coastal nations to exercise sovereignty over the seabed and subsoil in regions outside of their territorial control made negotiations more difficult.
- Making decisions is also made more difficult by the interests of distant and landlocked countries.

**Opposition to the Treaty:**

- Due to their support for private organisations engaged in cutting-edge research and development of maritime technology, a number of industrialised nations rejected the pact.
- China and Russia also voiced concerns; nevertheless, Russia finally withdrew during the last round of consensus building, claiming that the pact lacked a balance between sustainability and conservation.

**Significance of the treaty:**

- In order to safeguard marine biodiversity and solve urgent problems like overfishing and pollution, the High Seas Treaty is essential.
- It constitutes an important step in the direction of global collaboration in maintaining the sustainability and health of our seas.
- The agreement stimulates international cooperation and the exchange of scientific knowledge.
- This will encourage research projects, make it easier to understand marine ecosystems, and make it possible to implement conservation policies that are more successful.

**Arguments against same-sex marriage:**

- **Religious Beliefs:** Due to their strong religious convictions, many people reject same-sex marriage and see it as a sin.
- **Traditional Family:** Some individuals think that the ideals of the traditional family are at danger because of same-sex marriage.
- **Children:** There are worries that growing up in same-sex families will have a harmful impact on kids.
- Legalising same-sex unions is thought by some to have unfavourable societal repercussions, such as the dissolution of the family and moral degeneration.
- Some individuals think that making same-sex marriage legal might start a slippery slope that makes other non-traditional marital arrangements permissible as well.

**Conclusion:**

A critical turning point in worldwide efforts to safeguard marine biodiversity outside of state borders was reached with the passage of the High Seas Treaty. Although difficulties and disagreements made the negotiating process more drawn out, the treaty paves the way for improved international collaboration and the execution of rules to protect our seas for future generations.

Source: The Hindu



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## 6. Global South

**Context:** The phrase "Global South" has once again come to light as a result of several major nations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America refusing to support NATO in the conflict in Ukraine.



### What is Global South?

- Countries that are frequently referred to be "developing," "less developed," or "underdeveloped" are referred to as being in the "Global South."
- It includes nations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America that are worse off than the "Global North" in terms of poverty, economic disparity, and living standards.

### Historical Background:

- Political activist Carl Oglesby used the phrase "Global South" for the first time in 1969. He said that the Vietnam War was evidence of northern "dominance over the global south" throughout history.
- These nations were typically considered to as belonging to the "Third World" prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991.
- Following the conclusion of the Cold War and the development of the non-aligned movement, the phrase gained popularity.

### Features of the Global South:

- The majority of the lower-income nations that make up the Global South are found in South America, Asia, and Africa.
- These countries have a history of colonial and imperial dominance on a geopolitical level.
- Many of these nations have been referred to as recently industrialised and are still in the process of industrialising.
- Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, and Mexico are prominent nations in the Global South and are recognised for having sizable populations and economies.

### Need for Classification:

- It was said that the East/West dichotomy and the classification of nations as developed or developing fostered prejudices and favoured Western values.

- Cold War alliances were connected to the First World, Second World, and Third World categories.
- A larger categorisation based on a common history of colonisation and comparable socioeconomic statistics is provided by the phrase "Global South."

**Global South amid Ukrainian War:**

- India wants to bring the nations of the Global South together to take concrete action.
- Collaboration between countries in the Global South may unleash a lot of possibilities for development, including the sharing of best practises in manufacturing and technological and intellectual exchanges.
- India wants to draw attention to the issues of energy security, fairness, and the transition to sustainable energy sources that affect the Global South.

**Challenges for Consolidation:**

- As a result of their growing industrialisation and previous carbon emissions, some claim that China and India should contribute to the ongoing discussion over climate reparations.
- The least developed countries (LDCs) have been influenced by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, which has led to a closer alliance with China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- The US still controls international affairs despite the transition to a multipolar world, which presents difficulties for the integration of the Global South.

**Way forward:**

- To support the Global South, India must actively participate in regional politics within the developing countries.
- Recognising the variety within the Global South is essential, as is creating a policy vision that takes into account the various needs and capacities of its member nations.

**Conclusion:**

Collaboration between India and the Global South can result in important developments in many different domains. India places a high priority on consultation, outcome orientation, people-centric approaches, and respect for partner nations' sovereignty in its development partnerships. By separating India's strategy from China's, the Global South may promote sustainable growth by avoiding debt traps and financially risky ventures.

**Source: Indian Express**



## 7. Quiet Diplomacy

**Context:** The External Affairs Minister of India, S. Jaishankar, and the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, Enrique Manalo, laid out a roadmap to strengthen the bilateral partnership in the twenty-first century. The two countries have shared diplomatic ties for nearly 75 years and share maritime interests.



### Significance and developments emerged from the meeting:

- There is a stronger commitment to defence cooperation between India and the Philippines as evidenced by the choice to build a resident defence attaché post in Manila. This action will make it easier to coordinate efforts more closely, share information, and launch cooperative defence projects.
- To increase marine security in the area, the coast guards of India and the Philippines will boost their cooperation. This include information sharing, cooperative activities, and combined patrols to counter marine threats.
- The Philippines will purchase naval equipment with the aid of a concessional line of credit provided by India in order to strengthen its maritime capabilities. This assistance will strengthen the Philippines' marine defence capabilities and help to keep the area stable.
- Both nations will broaden their training initiatives and hold cooperative drills with a marine security and disaster response focus. Through their combined efforts, they will be better equipped to handle marine issues and aid in disaster assistance.

### What is Quiet diplomacy?

- A diplomatic strategy centred on covert conversations and discussions held out of the spotlight and away from media scrutiny is known as quiet diplomacy.
- It entails making diplomatic efforts through secret channels, unofficial discussions, and private gatherings to handle delicate situations and settle disputes.

**How Quiet diplomacy could ease South China Sea tensions:**

- The execution of confidence-boosting measures among the claimant nations can be facilitated by quiet diplomacy. Agreements on combined military drills, intelligence sharing, or cooperation projects aimed at lowering tensions and fostering trust are a few examples of this.
- Confidential and discrete communication between parties, including China and the claimant nations, is made possible through quiet diplomacy. It offers a forum for open discussion where issues and viewpoints can be raised, fostering improved comprehension and the possibility of settling disagreements.
- Engaging facilitators or mediators who are impartial third parties with the ability to help resolve conflicts and direct the negotiation process may be an element of quiet diplomacy. These mediators can give a third-party viewpoint, subject-matter knowledge, and assistance in fostering fruitful communication between the parties.
- Informally held discussions and exchanges between academic professionals, think tanks, and non-governmental organisations are encouraged by quiet diplomacy. These encounters can provide fresh insights, ground-breaking concepts, and a greater comprehension of the problems at hand.

**Way Forward:**

- For a political settlement to the South China Sea issue, engagement is necessary. As legal options may have limitations, leaders of ASEAN countries are urged to use "quiet diplomacy to find a political solution." Negotiations and diplomatic channels can be used during dialogue to settle disputes amicably.
- To manage the South China Sea issue, a legally binding code of conduct must be established. Leaders in ASEAN are urged to work on creating and putting this code into effect. A code of conduct can offer principles and standards to handle conflicts, lower tensions, and advance regional stability.
- In order to properly resolve the South China Sea problem, regional collaboration and solidarity among ASEAN states are crucial. Greater cooperation and understanding among ASEAN countries can improve their negotiating position and promote a unified front in addressing issues relating to maritime security and territorial claims.
- The text emphasises upholding international law, especially UNCLOS. Countries are urged to abide by their UNCLOS duties, respect diplomatic and legal channels, and defend the rights of coastal nations. For the South China Sea to remain stable, to settle conflicts, and to advance a rules-based system, international law must be upheld.

**Conclusion:**

India emphasises its commitment to regional security and peace by pledging to a rules-based system and highlighting the importance of international law. To achieve a peaceful conclusion in the South China Sea, safeguard essential marine commons, and guarantee the unhindered flow of international trade, ASEAN member states must engage in conversation, establish political frameworks, and come together.

Source: The Hindu



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## 8. CPTPP Trade Deal

**Context:** The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), a significant Indo-Pacific trade agreement, has been formally signed by the UK. The UK's trade agreement since leaving the European Union is viewed as being its entry into the bloc.



### What is CPTPP?

The CPTPP, which was founded in 2018, lowers trade obstacles between 11 nations, including Vietnam, Japan, Australia, Canada, and Canada.

### Objectives of CPRPP include:

- As part of the deal, nations must pledge to open their markets for services and investments and to remove or drastically lower tariffs.
- The CPTPP has regulations governing intellectual property rights, competition, and foreign business safeguards.
- China and other nations, including Taiwan, Ukraine, Costa Rica, Uruguay, and Ecuador, have filed to join the CPTPP, which intends to challenge China's dominance in the area.

### Importance of CPTPP for the UK:

- The UK government expects lower tariffs for UK exports to nations in the Asia Pacific region. Joining the CPTPP increases trade potential since the group has a combined GDP of £12 trillion and accounts for 15% of global commerce.
- Through its "Global Britain" plan, the UK hopes to strengthen commercial connections with the Pacific area after leaving the EU.
- Given the difficulties in reaching agreements with large powers like China and the United States, the UK seeks to build economic relations with nations and groups whose economies are expanding more quickly than those of the EU.



### State-Wise Distribution of Waterbodies:

- According to the survey, West Bengal has the most ponds and reservoirs, while Andhra Pradesh has the most storage tanks.
- The majority of lakes are in Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra is the state with the most water conservation initiatives.
- The district of South 24 Parganas in West Bengal has been named as having the most waterbodies (3.55 lakh) in the whole nation.

### Challenges and Criticisms:

- Critics contend that trade agreements like the CPTPP will find it difficult to make up for the economic losses incurred by the UK's decision to leave the EU, which continues to be its top trading partner.
- The Office for Budget Responsibility estimates that Brexit will result in a 4% decline in the UK's long-term productivity.
- The majority of CPTPP participants are already trading partners of the UK, and the anticipated economic benefit of joining the pact is only expected to increase GDP by 0.08% yearly.

### Recent Developments:

Members of the CPTPP are evaluating potential members' economies as part of the selection process for prospective membership to see whether they can fulfil the high requirements of the bloc.

Existing CPTPP participants will decide together on new members and the timetable for their participation.

Source: Indian Express



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## 9. Black Sea Grain Initiative

**Context:** On July 17, the Black Sea grain agreement will come to an end. Russia has declined to extend the agreement, citing unfulfilled commitments and challenges with its own agricultural exports as a result of Western sanctions.



### Black Sea Grain Initiative:

- Three significant Ukrainian ports were reopened as a result of the Initiative, which reduced Russia's naval blockade.
- The agreement, which was mediated by the UN and Turkey in July 2022, let cargo ships to move between Ukrainian ports and to be inspected to make sure they were not transporting weapons.
- The agreement, which has already been extended twice, will finish on July 17, 2023.
- In an effort to alleviate the food crisis in 2022, the agreement established protocols for the secure export of grain from certain ports.
- It offers a secure maritime humanitarian corridor for exports from three of its major ports, notably Chornomorsk, Odesa, and Yuzhny/Pivdennyi in the Black Sea, including food grains in particular.

### Outcomes of this deal:

- Since the arrangement was negotiated, over 9.8 million tonnes of grains have been exported.
- Due to the shortage of supplies, those who had been stockpiling grain in the hopes of selling it for a significant profit were suddenly forced to do so.
- The project has also been praised for making a significant effect in the world's affordability dilemma.

**Why was this deal launched?**

- Ukraine contributes to the UN's food aid programmes and is a big exporter of grains, such as wheat and maize.
- Invasion and blockade of Ukrainian ports by Russia sparked worries about the safety of the world's food supply and rising costs.

**Russia's Opposition and Reasons:**

- According to Russia, the deal's pledges have not been kept, which has caused Western sanctions to harm its own agricultural exports and fertiliser production.
- Despite the fact that there are no explicit limitations on its agricultural goods, Russia confronts difficulties with payment platforms, insurance, shipping, and logistics.
- The Russian President voiced his annoyance and said that although Russia had extended the agreement out of goodwill, he felt that enough was enough.
- While Ukraine has mostly sold to high- and middle-income countries, the UN adds that food prices have decreased, helping poorer countries, despite Russia's claims that the agreement was intended to secure global food security.

**Impact on Grain Exports and Production:**

- Russia continues to be the world's largest exporter of wheat, with the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia as its key markets.
- Grain shipments from Ukraine are anticipated to more than half, while output is at an 11-year low.
- Due to the ease of shipping, Ukraine's grain markets have moved from Asia and North Africa to Europe. This has led to a surplus of Ukrainian grain and objections from farmers in Eastern European nations.

Source: Indian Express

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## 10. Henley Passport Index

**Context:** India has improved its standing on the Henley Passport Index 2023, moving up seven spots to 80th place from 87th place last year. The number of nations granting Indian passport holders visa-free travel stays the same, notwithstanding the increase in ranking.



### What is Henley Passport Index?

- The strength and worth of passports from various nations are evaluated and ranked using the Henley Passport Index.
- It is released by the worldwide residency and citizenship advice company Henley & Partners.
- The index offers an annual rating of passports depending on how many nations and territories their owners may visit visa-free or with visas available at the airport.

### How is it derived?

- It incorporates information from dependable sources like the International Air Transport Association (IATA).
- The index lists 227 travel locations and 199 passports.
- Each passport is given a "visa-free score" that indicates the number of places that can be visited without a prior visa.
- The stronger the passport, the better the visa-free score.



**India's Passport Performance in 2023:**

- In 2023, India is ranked 80th.
- 52 countries in 2014 granted Indian passport holders visa-free travel, placing India at position 76.
- With ranks of 88th (2015), 85th (2016), 87th (2017), 81st (2018), 82nd (2019 and 2020), and 81st (2021), its ranking has changed over time.
- India was placed 94th out of 97 countries in the Henley Openness Index, which counts the number of countries that allow visa-free travel, since it only allows travel to four other countries.

**Global scenario:**

- Singapore's passport is now more powerful than Japan's, granting its inhabitants visa-free access to 192 of the world's 227 tourist destinations.
- Spain, Italy, and Germany tie for second place. Austria, Finland, France, Luxembourg, South Korea, and Sweden all tie for third place.
- On the Henley Passport Index, Japan, which had previously held the top spot for five years, has slipped to third place.
- The nation that is notorious for its terrorism and current economic turmoil is rated 100th on the list. Only 33 nations allow Pakistani nationals to travel without a visa.

Source: The Hindu

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## 11. NATO Vilnius Summit, 2023

**Context:** The Vilnius Summit, which took place in July 2023, was important for evaluating the advancements achieved by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) over the previous year and putting plans in place for any confrontations. Although there were great hopes for Ukraine's membership timetable, the conference fell short.

About NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)	
<b>Formation</b>	Established on April 4, 1949
<b>Members</b>	Consists of 30 member countries
<b>Headquarters</b>	Located in Brussels, Belgium
<b>Mission</b>	Safeguard freedom and security through political and military cooperation
<b>Key feature: Article 5</b>	Mutual defense provision, attack on one is an attack on all
<b>Operations</b>	Involved in peacekeeping and crisis management operations worldwide
<b>NATO-Russia Relations</b>	Complex relationship with Russia, involving cooperation and tensions
<b>Evolving Security Challenges</b>	Adapts to address evolving security challenges like terrorism, cyber threats, and hybrid warfare

### Key takeaways from Vilnius Summit:

#### NATO's Response to Threats:

- The summit communiqué recognised that the biggest and most immediate danger to the safety, stability, and peace of NATO members in the Euro-Atlantic region comes from Russia.
- NATO voiced alarm about Belarus's potential to support Russian aggression against Ukraine by supplying infrastructure and land. The transfer of Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) by Iran to Russia for use in strikes on vital infrastructure in Ukraine was also noted.

**Recalibrations in the Baltic Sea:**

- Finland participated in the summit for the first time as a NATO member, and Turkey decided to approve Sweden's application for membership.
- This opens the door for a strategic realignment in the once under Russian control Baltic Sea region.

**Commitments to Ukraine:**

- Contrary to predictions, no precise timeframe for Ukraine's participation in NATO was given.
- NATO countries made both immediate and long-term security commitments to Ukraine, including the establishment of the NATO-Ukraine Council and a multi-year programme to support the modernization of Ukrainian troops.
- In order to strengthen Ukraine's defence, member states including Germany, Norway, and France pledged financial support, military hardware, and bilateral security cooperation.

**Concerns over China:**

- The summit reaffirmed NATO's view of China as a danger to its security, goals, and principles. It brought to light China's hazy aims, strategy, and military buildup as well as its support for Russia.
- NATO emphasised the significance of the security of the Indo-Pacific area and connected it to the security of the Euro-Atlantic.

**Defense Spending and Readiness:**

- Due to the more contentious security order, NATO accepted the necessity for greater defence spending over the baseline 2 percent of GDP.
- To increase the readiness of the alliance, allies came to an agreement on regional defence plans. The proposals concentrate on modernising the military, enhancing interoperability, and taking care of the budgetary consequences.

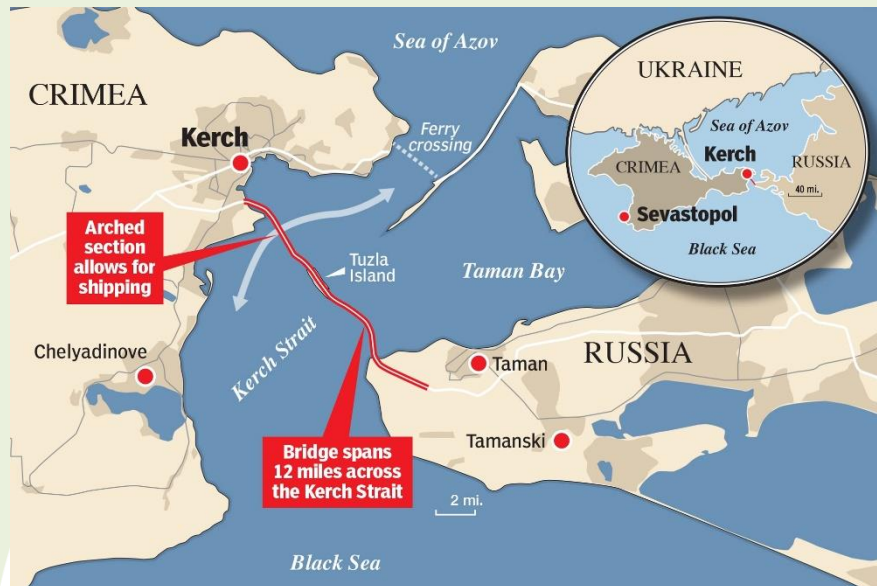
**Conclusion:**

- Overall, the summit reaffirmed NATO's strategic aims and relevance in a changing security environment.

Source: Indian Express

## 12. Kerch Bridge

**Context:** An attack by Ukrainian sea drones on the Kerch Bridge, which connects the Russian mainland to the Crimean Peninsula, prompted Russian reprisals.



### About Kerch Bridge:

- The 19 km long Kerch Bridge, which spans the Kerch Strait, includes two concurrent rail and traffic systems.
- In 2018, Vladimir Putin of Russia officially inaugurated it, four years after annexing Crimea from Ukraine through a contentious referendum.
- It represents Russian rule over Crimea, which was taken in 2014.
- It is significant symbolically for Russia since it connects the Russian mainland to the annexation of Crimea.

### Significance of the Kerch Bridge for Russia:

- The bridge was built to protect a "land bridge" connecting Crimea and mainland Russia after Crimea was annexed in 2014.
- In order to facilitate logistical supplies to Russian soldiers in southern Ukraine, the bridge is crucial.
- Security of the bridge is crucial to Russia's military operations since it is still vulnerable to fire from the Ukraine.

Source: Indian Express



## 1. Greedflation

**Context:** Due to rising prices in India and elsewhere, greedflation is making headlines.



### Details:

- Greedflation is a word used to describe a scenario in which excessive greed and speculation, as opposed to supply and demand issues, are the main causes of inflation. A self-fulfilling prophecy is produced when investors, customers, and companies anticipate constant price increases and behave accordingly.
- Asset bubbles, unstable financial conditions, wealth disparity, and social upheaval can all be results of greedflation.

### Greedflation:

- In contrast to supply shocks or monetary growth, it defines a situation in which high inflation is caused by excessive demand and speculation.
- It is not a recent occurrence. Many nations and regions have seen it before, including the US during the dot-com bubble, China during the property boom, and Latin America during the debt crisis.
- As a result of enormous fiscal and monetary stimulus, historically low interest rates, supply chain disruptions, and pent-up demand, inflationary pressures have increased in frequency and persistence in the post-pandemic world.

### Impacts of Greedflation:

- Greedflation may have a detrimental effect on social welfare, environmental sustainability, and economic progress.

- Consumers' purchasing power may be affected, particularly that of the poor and middle class, who spend a greater percentage of their income on necessities like food and shelter.
- The wealthiest gain from growing asset values while the rest of us experience increased living costs, which can exacerbate the gap between the rich and the poor.
- It may make financial markets more volatile and brittle, increasing their risk of crises and collapses.
- As several nations adopt diverse and incompatible approaches to deal with inflation, it can worsen global imbalances, trade disputes, and geopolitical confrontations.

**Main Drivers of Greedflation in India:**

- Rising import costs and local production costs are directly impacted by rising global commodity prices, particularly those of crude oil, metals, and food products.
- The second wave of COVID-19 has caused supply-side bottlenecks that have interfered with several industries' regular operations, including manufacturing, transportation, hospitality, and education.
- The RBI has introduced extra liquidity into the banking system via a variety of strategies, including targeted long-term repo operations, quantitative easing, and loan repayment moratoria.
- Strong resurgence in consumer demand as the economy gradually recovers from the lockdowns, particularly in rural regions and for discretionary goods like cars, durables, and services.
- Trading, investing, and consumer speculative conduct that leads to artificial scarcity and promotes expectations of inflation by anticipating future price rises and hoarding goods and assets.

**Challenges:**

- Greedflation presents a conundrum for policymakers, who must choose between boosting GDP and containing inflation, bolstering demand and reducing speculative activity, and caving in to expectations while maintaining credibility.
- Different players and institutions, including central banks, governments, regulators, corporations, and civil society must coordinate and work together.
- It necessitates innovation and adaptability in terms of laws, rules, practises, and technology.

- The future for greedflation is neither simple nor obvious. There is no one-size-fits-all cure for greedflation, no magic pill. Depending on their unique conditions and preferences, several nations may require various methods and approaches.

**Steps that could help to mitigate or prevent greedflation include:**

- Adopting a macroeconomic management strategy that is more well-rounded, comprehensive, and takes into account growth, employment, inequality, and sustainability in addition to inflation.
- Enhancing central banks' autonomy and responsibility so they may implement credible and successful monetary policies that restrain excessive money creation and anchor inflation expectations.
- Putting in place a cautious, countercyclical fiscal strategy that encourages public investment, social protection, and redistribution while avoiding a surplus of deficits or debt.
- Increasing the level of financial regulation and oversight that may stop excessive leverage, risk-taking, and speculation in the financial markets without impeding innovation or competition.
- Advocating for structural changes that can improve the real economy's productivity, competitiveness, and innovation without sacrificing social or environmental norms.
- Promoting global collaboration and coordination that may harmonise laws, regulations, and standards while maintaining national autonomy and diversity.

**Way forward for India to tackle greedflation:**

- Coordinating monetary and fiscal actions to ensure that they work in harmony to achieve macroeconomic growth and stability goals.
- Strengthening supply-side changes to improve the competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency of many economic sectors, including agriculture, industry, and services. The government could, for instance, put into effect the newly passed farm regulations, which are intended to liberalise the agricultural markets and give farmers more influence.
- To lessen reliance on imports and exposure to external shocks, diversify your sources of energy and raw materials. For instance, the government need to support renewable energy sources like solar and wind, which may cut India's energy import cost and carbon impact.

- Enhancing the accuracy and timeliness of data collection and distribution to better track inflation dynamics and trends. For instance, the base year and weights of several pricing indexes, which are now out of date and do not account for shifting consumption patterns, should be updated by the government.
- Managing inflation expectations and discouraging speculative activity through public education and stakeholder communication. For instance, the government could start educating the public on the origins, effects, and coping mechanisms of inflation.

**Conclusion:**

For India's economy and society, greedflation is a significant problem. To address its underlying origins and effects, politicians, corporations, and consumers must adopt a comprehensive and proactive strategy. Only then, in the post-pandemic world, can India attain inclusive and sustainable growth.

Source: The Hindu



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## 2. UTPRERAK

**Context:** The Union Ministry of Power established the UTPRERAK, or Unnat Takniki Pradarshan Kendra, Centre of Excellence with the goal of facilitating and accelerating the industry's adoption of energy-efficient technology and practises. The Centre wants to be a driving force behind India's industrial sector's transition to a low-carbon and sustainable one.



### Details:

- In order to contribute to the global effort to address climate change, India is dedicated to lowering its greenhouse gas emissions and increasing its capacity for renewable energy. Improving the energy efficiency of various industries, notably the industry, which makes up around 40% of the nation's overall energy usage, is one of the primary measures to accomplish this aim.
- The Union Ministry of Power established the UTPRERAK Centre of Excellence with the goal of facilitating and accelerating the industry's adoption of energy-efficient technology and practises.

### UTPRERAK:

- Utilisation Transformation and Promotion of Renewable Energy Resources by Application of Knowledge is what UTPRERAK stands for.
- It is a cooperative effort of the National Productivity Council (NPC), Energy Efficiency Services Limited, and the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE).

### Key Objectives:

- The primary goals of UTPRERAK are to offer technical assistance, capacity development, policy advocacy, and information dissemination to the industry stakeholders on a variety of energy efficiency-related topics.
- The Centre exhibits the most cutting-edge and effective energy-efficient technology in a variety of industrial sectors, including steel, cement, textiles, chemicals, and others.

Industry stakeholders may learn about the advantages and viability of adopting these technologies at this expo, information hub, and knowledge resource.

- The Centre provides a forum for networking and knowledge sharing between professionals from the sector, specialists, researchers, and policymakers. In order to exchange best practises, case studies, success stories, and obstacles associated with adopting energy-efficient solutions, it organises workshops, seminars, webinars, and other events.
- Energy experts from diverse industries benefit from the Center's capacity-building and skill-development efforts. It provides online modules, training courses, certification programmes, and other instructional materials on energy efficiency. In the following five years, it plans to teach more than 10,000 energy specialists.
- The Centre offers suggestions for creating policies, connects energy efficiency education and research, and creates creative, practical solutions for particular sector requirements.

**Some of the key features of UTPRERAK are:**

- It will serve as a one-stop shop for all of the industry's demands relating to energy efficiency, including those related to steel, cement, textiles, chemicals, fertilisers, paper, and food processing.
- Energy audits, benchmarking, technology evaluation, project execution, finance, monitoring and verification, and certification are just a few of the services it will provide.
- It will make use of the Ministry of Power's current plans and initiatives, including PAT (Perform, Achieve, and Trade), UJALA (Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All), SLNP (Street Lighting National Programme), and EESL's Super-Efficient Equipment Programme (SEEP).
- To enable knowledge transfer and technology transfer, it will work in conjunction with national and international organisations, research institutions, industry groups, and technology providers.
- The industry's stakeholders will become more aware of the advantages of energy efficiency and the opportunities provided by UTPRERAK.

**Significance:**

- It will aid the sector in lowering energy use and carbon emissions, assisting in achieving the nation's objectives of energy security, reducing global warming, and promoting sustainable development.

- By lowering operating costs and raising productivity and quality, it will strengthen the industry's competitiveness and profitability.
- Youth in the field of energy efficiency will benefit from the growth of their skills and work possibilities.
- By fostering an ecosystem that is favourable for new technologies and business models, it will encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in the energy efficiency industry.

**Some challenges in its implementation:**

- The industry's stakeholders' lack of knowledge about and drive to embrace energy-efficient practises and technology.
- Some energy-efficient devices have significant up-front costs and lengthy payback times.
- The challenges associated with finding funding and incentives for energy efficiency initiatives.
- The absence of certification and standardisation for goods and services with regard to energy efficiency.
- The absence of coordination and convergence across the several ministries, departments, agencies, and energy efficiency-related programmes.

**To ensure the success of UTPRERAK, some possible measures are:**

- UTPRERAK should improve its outreach and communication strategies to generate interest and demand among industry players.
- Giving the industry's stakeholders financial assistance and incentives would help them overcome financial obstacles and promote investment in energy efficiency initiatives.
- Creating a solid monitoring and verification mechanism for the energy savings brought about by UTPRERAK activities.
- Establishing a system of quality control for the energy-saving goods and services provided by UTPRERAK partners.
- Improving the coordination and cooperation between the numerous parties involved in energy efficiency on various levels.

**Conclusion:**

In the area of energy efficiency, UTPRERAK is a novel effort that aims to close the gap between technology development and technology application. It is anticipated to have a significant influence on the Indian industry's competitiveness, productivity, and profitability while simultaneously lowering its environmental impact and carbon footprint. Thus, UTPRERAK plays a crucial role in enabling India's shift to clean energy and green growth.

Source: Indian Express



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### 3. PM-PRANAM Scheme

**Context:** The PM-PRANAM initiative, which seeks to encourage the use of alternative fertilisers and balanced use of chemical fertilisers, has received approval from the union cabinet. This programme, which was unveiled in the budget for 2023-2024, demonstrates the government's dedication to natural resource preservation and sustainable agriculture methods.



#### What is PM-PRANAM Scheme?

- The Prime Minister Promotion of Alternate Nutrients for Agriculture Management Yojana is known as PM-PRANAM.
- The plan was put up at the September 2022 National Conference on Agriculture for Rabi Campaign.
- By encouraging the use of alternative fertilisers, it seeks to lessen the subsidy load on chemical fertilisers.

#### Notable features of the scheme:

- To encourage the use of alternative fertilisers and establish a balanced use of chemical fertilisers, the plan provides incentives to the states and Union Territories. As an incentive, states that can show large financial savings by using less chemical fertiliser are given awards.

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- The state that uses the least chemical fertiliser will get a reward equal to around 50% of the subsidy savings that arise from this. State participation in the use of substitute fertilisers is therefore encouraged.
- The allotted funds will be used to create assets related to the technical integration of alternative fertilisers to the tune of 70% of the total amount. To facilitate local production and the accessibility of substitute fertilisers, this entails setting up production facilities at the village, block, and district levels.
- Farmers and other village organisations will be rewarded and encouraged for their contributions to lowering fertiliser consumption with the remaining 30% of the allotted cash. Their efforts to embrace sustainable agriculture methods are recognised by this.
- The programme encourages the use of alternative fertilisers in order to encourage agricultural methods that are more ecologically friendly. This lessens the need on artificial fertilisers, which in turn helps to preserve and protect the ecosystem.
- The programme protects the long-term health and fertility of agricultural ecosystems by encouraging a balanced use of fertilisers. It places a focus on sustainable farming methods that maintain soil health and safeguard natural resources.
- The programme encourages the use of technology in agriculture to produce and apply substitute fertilisers. This involves establishing small-scale manufacturing facilities, supporting regional production, and making alternate fertilisers available.

Source: Indian Express

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## 4. GIFT NIFTY

**Context:** The first cross-border venture between India and Singapore's capital markets, GIFT NIFTY (previously SGX NIFTY), began trading from GIFT City in Gujarat. Over 30,000 deals were made throughout the trading session, demonstrating the expanding importance of this partnership.



### What is GIFT NIFTY?

- PM Modi started the transition to GIFT NIFTY in July 2022.
- The improvement of the capital market environment in GIFT City and the accessibility of GIFT IFSC to international investors are both made possible by GIFT NIFTY.
- Collaboration between SGX and NSE improves ties between two economies that are experiencing tremendous growth.
- Because NSE IX is prohibited from agreeing to identical terms with other exchanges, the agreement is stable.
- A further two years may be added to the initial five-year contract.

### GIFT NIFTY: 10 KEY POINTS

- 1 **Nifty derivatives** moved from Singapore Exchange to NSE IX as Gift Nifty
- 2 **Regulatory approvals** obtained from MAS and IFSCA
- 3 **Costs and facilities** for domestic investors remain unchanged in GIFT City
- 4 **Offers extended trading hours** of almost 21 hrs
- 5 **More global investors** can trade in dollar-denominated Nifty futures contracts
- 6 **International investors** can still trade Nifty through Singapore Exchange
- 7 **NSE IX offers dollar-denominated Nifty derivatives** under IFSCA
- 8 **Open positions** shifted to NSE IFSC for liquidity
- 9 **Initially, Gift Nifty** offers contracts for various indices
- 10 **IFSCA aims** for single-window clearance system for clearances & NOCs



**Operating time:**

- With the help of GIFT NIFTY, a trade link is created between Singapore and India, with trading and matching taking place in the former.
- It works in the Asia time zone from 6:30 am to 3:40 pm.
- The second session, which runs from 4:35 pm until 2:45 am the next day, is geared at investors from the US and Europe.

**Deal between SGX and NSE:**

- A 50:50 revenue-sharing agreement between Singapore Exchange (SGX) and NSE International Exchange (NSE IX) is established under the five-year pact.
- SGX will get 75% of income for business generated in Singapore, with the remaining 25% going to NSE.
- The International Financial Service Centre (IFSC) business will be split 75% between NSE and SGX, with the remaining 25%.
- The income sharing will be distributed evenly between the two organisations after a "threshold volume" has been met.

**Shift to GIFT NIFTY:**

- Singapore's SGX NIFTY trading ceased on June 30, and all trading volume and liquidity were transferred to GIFT IFSC.
- The trading platform was rebranded GIFT NIFTY and now offers four products: GIFT Nifty Bank, GIFT Nifty Financial Services, GIFT Nifty IT derivatives contracts, and GIFT Nifty 50.

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### GIFT City, Gandhinagar

- India's first operational smart city and worldwide financial services hub, GIFT city is similar to a contemporary IT park.
- GIFT's concept originated during the 2007 Vibrant Gujarat Global Investor Summit.
- East China Architectural Design & Research Institute (ECADI) carried out the basic planning.
- Currently, the City employs more than 12000 people across 225 operating divisions and organisations.

#### Key features:

- The idea of FTTX (Fibre to the Home/Office) underpins the entire city.
- The fault-tolerant ring topology used to install the fibre optics allows for optimal service uptime.
- In GIFT City, every structure is an intelligent structure.
- Cooking gas is supplied by pipes. At GIFT City, the country's first city-level DCS (district cooling system) is also in use.

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## 5. Global Governance of Biobanks

**Context:** The bioeconomy, sometimes referred to as the biotechnology economy, has grown significantly in recent years thanks to developments in genetic research, medical applications, and improvements in food security and bioproduction. However, to ensure fair access and benefit sharing, rigorous governance is required for the appropriate collecting, storage, and sharing of biological data, especially in the form of biobanks.



### What is the biotechnology economy?

- The sector that includes diverse activities connected to biotechnology, genetic research, and the use of biological resources for industrial and commercial reasons is referred to as the biotechnology economy, also known as the bioeconomy.
- It includes the use of biological concepts, knowledge, and methodologies to create novel goods, services, and systems in industries including healthcare, agriculture, food production, energy, environmental preservation, and more.
- The biotechnology industry depends on developments in domains like genetic engineering, genomics, bioinformatics, and others in order to comprehend and control biological systems in real-world applications.
- It encompasses the design of sustainable solutions for numerous industries as well as the development of novel medications, therapies, and medical treatments. It also involves the development of improved livestock and agricultural products.

**India's potential in the Bioeconomy:**

- According to India's Bioeconomy Report, the country's bioeconomy might have a market worth of \$300 billion by 2030. This points to the sector's rapid expansion and promising economic future.
- In the previous 10 years, India has seen an exponential rise in the number of biotech start-ups, from 50 to over 5,300. This dynamic ecosystem exhibits a solid basis for bioeconomy research, development, and industry involvement.
- Out of the 340 registered biobanks worldwide, 19 are located in India. This infrastructure is essential for the gathering, storage, and dissemination of biological data for research and development.

**Significance of biobanks for India:**

- In addition to storing biological samples like DNA, tissue, and blood, biobanks also keep track of the corresponding medical data. Researchers may investigate illnesses using these samples and data, which also help them understand genetic variables, find biomarkers, and create novel diagnostic techniques and treatments.
- Biobanks provide study on the aetiology, course, and treatment possibilities of certain diseases by gathering samples and health data from people with particular diseases or genetic abnormalities.
- Researchers can uncover individual variances and create customised treatment techniques based on a person's particular genetic make-up by analysing genetic and molecular data kept in biobanks.
- Researchers may discover risk factors, comprehend illness prevalence, track disease trends, and create strategies for disease prevention and public health interventions by analysing large-scale data sets from biobanks.

**Inequitable Data Collection and Benefit Deployment:**

- Due to the geographic concentration of biobanks in the Global North, research and financing are biased in favour of genetic disorders and illnesses that are common in those areas. This bias limits the relevance and application of research on health issues unique to the Global South to the inhabitants in these areas.
- Using samples from the Global South to address health requirements predominantly in the Global North creates a contradiction. Because of this contradiction, it is possible that the conclusions drawn from research based on data gathered in the Global South may not sufficiently meet the requirements and difficulties that the populace there confront in the area of healthcare.
- The advantages obtained from the data gathered in the Global South are not adequately shared since there are no defined return on outcomes policies. The advantages and



results of study employing data from the Global South's biobanks are not equally distributed across the nations and populations where the data originates.

**India's contributions and leadership in the bioeconomy:**

- India has made a significant contribution to vaccination and healthcare development. The nation has participated in the development, distribution, and diplomatic efforts of the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine. Its participation and knowledge have been vital in tackling issues related to global health.
- India's role in pushing for representation of the global South in biobanking governance and international forums shows its dedication to eliminating disparities. The leadership of India encourages cooperation, trust, and equitable involvement among the nations of the Global South.
- India's membership in the Quadrilateral Alliance and its leadership of the G20 offer opportunities for international cooperation and diplomacy. Through these interactions, India is able to promote global governance frameworks and procedures that support fair access, benefit distribution, and financial support for the bioeconomy.

**Way Forward:**

- The Global South needs to be more fully represented in international governance frameworks. This makes sure that in the formulation of decisions and policies, the unique needs and viewpoints of the Global South are taken into account.
- The development of international standards and best practises for biobanking is required. In order to handle ethical data collecting, storage, sharing, and benefit distribution, it would be necessary to take into account the particular requirements and worries of the Global South.
- To guarantee equitable benefit sharing, specific return on results rules are crucial. These regulations would guarantee that the nations and populations from where the data originates get the advantages obtained from the data collected in the Global South.
- International cooperation, information sharing, and technology transfer across nations and regions should be encouraged through global governance in the bioeconomy. This partnership supports initiatives to strengthen capacities in the Global South and addresses inequities while fostering trust.

**Conclusion:**

- In order to advance scientific research, guarantee equitable healthcare, and solve the particular healthcare difficulties encountered by the global South, it is essential to promote equitable governance in biobanking. The timing is right for India to take the lead on this issue and promote revolutionary transformation in the global biobanking industry.

**Source: The Hindu**



## 6. Internationalising the Rupee

**Context:** The Indian government has unveiled a long-term roadmap for the internationalisation of the rupee, which has enormous potential for the nation's economic development. This action intends to boost the rupee's standing in the global foreign exchange market and restore its historical status as a frequently used currency in the Gulf area.



**INTERNATIONALIZING ₹**

Pros:	Cons:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will ease foreign trade, aid capital flows</li><li>• Mitigate exchange rate risks</li><li>• Reduce dependence on FX reserves</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complicates monetary policy</li><li>• Exchange rate stability is challenging</li><li>• Could bring uncontrolled capital flows</li></ul>

moneycontrol

### Historical Context:

- In the 1950s, various Gulf nations, notably the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, and Qatar, recognised the Indian rupee as legal cash. The pound sterling was frequently employed for a variety of transactions, including the purchase of rupees by these Gulf monarchy.
- The Reserve Bank of India (Amendment) Act was passed in 1959 to address issues linked to gold smuggling. The Gulf Rupee, which was solely meant for use in the West Asian area, was created as a result of this law. People with Indian money were given a six-week opportunity to swap their rupees for the new Gulf rupee when the central bank produced notes particular to the Gulf area.
- India's currency was depreciated in 1966, which ultimately affected how well the Gulf rupee was received. Some West Asian nations replaced the Gulf rupee with their own sovereign currencies as a result of the depreciation, which reduced trust in the stability of the Indian rupee. Concerns about the stability of the Indian rupee and economic considerations both contributed to the creation of sovereign currencies in the area.

**What does it mean by Internationalizing the Indian Rupee?**

The process of making the Indian rupee a more widely accepted, used, and recognised form of money is known as "internationalising" the rupee. It entails expanding the rupee's usage and trading on global markets, improving its convertibility, and encouraging its acceptance for international trade settlements, investment transactions, and cross-border transactions.

**Advantages of internationalization of the rupee:**

- Trade between India and other nations can run more smoothly if the rupee is internationalised. Increased bilateral commerce, the attraction of foreign investment, and economic expansion can all result from this.
- Internationalisation lowers the risks associated with exchange rate variations in the main world currencies. The sensitivity of the Indian economy to fluctuations in foreign currencies decreases as the rupee gains acceptance and use on a global scale.
- For companies and people doing cross-border commerce and remittances, lower transaction costs may result from the rupee's increased global recognition.
- Deeper and more liquid rupee-denominated financial markets would emerge as a result of the rupee being more globally traded. The derivatives and rupee bond markets are included in this. It aids in finance source diversification and offers firms and investors more stability and opportunity.

**The Challenge of International Demand for the rupee:**

- The rupee now holds a daily average foreign exchange market share of around 1.6%. In comparison to currencies like the US dollar or the euro, the rupee is not generally traded or utilised for foreign transactions, according to this data.
- India has considerable restrictions on the ability of local financial investments to be converted into international assets and vice versa. Given India's current and capital account deficits, these limitations are in place to reduce the risks of capital flight and exchange rate volatility. They do, however, restrict how simple it is to exchange rupees for other currencies, which lowers demand outside.
- A currency must be completely convertible, easily useable, and present in sufficient numbers in order to qualify as a reserve currency. The rupee does not yet qualify as a reserve currency, and its restricted convertibility and usage make it less desirable for central banks and other international organisations to retain significant quantities of rupees in their foreign exchange reserves.

**Learning from China's Experience:**

- China decided to internationalise the Renminbi (RMB) gradually. It first permitted the use of RMB outside of China for current account activities, like as business commerce and interest payments, before progressively extending it to some types of investment operations. This method of controlling risks and ensuring a seamless transition benefited.
- Chinese financial institutions were able to issue RMB-denominated bonds thanks to the establishment of offshore markets like the "Dim Sum" bond and offshore RMB bond market. China also allowed the excess RMB to be invested in debt securities by central banks, offshore clearing banks, and offshore participating banks. These initiatives improved the RMB's liquidity and made it easier to use it in foreign trade.
- With a number of nations, including Brazil, the United Kingdom, Uzbekistan, and Thailand, China entered into currency swap arrangements. In order to facilitate trade and investment transactions in RMB and lessen dependency on other currencies, these agreements allowed the exchange of equal quantities of money in several currencies.
- Shanghai unfettered Trade Zone was established by China to enable unfettered trade between non-resident onshore and offshore accounts. This region increased the use of the RMB abroad by giving foreign enterprises a platform to do business.

**Way Forward:**

- With the goal of reaching complete convertibility by 2060, the rupee should be made more readily convertible. In order to achieve this, considerable limitations on currency exchange and money movements would need to be lifted, allowing financial investments to flow freely between India and the rest of the world.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has to concentrate on expanding the depth and liquidity of the rupee bond market. This would increase the currency's appeal and use by giving Indian trading partners and overseas investors additional rupee investment possibilities.
- It should be encouraged for Indian exporters and importers to invoice their operations in rupees. Increasing the use of the rupee in international trade will enable less reliance on foreign currencies by streamlining the trade settlement procedures for rupee import/export transactions.
- India is able to negotiate more currency exchange deals with trading partners. With the help of these agreements, India would be able to settle trade and investment deals in rupees, reducing its dependency on reserve currencies like the US dollar.



IAS with Ojaank Sir

**Conclusion:**

The government's plan for internationalising the rupee has enormous potential for Indian companies, financial stability, and the capacity of the government to pay deficits. The voyage of the rupee towards internationalisation may support India's economic growth and boost its place in the global economy with predictable currency management rules and a gradual approach.

Source: The Hindu



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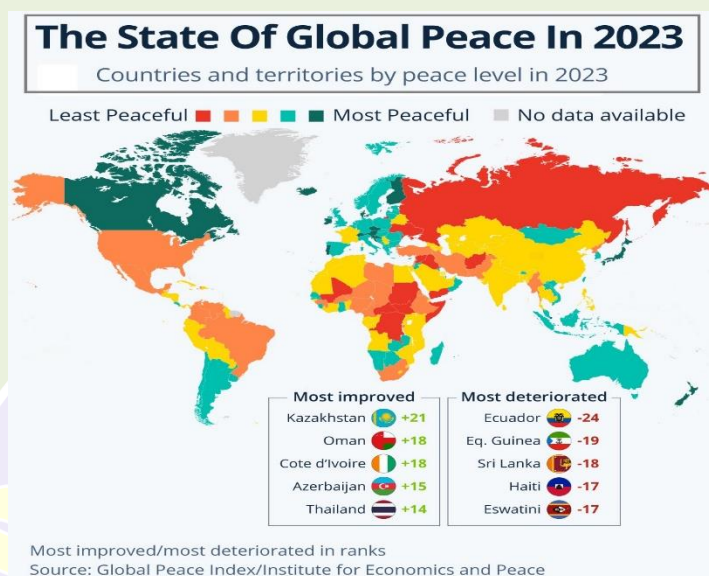


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## 7. Global Peace Index, 2023

**Context:** The Global Peace Index (GPI), now in its 17th edition, ranks 163 sovereign governments and territories according to how peaceful they are.



### What is Global Peace Index?

- Since May 2009, the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) has been publishing it.
- The GPI uses 23 qualitative and quantitative variables from reliable sources to cover 163 nations and 99.7% of the world's population.
- The index gauges peace in three areas: militarization, ongoing internal and foreign conflict, and social safety and security. These areas offer a comprehensive knowledge of a nation's level of peace.

### Rankings and Highlights:

- Since 2008, Iceland has held the distinction of the nation with the greatest peace, followed by Denmark, Ireland, New Zealand, and Austria.
- For the eighth year running, Afghanistan continues to be the least peaceful nation, followed by Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- India is now ranked 126th, up two positions from where it was. Its peacefulness increased by 3.5%, which may be ascribed to drops in violent crime, better ties with its neighbours, and less political instability.
- The rankings for Nepal, China, Sri Lanka, the United States, and Pakistan are 79, 80, 107, 131, and 146, respectively.



## Global Peace Trends:

- The report from 2023 shows a 0.42% decline in the average degree of world peace. In the past fifteen years, there have been thirteen deteriorations.
- 84 nations had advances in their levels of peace in 2022, while 79 nations saw declines.
- The average peacefulness score for the world has fallen by 5% over the previous fifteen years, signalling a general drop in peace.

Source: Indian Express

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## 8. China Limiting Exports

**Context:** Recently, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce put restrictions on the export of germanium and gallium, citing concerns for national security. Due to the significance of these raw materials in the production of semiconductors and several other sectors, the action has generated controversy.



### Curbs Imposed by China:

- Exporters that want to limit the export of gallium and germanium must get a particular licence.
- Operators must disclose information on importers, final consumers, ultimate use, and the original export contract. Unauthorised exportation will be considered a violation with administrative fines and even criminal proceedings.

### Significance and Concerns:

- Manufacturing semiconductor wafers, integrated circuits, LEDs, automotive, lighting, sensor, satellite, mobile, and other electronic devices need gallium.
- Due to its heat resistance and energy conversion efficiency, germanium is utilised in solar cells, infrared imaging devices, optical devices, and fiber-optic cables.
- Gallium and germanium production are dominated by China to the extent of 80% and 60%, respectively, raising worries for import-dependent nations like the European Union and India.



**International Responses:**

- The United States disagrees with China's export restrictions and intends to discuss the matter with friends and allies. Diversifying supply chains and enhancing resilience are the main goals.
- expresses alarm about the development and casts doubt on whether it is a security-related development.
- For concerns of national security, the US, Japan, and the Netherlands have established export restriction measures that target sophisticated computing processors and semiconductor production capacities.

**China's Perspective:**

- The spokeswoman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry emphasises that the export restrictions are not directed at any one nation and shows China's dedication to safe and reliable global supply chains.
- According to some Chinese officials, export limitations are just the beginning, and if future restrictions become more stringent, China may further up its defences.

**Impact on India:**

- The disruption of immediate supply chains and higher pricing may cause short-term disruptions in India's industries.
- Alternative supply sources, local semiconductor manufacturing capacity, and strategic alliances like the India-U.S. Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) will all have a long-term influence on India's chip-making ambitions and businesses.
- India can investigate waste recovery from the manufacturing of zinc and alumina for gallium and germanium, think about indium and silicon as alternatives, and concentrate on homegrown semiconductor production.

**Conclusion:**

Due to their crucial roles in several sectors, notably semiconductor fabrication, and China's export restrictions on germanium and gallium, these materials have drawn attention from throughout the world. The reactions from other nations mirror the geopolitical setting of the continuing "chip war."

Source: The Hindu

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## 9. Trade Payments Crisis

**Context:** Due to a number of issues, India's increased reliance on oil imports from Russia has made it difficult to make payments. The payment procedure has become more challenging due to the violation of the oil price ceiling set by the US and European countries, lesser discounts provided by Russia, and geopolitical repercussions of utilising alternative currencies.



### Oil Imports from Russia:

- Russia has surpassed established powers like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE to become India's top oil supplier.
- Over \$31 billion worth of crude oil was imported from Russia to India in 2022-2023, more than 13 times as much as the previous year.
- A sizable share of the seaborne supply of Russian-grade oil priced under \$60 per barrel originate in Russia.

### Currency for Payments:

- Western sanctions on Russian banks have prevented transactions from passing through the SWIFT system, which has hampered payments.
- The dollar has typically been the only accepted currency for oil purchases, but the price ceiling and the sanctions have forced India to look into other payment options.
- Chinese Yuan and UAE dirham have been used as alternative currencies to settle some payments for Russian oil

### Issues with Rupee-Rouble Mechanism:

- Due to doubts regarding the convertibility of the rouble and worries about rupee volatility, discussions to resuscitate the rupee-rouble trading arrangement have run into difficulties.
- With a \$43 billion trade imbalance in 2022-2023 due to the increase in oil trading, India is facing difficulties.

### Geopolitical Ramifications:

- Geopolitical issues are raised by using the Chinese yuan for payments in light of the continuing hostilities between China and India.
- Countries are investigating dedollarization and looking for alternatives to the dollar as the world's reserve currency as a result of U.S. sanctions..

**Potential Solutions:**

- Encouraging Russian investment in Indian energy projects or Russian investment in Indian government bonds might help to reduce the trade imbalance with Russia.
- India wants to promote the use of the Indian rupee abroad, but there are still issues with its purchasing power and worldwide market share.

**Conclusion:**

Due to violations of the oil price limitation, the availability of adequate payment methods, and geopolitical factors, India has difficulty paying for its imports of Russian oil. The defunct rupee-rouble system and the widening trade imbalance have made things much more difficult.

Source: The Hindu

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## 10. FPI Amendments

**Context:** The Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI) Regulations were amended in 2018, and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has been urged by the Supreme Court to explain why. Important provisions intended to avoid opacity in FPI ownership arrangements were removed by these modifications.

- According to a court inquiry report, FPI ownership modifications hampered SEBI's examination into claims made against the Adani Group by Hindenburg Research.
- Due to the murky nature of their ownership chains, the study emphasised the difficulties SEBI encountered in identifying the "ownership" of 13 foreign firms, including the FPIs identified in the Hindenburg report.

### Tweak to law queried

**SC asks SEBI to explain why legal provisions that prohibited opacity in ownership structure of FPIs were dropped**

■ SC's expert panel noted that provision on 'opaque structure' requiring an FPI to disclose every ultimate beneficiary was junked in 2018



■ What are the circumstances under which you had changed the provisions dealing with 'opaque structure', CJI asks SEBI

■ Amendments may prevent SEBI from exploring layers of transactions, notes CJI

### What are FPIs?

- Investments made in financial instruments of a foreign nation by foreign individuals, institutional investors, pension funds, sovereign wealth funds, and other institutions are referred to as "foreign portfolio investments" (FPI).
- Investing in these types of investments often entails buying securities like stocks, bonds, mutual funds, exchange-traded funds (ETFs), and other transferable financial assets.

**Key characteristics of foreign portfolio investments include:**

- Instead of owning companies or physical assets directly, FPIs involve indirect ownership of financial instruments. Portfolios of securities issued by businesses, governments, or other organisations in the target nation are held by investors.
- Investors may diversify their investment portfolios globally with the help of FPIs. Investors can lower the risks associated with a concentration in a particular market or asset type by diversifying their investments across other nations and asset classes.
- FPIs provide significant liquidity since they deal in financial products that are simple to buy or sell on the secondary market. Depending on the state of the market or their investing goals, investors have the freedom to immediately enter or exit their holdings.
- Foreign investors can access international securities markets thanks to FPIs. This enables them to benefit from investment possibilities that might not be accessible locally and to share in the economic growth and potential profits of other economies.

**Key Issue: FPI Regulations Amendment**

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) initially enacted the Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI) Regulations in 2014.
- The FPI Regulations' provisions addressing opaque structures and requiring FPIs to reveal every ultimate natural person in the ownership chain were abolished by the 2018 modifications.
- The repeal of these restrictions, according to the expert committee report, left SEBI in a "chicken-and-egg situation" when it came to its probe into the 13 foreign businesses accused of having opaque structures.
- The study emphasised the need for information on the ultimate economic ownership of the businesses under inquiry, as opposed to merely the beneficial owners.

**Supreme Court's Query and SEBI's Response:**

- The Chief Justice requested an explanation from SEBI about the circumstances and justifications for the amendments made to the laws addressing opaque structures.
- The inquiry is moving along at full speed, and SEBI is making every effort to fulfil the extra deadline imposed by the court, according to the Solicitor General, who is speaking on behalf of the agency.



- The petitioners claimed that because the definition of an opaque structure was eliminated as a result of the 2018 revisions, SEBI's ongoing inquiry was no longer valid. They stated that the purpose of these adjustments was to shield fraud from exposure.

**Court's Concerns and Request for Explanation:**

- The court's curiosity in knowing the rationale behind the modifications made by SEBI in 2018 was raised by the Chief Justice.
- The court recognised the claim that the modifications may prevent SEBI from examining the depths of transactions, thereby impeding the probe.

**Conclusion:**

The court requests more information about the circumstances underlying these modifications and how they affect SEBI's inquiry against the Adani Group. The court is concerned about any restrictions that these revisions would have placed on SEBI's capacity to investigate the ownership chain and several layers of transactions.

Source: The Hindu



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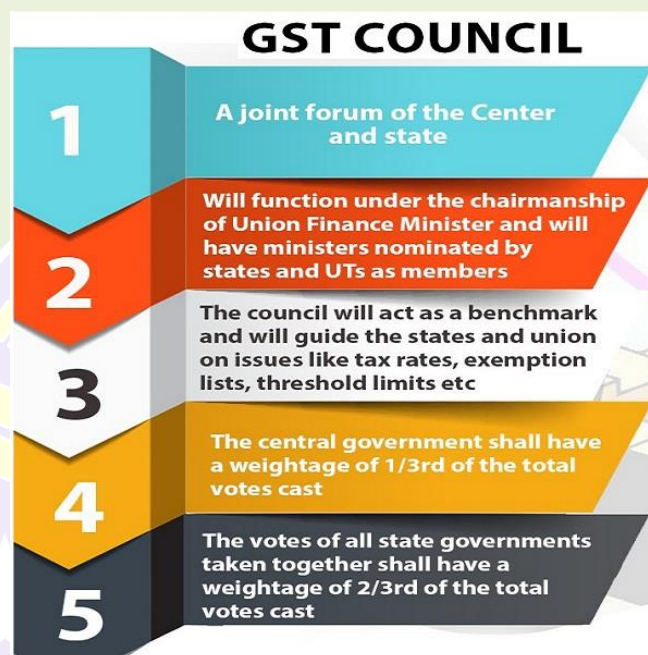
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## 11. GST Council

**Context:** At its 50th meeting, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council revealed substantial changes and clarifications to tax rates. The council also talked on the creation of GST Appellate Tribunals. It aimed to allay worries about the GST Network being covered by the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).



### What is GST Council?

- A significant organisation called the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council was created in 2016 as part of the 101st Constitutional Amendment to monitor the GST regime's implementation in India.
- The Council, which is made up of officials from both the federal government and the states, is crucial in formulating suggestions and taking positions on matters pertaining to GST.

### Composition of the GST Council:

- The GST Council is a joint forum made up of representatives from the states and members from the federal government (the Union Finance Minister and the Union Minister of State for Finance).
- A minister in charge of finances, taxes, or any other relevant minister is proposed by each state to serve on the Council.

**Objectives of the GST Council:**

- GST rules as well as recommendations on the commodities and services that need to be subject to or excluded from GST.
- The various rate slabs under the GST regime are decided by the Council. It has the power to choose the tax rates that will apply to various commodities and services.

**Recent Tax Rate Changes proposals:**

- These products now have a 5% tax charge instead of the previous 18% rate.
- These goods now only have a 5% GST tax instead of the previous 12%.
- In contrast to the former 18% tax charged on movie services, the GST rate for these goods was decreased to 5% without any input tax credits.
- In order to ensure that sedans are not impacted by the increased GST compensation cess, the tax structure for SUVs was clarified. The criteria for designating a vehicle as an SUV have been altered to remove the need that it be frequently mistaken for one. Now, a vehicle should only have a 170 mm ground clearance if it is not loaded.
- For satellite launch services provided by private organisations, the Council offered a GST exemption.

**Other recommendations: GST Appellate Tribunals**

- The suggestions from the states to create 50 GST Appellate Tribunal Benches were looked at. In settling GST issues, these tribunals will be of utmost importance.
- The creation of Benches in State capitals and locations where High Courts have Benches is the first step in the government's plan to have the tribunals functioning within four to six months.
- The appointment and service requirements for tribunal members and the president were approved by the Council and will take effect on August 1.

**Inclusion of GST Network under PMLA:**

- The decision to subject the GST Network to the enforcement of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), which is overseen by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), was criticised by representatives from states that are not ruled by the BJP.
- Tamil Nadu opposed the action, arguing that it is against taxpayer interests and undermines the goal of decriminalising offences under the GST law.





- The clause was explained by the Revenue Secretary, who noted that it has no direct connection to GST legislation and is instead a requirement of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).
- The GSTN will not provide other law enforcement authorities with information regarding private companies. The director of the Financial Intelligence Unit may share information with the GSTN to help tax authorities fight tax evasion and money laundering, but the ED will neither receive nor distribute information.

Source: Indian Express



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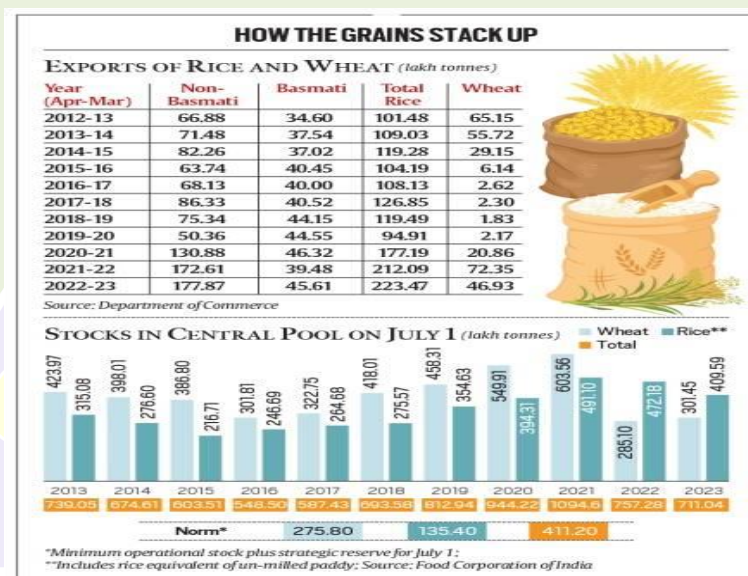
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## 12. More Cash, Less Grain

**Context:** Three years ago, the Centre and the states were unable to offer cash transfers to needy households during pandemic lockdowns because of financial restrictions. However, FCI's warehouses had a plenty of rice and wheat, enabling for delivery to 813.5 million people. Governments now have finances but just a small amount of food stocks, which raises questions about future preparations.



### Grain Distribution and Export Scenario:

### Grain Distribution:

- The government provided 10 kg of grain per month, essentially free, to 813.5 million individuals from April 2020 to December 2022 during the pandemic-enforced lockdowns.
- This distribution, which sought to aid poor and vulnerable households suffering from job and income losses, was made possible through the public distribution system (PDS).

### Offtake of Grains:

- 92.9 million tonnes of wheat and rice were consumed, above the 62.5 million tonnes per year average over the first seven years following the National Food Security Act's (NFSA) adoption in 2020-21.
- In 2021-2022, the offtake rose even more, reaching 105.6 million tonnes.
- 92.7 million tonnes of offtake were used in 2022-2023.

**Grain Exports:**

- India sold 21.2 million tonnes of rice worth \$9.66 billion in 2021-2022 abroad. Exports of rice totaled 22.3 million tonnes in 2022-2023 and were worth \$11.14 billion.
- In 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, respectively, wheat exports totaled 4.7 million tonnes (\$1.52 billion) and 7.2 million tonnes (\$2.12 billion).

**Karnataka Case: Shift from Grain to Cash Transfers**

- The financial position for the Centre and the states improved as economic activity picked up. Gross GST receipts rose, indicating that governments now have more resources at their disposal.
- The National Food Security Act's (NFSA) monthly grain allotment was cut from 10 kg to 5 kg per person beginning in January 2023.
- In order to keep its electoral pledge to give 10 kg of free rice per month to every member of below-poverty-line (BPL) families, the government of Karnataka asked the FCI for more grain.
- The National Food Security Act (NFSA) only provides 5 kg of rice, and the Centre did not let the state government to distribute any additional rice.
- The Karnataka government switched to making cash transfers as a consequence. In place of the extra 5 kg of food, they began sending Rs 170 to the bank accounts of the BPL household heads.

**Implications of cash transfers:****Inflationary Pressures:**

- Instead of receiving free grain, households receive cash, which they may spend on anything they like, including buying rice or other commodities.
- The market's increased demand for rice may result in higher pricing, which might exacerbate inflationary pressures.

**Deflationary Impact of Free Grain Distribution:**

- Surplus grains can help stabilise or lower market grain prices when they are distributed without a monetary exchange.
- This can reduce inflationary pressures and guarantee needy communities' access to basic food supplies at reasonable prices.

**Budgetary Considerations:**

- In order to guarantee that this allocation is in line with overall budgetary aims and goals, it must be properly monitored.
- When deciding between cash transfers and free grain distribution, the availability of sufficient financial resources for cash transfers may be a deciding factor.

**Flexibility for Beneficiaries:**

- Instead of getting a fixed amount of grain, families can utilise the money anyway they see fit based on their priorities.
- With this flexibility, households are able to take care of other special needs they may have outside food, such as for essentials like healthcare or education.

**Market Dynamics:**

- Cash transfers that flood local marketplaces with funds can boost economic activity. This may have advantageous multiplier effects that help numerous industries and neighbourhood businesses.
- Free grain distribution, on the other hand, may reduce the market's demand for grains, which might have an impact on farmers' and merchants' lives.

**Depleted grain stocks and uncertain monsoon:****Depleted Grain Stocks:**

- The Central pool's combined wheat and rice inventories are currently at a five-year low.
- Even if these stockpiles are still over the minimal normal need, there are worries about the monsoon and how it will effect the rice harvest this year, which might have an influence on procurement and future supplies.

**Monsoon Impact on Production:**

- Due to the uneven distribution of the rain, farmers were only able to sow 123.18 lakh hectares of rice, compared to the average 399.45 lakh hectares during the monsoon season. Additionally, the total area seeded is 6.1% less than it was the year before.
- Lack of rain during the second part of the monsoon might affect both the forthcoming Rabi wheat harvest and the kharif rice crop.

**Way Forward:**

- Implement targeted cash transfer programmes to assist the most disadvantaged households struggling with financial difficulties.
- To guarantee a sufficient supply of grains for the Public Distribution System (PDS) and strategic reserves, strengthen the procurement processes for grains.
- Create efficient plans to distribute grain in a way that allows for both substantial stores for emergencies and rapid consumption.
- In order to increase dietary and nutritional variety and decrease dependency on a single crop, consider varied food alternatives including millets, pulses, and vegetables.
- Enhance stakeholder collaboration, cut down on food waste, and increase supply chain efficiency to create a resilient food system.

**Conclusion:**

The government has a major challenge as a result of the current condition of reduced food reserves, as well as the unknowns surrounding monsoon performance and global market dynamics. It is a tough challenge to strike a balance between the need for cash transfers to ease the hardship of poor households and making sure there are enough grain reserves to preserve the nation's food security.

Source: The Hindu

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### 13. Poverty in India

**Context:** With Covid-19's effects starting to fade and positive signs for a peaceful end to the Russia-Ukraine War, India must now concentrate on developing its long-term economic plan. The predicted \$2,379 per capita income for India in 2022-2023 will need to increase by approximately six times during the following 25 years. The elimination of poverty and a greater level of life are both possible outcomes of this ambitious objective. To realise this vision, however, demands a thorough comprehension of the difficulties that lie ahead and the steps that must be taken to overcome them.



#### What is per capita income?

- The average annual income of people living in a certain region is referred to as per capita income. It is computed by dividing the population's total income by the population's total number of members.
- A population's average level of living and financial health may be determined by looking at per capita income.

#### What is Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)?

- The entire amount invested in fixed assets, such as machinery, equipment, buildings, and infrastructure, within an economy during a certain time period is referred to as GFCF.
- In terms of fixed capital goods, it shows the net growth in the stock.
- GFCF is seen as an engine of economic growth and a crucial part of total demand.
- Higher levels of investment in fixed assets help to boost productivity, expand output, and promote long-term economic growth.
- The GFCF ratio, which is sometimes stated as a percentage of GDP, shows how much money is invested overall in fixed assets in comparison to the size of the economy.

**What is incremental capital-output ratio (ICOR)?**

- An economic indicator known as the ICOR calculates the amount of investment needed to produce an extra unit of output.
- It is a measure of the relationship between changes in capital expenditure and changes in production or GDP.
- It offers information on an economy's investment productivity and capital utilisation efficiency.
- A lower ICOR shows greater capital productivity and efficiency since less capital is needed to produce a given increase in output.
- A greater ICOR means that more money must be invested to generate the same level of production growth, which indicates worse capital utilisation efficiency.

**Growth Target and Investment Requirements:**

- India must maintain a GFCF rate of 28% in order to sustain sustained growth of 7% for the next 25 years.
- The most recent NSO publication indicates that the GFCF rate in current prices for 2022-2023 is 29.2% of GDP.
- The incremental capital-output ratio (ICOR), which is typically thought to be 4 and indicates increased capital efficiency, is actually 4.65 on average from 2016-17 to 2022-23, according to current trends.
- Recognise that the ICOR is changing and strive for an investment rate of 30-32 percent of GDP.
- Investments from the public and private sectors, particularly those from business and nonprofit organisations, must rise.
- Direct investments in industries that foster expansion and create job opportunities.

**What global factors at present poses challenges?**

- The Ukraine-Russia war worsened the general environment for peace, which is essential for progress.
- Conflicts and persistent tension have a detrimental influence on world stability and economic progress.
- certain nations' attitudes regarding international commerce are changing.
- Import limitations are being put in place by developed nations that once supported free trade. This presents difficulties for emerging nations like India as they try to compete on the global market.

- Critical import supply interruptions, like those involving oil, may be detrimental to both emerging and established nations.
- The difficulty for populous nations like India is how emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), will affect the industrial structure and job environment.
- Compromises and changes to the growth rate may be necessary to strike a balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability.

**What strategy India must follow to sustain its growth?**

- In 1991, India underwent a significant economic revolution that broke with tradition and embraced a more market-oriented philosophy.
- India must embrace a multifaceted strategy that integrates exports, industry, and agriculture.
- India's prowess in the services industry makes it imperative to maintain and strengthen this edge.

**Conclusion:**

Over the past 75 years, India has made great progress towards establishing a robust and diverse economy. India's per capita income, however, is still low when compared to many other nations, underscoring the necessity of further growth. India can achieve its goal of a rich and just future by resolving internal issues, embracing opportunities, and emphasising inclusive growth.

Source: The Hindu



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## 14. Local Currency Settlement System (LCSS)

**Context:** During PM Modi's visit to Abu Dhabi, an agreement was reached between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It created a framework for encouraging the usage of the UAE dirham (AED) and Indian rupee (INR) in international trade.



### Local Currency Settlement System (LCSS):

- A Local Currency Settlement System (LCSS) between India and the UAE is what the framework wants to create.
- Exporters and importers can invoice in their respective home currencies and receive payment using LCSS.
- The growth of the INR-AED foreign exchange market is facilitated by LCSS.
- Utilising local currency reduces transaction fees and speeds up settlement.
- Remittances from Indians living in the UAE are beneficial to LCSS.

### Interlinking of Payment Systems: UPI-IPP Linkage

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) calls for connecting the UAE's Instant Payment Platform (IPP) with India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
- It investigates how the messaging systems and card switches (RuPay switch and UAESWITCH) of the two nations may be connected.
- Cross-border financial transfers are made easier, faster, safer, and more affordable because to UPI-IPP connection.
- The agreement permits the processing of card transactions and the mutual acceptance of domestic cards.



**Impact of the Move:**

- In FY23, trade between India and the UAE was estimated to be worth \$85 billion.
- The arrangement assists Indian exporters in hedging exchange rate risks in transactions involving the rupee.
- It backs India's initiatives to diversify its currency reserves and lessen reliance on the US dollar.
- Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Gulf States, and Africa have all expressed interest in trading in rupees.

**Significance for Exporters:**

- Export contracts and invoices should be denominated in local currencies to reduce exchange rate risk and promote competitive pricing.
- The UAE and India's financial systems should work together more to promote commerce and economic activities.
- Mineral fuels, pearls, precious stones, electrical apparatus, and equipment are among the top exports from India to the UAE.
- India's second-largest export market is the UAE, and commerce between the two countries was \$85 billion in 2022.

**Benefits for Remittances:**

- The arrangement lowers remittances' high transaction costs and exchange rate margins.
- In especially for low-wage workers, it increases the effectiveness and affordability of remittances.
- Remittances to India increased by 24.4% in 2022, reaching \$111 billion and constituting 3.3% of GDP.
- The majority of India's overall remittance inflows come from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

**Larger Impact:**

- The agreement lessens reliance on the US dollar in international commerce by encouraging the use of local currencies.
- Investments, remittances, and trade growth are all encouraged by India and the UAE's strengthened economic links.
- The deal supports India's mission to internationalise the rupee and increase its recognition throughout the world.
- Similar initiatives to ease international transactions have been made, such working with PayNow in Singapore.

**Conclusion:**

The deal helps India's objective of internationalising the rupee and has a favourable influence on bilateral trade and remittances. The agreement increases economic ties between India and the UAE, promoting trade growth and collaboration by lowering transaction costs and improving financial connectivity.

Source: Indian Express

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## 15. APMC

**Context:** The current Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) system in India's agriculture sector has been suggested to be updated by experts from NITI Aayog.



### NITI Aayog:

- The National Institution for Transforming India is known as NITI Aayog. It is a government organisation in India and a think tank for policy.
- It was created on January 1st, 2015, to take the position of the Planning Commission, which served as the primary organisation in charge of creating India's Five-Year Plans.
- Ex-officio Chairman of NITI Aayog is the PM.
- It features numerous full-time members as well as special invitees, as well as a full-time Vice-Chairperson who is typically a well-known economist or policy specialist.
- Its main goal is to offer strategic and policy recommendations to the national and state governments of India, with an emphasis on development that is both inclusive and sustainable.

### What is APMC?

- Since agriculture is a State List topic under the Indian Constitution, state governments are the ones that form APMCs.
- The purpose of APMC is to protect farmers from being taken advantage of by big retailers and to preserve fair retail pricing spreads.
- The Agricultural Produce Marketing Regulation (APMR) Act mandates that all food produce be delivered to market yards before being sold at auction.

**Establishments of APMCs:**

- The Hyderabad Residency Order's regulation of raw cotton in 1886 was the first step in India's agricultural output market regulation.
- The development of controlled marketplaces and the regulation of marketing practises were suggested by the 1928 Royal Commission on Agriculture.
- A Model Bill was created by the Indian government in 1938, but substantial advancements weren't achieved until after India won independence.
- The majority of states passed and implemented Agricultural Produce marketplaces Regulation (APMR) Acts throughout the 1960s and 1970s, putting principal wholesale assembly marketplaces under their purview.

**Working of APMCs:**

- APMCs work under two guiding principles: First, they make sure that farmers aren't taken advantage of unscrupulous middlemen (or money lenders) who force them to sell their goods at the farm gate for a pittance.
- All food products should be delivered to a market yard before being auctioned off.
- In order to divide the state geographically, each state that runs APMC markets (mandis) installs its markets in various locations within its borders.
- Farmers are obligated to conduct an auction sale of their produce at the local mandi.
- To do business within a mandi, traders need a licence

**Key Reforms Suggested by NITI Aayog:****Alternative Marketing Options:**

- The experts advise using technology to enable individual farmers or farmer organisations to sell farm products through apps. They also emphasise the possibilities of digital and e-commerce as alternate marketing channels.
- They advise direct payment of subsidy amounts to farmers and switching to the metered power supply in order to solve the overexploitation of groundwater caused by free or heavily subsidised electricity.

**Modernizing Agriculture:**

- The study emphasises that most agricultural investments—about 80%—come from farmers and other private sources. However, they feel there is tremendous room for corporate development in agribusiness and that the corporate sector's engagement is still relatively limited.



- It would promote market integration and competitiveness throughout time and space to encourage business investment in sectors like storage, logistics, the cold chain, food processing, and value chain growth.

#### **Enhancing Farmer Income:**

- The experts propose allowing farmers with small land holdings to concentrate on high-value crops and animal operations while boosting their agricultural revenue from non-agricultural sources in order to increase their income.
- To prevent market distortions, the Minimum Support Price (MSP) system should be created. According to the demands of the public distribution system, price stability, and strategic stockpiles, the report suggests employing a mix of procurement and price deficiency payment to pay MSP to farmers.

#### **Earlier reforms: Three Farm Laws**

- In 2020, three statutes containing reforms were approved (and then revoked), sparking massive demonstrations.
- Farmers' product Trade and Commerce Act: This act allowed farmers to sell their goods in other marketplaces and directly to customers, promoting and facilitating trade and commerce of farmers' product outside the actual bounds of APMCs.
- The Farmers Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act gave farmers the authority to contract with consumers in order to secure a fixed price for their produce and access to a range of farm services.
- The critical goods Amendment Act aimed to free up the market by removing limitations on the transportation and storage of critical goods.

#### **Conclusion:**

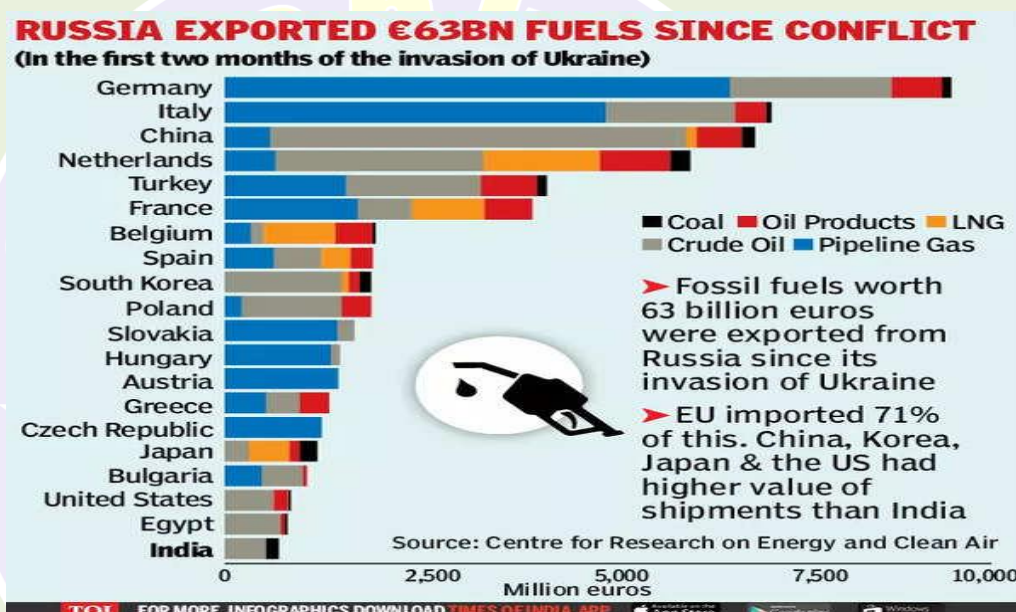
While market liberalisation and increased competition are the goals of the reforms, it is critical to address farmers' concerns and safeguard their interests. The future of agricultural reforms must be shaped through constructive communication and cooperation between the government and farmers in order to reach a consensus.

**Source: The Hindu**

**You Tube**  
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## 16. India's oil trade with Russia

**Context:** India, the third-largest consumer of crude oil in the world with a dependent on imports of more than 85%, has been involved in a passionate relationship with Russian oil for more than a year. Following its invasion of Ukraine, Russia started giving eager purchasers huge discounts as Western nations stopped buying its oil. Prior to the battle, West Asian suppliers like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE controlled India's oil trade, which played a modest role for Russia. Russia's discounts, however, brought about a significant change that made it India's main supplier of crude oil.



### Recent growth in Russian oil imports:

- Data from the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S) show that since April 2022, India's oil imports from Russia have increased more than tenfold.
- This gradual expansion accelerated, especially when the G7 set a price ceiling of \$60 per barrel on seaborne Russian crude in December 2022.
- From a meagre 2% in FY22, Russia's market share soared to 24.2% throughout the 14-month period. Other significant suppliers, including Iraq, Nigeria, and the US, however, saw significant drops in their market shares.
- The percentage of oil imported by India from OPEC decreased from 75.3% in May 2022 to 40.3% in May 2023.
- Several OPEC nations saw their market shares among the top exporters to India drop, but Russia's share increased from 6% to 40.4%.

**How it transformed India's energy landscape?**

- Prior to the crisis in Ukraine, Russia had a minimal role in the oil trade with India, which depended mainly on West Asian suppliers like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.
- India has the chance to diversify its crude oil supply sources, lowering its reliance on a small number of major suppliers and enhancing its energy security thanks to the significant discounts given by Russia.
- For Indian refiners, the reductions on Russian oil resulted in considerable currency savings. Due to increasing imports of inexpensive Russian oil, Indian refiners saved \$7.17 billion in foreign money up until May 2023.
- The trade balance and current account deficit of India were favourably influenced by these savings, promoting overall economic stability

**What are the concerns?**

- India may be exposed to geopolitical risks as a result of its expanding energy relations with Russia amid global sanctions and geopolitical unrest.
- The connection to Russian energy might complicate diplomatic relations with other countries.
- There are still worries about an excessive reliance on Russian oil despite diversifying the country's energy supply.
- India may be exposed to supply interruptions or geopolitical changes that influence Russian exports due to its significant imports from Russia.
- India's energy trade calculations are made more unclear by the erratic discount rates on Russian oil.
- Determining precise discounts is difficult due to the opaque price of Russian oil cargoes, which creates uncertainty in business discussions and financial planning.

**Way Forward:**

- To lessen reliance on a single supplier, India should keep diversifying its crude oil supply.
- Making educated judgements can be aided by ensuring openness in oil price and knowing the actual discounts provided by Russia.
- India should manage its connections with other oil-producing countries, notably those from OPEC, while it strengthens its energy links with Russia.
- India should create a thorough and futuristic energy strategy that takes into account both immediate energy requirements and long-term sustainability.
- Diverse energy sources and effective energy commerce depend on adequate energy infrastructure, which includes ports, pipelines, and storage facilities.



**Conclusion:**

The tremendous impact of Russia's steep discounts during geopolitical tensions is reflected in the unusual shift in India's oil trade. While the problem with Russian oil has had a lasting effect on India's energy trade dynamics, the current erosion of discounts presents difficulties for Indian refiners. Although the future of this partnership is still unclear, India's oil trade history will remember Russia's discounts for their enormous impact.

Source: The Hindu



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## 17. Export Preparedness Index, 2022

**Context:** Tamil Nadu has emerged as India's most export-competitive state, topping Niti Aayog's Export Preparedness Index for 2022.

Himalayan			Coastal		
State	Score	Rank	State	Score	Rank
Uttarakhand	40.79	1	Gujarat	78.86	1
Himachal Pradesh	40.43	2	Maharashtra	77.14	2
Tripura	27.46	3	Karnataka	61.72	3
Sikkim	27.41	4	Tamil Nadu	56.84	4
Manipur	15.78	5	Andhra Pradesh	50.39	5

Landlocked			UT/City States		
State	Score	Rank	State	Score	Rank
Haryana	53.20	1	Delhi	43.66	1
Uttar Pradesh	51.09	2	Goa	41.95	2
Madhya Pradesh	51.03	3	Jammu and Kashmir	30.06	3
Punjab	50.99	4	Chandigarh	28.41	4
Telangana	47.92	5	Puducherry	22.19	5

### Export Preparedness Index (EPI):

- EPI is a comprehensive instrument designed to assess an Indian state's or union territory's (UT) preparedness for export.
- The index assesses a number of criteria, allowing for the identification of regional strengths and weaknesses and providing insightful information for the creation of successful policies.

### EPI focuses on four pillars:

- This pillar offers strategic guidance for both imports and exports by assessing the efficacy of a state's trade strategy.
- For recruiting investments and supporting an enabling infrastructure for startups and entrepreneurship, a business ecosystem's effectiveness is essential.
- This pillar evaluates the export-specific business climate and establishes the degree of assistance and facilitation offered to exporters.
- This pillar, which only has an output-based dimension, looks at the extent of the export footprints in the states and UTs and gauges their actual export successes.
- Infrastructure, transport connectivity, export infrastructure, trade support, R&D infrastructure, export diversification, institutional framework, business environment, and growth orientation.

### States performance:

- Gujarat, which led the way the previous year, was closely followed by Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Haryana, with Haryana claiming the fifth spot.
- The top rankings were dominated by coastal states, who took up four of the top five spots. Additionally, Andhra Pradesh took tenth place.

- One-third of all goods exported from India are from Gujarat, which holds the top spot as the country's main product exporter.
- The top five exporting states in India are Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka.
- Just seven states account for an astonishing 75% of all exports from India.

**Reasons for export boost:**

- At both the state and district levels, export promotion programmes have been enacted in the top-performing states.
- These nations exhibit their global reach with a wide export portfolio.
- States that are prosperous concentrate on marketing locally produced goods. Leading states for geographical indication (GI) exports include Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

**India's Export Performance:**

- India's goods exports remained strong, reaching an all-time high of \$447 billion in FY23 despite pandemic difficulties and supply-side problems.
- Due to global headwinds, the administration decided against establishing a precise export goal for FY24, but it may aim for \$450 billion to \$500 billion in exports of products.
- India's total exports reached \$770 billion in FY23, including \$323 billion in services exports.

Source: Indian Express



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## 18. GST on Online Games

**Context:** The GST Council recently resolved to tax internet gambling, horse racing, and casinos at the highest rate of 28%. The government expects to make an extra Rs 20,000 crore annually.



### The Distinction between Games of Skill and Games of Chance:

- The main goal is to increase money for the exchequer by taxing the expanding online gaming market, which has experienced rapid expansion and growth.
- To ensure that different types of leisure and recreational activities receive equitable treatment under the tax code, a 28% GST will be applied to online gaming activities.
- A higher tax rate might be implemented as a way to regulate the online gaming market, perhaps affecting customer behaviour and encouraging ethical gaming.
- While maintaining tax compliance within the business, setting a tax rate equivalent to global standards may draw foreign investment into the online gambling sector.

### Impact of 28% GST on the Online Gaming Industry?

- Players may face a greater financial burden as a result of the 28% GST on the total amount wagered in online games, particularly those who do not win or engage regularly. This could make some gamers less likely to play online games.
- The industry's viability may be impacted by the increased tax rate, especially for newcomers and gaming businesses. It may result in lower profits for the businesses, which would limit their capacity to make investments in game invention and development.
- The increasing tax rate might reduce the competitiveness of Indian gaming platforms in comparison to rivals abroad who might not be subject to such high taxation. This would cause players to go to foreign gaming sites, which would hurt the home market.
- An important employer in India, the online gaming sector employs thousands of people both directly and indirectly. Companies may experience financial difficulty as a result of the increased tax rate, which might result in the loss of jobs and less prospects for the industry to expand.

**Way Forward:**

- The government should have substantive conversations with industry participants, such as gaming businesses, players, and experts, to better understand the sector's particular difficulties and potential.
- Examine the present tax system once more, and consider possible changes, such as concentrating on service fees rather than taxing the total pooled amount. Adapting to international standards may result in more equal and sustainable taxes.
- Allocate a percentage of tax income to encourage ethical gaming, player safety, and education campaigns to address possible societal issues.
- Encourage domestic gaming enterprises to invest in R&D and innovation by offering incentives and tax advantages, hence promoting the industry's expansion.

**Conclusion:**

The choice to apply a 28% GST to the whole cash collected from online gaming might have disastrous effects on the sector. It is crucial to take a more balanced approach, taking into account the sector's potential for employment and total economic effect. Policymakers can assure the existence and profitability of the online gaming business while also raising money for the government coffers by concentrating on acceptable taxation and encouraging expansion.

Source: Indian Express

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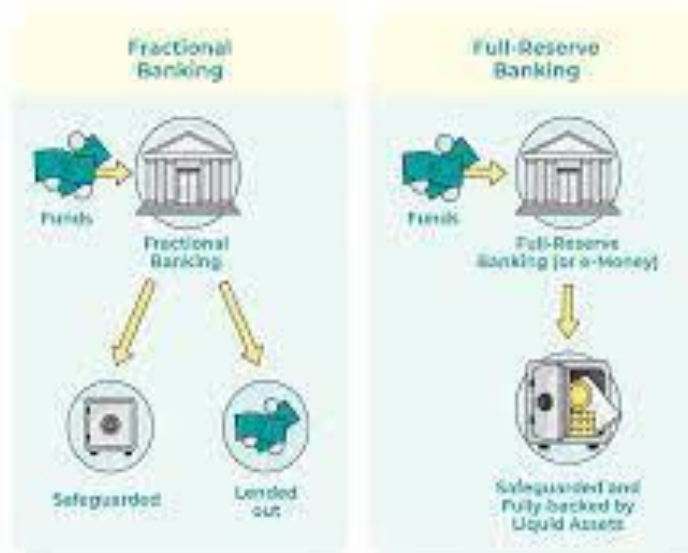
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## 19. Full-Reserve Banking vs. Fractional-Reserve Banking

**Context:** The two major banking systems, full-reserve banking (also known as 100% reserve banking) and fractional-reserve banking, govern how banks manage client deposits and lending procedures.

### SAFEGUARDING OF CLIENTS' FUNDS: FRACTIONAL BANKING VS FULL-RESERVE BANKING



### What is Full-Reserve Banking?

- In a full-reserve banking system, banks operate as safekeepers of depositors' cash by keeping all money received as demand deposits from clients in their vaults.
- Only time deposits, which clients may withdraw after a certain period, are acceptable as collateral for loans by banks.
- A bank run is less likely since banks are guaranteed to be able to satisfy depositor demands even if all clients want money withdrawals at the same time thanks to the full reserve.
- Loans cannot be made by banks, restricting their ability to manipulate the money supply and perhaps averting fictitious booms and busts.

### Fractional-Reserve Banking:

- In a fractional reserve system, banks often lend in the form of electronic funds, which enables them to provide credit in excess of the amount of hard currency they have in their vaults.
- Although the use of electronic money reduces cash withdrawals, excessive lending may trigger a bank run if depositors want more money than is really available.
- Fractional-reserve banking advocates contend that by enabling banks to make loans without entirely depending on consumer deposits, the practice stimulates investment and economic growth.

**Arguments for both systems:**

Supporters contend that fractional-reserve banking liberates the economy from real savings' limitations and encourages investment and development.

Full-reserve banking, according to proponents, is more natural, eliminates bank runs, and places restrictions on banks' power to print money, all of which might reduce the risk of economic instability.

Source: Indian Express



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## 1. Reservation for Transgender Community

**Context:** The Maharashtra government said that due to already existing reservations for other ethnicities in India, it was challenging to grant transgender people further privileges in public jobs and education. Transgender people in Mumbai demonstrated against this claim.

**TRYST WITH THE LAW**

**The Transgender rights' movement achieved considerable success in National Legal Services Authority vs Union of India (2014). Supreme court observations:** Transgenders are the 'third gender' and fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution are applicable to them. They are entitled to the right to self-identification of their gender as male, female or the third gender. Insisting on sex-reassignment surgery as a condition for changing one's gender is illegal.

- Central and state governments **should provide for reservation for them in education and public employment by treating them as a socially and educationally backward class of citizens**
- Rights of Transgender Persons Bill, 2014, was introduced as a private bill by MP Tiruchi Siva. The bill got the Rajya Sabha nod, but lapsed following the dissolution of the House. **This Bill contained provisions for reservation in education and employment**

➤ The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2016, met with protests and was referred to a standing committee. **The recommendations of the committee were not incorporated in the 2018 bill also, which was opposed by the transgender community**

➤ The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, **was passed by both Houses of Parliament and came into effect from January 10, 2020**

➤ The 2019 Act provides for self-perceived identity and prohibition of discrimination but does not make any provision for reservation, **which was a specific mandate of the judgement of the Supreme Court in NALSA**

### Courts' rulings on reservations for transgender community:

- The Supreme Court declared in the 2014 case of National Legal Services Authority of India (NALSA) v. Union of India that transgender people are entitled to reservations since they are a socially and educationally underprivileged group.
- The court ordered that all forms of reservation be applied for admittance to educational institutions and positions in the public sector and that transgender people be treated as socially and educationally disadvantaged.
- The NALSA ruling is silent on whether transgender people should be given vertical or horizontal reservations.

### Understanding horizontal reservations:

- In India, there are two types of reservations: vertical and horizontal.
- Vertical reservations, such as those for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC), are intended to redress socioeconomic inequalities brought on by caste hierarchy and backwardness.



- To provide positive measures for underprivileged groups within categories, horizontal reservations cut across all vertical groupings. For instance, all vertical categories ensure horizontal reservation for people with disabilities.

**Demand for horizontal reservation for transgender community:**

- Long-term marginalisation of transgender people in society calls for special protections and acknowledgement of their social identity.
- Only 6% of transgender persons were legally employed in 2017, according to a research, and many of them labour informally owing to cultural pressures and survival necessities.
- The NALSA ruling has been read to mandate reservations for transgender people in the OBC category since they are considered to be a socially and educationally underprivileged group.
- Concerns about competition and exclusion arise from the desire for horizontal reservation, which may force transgender Dalit, Bahujan, and Adivasi people to choose between reservations based on caste and gender identities.

**Progress on horizontal reservations:**

- The Central government has not implemented the right to reservation for transgender people after the NALSA ruling.
- The Lok Sabha rejected the Rights of Transgender Persons Bill, 2015, which had reservations in it. Reservations are not included in the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.
- The horizontal reservation for people with disabilities under the Central government is guaranteed under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.
- Transgender women were classified as belonging to the Most Backward Classes (MBC) in Tamil Nadu, while transgender people now have a 1% horizontal reservation in Karnataka. Transgender people were included in the OBC category in Madhya Pradesh.
- In order to get horizontal reservation in employment and education, transgender people have filed petitions with several High Courts.

**Way forward:**

- Legal challenges are necessary since there has been little progress in adopting horizontal reservations for transgender people, ensuring the protection of their legal rights.
- Equitable representation depends on ensuring horizontal reservation while taking into account the many identities within the transgender population, including caste and tribal backgrounds.



- Implementing horizontal reservations can help alleviate employment issues and empower transgender people across a range of industries.
- The public's support for inclusive policies can be increased by raising public awareness of the necessity for horizontal reserve.
- Engaging with transgender rights organisations, activists, and community leaders can motivate group efforts to accomplish real horizontal reservations.

Source: The Hindu

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## 2. Criminalization of Politics

**Context:** The Maharashtra government said that due to already existing reservations for other ethnicities in India, it was challenging to grant transgender people further privileges in public jobs and education. Transgender people in Mumbai demonstrated against this claim.

### Cause for concern

The Supreme Court on Thursday flagged the alarming increase in incidence of criminals in politics

#### MPs with pending criminal cases:

2004	24%
2009	30%
2014	34%
2019	43%

■ The 2018 Constitution Bench judgment that formed the basis for Thursday's verdict said: Rapid criminalisation of politics cannot be arrested by merely disqualifying tainted legislators but should begin by "cleansing" political parties

 No political party offers an explanation as to why candidates with pending criminal cases are selected as candidates

JUSTICE NARIMAN, on February 13, 2020



**About ADR:**

- The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad's faculty founded the electoral watchdog ADR in 1999.
- Concerns about political parties fielding candidates with criminal histories have been voiced by the watchdog.

**Concerns raised by ADR:**

- It turned out that 43 percent of the newly elected MPs in 2019 had active criminal convictions.
- Political parties are found to be disobeying Supreme Court judgements and ECI directives, according to ADR.
- ADR points up issues with the parties' use of the required forms (C2 and C7).
- Many parties don't have working websites or don't offer URLs that are open.
- In defiance of the Supreme Court's decision, parties choose candidates with criminal histories based on their "winnability" and popularity.

**Supreme Court's Mandate (2018):**

- Parties are required by the Supreme Court to list candidates' criminal convictions on their websites.
- The format for disseminating this information is set down by the Election Commission of India (ECI).
- The Supreme Court ordered parties to publicly post information about criminal cases.
- Candidates with open cases must disclose their criminal history to the party.
- After submitting nominations, parties and candidates are required to disseminate the information many times.

**ADR's Action and Demands:**

- ADR instructed to pursue ECI remedies.
- ADR requests that the ECI impose strong penalties on failing parties, including the possibility of deregistration.
- ADR stipulates that failing parties must be listed publicly and that penalties must be imposed.

**Conclusion:**

- The letter from ADR emphasises the requirement that parties comply with the Supreme Court's order to reveal candidates' criminal convictions.
- To ensure openness and stop the criminalization of politics, strict adherence to these orders is necessary.

**Source: The Hindu**

**You Tube**

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### 3. Census

**Context:** The option of holding the Census before to the 2024 General Elections has been eliminated by an extension of the deadline to freeze administrative borders for the Census in India to December 31.



#### What is Census of India?

- The Government of India conducts a comprehensive demographic census known as the Census of India.
- It strives to compile comprehensive data on the population, demography, and socioeconomic features of the nation.

#### Historical Background:

- Under British administration, the first comprehensive census of India was taken in 1881.
- The Census has been carried out by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India since 1949 under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- The census's legislative foundation is provided by the Census of India Act, 1948.

#### Extension of Deadline and Administrative Changes:

- The Census boundary freeze date was extended to January 1, 2024, by an order from the office of the Registrar General of India.
- In addition to notifying the Census office of jurisdictional changes, the Directorate of Census Operations has been required to alert State governments to make any necessary administrative modifications by December 31.

#### Reasons for Delay:

- Enumerator training for the Census must begin at least three months after the boundaries are set.
- Due to concurrent General Elections, which would use the same workforce, the exercise cannot start until April 2024.
- The next Census will be the first digital one to enable self-enumeration by residents.

**Phases of Census and Population Projections:**

- The Houselisting and Housing Census and the Population Enumeration portion of the Census, each lasting about 11 months, are conducted separately.
- The first round of Census data is updated in the NPR.
- According to forecasts based on Census 2011 data, the population is predicted to grow from 121.1 crore to 151.8 crore between 2011 and 2036, with an increase in population density from 368 to 462 people per square kilometre.

**Purpose and Importance of the Census:**

- The Census offers data that the federal and state governments may use to plan and create policies.
- It aids in determining the demographic make-up of the country and directs present and future resource allocation.
- The distribution of cash and support to states and localities is determined in part by census statistics.
- Numerous national and international organisations, academics, corporations, and policymakers utilise the data.

**Significance and Impact of the Census:**

- The Census provides essential data for government and acts as the cornerstone for official statistics.
- Demographic, economic, literacy, housing, migration, and other sociocultural information is provided.
- The delineation and reserving of parliamentary, assembly, and local body constituencies are done using the census data.
- The Census aids in reviewing progress, keeping an eye on government initiatives, and making future plans.
- Real beneficiaries are identified, identity construction is supported, and inter-temporal comparability is guaranteed.

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- Real beneficiaries are identified, identity construction is supported, and inter-temporal comparability is guaranteed.

**Impact of Delay in Census 2021:**

- Delayed census data impacts how recipients of public assistance are identified, robbing them of their rights to subsidised food.
- The delay impairs the budgeting, administration, and planning of policies that depend on reliable demographic data.
- Outdated census data affects policy and planning across a range of industries and fails to accurately record migration patterns.

**Reasons for Delay:**

- Only until the boundaries of administrative entities have been frozen, which takes time, can a census be undertaken.
- Officially, the epidemic is blamed for the delay, despite the fact that limitations have been eased.
- The National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) usage of the census has caused additional delays.
- The delay is a result of the government's lack of urgency and explanation over the census deadline.

**Way Forward:**

- Hasten the listing of the house and other relevant procedures.
- Self-enumeration and mobile applications can be used to speed up data collecting and processing.
- During self-enumeration, address issues with data quality and coverage completeness.

**Conclusion:**

- Accurate demographic statistics and planning in India face issues as a result of the Census's postponement.
- The subsequent census, which will take place after the general elections in 2024, will be a major turning point since it will be the first digital one and allow people to self-enumerate.

**Source: The Hindu**

**You Tube**  
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## 4. Har Ghar Jal Initiative

**Context:** The Jal Jeevan Mission's Har Ghar Jal project seeks to link every rural home in India to clean water by 2024. The project, however, is likely to fall short of its goal, with just 75% of village dwellings predicted to have drinking water taps by April 2024, according to a number of sources and data analysis.



### Har Ghar Jal Initiative: A quick recap

- The Ministry of Jal Shakti launched the Har Ghar Jal (literally, "Water to Every Household") programme as part of the Jal Jeevan Mission in 2019.
- By 2024, it hoped to have tap water available in every rural home.
- In the 2019 Union budget, the Finance Minister introduced the programme.
- Goa, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu became the first 'Har Ghar Jal' recognised states and union territories with 100% tap-water access in August 2022, respectively.
- Gujarat, Puducherry, and Telangana, along with other states and UTs, have all attained 100% tap-water access as of January 2023.
- The program's implementation has greatly increased India's access to clean tap water for households.

### Challenges Faced by the Initiative:

- The COVID-19 epidemic and a shortage of skilled labour in the states have slowed down the scheme's implementation.
- Due to severe shortages of steel and cement, which are essential for producing and joining metal pipes, the continuing Russia-Ukraine war has caused delays and price adjustments.

- Finding qualified personnel to build tanks, cisterns, and water connections of adequate quality proved difficult in several areas.
- Water availability is a problem in some areas, including Rajasthan, while water pollution is a problem in West Bengal and Kerala.
- Although the states claim to have excellent coverage rates, there is a considerable discrepancy between reported and confirmed connections.

**Expectations and Progress:**

- Officials now anticipate that by March 2024, 75% of homes will have coverage, and by December 2024, 80%.
- Five percent of all families, or almost one crore, have not even started using the programme.
- It takes an average of eight months to connect all houses in communities with existing water sources, thus completion in some locations is doubtful before 2025-2026.

**Political Factors and Connection Status:**

- Due to political reasons, certain states, like Bihar and Telangana, did not rely on national funding and did not confirm their connection status.
- Particularly if Central money were utilised, "Har Ghar Jal" villages that have been verified as 100% compliant prominently display the pictures of the Prime Minister and Chief Minister.
- Source: Indian Express

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## 5. PRISM

**Context:** The Lok Sabha Speaker created "PRISM," a 24-hour research reference hotline for Members of Parliament (MPs), to help with policy-related questions.



### What is PRISM?

- Weekend services are provided during legislative sessions by the Parliamentary Research and Information Support for Members of Parliament (PRISM).
- It intends to help MPs who are serving their first terms as well as those without large secretarial staffs who might find it intimidating to speak in Parliament about policy issues.
- For research and reference help, a team of 30-32 officers work on the hotline in shifts.

### Usage and Enquiries:

- 87% of MPs used either online or offline reference services between 2019 and 2023; these services are also distributed via WhatsApp and email.
- The Juvenile Justice Bill, the Wildlife Protection Bill, and quick talks on issues including climate change, drug misuse, and price increases were the primary subjects of inquiries.

### Need for PRISM:

- First-term when called to comment on bills without considerable research help, MPs frequently encounter difficulties.
- MPs have found the hotline and reference services to be of great assistance in enabling them to participate successfully in debates and discussions.
- The programme has especially helped MPs who might not be fluent in Hindi or English, allowing them to bring up important problems in Parliament.

### Significance:

- The atmosphere in parliament may be disjointed, with several clubs and cliques growing over time.
- Particularly backbenchers frequently spend a lot of time in alone.
- By enabling informed involvement in policy discussions, the research and reference services provided by PRISM can make these years on the sidelines more fruitful.

**Source:** Indian Express



## 6. Scheme to support Minor Rape Victims

**Context:** The Centre has put in place a specific programme to help minor rape victims who get pregnant as a consequence of sexual assault with medical, financial, and infrastructure support.



### Supporting Minor Rape Victims:

- The Nirbhaya Fund has provided cash for the initiative, which was created to meet the needs of young victims.
- To carry out this effort, the Ministry of Women and Child Development worked in conjunction with State governments and Child Care Institutions (CCIs).
- It makes advantage of Mission Vatsalya's current administrative setup, which is centred on child care and protection.

### Objectives of the Scheme:

- The programme seeks to offer victims who are girls full help and assistance under one umbrella.
- Access to education, police support, healthcare (including maternity, neo-natal, and newborn care), emotional support, and legal assistance are examples of immediate and non-emergency services.
- The system provides insurance for the young victim and her unborn child.

### Eligibility and Coverage:

- Girls under the age of 18 who get pregnant due to rape and who are either orphans or have been abandoned by their relatives are eligible victims under the programme.
- In order to receive benefits under the programme, victims are not required to have a copy of the First Information Report (FIR).

## Other initiatives:

- To speed up the legal processes for young rape victims, the government has established 415 fast-track courts around the nation.
- By offering complete support to young victims, the new programme complements legal procedures.

## Need for Support:

- In accordance with the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the National Crime Records Bureau recorded 51,863 instances in 2021.
- According to the analysis, females were engaged in 99% of the incidents, and many of them face physical and mental health issues when they get pregnant as a result of the attack.
- Some victims experience family rejection or abandonment, while others are orphans, which exacerbates their problems.

Source: Indian Express

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## 7. Internet Shutdowns

**Context:** Internet blackouts have become a more common tactic used by the Indian government in recent years to maintain peace and order in a number of areas, including Punjab, Manipur, and Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Between 2016 and 2022, India experienced a startling 60% of all internet outages worldwide.



**Reasons behind internet shutdowns in India:**

- Officially, communal conflicts in India are to blame for between 40 and 50 percent of internet outages. During times of very high racial tensions, shutdowns are implemented to stop the spread of rumours, hate speech, and violent incitement.
- During demonstrations and times of civil disturbance, shutdowns are regularly implemented to manage information flow, organise activities, and stop protestors from becoming more mobilised.
- In order to prevent cheating and the use of online resources that can facilitate unethical practises, internet shutdowns have been implemented during examinations.
- In order to stop the spread of incendiary information and preserve public order, shutdowns have also been seen during religious processions, particularly in areas where religion is sensitive.

**Impact of internet shutdowns:**

- Shutting down the internet restricts people's ability to enjoy basic rights including freedom of speech, information access, and privacy. These outages restrict people's access to vital information, their capacity to express themselves, and their ability to communicate.
- Businesses that depend on the internet for their operations are severely affected by internet outages. Shutdowns result in financial losses for digital platforms, online services, and e-commerce.
- Access to vital services including healthcare, education, and emergency services is disrupted by internet outages. People's productivity, educational possibilities, and access to telemedicine and online learning are all negatively impacted.
- Long-term, arbitrary internet outages may constitute breaches of human rights. They restrict people's freedom of expression, suppress dissent, and undercut democratic procedures.

**Justifications behind the frequent imposition of shutdowns:**

- In order to preserve public order and prevent the deterioration of law and order situations, internet shutdowns are frequently implemented.
- Shutting down the internet is thought to be a technique to slow the transmission of false information and fake news during times of crisis or unrest.
- Shutdowns are also implemented to prevent the planning and coordinating of protests, rallies, or other events that pose a risk to public order.
- In order to stop exam cheating, the internet may be turned off. Authorities want to protect the fairness and integrity of the test process, thus they have restricted access to internet materials.

### The two significant Supreme Court judgments related to internet shutdowns in India:

- **Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India (2020):** Recognized the right to access the internet as part of the right to freedom of speech and expression. Emphasized that internet shutdowns must be necessary and proportionate, subject to judicial review.
- **Faheema Shirin v. State of Kerala (2020):** Reaffirmed the importance of internet access for exercising fundamental rights. Stressed that restrictions on internet access should be temporary, proportionate, and justified with reasons

#### Way Forward:

- In order to promote safety, security, and the smooth operation of society, governments have a legitimate interest in maintaining public order. When there is a genuine and immediate threat to public safety or when it's necessary to stop the spread of violence or disturbance, internet shutdowns may be used.
- Any action used to maintain public order, such as shutting down the internet, should be appropriate to the threat. Instead of imposing general limits that affect the whole population, shutdowns should be focused, time-limited, and precisely designed to meet the particular problems.
- To make sure that any limitations on internet access adhere to constitutional principles and global human rights norms, independent judicial review is essential.
- Governments should clearly and transparently explain the reasons for any internet shutdowns, including any specific hazards or threats that call for such action. Accountability procedures must be in place to deal with any wrongdoings or violations that may occur during shutdowns.

#### Conclusion:

The effects of shutdowns on employment, education, and the economy highlight how urgent it is to look for other solutions. In order to preserve law and order in a fair and balanced manner, stakeholders must reevaluate the necessity and effects of internet shutdowns.

**Source: Indian Express**

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## 8. Annapurthi

**Context:** The World Food Programme (WFP) India recently demonstrated an innovative solution during the "National Conference of Food Ministers of States/UTs" by demonstrating the Automated Multi-Commodity Grain Dispensing Machine, Annapurthi



### What is Annapurthi?

- Through the Public Distribution System, Annapurthi, also known as the Grain ATM, offers a quick, efficient, and accurate way to distribute grain subsidies to recipients.
- It is an automated multi-commodity dispensing technology created by WFP India that guarantees effective access to commodities including rice, wheat, and cereals.
- Following biometric identification, beneficiaries can safely access their benefits through Annapurthi.

### Key Features:

- With Annapurthi, spillage, waste, and erroneous weighing are all eliminated while providing full entitlements around-the-clock.
- With a low mistake rate of 0.01 percent, the system can dispense one or two grain commodities, weighing up to 50 kilogrammes, in five minutes.

### Advantages and Potential Applications:

- The potential for food-based safety nets in Annapurthi is substantial, ensuring that recipients receive their subsidised grains on time each month.
- The machine's accuracy and dependability ensure that no losses occur and that everyone receives their due parts.

- In times of need, such as in the event of a natural disaster or a humanitarian crisis, Annapurti may help with the prompt and effective delivery of food to the affected communities.
- Its automated technology speeds the procedure, minimising mistakes and dependence on manual labour.
- Smallholder farmers can benefit greatly from increased market access thanks to Annapurti.
- Farmers may sell their goods directly to Annapurti, assuring fair rates and minimising middlemen, by providing a dependable and effective distribution route.

**Sustainable and Modular Design:**

- Food security is given first priority in Annapurti, which also ensures effective energy use.
- It provides a green solution with a consumption rate of about 0.6 Watt per hour.
- Based on available space, Annapurti's modular design enables flexibility and expansion.
- The storage container and its parts are simple to put together and may be altered to meet specific needs.
- Elevators, inverter batteries and solar panels may all be combined with Annapurti to provide automated refuelling.
- By minimising reliance on traditional energy sources, this integration improves the system's sustainability.

Source: Indian Express



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## 9. Sarpanch-Patism

**Context:** According to the Supreme Court of India, the government should deal with the problem of men using their influence to support elected women who are "faceless wives and daughters-in-law" in local politics. The court's comments were made in response to an NGO petition that highlighted the problem of unelected male relatives using their political power to undermine the spirit of women's reservation in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).



### Women in PRIs: Legal Aspects

#### (a) 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992:

- Requires a 33.3% reserve for women in all PRIs nationwide.
- Acknowledges the Gramme Sabha as the cornerstone of the Panchayat Raj System and grants it the authority to carry out the duties and use the powers assigned to it by the State Legislatures.
- Some states, such as Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, etc., have extended the reservation to 50%.
- 13.74 lakh (45.2%) of the 30.41 lakh elected representatives in PRIs are women. Annapurti.

#### (b) Article 15(3) of the Constitution:

- Gives the State the ability to provide specific protections for women.
- Enables the government to establish policies that guarantee gender equality and advance women's interests.

#### (c) Article 243D:

- Ensures that one-third of all seats and Chairperson positions in PRIs will be reserved for women.
- Within a Panchayat, the reserved seats and posts are rotated among the several constituencies.
- In all three tiers of PRIs, these reservations for women are in addition to the reservations for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).



**(d) Intersectional Reservations:**

- The total reservations for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in all three tiers of PRIs include the allocation of seats and positions for women.
- The purpose of this clause is to alleviate the several difficulties that women from underserved communities experience.

**(e) Proposed 110th Constitution Amendment Bill:**

- introduced in the Lok Sabha in 2009 with the intention of implementing a 50% reservation for women in all state-level Panchayats.
- The purpose of the law was to raise the reserve percentage over the current 33.3% required under the 73rd Amendment Act.
- The measure was often tried to be tabled, but it never became law.

**Proxy Sarpanchs in India:**

- It is customary for an elected lady sarpanch, who serves as the Panchayat's leader, to transfer their authority and responsibility to another person, usually a family member or a someone they can trust.
- When performing the Sarpanch's duties, this proxy then represents or fills in for him or her.
- This delegation is frequently coercively taken from women.

**Issues created:**

- Women's representation in Panchayat politics may be adversely affected by proxy Sarpanches.
- This undermines the advancements gained in women's political campaigns and limits their capacity to directly wield power and make decisions.
- The nomination of proxy Sarpanchs may uphold gender stereotypes about women's leadership abilities and suitability for positions of authority.
- When a proxy is chosen, it frequently excludes the elected woman Sarpanch and prevents her from actively participating in decision-making.
- It's possible that proxy sarpanches don't have a thorough awareness of the demands and problems unique to women, leading to policies and efforts that don't appropriately address issues of a gendered nature.

**Concern raised in the petition:**

- Despite the one-third reserve for women, the NGO claimed that men serving as stand-ins for elected women makes a mockery of constitutional democracy.
- The amendment sought to advance representative democracy at the local level in order to remove cultural obstacles and enhance the socioeconomic status of women.



**Court's Response:**

- The court acknowledged the problem but made clear that it was not the judiciary's job to foster a sense of empowerment.
- The court made the point that it would be impossible to stop the spouses of powerful people from running for office, and that empowering women required an evolutionary process.
- The court emphasised that the petitioner's complaint should be addressed, and that the Ministry of Panchayati Raj should look into more effective ways to carry out the goals of women's reservation.
- The petitioner recommended setting up an expert group and offering the appropriate support system for women. The court, however, found that this was an unreasonable demand of the justice system.

**Way Forward:**

- Encourage male allies to advocate the inclusion of women in PRIs. Encourage males to actively promote gender equality, contest patriarchal traditions, and contribute to the development of an inclusive and equitable political climate.
- Programmes for training and capacity-building should be made available for women elected to PRIs.
- Launch awareness-raising programmes to inform women of their rights, the value of political engagement, and the consequences of joining PRIs.
- Organise intergenerational discussions so that women and senior leaders may share information, viewpoints, and experiences. This can boost the combined influence of women in PRIs and foster intergenerational collaboration while bridging the generational gap.

**Conclusion:**

Finding appropriate solutions and ensuring efficient implementation of women's reservations in panchayat governance are under the purview of the executive authority.

**Source: Indian Express**

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## 10. TRAI banning OTT apps

**Context:** Unexpectedly, the TRAI is changing its mind about how to handle OTT messaging apps like WhatsApp, Zoom, and Google Meet. A consultation document has been launched by TRAI, allowing stakeholders to offer proposals on how to regulate OTT services, almost three years after the organisation advised against a special regulatory framework for these services.



### What is Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)?

- The Government of India formed the independent regulatory organisation known as TRAI to oversee and advance the nation's broadcasting and telecommunications industries.
- The main goals of TRAI are to guarantee fair competition, safeguard the interests of consumers, and promote the expansion and development of the Indian telecom sector.
- To achieve its goals, TRAI carries out a number of tasks, such as creating rules and policies, granting licences to telecom service providers, observing compliance with rules, settling disagreements, fostering fair competition, and conducting research and analysis in the telecom industry.
- In addition, TRAI serves as a government advisory body on subjects pertaining to broadcasting and telecommunications.

### What is Over-the-top (OTT)?

- The term "over-the-top" (OTT) describes the delivery of music, video, and other media material to users directly through the internet, eschewing more conventional distribution routes like cable or satellite television providers.
- Users of OTT communication services can utilise internet-connected devices to conduct group chats, send instant messages, and make audio and video conversations.

- Popular OTT services include social networking sites like Facebook and Instagram, video streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+, music streaming services like Spotify, and messaging applications like WhatsApp and Skype.

**Growing complexity of regulating Internet services:**

- It is difficult for regulators to stay on top of the most recent advancements and their possible ramifications given how quickly new technologies, platforms, and services are being developed in the Internet ecosystem.
- In the digital sphere, previously separate services like telecommunications, television, and information technology are merging. Internet services today include a wide range of features, such as social networking, e-commerce, entertainment, and communication.
- Due to the fact that the Internet crosses international borders, it is challenging to enact consistent laws in different countries. The ways in which Internet governance, privacy legislation, content control, and data protection are handled differ amongst nations.
- Concerns over privacy and data protection have been raised by Internet services' acquisition, storage, and usage of personal data.

**Why is TRAI exploring selective banning of OTT apps?**

- The economy of a nation may suffer greatly if telecommunications or the Internet are completely shut down. By investigating the possibility of selectively banning OTT applications, TRAI hopes to lessen the negative economic effects while still addressing issues with certain apps or material.
- Dynamic IP addresses and websites housed on cloud servers might make it difficult to use traditional techniques of website or app banning. It is challenging for service providers to ban or censor information at the individual app level because to cutting-edge methods and encryption protocols like HTTPS. TRAI thinks that despite these difficulties, it is still feasible to detect and restrict access to particular websites or apps using network-level filtering or other cutting-edge techniques.
- The suggestion issued by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on IT is in line with the TRAI's investigation into the selective banning of OTT applications. In contrast to a broad ban on the Internet, the committee indicated that targeted blocking of particular websites or applications would be a more successful strategy.

**Why it is necessary to regulate OTT communication services?**

- By defining requirements for user rights, data security, and privacy, laws can serve to safeguard consumers. OTT communication services support delicate discussions and manage enormous quantities of personal data, therefore it's critical to have security measures in place to preserve user privacy and prevent their data from unauthorised access or exploitation.



- Authorities can minimise interruptions and service failures by setting minimum service standards that guarantee consumers have constant and dependable access to communication services.
- OTT communication services are widely used in daily contacts in the government, corporate, and personal spheres. Regulatory control may be necessary to handle concerns including legal interception capabilities, preventing service usage for unlawful purposes, and ensuring the integrity of vital communications infrastructure in order to protect national security interests.
- A equal playing field between traditional telecom carriers and OTT service providers is the goal of regulatory initiatives. The perception of unequal duties can be addressed and fair competition among service providers encouraged by regulating OTT communication services.
- Through their support of healthcare, corporate communication, education, and other societal functions, OTT communication services have become indispensable. Regulations can make sure that these services adhere to social obligations and serve the public good. Regulations, for instance, can address concerns like preventing the spread of false information, hate speech, or dangerous content on these platforms.

**Conclusion:**

The shifting dynamics of the Internet business are reflected in TRAI's decision to reconsider its position on regulating OTT communication services. The necessity for regulatory uniformity and financial concerns in this sector is highlighted in both the consultation document and the draught telecom Bill. It is unclear how TRAI would find a balance between regulating OTT services and encouraging innovation in the digital space as stakeholders provide proposals.

Source: The Hindu

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## 11. Nari Adalat

**Context:** For the purpose of establishing women-only tribunals at the village level, the government is initiating a novel project called "Nari Adalat."



### Nari Adalat:

- The goal of Nari Adalat is to offer an alternative platform for resolving disputes over matters including domestic violence, property rights, and challenging patriarchal norms.
- Assam and Jammu and Kashmir will each have 50 villages participate in the trial initiative, with plans to roll it out nationally over the following six months.

### Structure and Functioning:

- Each Nari Adalat will have 7-9 members, half of whom will be elected gramme panchayat members and the other half would be socially prominent women like teachers, physicians, and social workers.
- It will handle individual cases, spread knowledge of social programmes, gather comments, amplify awareness of legal rights, and adjudicate disputes that come under its purview.
- For accessible and cheap justice, the platform will include alternative conflict resolution, grievance redress, counselling, evidence-based decision making, pressure group tactics, negotiation, mediation, and reconciliation.

### Implementation and Collaboration:

- The Sambal sub-scheme of Mission Shakti, which is devoted to the protection, security, and empowerment of women, will be implemented under the supervision of the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- The implementation process will be coordinated by the Common Service Centres of the Ministries of Panchayati Raj, Rural Development, and Electronics and Information Technology.
- In order to ensure uniformity and the efficient operation of Nari Adalats, comprehensive protocols for all states have been established and will be made public.

### Inception of the idea:

- The Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalats (People's Court of Women), which were once run by the National Commission for Women (NCW), served as inspiration for the system.
- These courts dealt with family law issues, marriage conflicts, bigamy, succession, and labor-related motor vehicle accident cases.
- Before the programme was terminated in 2014-15, the NCW-supported Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalats had a total of 298 sessions.

**Need for such scheme:**

- Women-only courts offer a fair and non-discriminatory setting for women's claims, counteracting gender prejudice in conventional judicial systems.
- These courts provide a culturally sensitive setting where women may freely participate, dismantling social and cultural barriers that prohibit them from seeking justice.
- Women's only courts provide them the freedom to stand up for their rights, question patriarchal expectations, and seek justice on their own.
- These courts concentrate on matters specific to women, such as gender-based discrimination, domestic abuse, and property rights.
- Women's only courts, by being situated at the village level, increase access to justice for women who have difficulty travelling to traditional courts due to logistical issues.
- These courts provide mediation and negotiation options for settling disputes since they are more beneficial and non-adversarial, especially in family and community problems.
- Women-only courts establish legal precedents, increase awareness of women's rights, and promote positive change through influencing societal standards.

**Conclusion:**

The government's dedication to empowering women and advancing gender justice is demonstrated through the establishment of women-only tribunals at the village level under the Nari Adalat project.

**Source: Indian Express**



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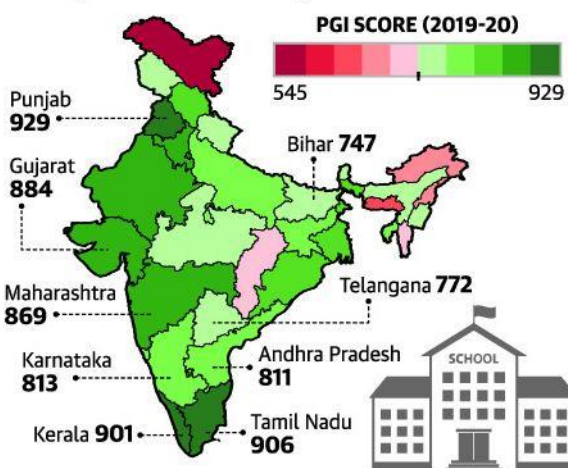
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## 12. Performance Grading Index (PGI)

**Context:** The Union government assesses the performance of States and Union Territories in school education for the academic year 2021-2022, according to the yearly Performance Grading Index (PGI). Although Chandigarh and Punjab came out on top, none of the states or UTs received the top grade, Daksh, showing that there is space for improvement on all fronts.

### Grade sheet

Three States, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, attained a score of more than 900 out of 1,000 in the Education Ministry's Performance Grading Index for 2019-20



### Performance Grading Index (PGI):

- The Performance Grading Index (PGI) is a tool that sheds light on the state of schooling in States and UTs, as well as the major factors that influence performance and important areas that require development.
- The PGI was created by the Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL) to spur transformative change in the school education sector.

### Key Parameters of the PGI:

- Evaluating the performance of pupils in language, math, scientific, and social science classes.
- Assessing the integration of out-of-school students into the mainstream, retention rates, and changes in educational levels.
- Assessing the presence of scientific laboratories, computer labs, book banks, vocational education classes, midday food supplies, functional drinking water facilities, and the availability of uniforms and free textbooks.
- As well as taking into account the performance difference between marginalised populations and the general category, inclusive infrastructure like ramps and restrooms that are accessible to people with disabilities is present.
- Evaluating computerised attendance data, the existence of elementary schools with a single instructor, job openings in the field of education, inspections, and teacher evaluations.

### Improved performance

Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Puducherry, Punjab and Tamil Nadu have improved overall score in the performance grading index by 10%.

#### Score of states in school performance index





### PGI Grades and Rankings:

- Daksh: The highest grade in the PGI, scoring above 940 out of 1,000 points.
- Akanshi-3: The lowest grade, with scores up to 460 points.
- Top Performers: Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra, Delhi, Puducherry, and Tamil Nadu came in at Prachesta-3, the eighth-highest grade, followed closely by Chandigarh and Punjab at Prachesta-2.
- Thirteen states were classified as Akanshi-1 states, with significant opportunity for development, including Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh.

### Conclusion:

The report emphasises that governments may enhance their overall PGI score by taking particular initiatives in each category.

Source: Indian Express

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## 13. Women's Reproductive Autonomy

**Context:** India's successes in areas like life expectancy, maternal health, and gender empowerment as well as its development with family planning programmes. In place of guaranteeing each woman's reproductive liberty, society has become fixated on overall fertility rates and the ideal family size. India has a lot to gain from this year's World Population Day, which has as its subject "Unleashing the power of gender equality:

Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities." It is crucial to prioritise reproductive autonomy as a key element in order to promote women-led development across all sectors in India.





**What is mean by reproductive autonomy?**

- The term "reproductive autonomy" refers to a person's right and capacity to make decisions about their reproductive health and options on their own terms, free from interference, pressure, or bias.
- It includes the freedom to choose whether or when to start a family, how many kids to have, and how far apart to have them.
- Access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare services, such as family planning strategies, contraception, sexual education, prenatal care, safe abortion services, and support for reproductive health decisions, is a key component of reproductive autonomy.

**India's progress in family planning:**

- India has received praise for its family planning programmes, which seek to offer all prospective beneficiaries complete reproductive health treatments.
- A variety of contemporary short- and long-acting reversible contraceptives, permanent methods, information, counselling, and services, including emergency contraception, have been made available as part of efforts to broaden the scope of the contraceptive market.
- Maternal mortality rates have significantly decreased, demonstrating India's outstanding progress in this area. Currently, there are 97 live births for every 100,000, a decrease from 254 in 2004.
- India has made strides in the area of female empowerment. Since the early 2000s, there have been half as many child marriages and a considerable drop in adolescent pregnancies.

**What are the Challenges?**

- Despite the advancements, many Indian women still lack bodily liberty.
- In India, just 10% of women have the independence to make decisions about their own health, according to the National Family Health Survey.
- According to the poll, 11% of women think domestic abuse is acceptable if a woman refuses to engage in sexual activity with her spouse.
- Since about half of all pregnancies in India are unplanned, providing effective family planning services and education is a problem.
- Although there has been progress, there are still lingering gender gaps and injustices that must be addressed if real gender equality is to be achieved.
- The cultural attitudes and customs that support gender-based violence and discrimination continue to be obstacles to women's empowerment.

**Opportunities for India:**

- India has a big chance to promote gender equality, which may have substantial beneficial effects on many facets of society, such as economic development, social advancement, and inclusive growth.

- India's potential for enormous economic growth might be unlocked by a 10 percentage point increase in the involvement of women in the labour force. According to estimates, this may account for more than 70% of future GDP growth, adding \$770 billion by 2025.
- Education and family planning may help women become more independent and build up their human capital, which is essential for long-term prosperity and economic growth.
- India can benefit from the enormous talent, ideas, and creativity that women bring to the table by allowing them to fully engage in a variety of industries, including science, technology, agriculture, education, and healthcare.
- India has the chance to create and put into effect laws and policies that enable women, girls, and people from marginalised groups to express their rights and make crucial decisions that will affect their lives.

**Way forward:**

- Investments must be made throughout every stage of a woman's life, from childbirth to adolescence to adulthood, in order to ensure gender equality and empower women. This involves giving women access to high-quality education, healthcare, and support networks so they can make educated decisions and stand up for their rights.
- It is essential to develop and put into effect rights-based laws and policies that support the empowerment of women, girls, and people from marginalised groups. To do this, it is necessary to interact with these groups, comprehend their needs, and foster an atmosphere that respects their rights and decision-making.
- There should be ongoing efforts made to offer complete reproductive health treatments that are readily available, reasonably priced, and of a high calibre. This entails increasing the variety of contraceptives available and ensuring that family planning tools, resources, counselling, and emergency contraception are accessible.
- For India to become a wealthy and inclusive nation, gender-just methods and solutions must be used. This entails promoting gender equality as a core principle and addressing cultural practises and attitudes that uphold gender discrimination and violence.

**Conclusion:**

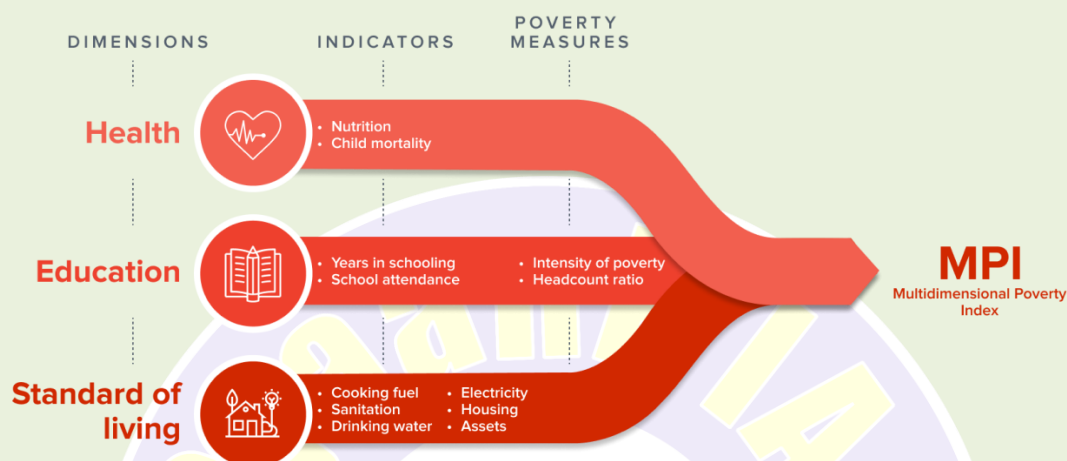
Let us reaffirm our commitment to putting individual rights, especially the rights and wellbeing of women, at the forefront of the conversation on population and development on this World Population Day. Building a thriving India and a better world for all depends on embracing gender-just ideas and solutions.

**Source: The Hindu**

**You Tube**  
IAS with Ojaank Sir

## 14. Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

**Context:** The UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) have produced the most recent revision of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). India has made outstanding strides in eradicating poverty.



### What is MPI?

- An international indicator of severe multidimensional poverty that includes over 100 developing nations is the global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).
- By reflecting the acute deprivations in health, education, and living standards that a person confronts concurrently, it complements conventional monetary poverty measurements.
- In collaboration with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) created the global MPI for the UNDP's 2010 Human Development Report.
- Since then, OPHI has released it every year in the HDRs.

### Rapid Progress and Halving MPI Values:

- The paper shows that 25 nations, including India, effectively cut their worldwide MPI values in half over a period of 15 years, demonstrating that significant advancement is possible.
- Indonesia, Morocco, Serbia, Vietnam, Cambodia, China, Congo, Honduras, Indonesia, and India are among other nations that have accomplished this accomplishment.
- By halving the MPI values, multidimensional poverty is significantly reduced, demonstrating gains in a number of well-being indices.
- India has made strides in the area of female empowerment. Since the early 2000s, there have been half as many child marriages and a considerable drop in adolescent pregnancies.

**Poverty Reduction:**

- Approximately 645 million individuals in India lived in multidimensional poverty in 2005-2006; this number dropped to 370 million in 2015-16; and then to 230 million in 2019-21.
- Indicators of deprivation in India have significantly decreased in terms of nutrition, child mortality, cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, power, and housing.
- The research emphasises that the quickest progress in eradicating poverty was made by the poorest states and vulnerable populations, such as children and those from outcast castes.

**Factors Contributing to Multidimensional Poverty:**

- Poor health, a lack of basic necessities, few possibilities for a livelihood, inadequate access to education, disempowerment, and susceptibility to climate change are only a few of the elements that are included in poverty.
- It is inadequate to use money alone as a measure of poverty. By taking into account a variety of disadvantages people experience, multidimensional poverty indicators provide a more thorough picture of poverty.
- The identification of national priorities and focused actions is made easier with the help of multidimensional poverty measures, which offer insightful information about the many areas and subgroups affected by poverty.

**Government Interventions for Poverty Alleviation:**

- Two-thirds of India's population is expected to receive food grains at reduced prices according to the National Food Security Act of 2013.
- The rural poor can find work and a steady income thanks to programmes like the National Rural Livelihood Mission and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.
- Direct benefit transfers and minimum income support are the goals of programmes like the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, which are aimed at the poor and farmers.

**Challenges Ahead:**

- The COVID-19 epidemic has made poverty worse, which has increased migrant workers' vulnerability to poverty.
- Extreme poverty is still more prevalent in rural regions than in metropolitan ones.
- Despite economic progress, a sizable segment of the populace continues to experience multidimensional impoverishment.



- It is still difficult to allocate resources for anti-poverty programmes effectively, and target reduction is frequently required due to funding constraints.
- Inefficient overlap across programmes causes improper application and targeting of poverty alleviation efforts, which have been ongoing problems in India.

## Challenges Ahead:

India has made great progress in eradicating multidimensional poverty, with significant gains across all metrics. To reduce poverty and promote equitable development, it is necessary to address issues such as regional inequities, job creation, resource distribution, and implementation difficulties.

Source: The Hindu

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## 15. Electoral Bonds

**Context:** In India, electoral bonds have become the main source of funding for political parties, with the BJP controlling the majority. According to a study by the Association of Democratic Reforms, national and regional parties collected an overall gift of \$9,188.35 crore through electoral bonds between 2016-17 and 2021-22. While other national parties earned a combined total of 1,783.93 crore, the BJP collected 5,271.97 crore.


### Benefits of Electoral Bonds



**WILL BRING** substantial transparency in political donations against the present system of contributions in the election funding mechanism



**HOW MUCH** funding comes, what kind of funding it is, the source of funding and where it will be spent will be known clearly



**NON DISCLOSURE** of recipients will ensure people are free to donate to any political party of their choice

**WILL REINFORCE** the idea of moving away from a cash system towards clean money which cheque system could not achieve

**15 DAYS** between buying and selling will ensure they don't turn into a parallel economy

**Political Donations under Electoral bonds scheme:**

- The 31 political parties under analysis received donations totaling 16,437.63 crore during the course of the six-year period. This was made up of 55.9% electoral bonds, 28.07% corporate bonds, and 16.03% miscellaneous sources.
- Through electoral bonds, the BJP reported donations of 5,271.97 crore, exceeding the combined donations of all other national parties.
- With 952.29 crore (61.54% of total donations), the Congress earned the second-highest sum through electoral bonds. Of all donations, Trinamool Congress got 767.88 crore (93.27%).
- Election-related bonds accounted for a sizable amount of the overall donations collected by regional parties including the BJD, DMK, and TRS.
- Between 2017-18 and 2021-22, electoral bond donations to national parties increased by 743%, while corporate donations only increased by 48%.

**Key features of Electoral Bonds Scheme:**

- During the critical time period examined in the research, the Electoral Bond Scheme 2018 was implemented for the purpose of supporting elections.
- The former limit on political donations, which was 7.5% of a company's average three-year net profit, was repealed by the Finance Act of 2017.
- Select State Bank of India branches provide Electoral Bonds for sale to Indian citizens and businesses with Indian corporate status. Bonds are available in amounts of \$1, 000, \$10,000, \$100,000, and \$1 million. The buyer can then give the bonds to a preferred qualifying political party.
- The buyer must meet the Know Your Customer (KYC) requirements and use a bank account to make the payment in order to purchase electoral bonds. The plan is only open to people and businesses having Indian citizenship or incorporation.
- The 15-day lifespan of electoral bonds prevents them from acting as a rival currency.
- The Permanent Account Number (PAN) and other identifying information are not needed of donors who give less than 20,000 to political parties using Electoral Bonds. However, the bank is aware of the donor's identity.
- To be eligible to receive Electoral Bonds, a political party must be registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, and must have received at least one percent of the votes in the most recent general election. Only a bank account with the authorised bank may be used to cash out the bonds.

**Issues with the Scheme:**

- The plan has come under fire for allowing murky political fundraising. While the donor's identity is recorded, neither the party nor the general public are made aware of it, restricting transparency.
- Donors may be discouraged from taking part in the programme since contributions made through Electoral Bonds may not be eligible for income tax benefits.
- The bank will be aware of the contributors' identities, which might jeopardise their privacy.
- As the government has access to information about the contributors and the monies received, the plan may serve the interests of political parties in power.
- Concerns about the influence of money in politics have been raised by amendments to the Finance Act of 2017 that permit limitless contributions to political parties from individuals and foreign corporations without declaring the sources of financing.

Source: Indian Express



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## 16. Extensions for CBI and ED Directors

**Context:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) directors can now extend their terms of office thanks to legislative changes that have been affirmed by the Supreme Court. Sanjay Kumar Mishra, the current director of the ED, was also ordered by the court to quit four months before the third extension he has received expires in November.



### Apex court affirms 2021 amendments

**WHAT THE TOP COURT ORDERED**  
SC quashed tenure extension given to ED chief Sanjay Kumar Mishra in 2021 and 2022.

**WHY?** It held that the extension was 'illegal' as it came after SC's September 2021 order which had specifically issued a mandamus that no further extension be granted to him as the apex court's writ cannot be nullified using a law.

**WHAT NOW:** Mishra can continue in office till July 31 to initiate a "smooth transition"

**CENTRE'S AMENDMENTS**  
Govt had said that amendments to the Central Vigilance Commission Act and the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act empowered it to give ED and CBI chiefs a max total tenure of 5 years.

**WHAT SC SAID:** While SC found no flaws with the amendments (meaning Centre's power to extend tenure of ED director or CBI chief is valid), it noted they can not be used to defend Mishra's extension in this instance.



**Amendments and Tenure Extensions:**

- The stipulated terms for the CBI and ED directors are two years.
- The Fundamental Rules, the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, and the Central Vigilance Commission Act all underwent revisions. Directors' terms may now be extended by a maximum of three times annually, going beyond the previous two-year restriction.
- The changes were made not long after the Supreme Court ordered the government to stop giving Sanjay Kumar Mishra extensions. These changes made it possible for the government to give Mishra two further extensions.

**Supreme Court's Ruling:**

- The Supreme Court ruled that Mishra's successive service extensions in 2021 and 2022 were unlawful.
- The court mandated Mishra's resignation by July 31 in order to facilitate a seamless handoff of duties to his replacement. The ED Director position has been held by Mishra for five years.
- The court rejected the arguments put out by its own amicus curiae, who requested that the revisions be rejected. The amicus curiae stated that the possibility of service extensions may persuade the directors to act in a way that would undermine the independence of the agencies by causing them to work to the government's requirements.

**High-Level Committees and Justification:**

- High-Level Committees must propose directors for service extensions under the amended provisions.
- Depending on the agency, the committees may include members like the Central Vigilance Commissioner, Vigilance Commissioners, Prime Minister, Opposition Leader, and Chief Justice of India. If an extension is necessary in the interest of the public, these committees provide recommendations.
- The committees are required to justify their recommendations in writing.

**Constitutionality of Amendments:**

- The modifications were passed by Parliament and should not be simply ruled unlawful, the court emphasised.
- According to the court, the revisions were approved by elected officials who are familiar with the demands and interests of the populace.
- The court agreed that unless there is a blatant breach of constitutional principles, it should not contest the judgement of the elected officials.



	Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)	Enforcement Directorate (ED)
<b>Mandate</b>	Investigates and solves major crimes in India	Enforces economic and financial regulations
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	Nationwide	Nationwide
<b>Legal Authority</b>	Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946	Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002
<b>Functional Focus</b>	Criminal investigations	Economic and financial offenses
<b>Investigative Powers</b>	Arrest, search, seizure, and interrogation	Attachment, confiscation, and arrest
<b>Collaboration</b>	Works closely with state police and agencies	Coordinates with various agencies and banks
<b>Reporting Authority</b>	Department of Personnel and Training, GOI	Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance
<b>Corruption Investigations</b>	Has an Anti-Corruption Division	Has a separate Economic Offenses Division
<b>Notable Cases</b>	2G Spectrum Scam, Bofors Scandal, etc.	Vijay Mallya extradition, PNB fraud case

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## 17. Finance Commissions

**Context:** The fiscal framework for allocating resources between the Union and state governments is determined by the Finance Commissions (FC) in India. The FCs, which were established in accordance with Article 280 of the Constitution, make suggestions on grants-in-aid, horizontal distribution, and vertical devolution. The efficiency of these guidelines in accomplishing their intended goals, however, is still debatable.

### **Purpose and Scope of Finance Commissions:**

- According to Article 280 of the Constitution, finance commissions are established, and their recommendations include three important topics: grant-in-aid, horizontal distribution, and vertical devolution.
- The Union to state transfers are the main emphasis of vertical devolution.
- Resource distribution across states based on a predetermined formula is known as horizontal distribution.
- Grant-in-aid, covered by Article 275, offers money to states that are considered to need it.
- It's critical to understand the difference between grants and grant-in-aid because the latter functions independently and provides greater control flexibility.

### **Recommendations of the previous Finance Commission:**

#### **13th Finance Commission Recommendations:**

- Utilising current infrastructure, extend the hours of operation for the courts.
- Boost assistance to Lok Adalats.
- To improve legal aid for the disadvantaged, give more money to state legal services authorities.
- Encourage the use of methods for alternative dispute resolution (ADR).
- bolster the abilities of judges and public prosecutors through training initiatives.
- Support the establishment of judicial academies for training in each state.
- Set aside money for the construction of specialised courts.

#### **15th Finance Commission Recommendations:**

- Assemble measurable information on the quality of the various services offered in various states.
- Gather relevant unit cost information to calculate the cost of disability across states.
- Utilise the Ministry of Statistics' efforts to eliminate statistical data gaps.

**Challenges encountered in the implementation of Finance Commission recommendations:**

- At both the federal and state levels, the suggestions given by finance commissions are frequently disregarded as having only sincere intentions. This suggests a lack of dedication and persistence in turning the ideas into practical steps.
- The issues associated to conditionalities attached to grants are indicated by the reservations voiced by various states in the article. Conditions may limit states' ability to spend money, making it difficult to carry out the suggested reforms.
- It's possible that the money allotted for a certain reform won't be enough, which would result in poor implementation. The amount of funding available and conflicting financial priorities may prevent the proposed actions from being carried out successfully.
- The Union and state governments must work together to implement the recommendations of the Finance Commission. The implementation of changes may be hampered by any lack of cooperation or conflicts amongst various institutions.

**Way Forward:**

- Understand the difficulties and complexity involved in carrying out the recommendations of the Finance Commission, such as coordination problems, administrative capability, and opposition to change. This knowledge will aid in developing reasonable expectations and approaches to overcoming these difficulties.
- Improve the procedures and methods used for implementation. The Union and state governments' coordination and collaboration must be improved. Additionally, administrative capacity must be strengthened at all levels, and conditionalities must be implemented more efficiently to allow for more efficient execution.
- Create efficient systems for monitoring and evaluating the performance and results of changes that have been put in place. Regular evaluation can assist find implementation shortcomings and present chances for changing course and improving.
- Encourage stakeholder involvement and forging of consensus to guarantee acceptance and ownership of suggested improvements. Create a common vision and a group commitment to implementation by including key stakeholders, such as government agencies, civil society groups, and local communities.

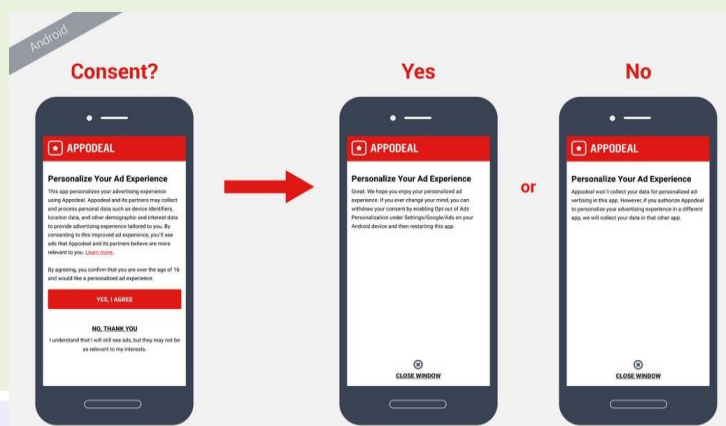
**Conclusion:**

- Financial transfers between the Union and state governments are decided by Finance Commissions in India. Due to a number of obstacles and constraints, the execution of their suggestions frequently falls short of expectations. It is clear from a critical examination of Finance Commissions' prior experiences that a more practical strategy is required to match expectations with actual results.

**Source: The Hindu**

## 18. Age of Consent for Data Protection

**Context:** The Centre may be given the right to decrease the age of permission for using Internet services without parental supervision from 18 under the impending data protection Bill in India. If a company can treat data in a "verifiably safe" way, the Bill may relieve that company from further privacy protection duties.



### Why in news?

- The age requirement was set to 18 years in the last data protection bill, therefore this represents a change.
- The modification complies with data protection laws in Western nations including the EU and the US.

### Journey of a Clause:

- The 2018 report of the Justice BN Srikrishna Committee advised obtaining parental approval for minors, but it also made the case that the age of consent may be lowered with the right changes.
- The PDP Bill, 2019, kept the advice and kept the definition of a child as someone under the age of 18.
- In its final recommendations released in late 2021, the Joint Committee suggested lowering the legal age of consent to 13/14/16 years.
- Children under the age of 18 were included in the draught Bill, which infuriated social media businesses.
- According to reports, the definition of a child in the data protection bill, which is scheduled to be debated during the Monsoon session of Parliament, has been altered to include anybody who has not reached the age of 18 or a lower age specified by the Central Government.

### Global Definitions of Children for Data Regulations:

- Although it is fixed at 16, member nations are permitted to reduce it to as low as 13. There are specific safeguards in place for children's personal data.
- Children are those who are less than 13 years old, and processing of their personal data is only permitted with parental agreement.



- The Act safeguards personal data regardless of age, but it also mandates that businesses determine each individual's ability for permission on a case-by-case basis.
- Children's data is considered sensitive and must be handled with parental approval by organisations managing the personal information of people under the age of 14.

### Conclusion:

- The age of consent has been lowered in India's data protection bill to mirror international trends in data protection laws. varied nations have varied definitions of what constitutes a kid and different standards for getting parental agreement. The final amendment to the Bill is the result of several conversations and considerations over how to define children's age for the purposes of India's data protection law, as well as how to accommodate industry stakeholders' concerns and comply with international standards.

Source: Indian Express

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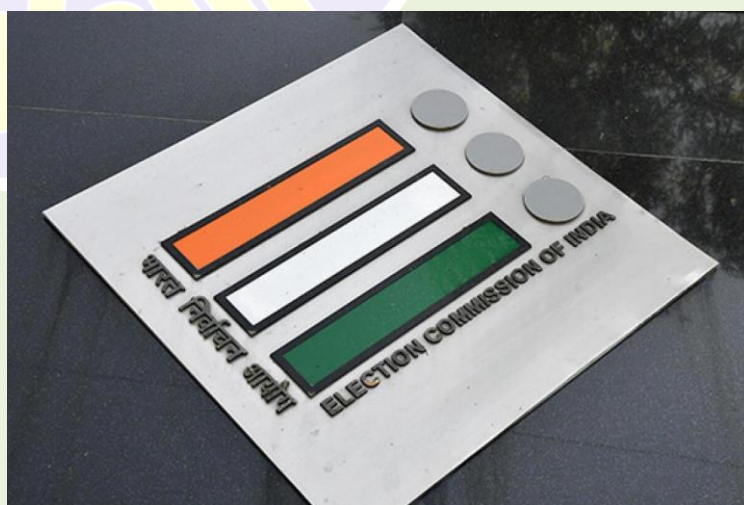
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## 19. Online Airtime Vouchers

**Context:** The Indian Election Commission has established a fully online system for allocating airtime to political parties for Doordarshan and Akashvani campaigns. With the new system, digital time vouchers are issued via an internet platform in place of the previous system's physical time voucher collection technique.



**Airtime Vouchers for Campaigning:**

- The goal is to provide everyone equal access to government-owned electronic media during elections so that candidates may campaign.
- A framework based on Section 39A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, which was notified in January 1998, governs the allocation of time on public broadcasters during election campaigns.
- Each recognised State party and national party is given a same amount of base time on Doordarshan (DD) and Akashvani.
- To guarantee fair allocation of airtime, variables including prior electoral success, participation in the legislature, and the number of candidates fielded by the party are taken into account.
- In collaboration with the EC and with the participation of party officials, Prasar Bharati sets the day and time for telecasts and broadcasts by authorised party representatives.

**Regulation of these Vouchers:**

- The accuracy of party transcripts is checked for conformity with applicable laws. These standards forbid material that disparages other nations, disparages groups or faiths, incites violence, or makes personal assaults.
- Conflicts about verified material are directed to an Apex Committee made up of representatives from DD and Akashvani. The committee's choice is conclusive.

**Significance of Digital Vouchers:**

- The choice demonstrates its dedication to use technology to increase everyone's convenience and improve the election process.
- In order to collect time vouchers during elections, political parties will no longer need to send representatives to the commission's offices.

**Operational Challenges:**

- Its genuine equality is questioned because the plan is only open to national and recognised State parties.
- Concerns regarding potential conflicts of interest are raised by the Apex Committee's membership of representatives from DD and Akashvani.
- When disagreements about the substance of the transcripts develop with political parties, these officials are expected to evaluate their own judgements.

**Source: Indian Express**

## 20. Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN)

**Context:** A Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) must be used, President Murmu emphasised.

### What is ULPIN?

- Each land parcel has a 14-digit Alpha-Numeric Unique ID code called a ULPIN or Bhu-Aadhaar.
- The Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP), which started in 2008, is now at this stage.
- It will depend on thorough surveys and georeferenced cadastral maps to identify the land parcel based on its longitude and latitude coordinates.
- When loading the geo-referenced shape file into BhuNaksha, a cadastral mapping system from NIC, ULPIN is created utilising the Electronic Commerce Code Management Association (ECCMA) standards.

### Land Identity

**14-DIGIT**  
ULPIN will provide coordinates of the land

**SIX STATES**  
will get the unique number in first phase

**IT WILL BE LINKED TO**  
Aadhaar, revenue system



### HOW WILL IT HELP?

**LAND ACQUISITION**  
will become easier

**REAL ESTATE**  
transactions  
will be  
transparent

**PUT AN END**  
to fraudulent  
land  
ownership

### Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP):

- DILRMP is a central sector programme run by the Ministry of Rural Development's Department of Land Resources.
- Utilising the similarities across state-by-state land records systems, the programme intends to create an Integrated Land Information Management System (ILIMS) across the nation.
- It combines financial institutions, banks, circle rates, registration offices, and other industries with land records procedures and databases.
- The programme involves computerising land records, conducting surveys and re-surveys, and digitising registration procedures.

### Benefits of ULPIN:

- The use of ULPIN and the digitalization of land records can greatly cut down on unethical and unlawful land-related activities. Digitization's increased openness improves accountability and reduces fraud.
- The correct use of land parcels will be made possible through ULPIN, which will also help create and implement new ideas.



- There are several advantages to linking E-Courts with land records and registration databases, including better information accessibility and simplified legal procedures for property disputes.
- In the case of disasters like floods and fires, digitising land records is useful since it speeds up the recovery process by reducing document loss.

## Impacts on Development and Welfare:

- Digitization helps with informed decision-making and efficient resource management by providing clear and accessible land information.
- Linking land records with multiple government agencies makes it easier to conduct social programmes like the PM Awas Yojana effectively.
- The identification of beneficiaries and the targeted provision of benefits and services are made possible by accurate and current land data.

Source: The Hindu



## 21. Rajasthan Minimum Income Bill

**Context:** In what is anticipated to be the final session before the State's elections in less than four months, the Rajasthan administration has tabled "The Rajasthan Minimum Guaranteed Income Bill, 2023" in the Assembly. The Rajasthan Minimum fixed Income Bill, 2023, aims to give all of the state's adults fixed salaries or pensions. The law has received strong feedback from social activists, who have praised its special characteristics and praised its emphasis on providing jobs and pensions through legislation rather than cash transfer programmes.

### Rajasthan minimum income Bill: provisions, what makes it unique

HAMZAKHAN  
JAIPUR, JULY 19

THE ASHOK Gehlot government on Tuesday tabled the Rajasthan Minimum Guaranteed Income Bill, 2023, which effectively seeks to cover the entire adult population of the state with guaranteed wages or pension.

#### What is the Bill?

Under the Bill, all families of the state get guaranteed employment of 125 days every year, while the aged, disabled, widows, and single women get a minimum pension of Rs 1,000 per month. Importantly, the pension will be increased at the rate of 15 per cent each year.

The Bill has three broad categories: right

to minimum guaranteed income, right to guaranteed employment, and right to guaranteed social security pension.

The government anticipates an additional expenditure of Rs 2,500 crore per year for this scheme, which may increase with time.

#### What are its major provisions?

**MINIMUM GUARANTEED INCOME:** Each adult citizen of the state has been guaranteed a minimum income for 125 days a year through the Rajasthan government's flagship Indira Gandhi Shakti Rozgar Guarantee Yojana for urban areas, and through Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in rural areas.

In his budget speech this year, Chief Minister Gehlot had increased the employment guarantee per family from 100 days to

125 days for his urban employment scheme. The state will supplement the MGNREGA's 100 days by providing jobs for an additional 25 days in rural areas.

Next, the government will provide eligible categories with a minimum pension of Rs 1,000.

**GUARANTEED EMPLOYMENT:** The right to employment states that post the work in urban or rural employment schemes, the minimum wages should be paid "weekly or in any case not later than a fortnight."

The state will designate a program officer — not below the rank of Block Development Officer in rural areas and an Executive Officer of the local body in urban areas — to implement the Act. Among other things, the Program Officer shall ensure

that the work site is within a radius of five kilometres of where the job card is registered in both rural and urban areas. If the Program Officer fails to provide employment within 15 days from the receipt of the application, the applicant shall be entitled to an unemployment allowance on a weekly basis, "and in any case not later than a fortnight."

**GUARANTEED SOCIAL SECURITY PENSION:** Every person falling in the category of old age/specially-abled/widow/single woman within prescribed eligibility criteria shall be entitled to a pension.

This will increase over the base rate in two instalments — 5 per cent in July and 10 per cent in January of each financial year 24 starting 2024-2025.

#### Why the Bill?

While announcing the scheme in his budget speech earlier this year, CM Gehlot had said that Mahatma Gandhi's message, "The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members", was a focal point of all his government's policies.

Last week, at an interaction with social security pension beneficiaries, the CM had said, "When the government gives you Rs 1,000, it is not a favour. The one who rules has a moral responsibility that everyone gets justice. And we are bringing in a law so that no one can stop the pension."

The Bill is part of a bouquet of schemes and measures undertaken by his government to provide relief from inflation with an eye on the polls later this year.

#### How have social activists reacted?

Social activist Nikhil Dey of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), which had shared a draft of the Bill with the state government, said, "The Bill contains many firsts in the country. It is a very welcome step. We're really happy that it has come, especially since it has all the essentials."

He said that the Bill's approach — guaranteeing minimum employment and pensions by law — distinguishes it from the cash transfer schemes in operation in various other states.

While the civil society network Sookhna Evam Rozgaar Adhikar Abhiyan had submitted a more detailed draft to the government, Dey said that parts which have been skipped can still be included in the rules brought under the Act.



**What is the Bill?**

- Every family in the state is promised 125 days of employment annually, while widows, widowers, and single women are entitled to a minimum pension of Rs. 1,000 a month.
- Each year, a 15% increase will be made to the pension.
- The Bill is divided into three major categories: the right to a minimum guaranteed income, the right to a job guarantee, and the right to a social security pension guarantee.
- The government estimates that this plan will add another Rs 2,500 crore in annual expenses, with potential for growth.

**Major provisions of the Bill:****Minimum guaranteed income:**

- In both urban and rural regions, implementation responsibility—through a programme officer—ensures that job locations are situated within a five-kilometer radius of the registered job card address.
- The applicant will be eligible to a weekly unemployment payment if the programme officer does not provide work within 15 days of receiving an application.

**Guaranteed social security pension:**

- People who meet the criteria for the categories of old age, special needs, widows, and single women are eligible to a pension.
- From the fiscal year 2024-2025 forward, the pension amount will rise by 5% in July and 10% in January each year.

**What is the Rationale behind the Bill?**

- The legislation supports the idea of social justice and seeks to protect and help those in society who are most in need.
- Treating those who are most marginalised with respect and fairness.
- "Mahatma Gandhi's teaching that a society is truly judged by how it treats its weakest members"
- is one of a number of programmes and actions the government has implemented to combat inflation
- Create a safety net for the most disadvantaged groups in society, and reduce their financial obligations.

**Criticism over the bill:**

- Political motivations were behind the bill's introduction so close to the elections.
- A populist policy intended to win over voters.
- Obtaining sustainable funds to implement the requirements of the law is financially feasible.
- Long-term financial burden on the state.
- Assuring accurate beneficiary identification, monitoring processes, and effective delivery of pensions, employment, and guaranteed income.

**Criticism over the bill:**

It is believed that the Rajasthan Minimum Guaranteed Income Bill, 2023, is a trailblazing move towards ensuring social security for all state inhabitants. The Act will pave the path for the creation of a just and inclusive society where the wellbeing of every person is prioritised if it is implemented correctly and effectively.



**Source: Indian Express**

## 22. Section 69 (A) of IT Act

**Context:** The Information Technology Act of 2000's Section 69(A) has been used by the Indian government. It asked Twitter and other social media sites to take down a video showing two Manipur women being sexually assaulted and paraded in their pants.



**Statutory Order  
under Section  
69 of IT Act**

**What is Section 69(A) of the IT Act?**

- The government is authorised to issue content-blocking orders under Section 69(A) to internet intermediaries including ISPs, web hosts, search engines, etc.
- Content that is deemed to pose a risk to India's national security, sovereignty, public order, or cordial relations with other nations, or that incites the commission of crimes that are punishable by law, may be restricted.
- A review committee receives requests from the government to limit access to certain information, and it then provides the required instructions. Usually, these orders are kept private.

### Supreme Court's Verdict on Section 69(A):

- The Supreme Court invalidated Section 66A of the IT Act, which imposed fines for delivering abusive comments over communication services, in the 2015 case of Shreya Singhal v. Union of India.
- The Information Technology Rules 2009's Section 69(A) was affirmed by the Court as constitutional, citing its specific wording and several protections.
- The Court emphasised that in order to be legally challenged, blocking must be justified and may only be done if the Central Government is satisfied that it is necessary.

### Other Rulings on Section 69(A):

- In July of last year, Twitter filed a petition with the Karnataka High Court to challenge the content-blocking orders granted under Section 69(A) by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- The Karnataka High Court's single-judge panel rejected Twitter's appeal in July of this year, claiming that the Centre had the right to censor messages.
- According to Justice Krishna D Dixit's decision, the Centre has the authority to restrict not just individual tweets but also whole user accounts.

### Conclusion:

As it attempts to strike a balance between concerns about public order and national security with the protection of free speech and expression, the implementation of Section 69(A) has been the topic of legal and social discussion.

Source: Indian Express



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## 23. Short Duration Discussions

**Context:** The administration favoured a "Short Duration Discussion" under Rule 176, whilst the opposition demanded that all other business be suspended pursuant to Rule 267 so that the Manipur issue may be discussed. For parliamentary discussions to be successful, it is crucial to comprehend the complexities of these norms and their repercussions.

### Question 66. What is a Short Duration Discussion?

**Answer.** In order to provide opportunities to Members to discuss matters of urgent public importance, a convention was established in March 1953 which was incorporated later into the *Rules of Procedure and conduct of Business in Lok Sabha* under Rule 193 as Short Duration Discussion. Under this Rule, Members can raise discussion for short durations without a formal motion or vote thereon.

### Why discuss this?

- Debates in the legislature are valuable for resolving urgent concerns and talking about topics that are important to the country.
- They offer a forum for representatives of diverse political parties to have educated conversations, which results in better governance and more efficient decision-making.

### Rule 267: Suspension of Business

- Rajya Sabha members are permitted to pause all listed business and have discussions about issues of national significance under Rule 267.
- Any member may request the Chairman's approval to suspend the application of a rule pertaining to the day's listed business in accordance with the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha.
- The relevant regulation is momentarily suspended if the motion is approved.

### Short Duration Discussions under Rule 176:

- Rajya Sabha can have discussions that are up to two and a half hours long according to Rule 176.
- If an MP wants to debate an important public issue, they must notify the Secretary-General in writing and include a justification note.
- Without using formal motions or voting, the Chairman schedules the discussion after consulting with the Leader of the Council.
- The member who issued the notice makes a brief opening remark, after which the Minister responds briefly.



**Contention Surrounding Rule 267:**

- The Opposition complains that its notifications under Rule 267 have not received current attention.
- Under this regulation, talks on a variety of topics have taken place in the past under the leadership of several Chairmen.
- According to experts, Rule 267 is being abused to replace the adjournment motion in Lok Sabha, when debates entail resolutions that do not apply to Rajya Sabha because they contain elements of censure.

Source: Indian Express

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## 24. Adjournment Motion

**Context:** The Lok Sabha was adjourned on the second day of the Monsoon Session of Parliament as opposition parties pressed for an urgent debate of the alleged sexual assault of women in Manipur in light of the ongoing ethnic unrest in the state. In order to preserve religious minorities and Scheduled



Tribes, Congress MPs introduced adjournment motions pleading with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to solve the issue. The notion of adjournment motions and how they vary from other legislative motions put up in the Indian Parliament will be covered in this article.

**What is an adjournment motion?**

- A legislative process known as an adjournment motion is used to bring up a matter of urgent public concern that has to be discussed and debated right away.
- It enables Members of Parliament (MPs) to pause the house's usual work in order to draw everyone's attention to a particular issue that they feel urgent and important.
- Any member of the Lok Sabha who requests the Speaker's permission to consider a specific topic of urgent public significance may raise an adjournment motion.
- On the day it is to be raised, an adjournment motion must be announced to the Lok Sabha Secretary-General by 10 a.m.

**Parliamentary Procedures in Indian Parliament:**

- The Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha each have different processes for members of parliament to bring up pertinent concerns.
- Discussions in the Lok Sabha can be held using one of four major procedures: a debate without a vote under Rule 193, a motion (with a vote) under Rule 184, an adjournment motion, or a no-confidence motion.
- Other than a resolution of no confidence, the Rajya Sabha also has similar measures.

**Rule 193: Short Duration Discussion**

- Short Duration Discussions are permitted by Rules 176 and 193 of the Rajya Sabha's rules, respectively.
- The Chairman or Speaker must be convinced that the issue is urgent and of significant public concern before these talks may proceed.
- The Chairman or Speaker can then decide on a day and allot up to two and a half hours for debate.
- The Rajya Sabha was adjourned on the Manipur issue due to disagreements regarding the rule to invoke.

**Rule 184: Motion with a Vote**

- If a motion meets the requirements of Rule 184, it may be allowed for consideration on a subject of wide public interest.
- There shouldn't be any justifications, implication, irony, imputations, or defamatory remarks in the motion.
- It must be limited to recent events and cannot be related to a case that is currently being investigated by a court, commission, or statutory authority.
- Such a motion may be presented at the Speaker's discretion, and he may also grant time for discussion.

**Significance of the adjournment motion:**

- It enables the Parliament to consider urgent topics quickly, preventing important issues from being missed or postponed.
- It works as a weapon for demanding accountability from the government for its deeds or lack thereof.
- MPs may encourage openness in government by bringing up critical issues and starting conversations in order to get answers from the government.
- An adjournment motion results in talks that bring vital concerns into the open and increase public awareness of important issues impacting the nation.
- The government is required to respond to the issues brought up during the discussion of the adjournment motion.
- Greater accountability is ensured since it gives the government a chance to explain its position, course of action, and plans for dealing with the problem.
- It gives the Opposition the ability to bring up significant problems and highlight government failings.
- It provides individuals with a forum to express disapproval and criticise governmental actions, promoting constructive democratic discourse.

**Criticisms over the adjournment motion:**

- Once accepted, the adjournment motion impedes the house's usual business.
- The overall productivity of the Parliament may suffer if other significant legislative work, debates, or measures scheduled for that session are delayed or postponed.
- A move for adjournment may result in a protracted debate.
- Some detractors contend that the adjournment motion duplicates other parliamentary moves, such as the motion for an urgent discussion and the motion summoning attention, which also provide chances to debate important issues.
- The adjournment motion may occasionally be utilised for partisan gain rather than to address actual emergencies.
- Even while the adjournment motion brings up critical issues that need the government's attention, it does not ensure that they will be addressed right away.

**Conclusion:**

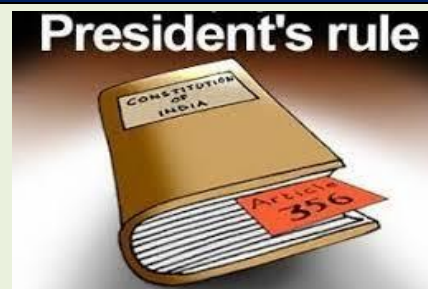
The Lok Sabha was adjourned as a result of the recent resolution calling for an immediate examination of the ethnic violence in Manipur. To solve pertinent concerns, Parliament has a number of processes, each with their own circumstances and ramifications. It would be interesting to observe how the government and opposition parties handle requests for debate on this important issue as the proceedings are about to restart.

**Source: The Hindu**



## 25. President's Rule

**Context:** To start a peace process under impartial rule, a political party has asked for the removal of the Manipur state government and the immediate installation of President's Rule.



### What is President's Rule?

- The President is given the authority to establish central control in a state when the constitutional machinery has malfunctioned under Article 356 of the Indian Constitution, also known as President's control.
- Although it was primarily designed for unusual situations, central governments frequently abuse it for political ends.

### Provisions of Article 356:

- When a state government cannot operate in line with the Constitution, the President may suspend its legislative and executive branches pursuant to Article 356.
- If the state's constitutional system has malfunctioned, the President may invoke Article 356 based on a report from the Governor or on his own initiative.
- It can last up to three years and can be implemented for periods of time of six months each.
- President's Rule may only be enforced for another six months without Parliament's assent.

### Historical Origins:

- Section 93 of this statute, which permitted the governor of a province to assume the functions of the government in certain situations, served as the model for Article 356.
- The clause gave regional governments considerable autonomy while allowing the British Crown to use its absolute power if needed.

### Political Misuse of Article 356:

- Article 356 was used to overthrow Left-leaning state governments and regional parties while Congress was in power. It was used six times by Jawaharlal Nehru's administration up until 1959, including to overthrow Kerala's duly elected communist administration.
- In the ensuing decades, several federal governments, especially those headed by Indira Gandhi and the Janata Party, repeatedly utilised Article 356 against state governments.



## Landmark Judgment: S R Bommai Case

- In the R. Bommai v. Union of India decision from 1994, the Supreme Court issued comprehensive instructions on how to apply Article 356.
- According to the court, situations when there is a "hung assembly" or a physical collapse of the government permit the use of President's Rule.
- Prior to enforcing President's Rule, the court's ruling emphasised the necessity to allow the state administration an opportunity to demonstrate its majority or instances of violent breakdown.

Source: The Hindu



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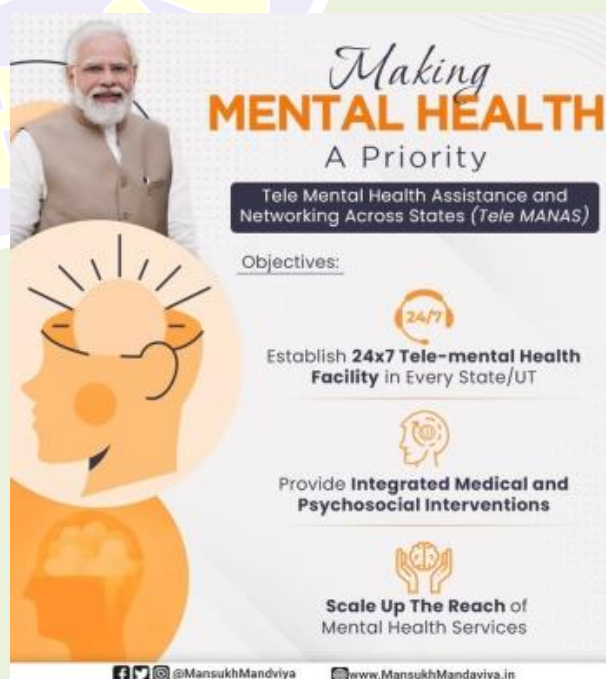
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## 26. Tele-MANAS

**Context:** Since its debut in October 2022, the government-run national tele-mental health service Tele MANAS has received over 2,00,000 calls from people all around India, marking an important milestone.



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**MENTAL HEALTH**  
A Priority

Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States (Tele MANAS)

Objectives:

- Establish 24x7 Tele-mental Health Facility in Every State/UT
- Provide Integrated Medical and Psychosocial Interventions
- Scale Up The Reach of Mental Health Services

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**What is Tele-MANAS?**

- The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare established the Tele-MANAS (Telemental Health Assistance and Networking Across States) programme in October 2022.
- It aspires to offer 24/7 free tele-mental health services all around the nation, with a focus on those who live in isolated or underserved locations.

**Implementation of the scheme:**

- The initiative consists of a network of 38 centres of excellence for tele-mental health that are dispersed across 27 States and UTs and operate in more than 20 languages.
- The country has established a toll-free, round-the-clock hotline number (14416) that enables callers to choose their preferred language before receiving assistance. You may reach service at 1-800-91-4416 as well.

**Two-tier working:**

- There will be two levels of organisation for Tele-MANAS; Tier 1 consists of state Tele-MANAS cells with qualified counsellors and mental health professionals.
- Specialists from the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP)/Medical College resources and/or e-Sanjeevani will be available for physical and/or audio-visual consultation in Tier 2.

**Call Demographics and Concerns:**

- Two-thirds of the callers are between the ages of 18 and 45, 12.5% are between the ages of 46 and 64, and 8% are under the age of 18.
- Male callers made 59.6% of the two lakh calls, and female callers made 40%.
- General emotions of depression (28.8%), sleep disorders (27.6%), anxiety (20.4%), relationship problems (10%), aggressiveness (9.2%), and lack of interest in activities (9.7%) were the most frequent causes for seeking treatment.

**Expansion of the scheme:**

- All States and UTs are using a customised version of the original deployment, which offers fundamental assistance and counselling through a centralised Interactive Voice Response system (IVRS).
- For specialised care, it is connected to various programmes and services including National Teleconsultation, e-Sanjeevani, Ayushman Bharat, mental health specialists, health clinics, and emergency psychiatric facilities.
- This will provide a continuum of treatment in addition to assisting in the provision of acute mental healthcare services.
- This will eventually incorporate all systems that offer mental health treatment and cover the whole range of mental health and sickness.

### National Tele Mental Health Programme (NTMHP)

- In the Union Budget for 2022–2023, the Indian government debuted the National Tele Mental Health Programme (NTMHP).
- The program's nodal location is located in Bengaluru at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS).
- In response to the COVID-19 epidemic, the plan aimed to create a digital mental health network that can solve the mental health issue.
- The NTMHP seeks to offer everyone with access to and affordability for mental health services in response to the problems the epidemic has brought to mental health.
- To offer mental health care, the plan will make use of digital platforms including chatbots, smartphone applications, and teleconsultations.
- To offer a thorough and well-coordinated approach to mental healthcare, the NTMHP will combine with current mental health services.

**Source: Indian Express**



## 27. Meri Maati Mera Desh Initiative

**Context:** As the grand climax of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav,' commemorating 75 years of Indian Independence, the Union government has launched the 'Meri Maati Mera Desh' campaign.



### Meri Maati Mera Desh:

- The purpose of this effort is to remember and honour martyrs' sacrifices.
- It comprises those who gave their life in the course of duty, such as defence personnel, members of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), and State Police.

### Five-Point Agenda:

**Shilaphalakam Installation:** There will be monuments built, bearing the names of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for the country. The bravehearts (veers) will be revered and remembered for their enormous contribution to the freedom, cohesion, and integrity of the nation.



**Pledge of Commitment:** People will make a solemn promise at the memorial locations, reiterating their steadfast dedication to the country and its principles.

**Vasudha Vandhan:** As part of "Vasudha Vandhan," each gramme panchayat or village would plant 75 seedlings of native species in an effort to revitalise Mother Earth and create Amrit Vatikas (Eternal Gardens).

**Veeron Ka Vandan:** The relatives of deceased freedom warriors as well as living freedom fighters will be recognised and congratulated. The families of those who lost their lives while doing their duties, as well as retired members of the defence force, the CAPF, and the State Police, will also be honoured for their essential contribution to the country.

**National Flag Hoisting:** The National Anthem will ring out in unison as the National Flag is proudly raised, igniting the atmosphere with patriotism and pride.

### Implementation and Events:

- From panchayat and village to block, urban local bodies, state, and national levels, events will be organised at various levels.
- Young volunteers will gather dirt from every panchayat and hamlet and bring it to the block, where 'Mitti Kalash' (pots of soil) would be ceremoniously conveyed to Delhi.
- The gathered dirt will be used to build the Amrit Vatika, a special garden honouring national integrity and the warriors of the Indian liberation movement, along Delhi's Kartavya Path.

**Source: Indian Express**

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## 28. No-Confidence Motion

**Context:** To compel the PM to address the turmoil in Manipur, opposition parties affiliated with the new Alliance INDIA submit a no-confidence resolution against the government.

### NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION

➤ **First-ever** no-confidence motion was moved in **1963**

➤ **Total 26** so far (the one on July 20 will be 27th)

➤ **Indira Gandhi** govt had faced **maximum number** of no-confidence motion | **15**

#### Three in last 25 years

**July 1993** | Against the Narasimha Rao govt after Babri Masjid demolition (Govt won confidence vote)

**April 1999** | Against the Vajpayee govt (Govt lost by one vote)

**August 2003** | Against the Vajpayee govt (Govt won confidence vote)

**July 2008** | It was a trust vote after CPM-led Left Front withdrew support from the Manmohan Singh govt over the Indo-US nuclear deal. Govt proved its majority



**Motion of No-Confidence:**

- A motion of no-confidence is incredibly important in determining the strength and accountability of the government in the Indian legislative system.
- With the passage of this motion, the Council of Ministers will be challenged by opposition parties or any member, setting off a big political event.

**Procedure for No-Confidence Motion:**

- Rule 198 of the Lok Sabha's rules of procedure and conduct specifies the steps for a no-confidence motion.
- This does not need mentioning particular grounds in the move, and even if they are, they do not become a part of the motion.
- It cannot be moved in the Rajya Sabha; only the Lok Sabha.
- A no-confidence resolution may be introduced by any Lok Sabha member by giving written notice before 10 am.
- The motion must have the backing of at least 50 members in order to pass. Within 10 days after the motion's acceptance, the Speaker makes the date for its discussion public.
- A voice vote, a division vote (using electronic devices, slips, or a ballot box), or a secret ballot vote can all be used to cast a ballot.

**Implications of Voting:**

- The motion's fate is decided by majority vote after the voting.
- In the event of a tie, the Speaker votes to break the tie and end the deadlock.
- The gathered dirt will be used to build the Amrit Vatika, a special garden honouring national integrity and the warriors of the Indian liberation movement, along Delhi's Kartavya Path.

Source: Indian Express



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## 1. Hul Divas

**Context:** In remembrance of the Santhals' sacrifice in their struggle against British colonial rulers, the prime minister observed Hul Divas.



### What is Hul Divas?

- The Santhal insurrection, often referred to as the "Hul," was a planned uprising against colonialism led by the Santhals, who opposed the numerous types of persecution the British perpetrated upon them.
- The importance of the Santhal uprising, their identification, the motivations for the Hul, its structure, and its long-lasting effects are all examined in this article.

### Santhals and their Migration:

- From Bengal's Birbhum and Manbhum areas, the Santhal people, also known as Santhalis, came to the present-day Santhal Pargana.
- As part of their approach for collecting taxes, the British dispersed the Pahariya village and transported the Santhals to the forest of Damin-i-Koh.
- The police and predatory lenders were only two examples of the tremendous colonial tyranny the Santhals had to endure.

### Reasons behind the Hul:

- Due to extortion, forced extraction, property confiscation, fabricated measurements, and other illegalities, the Santhals rebelled against the British.
- Following discussions about the likelihood of insurrection at tribal councils and gatherings, the uprising was officially launched on June 30, 1855, by a large gathering of about 6,000 Santhals.
- The Santhals rose up against the British under the leadership of Sidhu and Kanhu, demolishing markers of colonial authority and beheading moneylenders and zamindars.

### Organization of the Hul:

- Contrary to what most people think, the Hul was a well organised and planned political conflict.
- There were preparations, including guerrilla formations, military teams, detectives, secret bases, supplies, and a network of message carriers for coordination, according to evidence from records and historical testimonies.
- The insurrection included members of non-Adivasi Hindu castes, demonstrating the diversity of the movement.

**Lesser-Known Facts about the Hul:**

- 32 villages, both tribal and non-tribal, participated in the uprising, casting doubt on the idea that it was just a Santhal insurrection.
- Two sisters under the leadership of Phulo-Jhano commanded an army of 1,000 women who were instrumental in supplying food, gathering intelligence, and attacking British barracks.
- During the uprising, the East India Company's army was destroyed twice, shattering the myth that they were unbeatable.

**British Narratives and Accounts:**

- The causes of the Santhal insurrection are revealed by British papers and personal accounts, which include high taxes, deceit and carelessness on the part of British authorities, extortion by moneylenders, corruption, and persecution.
- One of the main reasons for the revolt was the misery that moneylenders, or "mahajans," imposed on the Santhal people.

**Accounts from Prisoners and Divine Intervention:**

- There are reports of gods coming to the rebels in dreams or before them, which is similar to earlier tribal revolutions.
- Trials of captive Santhals showed occasions in which gods gave rebel leaders orders to attack the British and oppressors.

**Lasting Impact of the Hul:**

- After being put down in 1855, the Santhal insurrection continued to serve as an inspiration for subsequent uprisings, such as the Santhal participation in the 1857 mutiny.
- The Hul revolt served as a symbol of resistance to British colonialism and served as the starting point for other actions in Jharkhand.

**Source: Indian Express**

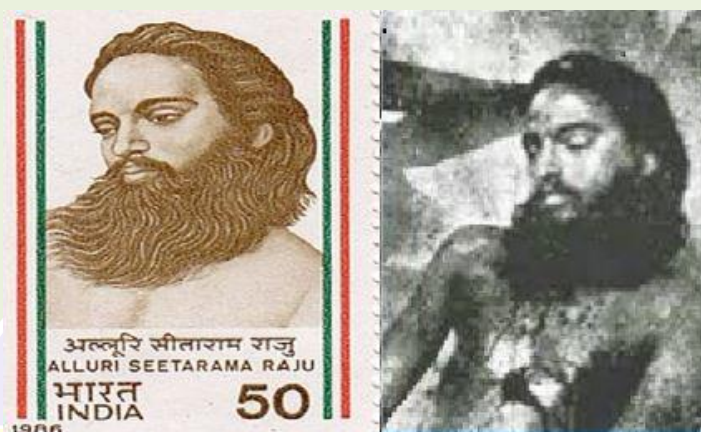
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## 2. Alluri Sitarama Raju

**Context:** At the conclusion of the 125th anniversary festivities for Alluri Sitarama Raju's birth in Hyderabad, the President of India, Draupadi Murmu, lauded the freedom warrior. Raju's fight against injustice and exploitation was important to India's liberation movement, the President emphasised.



### Alluri Sitarama Raju:

- Raju was thought to have been born in Andhra Pradesh around 1897 or 1898.
- At the age of 18, he became a sanyasi (ascetic), and as a result of his austerity, medical expertise, and ability to tame wild animals, he developed a mythical aura among the hill and tribal people.

### Revolutionary Activities:

- The dissatisfaction of the hill people of Ganjam, Visakhapatnam, and Godavari was diverted by Raju into successful guerilla fighting against the British.
- The customary podu agriculture of the indigenous people was endangered by the Forest Act of 1882 and other colonial measures, which pushed them into labour.
- In August 1922, the tribal leaders and muttadars (village chiefs) who had their authority reduced by the British administration banded together to form an armed insurgency against colonial rule.

### Contribution to the Freedom Struggle:

- The Rampa or Manyam Rebellion, Raju's guerilla conflict, lasted until May 1924.
- Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement and the uprising happened at the same time.



- Raju adored Gandhi and supported his recommendations to abstain from drinking and wear khadi (homemade clothing).
- Raju, however, disagreed with Gandhi's nonviolence and thought that India could only be freed via the use of force.

**Capture and Execution:**

- When Raju was caught by the British in May 1924, his resistance to the British came to an end.
- For his role in the uprising, he was put to death.
- Raju is famous for his contributions to India's liberation movement and for earning the nickname "Manyam Veerudu," or "Hero of the Jungle."

**Conclusion:**

Alluri Sitharama Raju was a key figure in the guerrilla battle against British colonial authority, the defence of tribal populations' rights, and the use of force to promote India's independence.

**Source: The Hindu**

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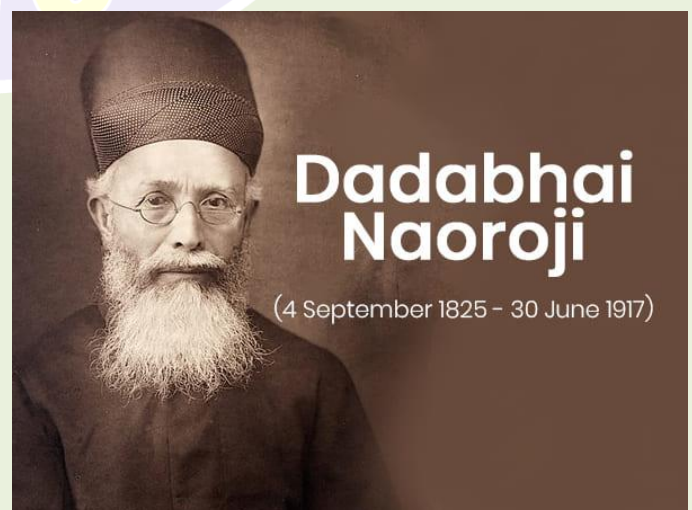
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### 3. Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917)

**Context:** The first Indian to serve in the British Parliament, Dadabhai Naoroji, made a crucial contribution to the fight against colonialism in India. His scholastic work, which placed a strong emphasis on the drain hypothesis, showed the economic exploitation of India by the British.



**Who was Dadabhai Naoroji?**

- Naoroji was born into a Parsi Zoroastrian family in Navsari, Gujarat. He attended Elphinstone Institute School for his studies.
- To further Parsi social reforms and clarify Zoroastrian ideas, he launched the Rast Goftar journal and the Rahnumai Mazdayasan Sabha.
- In order to promote Indian political rights and dispel inaccurate misconceptions, Naoroji co-founded the East India Association and the London Indian Society.
- He was an important member of the Indian National Congress and held the office of president three times.
- Naoroji represented Finsbury Central as the first Indian Member of Parliament in the British House of Commons from 1892 to 1895.
- His work "Poverty and Un-British Rule in India" showed the money transfer from India to Britain and how it affected India's growth.

**His proposition of Drain Theory and Poverty:**

- He identified six issues, including foreign rule, a lack of immigration, and uneven work prospects, that contribute to the wealth drain.
- According to Naoroji, a 200-300 million pound flow from India to Britain hampered India's economic development.
- India paid for services like railroads, according to Naoroji, but the profits were taken out of the nation, creating economic imbalances.
- Indian commodities were devalued, allowing for economic exploitation, and British employees in India were encouraged to send their earnings home.

**Major works:**

- Started the Rast Goftar Anglo-Gujarati Newspaper in 1854.
- The manners and customs of the Parsees (Bombay, 1864)
- The European and Asiatic races (London, 1866)
- Admission of educated natives into the Indian Civil Service (London, 1868)
- The wants and means of India (London, 1876)
- Condition of India (Madras, 1882)

**Legacy and Views:**

- He promoted responsible governance and Indian autonomy, and is regarded as a key role in the campaign for India's independence.
- Naoroji's words had an impact on Mahatma Gandhi, who saw him as a father figure for the Indian people.
- Bal Gangadhar Tilak lauded Naoroji's leadership and predicted that if given the chance, Indians would elect him without a doubt.
- Naoroji's efforts are recognised by a number of prizes, streets, and highways that bear his name.

## 4. Bastille Day

**Context:** Every year on July 14, France celebrates Bastille Day, its national holiday. The day is commemorated with fireworks and a parade under the name La Fete Nationale, or Le 14 Juillet in French. One of the most significant days in French history, it commemorates the collapse of the Bastille, a military stronghold and political jail that was formerly seen as a symbol of the monarchy and an arsenal.



### French Revolution:

- The French Revolution, which occurred between 1789 and 1799, was a significant period of social and political upheaval in France.
- The revolution was characterized by a period of radical social and political change, which saw the-
- Overthrow of the French monarchy
- Establishment of a republic, and
- Execution (Guillotine) of thousands of people, including King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette.

### Fall of the Bastille:

- The Bastille, which is located in Paris, stood for the monarchy's despotic control and misuse of power.
- Parisians gathered to the Bastille on July 14, 1789, as discontent with King Louis XVI's rule mounted.
- The mob wanted access to the fortress's armaments as well as the release of political detainees. A violent altercation resulted from the Governor's refusal.
- The castle was finally overrun by the citizens of Paris after several hours of warfare.

**Significance of the Event:**

- The overbearing old system was overthrown with the fall of the Bastille, which served as a symbol of the people's victory over the monarchy.
- This incident set off a period of extremely violent unrest that made it possible for the revolutionaries to gain control and create a new regime.
- The First French Republic was established as a result of the French Revolution, which also saw the end of feudalism and the adoption of the Declaration of Human and Citizen Rights.
- Global political and social movements continue to be shaped by the revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

**Global Importance of the Event:**

- Other nations were motivated to fight for their own independence and liberties as a result of the fall of the Bastille.
- The ideas of the French Revolution spread around the world, inspiring other revolutionary revolutions throughout history.
- The focus placed by the revolution on individual liberties, democratic government, and social equality has had a tremendous impact on the global political and social scene.

**Source: Indian Express**

**You Tube**  
IAS with Ojaank Sir

## 5. Nawab Wajid Ali Shah (1822-1887)

**Context:** To mark the bicentenary of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, the final sovereign of Awadh, an exhibition, heritage walk, and discourse will be conducted in Kolkata.

**Nawab Wajid Ali Shah:**

- The eleventh and last King of Awadh, Mirza Wajid Ali Shah (30 July 1822 - 1 September 1887), ruled from 13 February 1847 to 11 February 1856.
- He is recognised for his work as a writer, poet, dancer, and patron of the arts while he was in power.





**Reign and fall:**

- In February 1847, Wajid Ali Shah was crowned king of Awadh, taking the throne when the country was in decline.
- On February 11, 1856, barely two days before the coronation anniversary of Wajid Ali Shah, the British East India Company seized Awadh. He was then sent to Garden Reach in Metiabruz, close to Kolkata, where he is now surviving off of his pension.

**Patron of the Arts:**

- Wajid Ali Shah was a gifted composer and a kind music supporter. He developed the light classical style of thumri and supported the Lucknow Gharana of Kathak dance. He had a significant influence on Hindustani music by creating ghazals and introducing new ragas.
- Kathak dance was promoted in Lucknow thanks to Wajid Ali Shah. He placed a strong emphasis on creative expression by fusing theatre, feeling, and literature. Kathak became popularised by the king as a court dance and was made available to the general populace.
- In addition to staging Rahas (dance-dramas) that featured poetry, poetic music, and Kathak performances, the king developed the Jogia Jashan, a huge pageant. His efforts provided the groundwork for Hindustani theater's growth.

**Literary Pursuits:**

- Both in Persian and Urdu, Wajid Ali Shah wrote a lot. His writings addressed a wide range of topics, including history, literature, and introspection. Two notable pieces are "Bani," a dissertation on music and dancing, and "Huzn-i-Akhtar," an autobiographical composition.
- In his court, the monarch supported a number of poets and authors, including Mirza Ghalib. He supported the creation of works that reflected the culture and way of life of the time and provided pensions to well-known literary characters.

**Exile Years and Legacy (1856-1887):**

- When Wajid Ali Shah lost his empire, he relocated to Metiabruz, which is close to Kolkata. He continued to live a life of luxury while building a tiny duplicate of Lucknow. A spectacular complex called Matiya Burj served as a reminder of his beloved hometown.
- The works of Wajid Ali Shah, especially his well-known thumri "Babul Mora Naihar Chhooto Jaay," continue to have an impact and are frequently played by other musicians. His contributions to literature, dance, music, and drama have continued to influence culture and uphold his legacy.

**Conclusion:**

The final ruler of Awadh, Mirza Wajid Ali Shah, ruled from 1847 to 1856 before being banished. His support of the performing, visual, literary, and performing arts had a lasting impression on Awadh's cultural legacy. Wajid Ali Shah's creative endeavours and lasting impact continue to inspire and enhance the region's cultural identity despite the difficulties he experienced and the loss of his kingdom.

Source: The Hindu

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## 6. Opium Wars

**Context:** The Opium Wars, fought by European colonial powers against China, serve as an example of how an inanimate item like opium may transform into a potent historical force depending on the social and political context.


**Story of Opium and Tea:**

- Originating in China more than 2,000 years ago, tea gained popularity among the British aristocracy in the middle of the 17th century and broke down social boundaries to become the national drink of Great Britain.
- But because of the import of tea, the British East India Company had a trade imbalance with China.
- The commerce and manufacture of opium, which was in high demand in China, was given to the British in 1763. Opium exports from China's expanding colony in India to China helped reduce the trade imbalance brought on by purchases of tea.

**Opium Cultivation in India:**

- Opium output in India increased dramatically under the British Opium Department, expanding by about 800% over the course of a century. Between 1780 and 1880, India's total opium shipments to China multiplied one hundred times.
- Intriguingly, despite the fact that all of the opium was grown in India, the British avoided selling it in their own colony and instead chose to introduce it into Chinese culture.

**China's Addiction and Socio-economic Crises:**

- The crippling and extremely addictive substance caused socioeconomic difficulties in China by fostering widespread addiction among the upper classes and literati.
- The machinery of the state and the legitimacy of China's government were weakened by the Qing dynasty's inability to stop the opium trade.

**The Opium Wars:**

- The Qing Emperor initiated a crackdown in 1839 after learning that his son was using opium, which caused tensions with British opium traffickers in Canton.
- British armies invaded China in the First Opium War (1839-1842) to defend "free trade," which resulted in a string of Chinese losses. China was compelled by the Treaty of Nanking to pay British opium smugglers, give up Hong Kong, and open further ports to European commerce.
- A dispute between a Chinese official and British traders led to the Second Opium War (1856-60), which increased European influence in China and legalised the opium trade.

**Opium as a Historical Agent:**

- The Opium Wars exemplified colonialism in Asia, bringing in enormous riches for the colonisers at the price of Chinese sobriety and Indian labour.
- Worldwide opioid problems demonstrate opium's ability to cut through socioeconomic strata, making it a terrible historical force.

**Source: Indian Express**

**You Tube**  
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## 1. Mob Lynchings

**Context:** The Supreme Court has made the decision to review the steps that the Union and the States have done to curb lynching instances following its ruling in July 2018 that branded these crimes as mobocracy. The court has ordered State governments to furnish year-by-year information on complaints made, FIRs filed, and court cases involving lynchings and other acts of mob violence.



### Mob Lynching: A Backgrounder

- The Supreme Court's 2018 bench addressed the concerns of vigilantism, mob lynchings, intergroup violence, and hate crimes that are becoming more prevalent.
- The court emphasised that it is the responsibility of governments to prohibit individuals or core groups from enforcing the law on their own, and that it is every citizen's right to report legal violations to the police rather than engage in vigilantism.
- According to the court, lynching undermines the fundamental ideals of the rule of law and promotes instability and violence in society.

### Supreme Court's Observations:

- The court emphasised the need for authorities in charge of upholding law and order to prohibit vigilantism, especially cow vigilantism. Vigilante activities disturb the constitutional order and weaken the state's legal institutions.
- The court stressed that incidences of mob violence should not become the norm for law and order in the nation as it voiced worry over the rise in intolerance and growing polarisation, which are being fueled by them.
- The court emphasised the risks presented by lynching and mob violence, which might worsen into widespread instances fueled by intolerance, rumours, and the transmission of false information.

### Directive for Preventive and Remedial Measures:

- To stop mob violence and lynchings, state governments must employ senior police officials as Nodal officials in each area.
- States should mark the regions where lynching and mob violence have been reported.



- In accordance with Section 129 of the CrPC and Section 153A of the IPC, police personnel must use their power to disperse mobs and file FIRs as soon as possible.
- It is the duty of Nodal Officers to directly oversee and guarantee the success of the inquiry into such offences.
- According to Section 357A of the CrPC, state governments shall set up a victim compensation programme for victims of lynching and mob violence.
- Each district should have special designated courts or fast-track courts to handle lynching and mob violence cases.

**Directive to State Governments:**

- Sanjeev Khanna and Bela M. Trivedi, who make up the majority of the bench, have directed state governments to gather thorough data on instances of mob violence and lynchings.
- Complaints lodged, FIRs registered, and challans filed with the courts should all be included in the statistics, emphasising the advancements achieved annually.
- In order to get an update on the steps done in response to the court's 2018 ruling in the Tehseen Poonawala case, the court recommended that the Ministry of Home Affairs meet with the heads of the pertinent departments of the State governments.
- The court had earlier ordered the States to establish Special Task Forces to collect information on lynchings, mob violence, and hate speech.

**Conclusion:**

The Supreme Court's oversight of mob lynching prevention and correctional methods reflects its commitment to resolving this issue. The court wants to make the Union and State governments responsible for their acts, thus it has ordered the consolidation of data and demanded adherence to the 2018 ruling. These actions aim to prevent vigilantism, defend the rule of law, and provide justice for lynching and mob violence victims.

**Source: Indian Express**



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## 2. Manual Scavenging

**Context:** A substantial number of districts have yet to report themselves as being free of manual scavenging, according to the Social Justice Ministry, even though 530 districts have done so.



### Manual Scavenging in India:

- The activity of manually collecting human waste from septic tanks or sewers is known as manual scavenging.
- The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (PEMSR) outlawed the practise in India.
- Human excreta cannot be physically cleaned, carried, disposed of, or handled in any other way until it is disposed of, according to the Act.
- The term "manual scavengers" was further expanded in 2013 to cover anyone hired to clean septic tanks, ditches or railway lines.
- As a "dehumanising practise," manual scavenging is acknowledged by the Act, which also notes the need to "correct the historical injustice and indignity suffered by the manual scavengers."

### Reasons for its persistence:

- Marginalised groups in society frequently engage in manual scavenging because they are uninformed of their rights, leaving them open to abuse.
- Manual scavenging continues in part due to lax Act enforcement and the exploitation of unskilled labourers.
- Municipal officials are discouraged by the high expense of using automated cleaning techniques in sewage systems.
- Contractors continue the practise by hiring unskilled workers illegally who are prepared to labour for less money.
- The established caste system, with the bulk of manual scavengers being from lower castes, supports the practise.

**Various Policy Initiatives:**

- The crippling and extremely addictive substance caused socioeconomic difficulties in China by fostering widespread addiction among the upper classes and literati.
- The machinery of the state and the legitimacy of China's government were weakened by the Qing dynasty's inability to stop the opium trade.

**The Opium Wars:**

**Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation (Amendment) Bill, 2020:** The proposed amendment aims to automate sewage cleaning, give on-site security, and provide financial compensation in the event of sewer-related fatalities.

**Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013:** This Act forbids all manual faeces cleaning in unhygienic latrines, open drains, or pits, going beyond the limitations on dry latrines.

**Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan:** The "Maila Mukti Yatra," which was started in 2012, intends to end manual scavenging across the country, beginning in Bhopal.

**Prevention of Atrocities Act:** Since a sizable portion of manual scavengers are members of the Scheduled Caste, this Act protects sanitation workers.

**Compensation:** The PEMSR Act and the Supreme Court's ruling in the Safai Karamchari Andolan v. Union of India case require that the families of victims get compensation in the amount of Rs. 10 lakh.

**National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK):** The NCSK conducts research on the working conditions of garbage collectors in India and makes suggestions to the government.

**NAMASTE Scheme:** The NAMASTE programme aims to improve the safety and dignity of sanitation workers by doing away with dangerous sewer and septic tank cleaning methods.

**States and UTs with Pending Declaration of Manual Scavenging-Free Districts:**

- In terms of States and UTs, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Jharkhand have the most districts that have not yet formally proclaimed themselves to be free of manual scavenging.
- While states like Bihar, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu have declared all of their districts to be free from manual scavenging, several other states and UTs have only claimed 15% to 20% of their districts to be free from the practise.

**Way Forward:**

- Public and municipal authorities must regularly perform surveys and social audits on the use of manual scavengers.
- Manual scavengers need to be properly identified and given the tools they need to develop alternative forms of income.
- It's important to raise knowledge of the legal protections available to manual scavengers.

**Source: Indian Express**



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## 1. Euclid Mission

**Context:** The launch of the Euclid Space Telescope by the European Space Agency (ESA) marks the start of an incredible mission. Millions of galaxies will be surveyed as part of this huge research, which will provide light on the universe's development as well as the puzzling concepts of dark energy and dark matter.

### What is Euclid Mission?

- The main objective of the Euclid mission is to investigate the nature and characteristics of dark matter and energy, which together make up a sizeable fraction of the universe.
- Euclid's goal is to give information on the underlying processes that are responsible for the cosmos' shape by studying the distribution and development of galaxies.

### Mission Scope and Duration:

- The space-based project Euclid is outfitted with a powerful telescope and cutting-edge scientific equipment.
- With a nominal operating lifespan of six years, the mission will have plenty of time to explore the sky.

### Launch and Spacecraft:

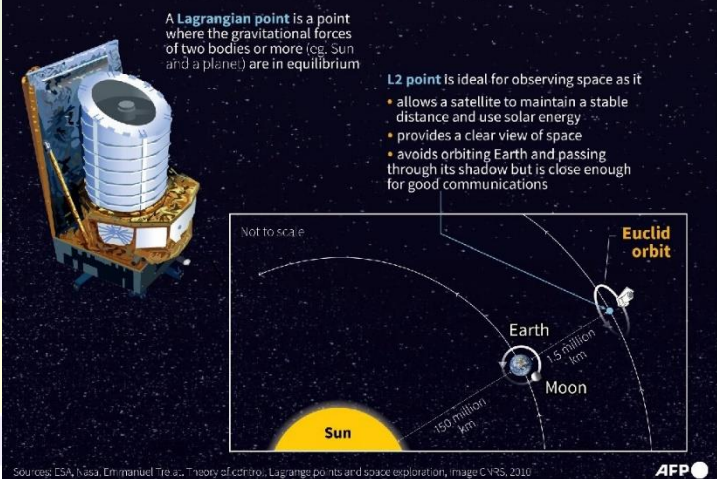
- A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket was used to launch Euclid on July 1, 2023, from Cape Canaveral in Florida.
- The spacecraft is equipped with the Euclid Space Telescope, which can examine galaxies at various wavelengths.

### Investigating Dark Energy and Dark Matter:

- The surprising acceleration of the expansion of the universe is explained by dark energy, which was found in 1998.
- The goal of the Euclid mission is to quantify this acceleration more precisely, maybe revealing fluctuations throughout cosmic time.
- Galaxies and clusters are kept intact by dark matter, which may be deduced from the gravitational pull it has on them.

### Europe's space telescope Euclid

The spacecraft will be sent to explore the evolution of the dark matter and dark energy in the Universe, joining the James Webb telescope in orbit around the **second Lagrangian Point, or L2**



## Euclid Space Telescope:

- With a 1.2-meter main mirror, the Euclid Space Telescope can record in-depth studies of galaxies.
- The visible-wavelength camera (VIS) and the near-infrared camera and spectrometer (NISP) are its two primary research tools.

## Visible-Wavelength Camera (VIS):

The VIS instrument will take visible-light pictures that will make it possible to analyse the morphological characteristics, sizes, and forms of galaxies.

## Near-Infrared Camera and Spectrometer (NISP):

- The near-infrared observations made by NISP will be used to gather crucial information on the distance, redshift, and grouping characteristics of galaxies.
- NISP will help in the study of large-scale cosmic structures by determining the distribution of galaxies at various cosmic epochs.

Source: Indian Express

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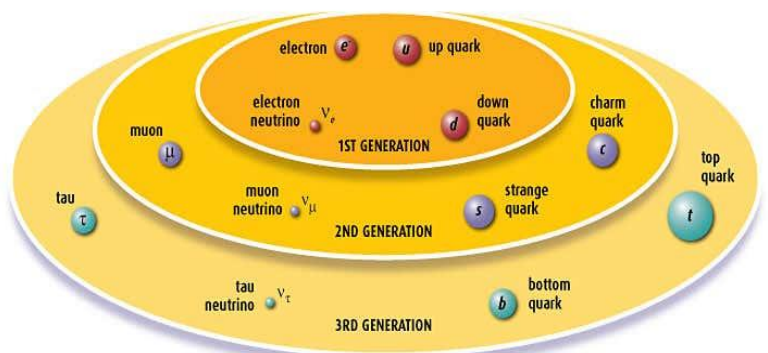
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## 2. Neutrinos

**Context:** By harnessing neutrinos to create a picture of the Milky Way, the IceCube Neutrino Observatory, a gigaton detector situated at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, has made a significant scientific advancement. Small particles known as neutrinos act as celestial messages that resemble ghosts.

### THE STANDARD MODEL

The particles that make up the standard model are grouped in three families, or generations. Neutrino measurements could reveal other families



### IceCube Neutrino Observatory:

- With more than 5,000 light sensors covering a cubic kilometre of Antarctic ice, the IceCube Neutrino Observatory is a distinctive detector.
- It finds high energy neutrinos that are millions to billions of times more energetic than those created by stellar fusion processes.

### What are Neutrinos?

- In the Standard Model of particle physics, neutrinos are basic particles.
- They are part of the group of elementary particles known as leptons, along with electrons and muons.
- Neutrinos are difficult to detect because of their incredibly tiny mass and weak interactions with materials.

### Properties of Neutrinos:

<b>Electric Charge</b>	Electrically Neutral
<b>Mass</b>	Extremely Low (Exact Masses Not Known)
<b>Flavors</b>	Electron Neutrino, Muon Neutrino, Tau Neutrino
<b>Interaction</b>	Weak Interaction
<b>Speed</b>	Close to the Speed of Light
<b>Spin</b>	Fermion, Half-Integer Spin
<b>Neutrino Oscillations</b>	Neutrinos Change Flavor during Travel
<b>Interactions</b>	Very Weak Interaction with Matter
<b>Abundance</b>	Among the Most Abundant Particles in the Universe
<b>Cosmic Messengers</b>	Can Carry Information from Distant Cosmic Sources

### Neutrino Emission from the Milky Way:

- There is proof of high-energy neutrino emission from the Milky Way, according to studies from the IceCube Collaboration.
- In contrast to light, this emission enables scientists to view objects outside of our galaxy that are close by.
- The Milky Way is now known to be a source of cosmic rays and high-energy particles thanks to the discovery of neutrinos coming from its galactic plane.

### Challenges and Breakthroughs:

- Due to background noise from cosmic ray interactions with the environment, it was difficult to detect neutrinos from the Milky Way's southern sky.

- To recognise and examine neutrino occurrences, IceCube researchers created cutting-edge data processing tools, such as machine learning algorithms.
- These techniques increased neutrino cascade detection and improved energy and direction reconstruction accuracy.

#### Implications and Future Prospects:

- Using 60,000 neutrinos from 10 years of IceCube data, the study offered a more thorough examination than earlier research.
- As a result of the study's confirmation that the Milky Way is a source of high-energy neutrinos, more research is being done to pinpoint individual sources inside the galaxy.
- In addition to the more common light-based studies, neutrino astronomy provides a distinctive viewpoint for studying the cosmos.

**Source: The Hindu**

### 3. Aspartame

**Context:** The launch of the Euclid Space Telescope by the European Space Agency (ESA) marks the start of an incredible mission. Millions of galaxies will be surveyed as part of this huge research, which will provide light on the universe's development as well as the puzzling concepts of dark energy and dark matter.



#### What is Aspartame?

- Aspartame is a common artificial sweetener used in a variety of foods and beverages.
- It is created from the dipeptide of L-aspartic acid and L-phenylalanine, two amino acids.
- It is frequently used in sugar-free gum, diet soft drinks, and other sugar-free goods. It is around 200 times sweeter than table sugar.
- It is preferred by folks trying to control their diabetes or cut back on calories.

#### Safety Record and Regulatory Approvals:

- Over 100 investigations on aspartame conducted over the course of 40 years have found no indication that using it is harmful.
- Since 1981, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved its usage in food after many safety reviews.
- Aspartame is likewise regarded as safe for eating by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) as well as national authorities in other nations.
- However, due to the presence of phenylalanine in aspartame, those with phenylketonuria (PKU), a rare hereditary condition, should avoid it.



### Controversies and Impact of WHO's Listings:

- Previous IARC decisions have caused anxiety, sparked legal action, and prompted producers to look for alternatives as a result of public misunderstanding.
- The IARC's prospective classification of aspartame as "possibly carcinogenic" goes against earlier scientific consensus about the substance's safety.
- IARC evaluations, according to its detractors, may confuse the public and lead to unwarranted fear and misunderstanding.

Source: Indian Express



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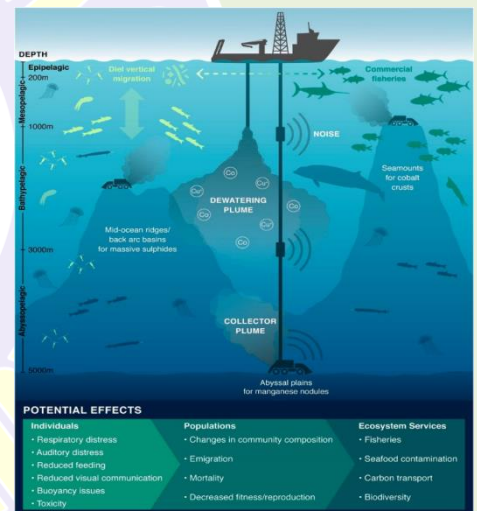
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## 4. Deep Sea Mining

**Context:** Deep sea mining, which is the process of removing metals and mineral resources from the ocean's bottom, is being discussed by the International bottom Authority (ISA), which is getting ready to pick up the conversation. These conversations have highlighted the need for laws and environmental protections by raising concerns about potential effects on maritime ecosystems and habitats.



### International Seabed Authority

- ISA is a Jamaican company created in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- The authority has control over the ocean bottoms outside of its 167 member governments' Exclusive Economic Zones.

### What is Deep Sea Mining?

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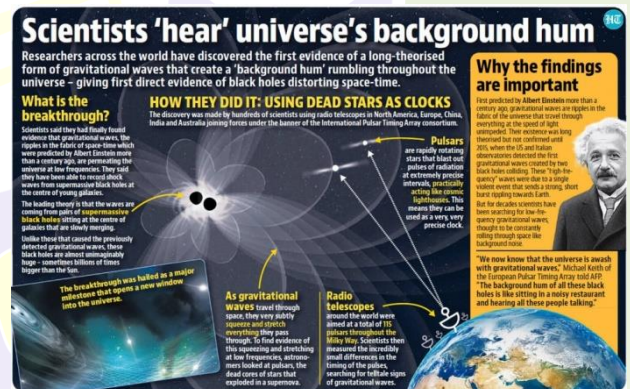
**Source: Indian Express**

## 5. Gravitational Wave

**Context:** Recent research has shown persuasive evidence that low-frequency gravitational waves are present throughout the cosmos. The movement, collision, and merger of enormous objects causes these waves, or ripples in space-time.

### What are Gravitational Waves?

- Einstein offered a ground-breaking theory of gravity in 1915, defining it as the space-time curvature brought on by large objects. According to this theory, mass-containing objects bend the space-time around them, producing a gravitational field.
- Wave-like disruptions in the space-time continuum are produced when big objects accelerate or encounter gravitational forces. These waves squeeze and stretch space-time as they transfer energy away from the source.
- While gravitational waves are not electromagnetic waves in nature, they do have certain similarities. The characteristics of gravitational waves include wavelength, frequency, and amplitude, just like those of electromagnetic waves.



**Detection and Significance:**

- Gravitational wave detection is a complex scientific task requiring sensitive equipment and accurate data.
- The Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) detectors made the first direct detection of gravitational waves in 2015. This finding established the reality of gravitational waves, earning it the 2017 Nobel Prize in Physics.
- Insights into the behaviour and characteristics of large objects, as well as the nature of space and time itself, are revealed by gravitational waves, opening up a new method for examining the cosmos.
- The discovery of gravitational waves has created a new window for the observation of catastrophic events like the merging of neutron stars and black holes, as well as perhaps undiscovered phenomena.
- Einstein's theory of gravity may be tested and improved thanks to gravitational waves, which also open up new scientific possibilities.

**Recent Breakthrough:**

- Five multinational teams, including the Indian Pulsar Timing Array (InPTA), worked together on the project, which made use of six sizable radio telescopes throughout the world, including one in Pune.
- In contrast to earlier research, scientists used a new method to find low-frequency gravitational waves.
- As very accurate cosmic clocks, pulsars—rapidly rotating neutron stars that generate bursts of radiation—have been researched.
- Researchers studied 25 pulsars for 15 years and discovered minute changes in the timing of their flashes. Low-frequency gravitational waves were said to have bent space-time, which was the source of these alterations.
- These low-frequency gravitational waves were likely produced by the collision of gigantic black holes, which are normally located in the centres of galaxies and are millions of times larger than our Sun, as opposed to previously discovered ripples.

**Significance of the Discovery:**

- Since low-frequency gravitational waves are thought to represent the universe's constant background noise, scientists have been looking for them for decades.
- The finding adds to our understanding of the origins and development of the cosmos and sheds information on the surroundings of enormous black holes.
- With the use of gravitational waves, scientists may now examine phenomena that were previously unreachable through electromagnetic waves.
- Insights into the dynamics and interactions at work are provided by the discovery of these waves, which provide proof of the universe's objects moving widely.



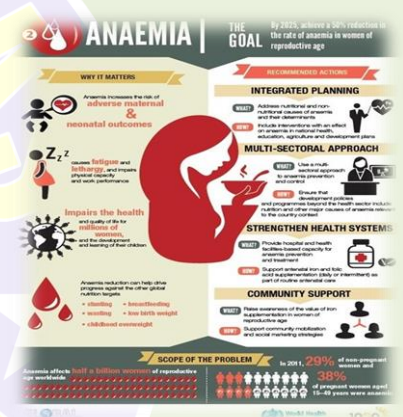
### Solving the mystery:

- Scientists are now able to observe phenomena like black holes, dark matter, and dark energy that were previously invisible.
- Understanding the origin, evolution, and structure of galaxies and the universe as a whole is possible through the analysis of gravitational waves.
- Our understanding of space and time was fundamentally altered by Einstein's theory, which combined them into the idea of spacetime, a malleable and dynamic material impacted by matter.
- Gravitational waves provide a way to investigate the birth of the universe, the nature of gravitational interactions, and the development of galaxies, among other cosmic mysteries.

**Source: The Hindu**

## 6. Anaemia and Maternal Health

**Context:** Anaemia has recently come up for discussion in India due to disagreements over how to test and maintain haemoglobin levels. In a report that was published in The Lancet, the WOMAN-2 trial collaborators emphasised the significance of anaemia in postpartum haemorrhage and urged India to make wise policy decisions. A large percentage of women globally suffer from anaemia, which is linked to high death rates in situations of postpartum bleeding.



### What is Anaemia?

- A medical illness called anaemia is characterised by a drop in the quantity of red blood cells or a lack of haemoglobin, the protein in charge of transporting oxygen throughout the body.
- This disorder may result in the blood's ability to carry oxygen to tissues and organs being lessened.
- Depending on the underlying reason and the severity of the ailment, anaemia symptoms might change.
- However, some common symptoms of anaemia include: Fatigue and weakness, Shortness of breath, Rapid or irregular heartbeat, Dizziness and light-headedness, Cold hands and feet, Headaches

### How Anaemia is linked to maternal risks?

- The risk of premature birth, low birth weight, and maternal death increases during pregnancy when anaemia exists.
- Exhaustion brought on by anaemia might make it more difficult for pregnant women to bear physical responsibilities.



- The risk of acquiring the hazardous disorder preeclampsia is increased by anaemia.
- The risk of heavy postpartum bleeding is increased by anaemia.
- Because anaemia impairs the immune system, infections are more likely to affect pregnant women.
- It can have a deleterious effect on both the health of the mother and the foetus during pregnancy.

**Link between Anaemia and Postpartum Haemorrhage:**

- Anaemia affects more than half a billion women globally who are of reproductive age.
- Particularly in low- and middle-income nations, anaemia increases the risk of postpartum haemorrhage, a primary cause of maternal mortality.
- In the experiment, women from Pakistan, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Zambia had their postpartum haemorrhage risk correlated with their prenatal haemoglobin levels.

**Findings from the WOMAN-2 Trial:**

- Clinical postpartum haemorrhage and greater blood loss have both been linked to lower haemoglobin levels.
- Women who have anaemia have a lower capacity to transport oxygen, which causes shock even with modest amounts of blood loss.
- Comparing severe and moderate anaemia, the likelihood of dying or having a close call was greater in the former.

**Recommendations and Prevention Strategies:**

- Women of reproductive age should pay special attention to the prevention and treatment of anaemia.
- To combat anaemia, particularly in teenage females, the Indian government offers folic acid and iron supplements.
- India's rising anaemia rate need a more aggressive public health strategy to effectively address the problem.
- For accurate haemoglobin measurement, public health programmes should take into account cultural attitudes and preferences around blood draws.
- To ensure the effectiveness of anaemia prevention measures, a thorough grasp of cultural and social factors is essential.

**Conclusion:**

- The WOMAN-2 study emphasises the importance of anaemia in postpartum haemorrhage and calls on Indian policymakers to utilise evidence-based recommendations for anaemia care.
- To successfully tackle growing anaemia levels, the Indian public health programme should prioritise prevention, treatment, and community involvement.
- When creating outreach programmes, cultural and social issues must be taken into account to ensure its applicability and acceptability by the target group.

**Source: The Hindu**

## 7. Leptospirosis

**Context:** In the modern world, leptospirosis has become a serious infectious illness. It is a zoonotic, possibly lethal bacterial illness that frequently spreads widely during periods of intense precipitation or flooding.

### What is Anaemia?

- A major danger to world health is posed by the zoonotic bacterial illness leptospirosis, especially during periods of intense precipitation or floods.
- It has a high death rate, affects millions of people each year, and its burden is anticipated to rise in the future.
- *Leptospira interrogans*, a bacteria that predominantly infects animals before moving on to humans, is the disease-causing agent.

### Disease Transmission and Risk Factors:

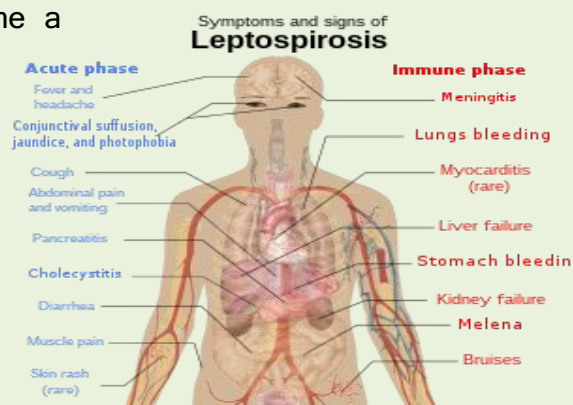
- Animals with the leptospira infection excrete it in their urine, polluting the land and water.
- The illness can be spread by both domestic and wild animals, including rats, cattle, pigs, and dogs.
- Animal urine can be dangerous whether inhaled directly or inadvertently through polluted soil and water.
- Those who work in sanitary services, agriculture, or with animals are more at danger.
- Activities involving water in polluted rivers and lakes might further increase the danger.

### Symptoms and Misdiagnosis:

- Leptospirosis symptoms range from a minor flu-like sickness to illnesses that are life-threatening and impact several organs.
- Due to symptoms that resemble those of other illnesses including dengue, malaria, and hepatitis, there is a lack of reporting and general knowledge.
- Accurate illness identification is hampered by a lack of dependable diagnostic instruments.
- Underestimating the illness burden results from inadequate environmental monitoring.

### Misconceptions and Preventive Measures:

- Various animals serve as reservoir hosts, therefore rats are not the only culprit.
- The danger of exposure is heightened by humidity and severe weather conditions like floods.
- The spread of the disease is aided by poor waste management practises, an abundance of stray animals, and inadequate sanitary facilities.
- A "One Health" strategy that considers people, animals, and the environment is essential.



- Gloves and boots should be worn by anybody working with animals or in flooded regions.
- Lessening the possibility of leptospirosis transmission requires hygienic animal-keeping practises.
- Essential preventative interventions include promoting good hygiene habits, informing people about the disease, and enhancing health literacy.

**Source: Indian Express**

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## 8. Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

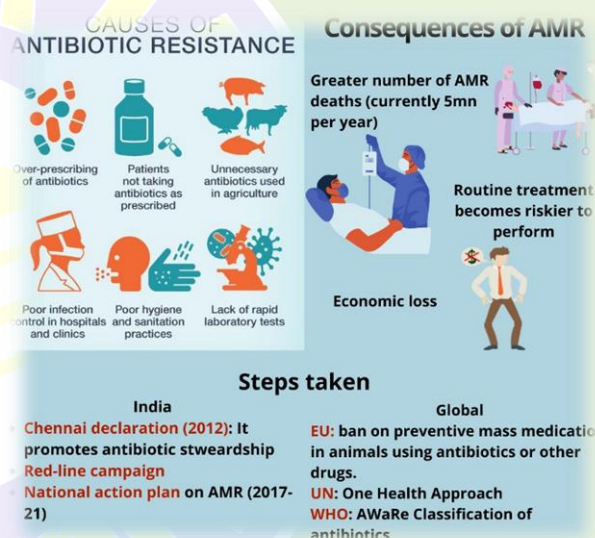
**Context:** Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) is currently regarded as one of the gravest dangers to global public health. The worldwide issue of AMR must be addressed urgently with a coordinated and all-encompassing strategy, and it is essential that different stakeholders play a part in preventive, control, and surveillance activities.

### Definition:

- Antimicrobial resistance is the phenomenon where some medications that were formerly successful in treating illnesses brought on by bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites are no longer effective because the pathogens have developed a resistance to them.
- Simply put, it occurs when the microorganisms that cause our illnesses develop a "immune" response to the medications we employ to treat them.

### Prevalence of AMR:

- Recent estimates indicate that drug-resistant diseases caused 1.27 million deaths worldwide in 2019. Up to 10 million fatalities might occur each year by 2050.
- If left uncontrolled, AMR may reduce GDP by US\$3.4 trillion yearly and send 24 million additional people into extreme poverty over the course of the following ten years.
- According to a 2022 research by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), broad-spectrum antibiotic resistance rises by 5% to 10% year.



**AMR: A concern for global public health**

- It is getting harder to properly treat illnesses brought on by pathogens including bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites because these diseases are growing more resistant to antimicrobial medications.
- Because routinely used antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals, and antiparasitic medications may no longer be effective against resistant strains, AMR might result in treatment failures.
- AMR lengthens hospital stays, raises the expense and complexity of therapy, and necessitates the use of stronger and more expensive medications. Particularly concerning are illnesses brought on by bacteria that are resistant to treatment.
- In recent years, the production of novel antimicrobial medications has slowed. There aren't enough new, efficient medicines to take the place of those whose efficacy is waning because of resistance.
- AMR is a problem that affects everyone worldwide. International collaboration is essential because resistant germs can spread between nations via commerce and travel.

**Current Scenario of AMR prevention and National Action Plans:**

- The prevention, control, and reaction to AMR have been a top priority for most national governments, international agencies (including the WHO, FAO, and OIE), healthcare communities, civil society groups, etc. for the past 10 years.
- The WHO introduced the Global Action Plan (GAP) on AMR in 2015, which gives nations a strategic framework to create their own national action plans.

**National action plans have been prepared by many countries so far.**

- The NAP for India was authorised in 2017. It is acknowledged that NAP 2.0 is now being considered.
- Under India's leadership, AMR is a top item on the G20 health agenda.

**India's national action plan to combat AMR:**

- The NAP for India places a strong emphasis on coordinated action between the public and private sectors. It incorporates a cross-government strategy that includes the health, agriculture, dairy, fisheries, pharmaceutical, and biotechnology industries.
- In order to inform healthcare professionals, politicians, and the general public on responsible antibiotic use and AMR prevention, the strategy focuses on lobbying and awareness-building efforts.
- China's NAP It places a focus on empowering and involving communities to encourage the appropriate use of antibiotics.
- To stop the spread of AMR, the NAP places a strong emphasis on infection prevention and control strategies. This involves encouraging good hygiene habits and putting infection control procedures into practise in hospital settings.



**Need for a concerted, combined effort to address AMR:**

- AMR necessitates a One Health approach, which acknowledges the interdependence of environmental health, animal health, and human health. To effectively combat AMR, cooperation is required from the human and veterinary healthcare sectors, agriculture, environmental organisations, and other stakeholders.
- In order to combat AMR, the industries in charge of food, water, and the environment should all have an equal ownership role. It is crucial to regulate antibiotic availability and use in industries that produce food for animals and poultry rather than humans.
- State governments are largely responsible for implementing infection control policies, pharmacy regulation, sewage treatment, pharmaceutical effluent disposal, and AMR surveillance.
- The environment should be protected from the pollution caused by untreated wastewater and effluents, especially those from hospitals and production plants for antibiotics. To address AMR, an efficient infrastructure for sanitation and waste treatment is required.

**What's more?**

- The research and marketing of novel antibiotics and new antimicrobials need parallel, warlike activities. Such efforts ought to be rewarded.
- People all around the world are fascinated by social media and its many platforms. It is impossible to deny that social media has an impact on our thoughts and actions. Social media and its many venues must be used to spread the word about AMR because of its impact on our thoughts and actions.
- The goal should be to promote community awareness of responsible and appropriate antimicrobial usage.

**Conclusion:**

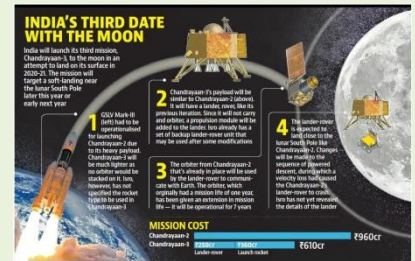
- Various parties must work together in a coordinated effort to address the worldwide problem of AMR. It's crucial to embrace innovative approaches, such as new diagnostics, alternative therapies, and technology-driven initiatives. We can safeguard public health, reduce economic burdens, and ensure a healthy future for everybody by adopting these steps.

**Source: The Hindu**



## 9. Chandrayaan-3 Mission

**Context:** The Chandrayaan 3 mission is scheduled to launch on July 14 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). The Chandrayaan 2 was the preceding expedition; it had technical difficulties and crashed-landed on the moon in September 2019.



### Chandrayaan-3: Mission Details and Landing

- The Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark III (GSLV Mk III) rocket will carry Chandrayaan 3 into space.
- Expected landing location is close to the South Pole of the moon.
- Chandrayaan 3 will be in operation for one lunar day—14 days on Earth—on the surface of the moon.

### Significance of the Lunar South Pole:

- It is ideal for researching dark locations since the lunar South Pole has a greater shady zone that is always in complete darkness.
- The Aitken Basin, the biggest impact basin in the Solar System, is bordered by the South Pole.
- Data collected over the South Pole region by NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter helps scientists better comprehend the region.
- The South Pole is easier to reach because of the Moon's extended day and night cycles, which are caused by its longer rotation cycle (of about 30 days).

### Trajectory and Landing Procedure:

- Chandrayaan 3 will take a similar path as Chandrayaan 2, orbiting the Earth with a propulsion module before moving on to the moon.
- The module will lower itself to a 100 x 100 kilometre circular orbit once it enters the moon's gravitational pull. Later, the lander will separate and touchdown on the moon's surface.

### Scientific Payloads:

- Four scientific payloads will be released by the lander, dubbed "Vikram," to investigate the moon's subsurface features and surface temperature.
- The rover, called "Pragyan," will explore the lunar surface while performing chemical and optical experiments.

### Objectives of Chandrayaan 3:

- The goal of Chandrayaan 3 is to show how to land gently and safely on the moon.
- The mission will demonstrate the rover's capacity to travel across the lunar surface.
- On the moon, Chandrayaan 3 will carry out in-situ scientific investigations.

**Development and Delay:**

- The goal of Chandrayaan 3 is to show how to land gently and safely on the moon.
- The mission will demonstrate the rover's capacity to travel across the lunar surface.
- On the moon, Chandrayaan 3 will carry out in-situ scientific investigations.

**Importance of Chandrayaan 3:**

- India's third lunar mission, Chandrayaan 3, is the country's second attempt at a gentle lunar landing.
- Following Chandrayaan-1's finding of water on the lunar surface, there has been a resurgence in interest in moon exploration in recent years.

**Conclusion:**

- India's ongoing attempts to explore the moon and make a gentle landing are symbolised by Chandrayaan 3.
- The accomplishment of the mission will increase knowledge of the lunar surface and advance science.
- Humanity's return to the moon after more than 50 years appears to be approaching as space organisations around the world prepare upcoming lunar missions.

**Source: Indian Express**

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## 10. Scorpene Submarines

**Context:** The Buy (Indian) category will be used to buy the three extra Scorpene submarines. The submarines will be built in Mumbai by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL).

**Scorpene Submarines and Project-75:**

- Six Scorpene class submarines are already being built by MDL under Project-75 thanks to technology transfer from the French defence company.
- The last of the six Scorpene submarines, which is scheduled to be commissioned early next year, is already operational.
- Project-75 experienced considerable setbacks because the first submarine was supposed to be delivered in 2012.



**Need for Additional Submarines:**

- In order to reinforce India's submarine fleet and make up for Project-75's delayed delivery, three new submarines must be purchased.
- The Indian Navy presently has 16 conventional submarines in service, but to conduct all of its activities, it would require at least 18 submarines.
- The number of active submarines is further diminished by the approximately 30% of submarines that are always undergoing refits.
- By acquiring more submarines with a larger indigenous content, MDL will be better able to build submarines, which will increase job prospects.

**Capabilities of Scorpene Submarines:**

- The purpose of Scorpene submarines, which are traditional attack submarines, is to hunt down and destroy enemy naval vessels.
- They have the ability to fire a range of torpedoes and missiles that are outfitted with surveillance and intelligence collecting devices.
- The length of a scorpene submarine is around 220 feet, while its height is roughly 40 feet. Their top speed when surfaced is 11 knots, and their top speed underwater is 20 knots.
- These submarines have diesel-electric propulsion systems that give them a 50-day range.

**Comparison with Nuclear Submarines:**

- Two Arihant class nuclear-powered submarines (SSBMs) are currently in operation in India.
- Nuclear submarines can operate for up to 30 years without refuelling and have theoretically limitless endurance. They can move at faster rates as well.
- Nuclear submarines are expensive to run and need specialised knowledge.
- The range and stealth of conventional submarines have substantially increased thanks to diesel-electric technology.
- AIP systems will improve the Scorpene submarines' endurance and stealth capabilities.

**Conclusion:**

The decision by India to purchase three more Scorpene submarines improves its naval capability and supports domestic manufacture. The acquisition of these submarines will enhance operational readiness and assist in meeting the needs of an expanding fleet.

**Source: The Hindu**

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## 11. Lightning

**Context:** According to a top government official, lightning-related fatalities can be avoided by education and public awareness; for this reason, the government argues against classifying lightning as a natural disaster.



### Why discuss this?

- States like West Bengal and Bihar have asked that lightning-related fatalities be classified as natural disasters so that victims may receive financial aid from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).
- The National Crime Records Bureau estimates that lightning was responsible for 2,880 fatalities in 2021, or 40% of all unintentional deaths attributed to "forces of nature."

### What is Lightning?

- Lightning is a sudden, strong electrical discharge that frequently faces the Earth in the atmosphere.
- Giant, moisture-rich clouds that are many kilometres tall are where lightning strikes.
- As temperatures fall below 0°C, water vapour in the clouds condenses into tiny ice crystals.
- Ice crystal collisions result in the release of electrons, which sets off a chain reaction that creates a positive and negative charge inside the cloud.
- Inter- and intra-cloud lightning can happen within clouds, while cloud-to-ground lightning can happen between clouds and the earth.

### Intensity of Lightning Strikes:

- Household current is much lower than the 300 million volts and 30,000 amps that a typical lightning flash may produce.
- 120 volts and 15 amps are the typical household current, demonstrating the incredible strength of lightning.

### Mitigating Lightning Incidents:

- A lightning early warning system was built in India, saving many lives.
- Rural populations need to be targeted for mitigation and awareness programmes because more than 96% of lightning fatalities occur there.
- More affordable lightning protection equipment has to be used, especially in rural regions.
- To reduce the dangers associated with lightning, states are encouraged to create and implement lightning action plans that are similar to heat action plans.
- An worldwide centre for lightning research excellence is being established to improve early detection and warning systems.

**Source: Indian Express**

## 12. Digital Tug of War

**Context:** The rise of private digital currencies poses a threat to central banks' authority and threatens to upend the status quo by bringing in novel dynamics and opportunities. Economic systems and national trajectories are significantly influenced by the regulation of money supply, circulation, and value. Governments and central banks are essential to the management of currencies, the development of economic strategies, and the maintenance of macroeconomic stability. The emergence of private digital currencies, however, presents fresh dynamics and obstructions to this control, perhaps upsetting the balance of power.



### What are Private digital currencies?

- Digital or virtual currencies that use cryptography to safeguard transactions and regulate the generation of new units are referred to as private digital currencies, or cryptocurrencies.
- They are often decentralised, meaning they are not governed or controlled by a central authority like a government or central bank, and they function independently of traditional financial institutions.
- Private digital currencies like Bitcoin (BTC), Ethereum (ETH), Ripple (XRP), and Litecoin (LTC) are some of the most well-known examples.

### What are stable coins?

- A form of cryptocurrency known as a stablecoin is intended to have a stable value in relation to a single item or a portfolio of related assets.
- Stablecoins strive to offer stability and reduce price swings, in contrast to many other cryptocurrencies that undergo severe price volatility.
- They accomplish this stability by tying the value of their assets to an underlying asset, such as a fiat currency (like the US dollar), a commodity (like gold), or a mix of assets.

### What is meant by monetary sovereignty?

- The capacity of a nation to govern its own currency and monetary policies without outside influence is known as monetary sovereignty.
- The value, supply, and circulation of a country's currency may be set and managed by its government and central bank, which may also develop and carry out monetary policies that support economic growth and stability.

**Challenges posed by Private digital currencies to monetary sovereignty:**

- Utilising blockchain technology, private digital currencies avoid the need for central middlemen like banks and central banks.
- Alternative value-transfer mechanisms Peer-to-peer transactions make banks and other financial organisations less important.
- Operate outside of regulatory frameworks; enforce financial legislation; and meet KYC and anti-money laundering procedures, which are intended to stop illegal activity.
- Risks to the stability of the financial system include volatility and speculation.
- Sharp price swings and market volatility have a negative impact on consumers, investors, and the whole economy, especially in emerging nations where financial institutions are less stable.
- Facilitate criminal activity, including tax evasion and sponsorship of terrorism.

**Case study 1: Myanmar's digital dynamics of power**

- The National Union Government (NUG) of Myanmar has used cryptocurrencies to collect money for the opposition by getting around the military-controlled economy.
- The Digital Myanmar Kyat (DMMK) that the NUG issued was not subject to military control and had independent exchange rate determination.
- Donations from expatriate populations are simpler to collect thanks to the DMMK—cross-border payments.
- Serves as a tool of fundraising and calls into question the authenticity of the kyat issued by the military.
- Myanmar's fragmented financial system serves as a stark reminder of the dangers digital currencies pose to state legitimacy.

**Case study 2: China's Cautious Monetary Security Approach**

- Viewpoints that contrast cryptocurrencies to central bank digital currencies (CBDCs).
- Cryptocurrencies do not qualify as legal cash and are subject to tight regulations.
- Actively pushes the digital yuan in order to internationalise the currency and lessen dependency on banking networks under US control.
- Acknowledges that digital money has the potential to change the financial system and sees it as a driver of monetary decentralisation on a global scale.
- China's dedication to preserving monetary sovereignty is shown in its full prohibition on cryptocurrencies.

**Case study 3: India's apprehensions**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has emphasised the need for prompt action to address the growing risks related to the ecosystem for cryptoassets.
- The main issue is the stablecoin hazards, which might be vulnerable to possible risks of redemptions and investor panics and need for appropriate mitigation measures.

- The RBI has issued additional warnings against private currencies, highlighting their historical tendency to foster volatility and jeopardise national control over the money supply, interest rates, and macroeconomic stability, particularly in developing nations.
- India's own CBDC, Digital Rupee, is seen as a strategic answer to address the issues facing the ecosystem for digital assets.

#### Way forward:

- Clear and thorough regulatory frameworks for private digital currencies should cover risk management, investor protection, consumer protection, and financial integrity.
- Coordination and collaboration on a global scale, communication, information exchange, and efforts towards standardisation.
- Keep looking at CBDCs' possibilities as regulated alternatives to digital money.
- Building trust, educating the public about advantages and hazards, and encouraging ethical use of government resources.
- Invest in R&D to create new solutions, improve finance processes, and boost productivity.

#### Conclusion:

For monetary sovereignty, private digital currencies provide both potential and difficulties. The cases of Myanmar, China, and India show how legitimacy, trust, and currency control interact in intricate ways. The balance between innovation and preserving national sovereignty will continue to influence the future of monetary systems as the globe navigates the emergence of digital currencies.

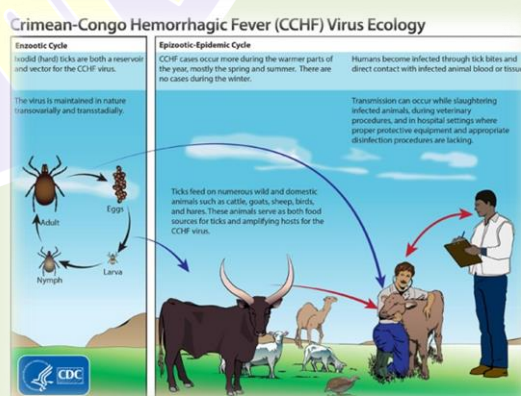
**Source: The Hindu**

## 13. Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever (CCHF)

**Context:** Wildfires and a heatwave are presently raging over Europe, raising worries about the potential spread of diseases that are more common in cooler areas. The Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF), a potentially lethal condition spread by ticks, has received a WHO notice.

#### What is CCHF?

- A viral hemorrhagic fever, CCHF is mostly spread by ticks.
- Additionally, during animal slaughter, it can be contracted by coming into touch with viraemic animal tissues.
- CCHF outbreaks provide difficulties for prevention and treatment since they can cause epidemics with a high case-fatality ratio (10-40%).





**Transmission and Hosts:**

- The tick family of insects is home to the virus.
- The virus uses animals including cattle, goats, sheep, and hares as amplifying hosts.
- Through contact with infected ticks or animal blood, humans can get CCHF.
- Humans can potentially contract the virus by coming into touch with infected blood or bodily fluids.
- Ticks may live on migratory birds, which makes it possible for the virus to travel great distances.

**Symptoms and Treatment:**

- Fever, muscular pains, dizziness, headaches, painful eyes, and sensitivity to light are typical CCHF symptoms.
- Along with mood swings and disorientation, early symptoms may also include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach discomfort, and sore throat.
- Later phases might include sadness, lassitude, and tiredness.
- CCHF in people or animals cannot be prevented, thus therapy focuses on symptom management.
- Ribavirin, an antiviral medication, has been used to treat CCHF infection with some visible success.

**Spread of CCHF in Europe:**

- Africa, the Balkan states, the Middle East, and some regions of Asia are all endemic to CCHF.
- The first CCHF-related death in Europe was reported from Spain in 2016.
- CCHF, which can have a mortality rate between 10% and 40%, is expanding northward and westward in Europe, according to scientists.
- Spain, Russia, Turkey, and the UK have all had cases of CCHF.

**Reasons for this spread:**

- Due to the disruption of temperature patterns brought on by climate change, diseases are flourishing.
- The longer and drier summers brought on by climate change are causing CCHF ticks in Europe to migrate northward.
- By increasing tick habitats, changing water habitats, and allowing animal and human migration and interactions, climate change aids in the transmission of illnesses.

**Source: The Hindu**



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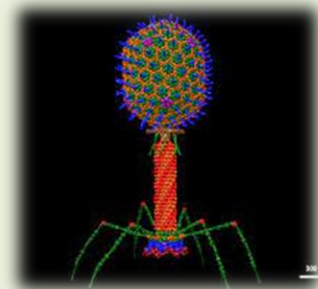
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## 14. Bacteriophages

**Context:** Viral outbreaks of lethal illnesses have had a tremendous influence on human history. Nevertheless, not all viruses are dangerous, and researchers are realising the value of the virome (bacteriophages).



### Do you know?

**Bacteriophages, or phages for short, are a kind of virus that only infects bacteria, hence they are closely connected to viromes.**

**Since they add to the total amount of viral genetic material present in a particular environment or organism, bacteriophages are regarded as a component of the virome.**

### What are Virome?

- Like the bacterial microbiome, they are a group of viruses in our bodies that support our health.
- Bacteriophages, which destroy bacteria in our microbiomes without harming human cells, make up the bulk of the viruses that live inside of us.
- Around 380 trillion virus particles, 10 times as many as bacteria, are present in our bodies.
- Some viruses have helpful effects, such as destroying cancer cells, assisting in the development of the immune system, warding off infections, and controlling gene expression during pregnancy.

### Bacteriophages and Phage Therapy:

- When a bacterium is found, a bacteriophage will attach to it, inject viral DNA into it, and then reproduce inside the bacterium, causing the bacterium to rupture and release fresh virus particles.
- Phages were investigated as possible antibacterial agents in the beginning of the 20th century, but the development of antibiotics eclipsed this work.
- Scientists are looking again at phage treatment as a substitute for treating bacterial illnesses in light of the growth of antibiotic-resistant germs.
- Phages precisely eliminate bacterial strains, successfully target multi-resistant infections, and do not disturb the gut microbiota the way antibiotics do.

**Phage Therapy in Practice:**

- In nations without access to many antibiotics, such as Georgia, Ukraine, and Russia, phage treatment continued. Infections resistant to antibiotics have been successfully treated in these locations.
- Phage treatment is receiving more attention in nations including Belgium, the US, and Germany, where there are requests for more research and use as well as specialised therapeutic facilities.
- It is still difficult to standardise treatment and modify phages to target certain bacteria that are the source of the sickness. However, phage treatments are generally safe and well tolerated by human beings.

**Future Prospects:**

- Phages aren't expected to replace antibiotics, but they may be used in conjunction with antibiotics to increase their efficiency, particularly against bacteria that have developed resistance to them.
- It is advised to do more extensive research and clinical trials to develop efficient phage treatments for various illnesses.

**Source: The Hindu**

## 15. Semiconductor

**Context:** India is dedicated to its semiconductor objectives despite recent failures, such as Foxconn Technology Group's exit from a joint venture with Vedanta, Ltd.

**What are Semiconductors?**

- Between conductors and insulators, semiconductors are a family of materials that display a special quality of electrical conductivity.
- Semiconductors have a medium degree of electrical conductivity, in contrast to conductors, which permit free passage of electricity through them, and insulators, which do not conduct electricity at all.

**Key characteristics of semiconductors include:**

- Compared to insulators, semiconductors transport electricity more efficiently, but not as efficiently as conductors. It is possible to regulate and alter their conductivity.
- The valence band, where electrons are closely bound, and the conduction band, where electrons can flow more freely, are separated from one another in semiconductors by an energy band gap. This band gap is greater than conductors' band gap but lower than insulators'.
- Semiconductors' conductivity is very temperature-dependent. Their electrical conductivity rises along with the temperature.

- To change the electrical characteristics of semiconductors, contaminants can be purposefully added to them. Conductivity may be increased or decreased by doping because it introduces more charge carriers, such as electrons or holes.

**Semiconductors and Transistors:**

- A semiconductor chip's fundamental components are transistors made of materials like silicon. Transistors modify information encoded as 0s and 1s to produce new data.
- The source, gate, and drain are the three main parts of a transistor. In the semiconductor chip, data is stored and processed by controlling the gate's opening and closing.
- A complicated network of electrical connections formed by transistors coupled to many metal layers on top allows the chip to perform several jobs.

**Understanding Semiconductor Nodes:**

- Gate length and metal pitch traditionally served as the foundation for semiconductor nodes. This naming scheme changed as transistors got smaller.
- Gate length and metal pitch stopped affecting node names as miniaturisation advanced. There is no physical characteristic in the state-of-the-art 7 nm node that is near to 7 nm.

**Importance of Legacy Nodes:**

- India's present focus is on 28 nm or above, even though advanced nodes span from 10 nm to 5 nm in size. Starting with legacy nodes has advantages for applications that need to be inexpensive in robotics, aircraft, defence, industry automation, cars, IoT, and image sensors.
- Commercial fabs continue to produce both legacy and cutting-edge nodes in order to meet demand. The semiconductor sector still sees a sizable amount of income from older nodes.

**India's Semiconductor Journey:**

- India made a deliberate decision to begin with older nodes. As the need for legacy nodes in applications like infotainment systems and electric automobiles rises, it prepares the nation for long-term success.
- India's semiconductor sector has the ability to expand and establish itself as a major centre for semiconductor technology with further development and improvement.

**Conclusion:**

- India's emphasis on legacy nodes paves the way for its aspirations in the semiconductor industry.
- Adopting these nodes establishes the country as a player in the global semiconductor market and equips it for growth.
- India has the ability to play a significant role in the semiconductor industry if it is committed to innovation and progress.

**Source: The Hindu**



## 16. DNA Bill

**Context:** The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019, was recently withdrawn from the Lok Sabha by the Union government.

### DNA Bill, 2019: Highlights

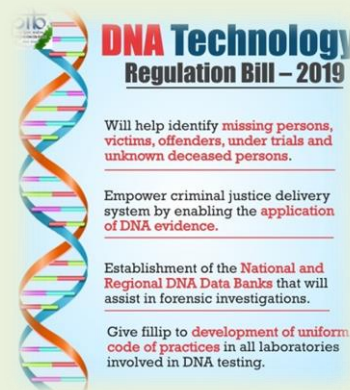
- The Bill, which was initially put up in 2003, seeks to provide a legal framework for collecting, preserving, and testing individual DNA samples, particularly for use in criminal investigations and proving identification.
- The Bill has undergone modifications throughout time, and in 2019 it was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee.
- Concerns were expressed by the committee over possible exploitation based on political, caste, or religious beliefs.

### Key Features:

- The Bill aimed to provide a legal framework for the gathering, testing, and storage of DNA samples, particularly for the purposes of identifying people and conducting criminal investigations.
- DNA testing is already used for finding missing people, determining parentage, and conducting criminal investigations.
- With the potential of regional centres at the state level, the Bill sought to establish a national DNA regulatory board and a DNA data bank.
- The board would establish policies and procedures for gathering, analysing, and storing DNA.
- All DNA samples obtained in accordance with the guidelines would be stored in the data bank.
- Only laboratories that have been approved by the regulatory body would be able to test DNA samples.
- The Bill outlined the conditions under which people may be requested to provide DNA samples, the justifications for such requests, and the precise steps for handling, storing, and accessing these samples.

### Controversies and Objections against the Bill:

- Critics questioned whether DNA technology was error-proof and expressed doubts about it.
- The risk of DNA data misuse was the major topic of discussion. Detractors were concerned that invasive DNA data collecting and storage may result in abuse and privacy concerns.



- DNA information shows a person's identity as well as physical characteristics and biological traits like eye, hair, and skin colour as well as their propensity for certain diseases and any relevant medical history. Some worried that keeping such private data might violate people's rights to privacy.

#### Standing Committee's Concerns:

- The technical, intricate, and delicate nature of the Bill was highlighted in the Standing Committee's findings.
- The study acknowledged and addressed worries raised by a number of members regarding potential discrimination based on political beliefs, caste, or religious beliefs using DNA technology.

#### Government's Defense of the Bill:

- The administration maintained that the need for such a law in India was justified by the fact that comparable legislation had been passed in over 60 other nations.
- Only 17 of the billions of numbers that DNA samples potentially provide, according to the government, would be kept in the indexes. Without disclosing any personal information, this data would serve as a distinctive identifier.

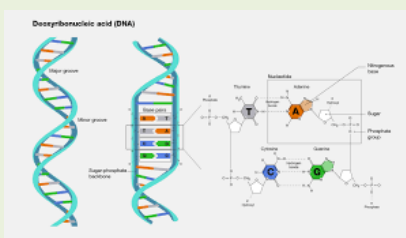
#### Conclusion:

- The government's efforts to establish legislation governing the use of DNA technology have been put on hold as a result of the withdrawal of the Bill.
- The debates and challenges presented underline the necessity of a reasonable strategy.
- The Centre must handle privacy and abuse issues while taking advantage of DNA technology's potential for application in criminal investigations and other fields.

### DNA

**Deoxyribonucleic acid, also known as DNA, is a molecule that houses the genetic instructions required for all known living things to grow, develop, operate, and reproduce. Many viruses also include DNA.**

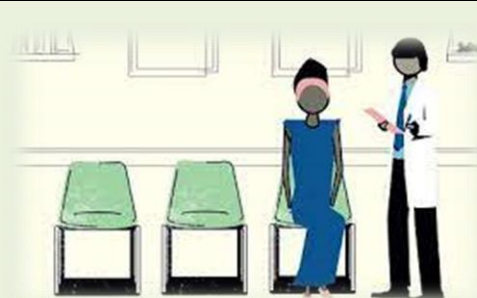
**It's frequently described as the "building blocks of life."**



**Source: The Hindu**

## 17. Controlled Human Infection Studies (CHIS)

**Context:** India has made the initial move towards implementing Controlled Human Infection Studies (CHIS), a research approach that is frequently utilised in other nations for the development of vaccines and treatments. The Bioethics Unit of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has created a consensus policy statement that is available for public discussion and addresses the necessity, advantages, and moral difficulties of CHIS.



### What is Controlled Human Infection Studies (CHIS)?

- CHIS, commonly referred to as human challenge trials, are controlled scientific experiments that intentionally expose healthy human volunteers to infectious pathogens.
- These research' main goals are to better understand the behaviour of the pathogens, the human immune system, and to evaluate novel vaccinations, therapies, or infection prevention strategies.

### Key points about Controlled Human Infection Studies (CHIS) include:

- In order to participate in CHIS, volunteers must give their informed permission after fully understanding the advantages and potential hazards of doing so.
- CHIS may be used to examine a variety of infectious agents, including bacteria, viruses, and parasites, such as cholera, dengue fever, and malaria.
- By providing controlled conditions to evaluate the effectiveness of potential vaccines and their capacity to elicit protective immune responses, CHIS plays a critical role in vaccine development.
- The use of CHIS has raised ethical discussions regarding how to weigh participant risks and possible public health benefits.

### Ethical Concerns Surrounding CHIS in India:

- Due to worries about intentional damage to research participants, equitable pay, hazards to third parties, withdrawal from the study, and the use of vulnerable subjects, CHIS is seen as being ethically sensitive.
- In order to protect study participants, ICMR accepts the necessity for a specialised ethical review procedure with extra monitoring and security measures.
- India was delayed in implementing CHIS because of technical, clinical, ethical, and regulatory issues, which were in part affected by the distinctive socio-cultural environment of the country.

**Potential Benefits of CHIS in India:**

- Infectious illnesses cause a large load on morbidity and mortality in India, accounting for around 30% of the disease burden in the nation.
- Compared to big clinical studies, CHIS allows for quicker and cost-effective results with lower sample numbers while providing unique insights into the pathophysiology of disease.
- CHIS can support community empowerment, increased pandemic preparedness, healthcare policy, economic gains, and public health response.

**Encouraging Collaboration and Expertise:**

- In order to guarantee that the essential knowledge is accessible, the ICMR emphasises the complexity of CHIS and advises that partnerships across researchers, institutions, organisations, and nations may be required.
- The consensus policy statement from the ICMR Bioethics Unit seeks to address ethical issues with CHIS while embracing its potential to advance knowledge of infectious illnesses and hasten the development of therapeutic options.

**Public Consultation and Future Directions:**

- The consensus policy statement on CHIS from the ICMR is out for public comment through August 16 in order to get opinions from experts and stakeholders.
- The ICMR emphasises their dedication to conducting the CHIS in India while upholding moral standards and protecting participants.

**Conclusion:**

- The consensus policy statement on CHIS from the ICMR is out for public comment through August 16 in order to get opinions from experts and stakeholders.
- The ICMR emphasises their dedication to conducting the CHIS in India while upholding moral standards and protecting participants.

**Source: Indian Express**

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## 1. Rugose spiralling whitefly (RSW)

**Context:** 'Rugose Spiralling Whitefly', an invasive insect that damages palm, coconut, and banana plants among others, has just been detected in Pune city. The insect has an influence on the fruit's nutritional content in addition to the output of coconut trees.

### SPIRALLING OUT OF CONTROL

➤ The Rugose Spiralling Whitefly derives its name from its egg-laying pattern

➤ It is a tiny insect measuring up to 2 mm in length

➤ It sucks out sap from under the leaves, inducing stress on the host plant from the loss of water and nutrients



**TOI** The honeydew excreted by the fly attracts ants and encourages the growth of fungus, thus affecting the plant

#### Details:

- A dangerous insect that may seriously harm ornamental and fruit plants and reduce productivity is the rugose spiralling whitefly (RSW).
- Due of its fast rate of reproduction, broad host range, and pesticide tolerance, RSW is challenging to manage. RSW can also spread quickly by the wind or via the human-mediated movement of infected plants.

#### Rugose spiralling whitefly (RSW):

- Aleyrodidae is the family of whiteflies that includes the rugose spiralling whitefly (RSW).
- It originated in Central America and the Caribbean, but it has now expanded to Florida, Hawaii, Africa, and Asia.
- It was discovered in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Maharashtra after being initially reported in Kerala, India, in 2016.

#### Features:

- RSW is a little, white insect with a length of 1-2 mm.
- It may consume plant sap thanks to piercing, sucking mouthparts.
- On the underside of leaves, it creates white waxy coatings by spiralling eggs. The flat, scale-like nymphs that emerge from the eggs feed on the plant tissues.
- Honeydew, a sticky material secreted by the nymphs, attracts ants and other insects and encourages the formation of sooty mould, a black fungus that hinders photosynthesis.

#### Concerns:

- RSW is a major pest of several commercially significant crops, including citrus, mango, guava, papaya, banana, coconut, and palm. By draining the sap from the plants and lowering their vitality, it directly damages them.
- By encouraging the formation of sooty mould and aiding in the spread of viral infections, it causes indirect harm.

- By influencing the size, weight, and oil content of the nuts, it can lower the production and quality of coconut.
- Bananas and other fruits may suffer in terms of flavour and look.
- RSW has a strong capacity for reproduction and a quick rate of dissemination. Up to 200 eggs can be laid by a female RSW in her lifetime, and they can hatch in 5-7 days.
- With the aid of wind currents, the adults may travel great distances and invade new places.
- Due to its ability to consume more than 60 plant species from 23 different families, it is challenging to manage it through crop rotation or host plant resistance.
- Due to its indiscriminate usage and excessive dependence, it has evolved resistance to a number of pesticides.
- RSW necessitates the use of an integrated pest management (IPM) strategy that includes a number of control techniques, including cultural, biological, mechanical, and chemical ones.

**Some of the IPM practices that can be adopted are:**

- Monitoring and scouting: Regularly inspecting the crops for signs of infestation and taking action before it becomes severe.
- Sanitation: Removing and destroying infested plant parts and debris to reduce the source of inoculum and breeding sites.
- Pruning: Pruning the lower leaves of coconut trees to expose the whiteflies to natural enemies and sunlight.
- Mulching: Covering the soil with organic matter to conserve moisture and suppress weed growth.
- Biological control: Using natural enemies such as parasitoids, predators and pathogens to reduce the population of whiteflies. Some examples are *Coccinella septempunctata* (predators) and *Beauveria bassiana* (fungus).
- Mechanical control: Using yellow sticky traps or water jets to trap or dislodge the whiteflies from the plants.
- Chemical control: Using selective or botanical insecticides as a last resort when other methods fail or are not feasible. Some examples are neem oil, azadirachtin, pyrethrum and spinosad.

**Conclusion:**

- RSW poses a danger to both consumers' food security and farmers' means of subsistence. All parties involved in crop production and protection must pay serious attention to this issue and take immediate action. We can reduce the harm done by this insect and maintain sustainable agriculture by implementing IPM practises.




**Source: The Hindu**

## 2. Ambergris

**Context:** An astonishing find has resulted from the finding of a sperm whale corpse on the coast of the Canary Island of La Palma. A doctor discovered ambergris, a very precious material sometimes referred to as "floating gold," trapped in the whale's intestines during the post-mortem investigation. The recovered chunk of ambergris is worth around €500,000 (roughly Rs. 4,47,62,500).

### HOW MUCH DOES AMBERGRIS COST?

Ambergris is sold per gram, with prices varying according to the grade and size. Ambergris Connect uses the following prices for the sale of ambergris:

WHITE AMBERGRIS, THE MOST VALUABLE AND MATURE GRADE, IS SOLD AT \$25 PER GRAM		\$25
BROWN AMBERGRIS IS PRICED AT \$23 PER GRAM		\$23
BLACK AMBERGRIS, THE YOUNGEST GRADE OF AMBERGRIS, IS SET AT \$20 PER GRAM		\$20

Ambergris Connect

### What is Ambergris?

- Ambergris is a waxy material that develops in the sperm whales that are kept in captivity.
- According to one idea, sperm whales' gastrointestinal tracts manufacture ambergris to help the animals' hard food items pass more easily.
- Ambergris is light yellowish and fatty when it is first passed; as it matures, however, it turns waxy and develops reddish-brown hues. It smells mildly sweet, earthy, and earthy with notes of oceanic odour.

### Uses and Rarity of Ambergris:

- Ambergris is traditionally used to fragrances to give them a musky smell.
- Ambergris was once used in several civilizations to flavour cigarettes, alcoholic drinks, and food.
- Due to its scarcity, ambergris is in high demand and commands a premium price on the global market.

### Legal Restrictions in India:

- According to Schedule 2 of the Wildlife Protection Act of India, sperm whales, which are the source of ambergris, are a protected species.
- The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 forbids ambergris and its derivatives from being in possession or traded, even in India.
- Ambergris is frequently obtained by smuggling networks from Indian coastal regions and transported through nations with relatively laxer maritime trade laws.

**Source: The Hindu**

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### 3. Mo Jungle Jami Yojana

**Context:** To successfully execute the terms of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006, the government of Odisha introduced the Mo Jungle Jami Yojana on July 2, 2023. This programme, or initiative, would be executed in 32 districts and 32000 villages, and it will help almost 7.4 lakh tribal households in Odisha.



This programme, which would cost a total of Rs 38.76 crore, was introduced in the state budget for 2023-24. It will continue in use for the following two years.

#### Mo Jungle Jami Yojana (MJJY):

- It is short for My Forestland Scheme.
- It is a programme for the welfare of tribal families in Odisha that is wholly supported by the state government with the intention of ensuring food security and chances for livelihood for the population of Scheduled Tribes and forest dwellers.
- Over 7.35 million families, dispersed over 35,739 sq km, will profit from it.
- If this plan is implemented successfully, Odisha would become the first state to comply with the FRA.
- The potential villages for this programme were selected by the Tribal Research Institute in Bhubaneswar.

#### Benefits of Scheme:

- The indigenous people have easy access to forest resources and land ownership.
- More prospects for employment and food security.
- Including tribal groups in publicly funded, mainstream development
- By converting non-surveyed communities to revenue villages, access to water supplies, road connections, educational opportunities, and medical care were made possible.
- Land ownership documents should be digitalized in order to recognise land rights.
- It will improve the forest governance.

#### However for the success of this scheme:

- To develop adequate cooperation between the departments of tax, forestry, and tribal affairs.
- Community Forest Resources (CFR) titles must be cleared as soon as possible.



- The solutions to all the problems and the provisions should be put into action within the allotted period.
- Records that need to be corrected for the titles provided should be verified quickly and thoroughly.

### Tribals in Odisha State:

- 13 tribal groups in the state are designated as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.
- Odisha is home to 62 different tribes in total.
- The estimated total tribal population is close to 1 million, or around 23% of the overall population.
- According to estimates from the 2011 census, it has the third-largest tribal population in India.
- According to official government records, there are 32,562 FRA (under the rules of the Forest Rights Act) prospective communities.

Source: The Hindu

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## 4. Atlantic Menhaden

**Context:** Ospreys are fish-eating birds, and scientists have shown that their population is declining as a result of the reduction in the population of Atlantic menhaden, which is their main food supply. Commercial fishing methods are to blame for the disappearance of the little, silvery fish known as menhaden. Reduced menhaden populations have a wider ecological impact, which is reflected in the fall in osprey reproduction.



### About Atlantic Menhaden:

- Brevoortia tyrannus, the official name for Atlantic menhaden, is a species of fish in the Clupeidae family.
- They are frequently seen throughout North America's Atlantic coast, from Florida to Nova Scotia.
- Atlantic menhaden have substantial commercial value and perform a significant ecological significance.

**Importance of Atlantic Menhaden:**

- The ecosystem of coastal waters of the Eastern Seaboard depends heavily on menhaden, which feed bigger fish, marine animals, and birds.
- Menhaden filter a sizable amount of ocean water while digesting smaller animals like plankton. They are nutrient-rich and contain omega-3 fatty acids.

**Commercial Fishing Impact:**

- For the next two years, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission increased the permitted capture of menhaden by 20% to 233,550 metric tonnes.
- For the reduction fishery in the Chesapeake Bay, where menhaden are utilised as bait and in fish products, the commission maintained a limit of 51,000 metric tonnes.
- Critics contend that the removal of large amounts of menhaden is harming the ecology and imperilling animals that depend on menhaden, such as ospreys and striped bass.

**Low Reproductive Numbers and Menhaden Depletion:**

- In Mobjack Bay, a portion of the Chesapeake Bay, just three of the 84 nests surveyed by researchers in mid-June contained juvenile ospreys.
- The lowest reproductive rate was observed by researchers at the College of William & Mary, who have been keeping an eye on the area's osprey population for more than 50 years.
- The loss of Atlantic menhaden, the osprey's main food supply, is thought to be the cause of the decline in breeding success.

**Lawsuit and Ecosystem Protection:**

- A group of Maryland recreational fishermen sued the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, saying that by approving quotas that impair fish populations and the recreational fishing business, the commission contributed to the menhaden drop.
- Critics draw attention to the detrimental effects of the industrial methods employed by businesses like Omega Protein, which collect menhaden in excessive amounts, causing the extinction of other species and harming ecosystems.
- In order to preserve a healthy environment, non-profit organisations push for the restoration of menhaden populations throughout the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts.

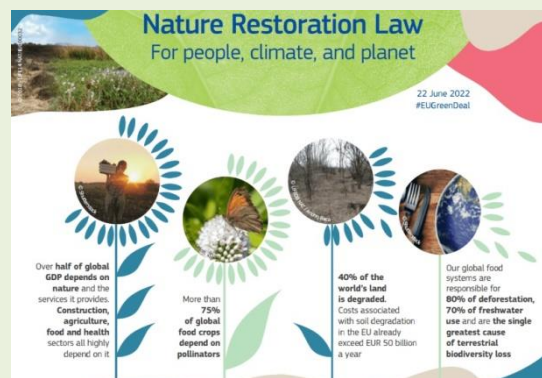
**Positive Signs beyond Chesapeake Bay:**

- Since the Atlantic Commission took action to combat overfishing in 2012, menhaden populations have expanded outside of the Chesapeake Bay, resulting in a recovery of the fish population within two years.
- Off the shores of New York and New Jersey, the recovery of menhaden populations has reintroduced a number of predators, including humpback whales, tuna, sharks, and bald eagles.

**Source: Indian Express**

## 5. EU Nature Restoration Law

**Context:** The adoption of a rule by the EU Parliament on environmental restoration has provoked criticism and discussion over strategies for preserving threatened ecosystems. The law, which attempts to combat species loss and repair degraded ecosystems, is an essential component of the European Green Deal.



### Nature Restoration Law:

- By 2030, the law seeks to improve the 30% of degraded terrestrial, coastal, freshwater, and marine environments.
- The measure is fiercely opposed by farmers and conservative MPs, especially with regard to proposals to rehabilitate drained peatlands. They contend that the loss of important agricultural land might have negative economic and social repercussions as well as possible threats to food security.

### Importance of Peatlands and Environmental Impact:

- More carbon is stored in wetlands, namely in peatlands, than in any other kind of ecosystem. They take up about twice as much carbon dioxide as all of the woods on Earth put together.
- Peatlands become substantial producers of greenhouse gases when they are drained for farming or other activities; this increases emissions.
- The destruction of more than half of Europe's peatlands has resulted in around 7% of the continent's greenhouse gas emissions.

### Calls for Rewetting and Paradigm Shift:

- In order to reduce climate change and restore the environmental functions of Europe's former peatlands, the proposed legislation calls for rewetting 50% of them.
- Paludiculture, or "farming on wetlands," which is agriculture on rewetted peat soil, is promoted by experts as an alternative to farming on drained peatlands. This strategy would reduce carbon emissions while enhancing the quality of the land and water.

### Political Challenges and Compromises:

- The European People's Party and other conservative organisations work to limit the extent of initiatives to restore wetlands and fight the conversion of agricultural land.
- Critics assert that destroying towns for wetland restoration might have negative economic and social effects. These assertions, however, have been dismissed as false and populist.



### Economic and Environmental Benefits:

- According to the European Commission, long-term economic returns from investments in restoring natural resources would be at least eight times greater than those from conventional investments.
- Rewetted soil might not be able to sustain conventional monocultures, but it might be able to support the development of other crops, such as reeds, grasses, and lumber for organic plastic alternatives, insulation materials, and building materials. Areas that have been revitalised may also be used as grazing land for different animals.

### Conclusion:

Agricultural and environmental groups are arguing over the EU nature restoration regulation since it was approved. Environmentalists make the case for the long-term advantages of sustainable land usage while farmers raise worries about the probable loss of agricultural land and its economic consequences. The European Green Deal's lofty climate and biodiversity goals will need to be met in order for the law to be fully implemented.

Source: The Hindu

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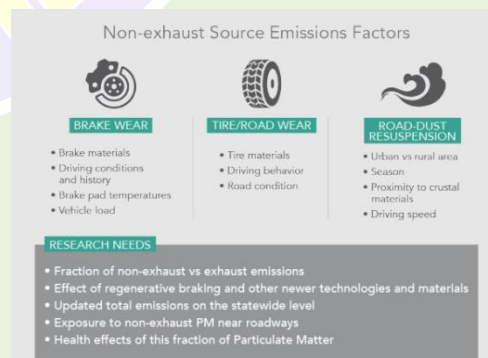
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## 6. EV Tires

**Context:** For electric vehicles (EVs), tyre makers work to create the ideal tyre that combines performance and durability. To bear the weight and effectively transmit power to the road, EVs' higher weight and torque necessitate stronger tyres. To address the demands of EVs, tyre manufacturers are creating new chemical formulae and enhancing tyre designs.

### Environmental Impact of Tires:

- Beyond exhaust emissions, tyres considerably contribute to environmental deterioration.
- Small particles released by worn tyres have the potential to pollute the air and soil by becoming airborne or settling on the ground.





- The issue of microplastic contamination is becoming more and more problematic due to tyre particles entering rivers.
- Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) found in tyres react in the environment to cause smog and air pollution.

**Tire Emissions and Electric Vehicles:**

- Pollution from tyre particles has surpassed emissions from car tailpipes.
- Compared to conventional vehicles, EVs have more weight, which increases the emissions from tyre wear.
- According to a research, the Tesla Model Y produced 26% more emissions related to tyre wear than the Kia Niro.

**Environmental Hazards and Solutions:**

- Water contamination and the buildup of microplastics are both caused by tyre particulate pollution.
- The health of humans, food plants, and aquatic life are all at danger from the chemical 6PPD found in tyres.
- When switching to electric vehicles, addressing tyre emissions is essential to reducing total pollution levels.
- Sustainable transportation requires minimising automobile use while balancing economic activity and environmental considerations.

**Market Mechanisms and Individual Actions:**

- Market forces may motivate tyre manufacturers to spend money creating low-emission tyre formulations.
- To control the amounts of harmful volatile organic compound (VOC) in tyres, more stringent industry regulations are required.
- Tyre wear and particle emissions can be decreased by using responsible driving practises.
- Particulate emissions are reduced during the initial period of use by using tyres to the full extent of their lifespan.

**Conclusion:**

Performance for EVs and pollution reduction must be balanced in tyre design and production. To overcome the problems associated with tyres and EVs, market, industry, and individual efforts are essential. Tyres can have a negative influence on the environment, however there are comprehensive solutions merging technology, environmental concerns, and ethical behaviour.

**Source: Indian Express**

## 7. Radio Collars

**Context:** At Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh, eight translocated cheetahs have so far perished. Concerns concerning the reintroduction initiative have been expressed in light of the recent deaths of two cheetahs in



Kuno from probable septicaemia brought on by festering neck wounds brought on by radio collars. Three more cheetahs have shown signs of the same wounds. Experts familiar with the common usage of collars for monitoring and research reasons in both Africa and India are perplexed by this unanticipated setback.

### What are collars on animals?

Devices worn around or fastened to an animal's neck are referred to as collars on animals. Depending on the particular situation and the animal kind, these collars have a variety of uses.

### What are Radio Collars used on Cheetahs?

- Radio collars are similar to tracking collars in that they use radio waves to keep an eye on animals.
- They are frequently used to obtain data on animal movements, home ranges, and social interactions in wildlife research.
- Radio collars can offer important insights into the ecology and behaviour of wild animals.

### The Problem with Collars:

- It might be harmful to wear a gadget on the body for a lengthy period of time.
- Staphylococcus aureus germs, which can cause sepsis or death, are more common on the wrists of watch wearers, according to a research in the Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research.
- Similar to humans, domestic dogs frequently have hot patches or acute wet dermatitis under their collars, which is made worse by tick or flea attacks.
- Additionally, tight collars can result in hair loss around the neck and pressure necrosis, which resemble bedsores.

### Factors Influencing Vulnerability of Cheetahs in Kuno:

- Compared to tigers or leopards, cheetahs have a furrier winter coat that holds more water and takes longer to dry.
- Over time, this continual contact with moisture weakens the skin.
- According to a research, the 3% collar weight restriction ignores animal athleticism.

- According to study using accelerometers, collars put pressure on cheetahs during mobility that can be up to 18 times the weight of the collar.
- During high-speed sprints, this weight burden, especially on a wet coat, might be harmful to cheetahs.
- Indian tigers and leopards are immune to some native infections, while cheetahs are not.
- Alternatively, given their compromised immunity brought on by stress, the cheetahs may have harboured latent viruses that flourished in novel circumstances.

**What needs to be done?**

- Tracking, immobilising, and assessing every cheetah for neck injuries brought on by the radio collars should be done right away.
- Reconsidering the usage of radio collars and looking at different collar options or modifications.
- To reduce the incidence of collar-related injuries, lighter collars should be developed together with adequate fitting procedures.
- The use of non-intrusive tracking techniques without collars might be investigated.
- Provide veterinary care and therapy that is suitable.
- Recognise and name the individual pathogens that Kuno's cheetahs' collar-induced illnesses are caused by.
- It is essential that wildlife biologists, vets, researchers, and conservationists work together. Consultation and the exchange of information and expertise.

**Conclusion:**

The endeavour to reintroduce cheetahs has been significantly hampered by the recent collar-related injuries and deaths of cheetahs in Kuno. To ensure the success and welfare of the cheetahs, the problems must be resolved. Finding a system that balances collar use with the safety and health of the cheetahs is still a challenging issue.

Source: The Hindu



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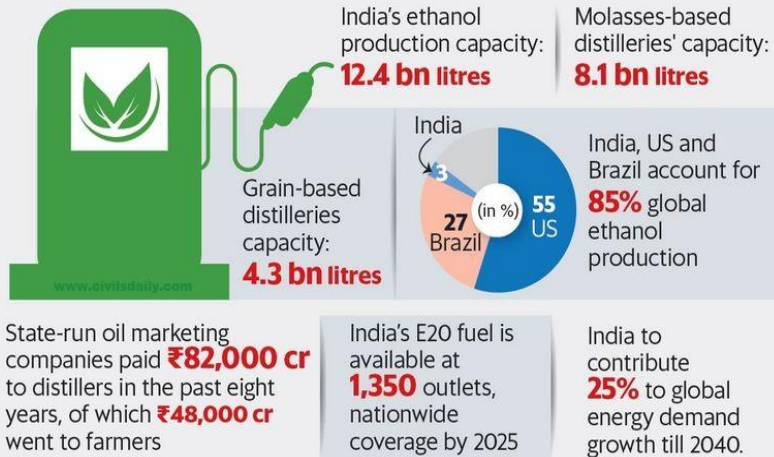
## 8. Global Biofuel Alliance

**Context:** The Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA) will be launched at the forthcoming 14th Clean Energy Ministerial and Eighth Mission Innovation (CEM14/MI-8) conference, which is slated to occur in Goa from July 19-22, 2023. The Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA), which is anticipated to be established and will be led by India during its G20

Presidency with backing from Brazil and the United States, intends to encourage worldwide collaboration and cooperation to advance the adoption and use of biofuels. In order to promote economic expansion, rural development, energy independence, a reduction in air pollution, and a global switch to clean energy, it aims to take use of the revolutionary potential of biofuels.

### Establishing Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA)

India is looking to ramp up biofuel production capability in view of growing energy demand.



### What is Biofuel?

- Bioethanol is an alcohol-based fuel that is typically made by fermenting crops high in sugar or starch, such as wheat, corn, or sugarcane. For transportation purposes, bioethanol is frequently added to petrol as a mix component.
- Vegetable oils, animal fats, or used cooking oil are used to make biodiesel. It can be combined with normal diesel fuel or used as a straight replacement for it in automobiles.
- A combination of gases, predominantly methane, known as biogas is created when organic wastes like sewage, food scraps, or agricultural leftovers are digested anaerobically. It may be used to produce power, heat homes, or fuel vehicles.

### Key Objectives and Initiatives of Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA):

- Fostering international commerce in biofuels and creating strong markets for these fuels.
- Globally, support national biofuel programmes with technical assistance, specific policy lessons to be shared, and policy coordination.
- Collaborate with and enhance the energy transition initiatives of current regional and international organisations, such as the Clean Energy Ministerial Biofuture Platform, the Mission Innovation Bioenergy Initiatives, and the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP).
- Maximise effect and speed up the expansion of the biofuel sector by using synergies.



**India's Biofuel Program:**

- India produced 4.08 billion litres of ethanol in 2020-2021, which resulted in a blending rate of 10.02 percent. As a result, 2.7 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were reduced, and huge currency savings were realised.
- The blending rate of 12% is the current objective for 2022-2023 with a 20% ambition for 2025.
- Through the Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) programme, India aggressively promotes CBG as a clean fuel made from waste. There have already been 46 CBG facilities built, and about 16,164 tonnes of CBG have been sold.
- The objective is to deploy 5,000 CBG units throughout India by 2024, helping with waste management and lowering pollution.
- In an effort to decarbonize the aviation industry, India carried out its first commercial passenger flight using a combination of locally generated sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).
- The Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has advanced the development of sustainable aviation fuel in the nation by establishing the Bio-Aviation Turbine Fuel Programme Committee.

**Inspiration behind GBA: International Solar Alliance (ISA)**

- India and France jointly launched the ISA in 2015.
- The ISA—significant contributions to the wider use of solar energy technologies in the fight against climate change.
- Initiatives like the Solar Finance Facility, SolarX Grand Challenge, Solar Technology Application Resource Centres, and the "One Sun One World One Grid Initiative" have facilitated the development of solar projects.
- By encouraging the use of biofuels and lowering India's dependency on foreign oil, the GBA seeks to build on the success of the ISA.

**Conclusion:**

The global biofuel market is about to undergo a change because to the GBA. The G20 Presidency of India demonstrates the value of biofuels in attaining energy independence, lowering carbon emissions, and promoting a switch to clean energy. A greener and more sustainable future will be made possible through the GBA's comprehensive plan, ambitious goals, and actions.

**Source: Indian Express**

**You Tube**  
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## 9. Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill

**Context:** During the monsoon session of the Parliament, the Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill, 2022, is scheduled to be introduced. Originally scheduled for discussion in the Lok Sabha on March 29, 2023, it was

postponed. The Biological Diversity Act, 2002, now in effect, is intended to be modified by the Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill, 2022, presented in 2021. Due to worries that some revisions may favour corporate interests and not sufficiently preserve the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), it has, nevertheless, drawn criticism and objections. Questions have been raised concerning the bill's possible influence on India's biodiversity protection during its current course.

### THE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY ACT, 2002



1. The Biological Diversity Act, 2002 is an Act enacted by the **Parliament of India for the preservation of biological diversity** in India, and provides mechanism for equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of traditional biological resources and knowledge.

2. The Act was enacted to **meet the obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, because India is a party of the convention

### Objectives of the Bill:

- The amendment bill's primary goals are to loosen restrictions on wild medicinal plants.
- Promote the Indian medical system.
- Encourage a collaborative research and investment environment.
- The National Biodiversity Authority's (NBA) requirements for practitioners and businesses making pharmaceuticals should be made less onerous.

### Controversial Provisions of the Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill, 2022:

- The proposed legislation would remove the ability for the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) to file a First Information Report (FIR) against defaulting parties and would decriminalise infractions of biodiversity rules.
- The measure permits domestic businesses to exploit biodiversity without consulting biodiversity boards. Only businesses with foreign ownership must get authorisation.
- The term "codified traditional knowledge" used in the legislation exempts users, such as practitioners of Indian medical systems, from the requirements for receiving or disclosing benefits.

### Concerns raised by the activists:

- The proposed revisions, according to some detractors, might make India's efforts to conserve biodiversity less effective.
- The misuse of biodiversity resources due to a lack of control and accountability may have an adverse effect on ecosystems and biodiversity.

- Because it has been codified, traditional knowledge may be used by profit-driven domestic businesses without fairly rewarding the communities that have preserved and maintained it for decades.
- The fair and equitable distribution of benefits resulting from the use of biodiversity is a key component of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). It's possible that the suggested changes don't adhere to these ideas entirely.
- Even if the law seeks to promote traditional medicine and loosen rules, it could not adequately address the more general problems of biodiversity loss, habitat degradation, and the need for more effective conservation measures.
- Indigenous and local people, which frequently depend on biodiversity for their livelihoods and cultural practises, might be disproportionately harmed by weakening biodiversity protection and benefit-sharing systems.

**Way Forward:**

- Review and rewrite the bill's controversial clauses, especially the ones that deal with decriminalising infractions, exempting domestic businesses from obtaining permission, and codifying traditional knowledge.
- Create trustworthy and transparent systems to ensure that the use of biodiversity is shared in a fair manner.
- Provide adequate compensation to indigenous groups and bearers of traditional knowledge in recognition of their contributions to biodiversity preservation.
- Encourage companies to prioritise resource conservation and sustainable use.
- Increased enforcement will guarantee that laws governing biodiversity protection are followed. To discourage non-compliance, provide suitable sanctions for infractions.
- Align the legislation with India's obligations to the international community, particularly those made during the 15th Conference of Parties to the CBD.
- Enhance the ability and power of organisations that administer biodiversity, such as the National Biodiversity power (NBA), to effectively control and oversee activities that affect biodiversity.

**Conclusion:**

The Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill, 2022 poses a challenging conundrum for India's efforts to conserve biodiversity. Policymakers must address the concerns expressed by environmentalists and legal experts while the bill awaits consideration in the monsoon session to ensure that India's biodiversity is protected and in line with global conservation objectives.

**Source: Indian Express**



## 10. Gadgil Report

**Context:** Recently, a terrible landslide in Maharashtra's Raigad region claimed 27 lives and completely destroyed a hamlet. The 2011 Dr. Madhav Gadgil study on the conservation of the environmentally vulnerable Western Ghats has re-ignited concerns.

### Dr Madhav Gadgil Report:

The Union Environment Ministry appointed the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) in 2010, which is led by ecologist Dr. Madhav Gadgil.

### Key recommendations:

- According to the research, the Western Ghats, which span six states and occupy 64% of the region, should be divided into three ecologically sensitive zones (ESZs) 1 through 3 and designated as an ecologically sensitive area (ESA).
- In ESZ 1, the research advised discontinuing practically all development projects, including mining, the building of thermal power plants, and the construction of dams. Additionally, it demanded that mining be phased out in Goa's ESZ 1, that new polluting businesses be prohibited in ESZs 1 and 2 in Maharashtra's Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts, and that zero emission standards be implemented for already-existing companies.
- In order to encourage sustainable agricultural methods in the Western Ghats, the study called for a restriction on the cultivation of single commercial crops such tea, coffee, cardamom, rubber, bananas, and pineapple.
- It suggested decentralising environmental control and giving local governments more authority. To oversee the region's environment and guarantee sustainable development, the creation of a Western Ghats environment Authority was suggested.
- The report recommended banning plastic bags, Special Economic Zones, new hill stations, genetically modified crops, and Special Economic Zones, as well as protecting public lands and river ecosystems.

### Challenges in Implementation:

- Stakeholder states opposed the suggestions because they feared a detrimental impact on development and livelihoods.
- A High-Level Working Group on the Western Ghats was established in response to the opposition and is headed by Dr. K Kasturirangan. Only 37% of the area was classified as environmentally sensitive in this panel's assessment, which was published in 2014—a considerable decrease from Gadgil's suggestion.





- The Western Ghats were split into cultural (areas with human habitation) and natural (regions without human settlements) regions in the Kasturirangan report. In addition to introducing red, orange, and green classifications for activities based on regulatory levels, it proposed designating cultural areas as ESAs.

**Controversy and Criticism:**

- Dr. Madhav Gadgil criticised the Kasturirangan report, saying that it misrepresented and corrupted the original recommendations made by his panel.
- He emphasised the necessity for a more pro-nature attitude and the need of including local populations in economic choices.

**Current Status:**

The Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) said in 2022 that a powerful committee would be formed to carry out physical landscaping and present a thorough report within a year.

**Conclusion:**

- The tragic landslide in Raigad and the debates surrounding the Dr. Madhav Gadgil report highlight how important it is to protect the Western Ghats' delicate ecosystem.
- It is still difficult to strike the right balance between conservation efforts and the demands of development.
- In order to conserve this crucial ecosystem and its biodiversity for future generations, it is imperative that stakeholders, governments, and specialists work together to create sustainable solutions.

Source: The Hindu

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## Sagar Samajik Sahayyog:

- The new Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) standards for ports, known as "Sagar Samajik Sahayyog," were introduced by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways.
- A Board Resolution establishing a mandatory CSR Budget as a percentage of net profit is required.
- A minimum of 20% of CSR costs must be designated for the Sainik Kalyan Board.
- According to Section 135 of the 2013 Companies Act, some businesses must spend at least 2% of their average net profit over the previous three fiscal years on CSR initiatives.

## National Surveillance Programme for Aquatic Animal Diseases (NSPAAD):

- Recently, the "Report Fish Disease App" was introduced by the Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairy.
- Under the auspices of the National Surveillance Programme for Aquatic Animal Diseases (NSPAAD), the CAR-National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBFGR) created the app.
- The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairy launched NSPAAD.
- Under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojna, it is put into practise.
- To quickly identify novel and unusual infectious illnesses in aquatic animals, it gathers data on the prevalence and spread of aquatic animal diseases.

## Global Forest Review (GFR):

- GFR was updated on the Global Forest Watch site by the University of Maryland and the World Resources Institute (WRI).
- The total area of tropical primary forest lost in 2022 was 4.1 million hectares, or 11 football fields of forest each minute.
- The amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from this forest loss was 2.7 gigatonnes (Gt), which is equal to India's yearly emissions from fossil fuels.

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## Panchayat Development Index (PDI):

- The Panchayati Raj Ministry of the Union issued it.
- It offers a grid to track and assess their development based on the marks they receive.
- It assigns panchayats a grade based on their performance and ranks them according to their results.
- A (75 to 90%), B (60-75%), C (40-60%), and D (sub 40%) are the different grades.



## Indian Skimmer:

- Four hatchlings of the Indian Skimmer, which were hatched on a sand patch in a barrage in Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, have been lost to erosion.
- Normally, Indian Skimmer lays its eggs between April and May.
- It consumes fish that live on the surface as well as tiny crustaceans and insect larvae.
- Larger, sandy lowland rivers, lakes, and nearby marshes are where it may be found most often. During the non-breeding season, estuaries and coastlines are also where it can be found.
- IUCN Conservation Status: Endangered
- Major Threats: Exploitation and degradation of rivers and lakes, Predation by corvids like House crows and presence of stray and domestic dogs.



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## India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) Trilateral Highway:

- The IMT Trilateral Highway's construction is almost 70% complete.
- Moreh in Manipur, India will be linked by highway to Mae Sot in Thailand via Myanmar.
- The Kalewa-Yagyi road stretch and two more IMT Highway sections are being built in Myanmar by India.
- On the Tamu-Kyigone-Kalewa stretch, 69 bridges and an approach road are being built.
- A plan to expand the IMT highway to Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam is also being considered.



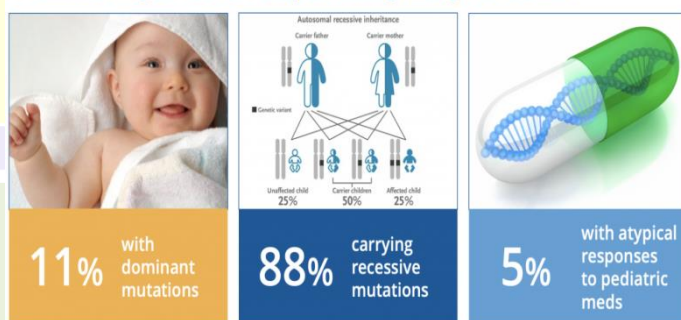
## Data Scraping:

- To stop data scraping, Twitter implemented temporary reading restrictions.
- The automatic method of obtaining copious amounts of data from websites or other online sources is known as data scraping, sometimes known as web scraping.
- Information from web sites is gathered using software tools or programming approaches.
- It may be used to develop ground-breaking software and services as well as for scholarly study and data journalism.
- But it might also result in data manipulation, privacy violations, copyright violations, and other issues.

## New-born genome-sequencing:

- Genome sequencing is the process of determining the precise sequence of base pairs in a person's DNA.
- A genome is an organism's whole DNA composition. It encompasses all of the DNA-containing chromosomes and the genes (distinct DNA segments).
- Genome sequencing of newborns may enable early diagnosis, improve the efficacy of treatment, and save a child's death or handicap. It may also make the therapy more affordable.
- Concerns with ethics include difficulties with privacy, the psychological toll on families, fair benefit allocation, etc.

### Newborn genomic sequencing may reveal...





## Metallurgical Coke:

- India has launched a safeguard investigation against a sharp increase in the imports of metallurgical coal.
- Destructive distillation of coal at extremely high temperatures in coke ovens yields metallic coke.
- It is widely utilised in the conversion of iron ore to iron in processes used in the iron and steel industry, including foundries, sinter plants, and blast furnaces.
- India can only supply a small portion of the demand; the rest must be imported.



## Project WAVE:

- In line with its "Project WAVE (World of Advance Virtual Experience)" digital transformation effort, Indian Bank has introduced new services.
- In conjunction with National E-Government Services Ltd., it has been unveiled.
- To simplify dated paper-based procedures, an electronic bank guarantee (e-BG) service has been established under it.

## eSARAS mobile App:

- The eSARAS mobile app has been released by Deendayal Antyodaya Yojna- National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).
- A more successful platform for promoting the goods created by women in self-help groups will be eSARAS, a mobile e-commerce app.
- The processing, packing, and delivery of goods that clients purchase through the eSARAS Portal and eSARAS mobile App will be handled by the eSARAS fulfilment centre.
- The Ministry of Rural Development's DAY-NRLM programme seeks to improve rural Indians' quality of life by expanding livelihood opportunities within the SHG ecosystem and generating higher revenue for SHG members.



### Rupees appreciated against Yuan:

- In the last three months, the rupee has gained 6% against the Chinese yuan.
- This is due to reduced export demand amid weaker global economy, a failing Chinese re-opening following Covid restrictions, greater returns in the US, and these factors.
- It may result in a rise in Chinese imports.
- Due to the lower prices of imported Chinese goods, core inflation (excluding food and energy) may be reduced.

### Zo peoples:

- In light of the ethnic conflict between the Meiteis and Kuki-Zomi tribes in Manipur, there is a demand for the Zo people of Mizoram to unite.
- The term "Zo peoples" refers to all tribes of the Chin-Kuki-Mizo ethnic group found in Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar.
- There are several sub-tribes and clans, including the Lushei, Zomi, Paitei, Hmar, Ralte, Pawi, Lai, Mara, Gangte, Thadou, and Mizo.
- It is said that tribes travelled from China to Tibet and then settled in Myanmar.
- A number of Tibeto-Burman languages are spoken there.

### Sudan (Capital: Khartoum):

- Fighting was intense all across Khartoum.
- Sudan, which is located in northeastern Africa, borders Ethiopia, Eritrea, Libya, South Sudan, Central African Republic, and Egypt.
- In 2011, South Sudan separated from it.
- Sudan and Saudi Arabia have a Red Sea maritime boundary.
- Highest Peak: Deriba Caldera (Jebel marra Mountain).
- Major River: Nile River (White Nile and Blue Nile merge in Khartoum).
- Major lakes: Kundi, Abyad and Turdat el-Rahad.



## International Court of Justice (ICJ):

- Recent legal action brought by the UK, Canada, Sweden, and Ukraine against Iran following the downing of a Ukrainian passenger plane in 2020.
- The main UN judicial body is the ICJ, often known as the World Court.
- The Hague, Netherlands, is home to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) headquarters.
- The UNGA and UNSC elect the 15 judges that make up the court for periods of service that last 9 years.
- The International Court of Justice (ICJ) hears two different kinds of cases: petitions for advisory opinions on legal issues that have been referred to it by United Nations bodies and specialised agencies (advisory procedures) and legal disputes between States that have been brought before it by them.



## Tele MANAS:

- In J&K, the first Tele-MANAS chatbot in India was introduced, allowing 24-hour access to clinical psychologists, consultants, and health counsellors.
- The National Tele Mental Health Programme of India, Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States (Tele-MANAS), had been introduced by the Centre in Budget 2022.
- Tele-MANAS falls under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- State Tele MANAS cells, which contain licenced counsellors and mental health professionals, make up Tier 1.
- Specialists from the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP)/Medical College resources and/or eSanjeevani are included in Tier 2 for physical and/or audiovisual consultation.



## Bahu Balli Cattle Fence (Bamboo Fence):

- Indian roadways will soon have the Bahu Balli Cattle Fence installed by the Ministry of Road Transport & roadways.
- Cattle crossing the road and resulting in hazardous incidents will be avoided.
- Bamboo is made into a more durable substitute for steel by being coated with recycled High-Density Poly Ethylene (HDPE), which is then treated with creosote oil.
- Fence has a Class 1 fire rating, which promotes safety and solves environmental issues.





## Chinkara:

- The national animal of Rajasthan is the chinkara, or Indian gazelle.
- Although it usually lives alone, it occasionally forms small groups of two to four people.
- Chinkara live in arid environments including sand dunes, low hills and plains, dry scrub, and light forests.
- They can survive without water for a very long period.
- India, Iran, Pakistan, and perhaps Afghanistan make up the species' range states.
- The Thar Desert in western India is home to the majority of the world's population.
- Both under CITES Appendix III and the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, it is classified as Least Concern.



## Khazan Land:

- The Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority recently came under fire from NGT for disregarding environmental regulations when building on khazan land in Cavelossim.
- Goa's Khazans are coastal wetlands.
- It is a tidally-influenced, low-lying terrain that is saturated with salt water.
- Through a complex network of dykes, sluice gates, and canals, they are extricated from mangrove forests throughout the Christian period.
- They have a variety of profitable applications, including farming, aquaculture, and salt mining.
- They serve as the area's primary drainage system for floodwater.

## Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant:

- The biggest nuclear power station in Europe, Zaporizhzhia, lies in eastern Ukraine but is currently under Russian control.
- It is located on the south bank of the Dnipro River and has six nuclear reactors.
- Khmelnytskyi, Rivne, and South Ukraine are additional nuclear power stations in Ukraine.

Nuclear power plants in Ukraine



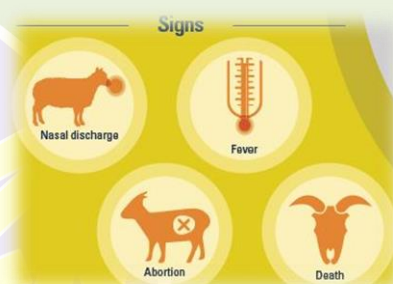


### Edible Oils:

- The "Multi-Source Edible Oils Grading and Marking Rules, 2023" have been announced by the Agricultural Ministry.
- In cases when several sources of edible oils are processed through blending, the new regulations make it necessary to disclose the mix proportion of the oils.
- Companies that produce edible oils are required to identify their products as "Multi source edible Oil" after the brand name on the label.
- Additionally, they must to list the brand names, the amount of edible oil that makes up each packet, and whether it is raw or refined.

### Peste Des Petits Ruminants (PPR):

- In the alpine pastures of the Lahaul and Spiti area of Himachal Pradesh, PPR recently killed 60 sheep and goats.
- It is a viral illness that is very infectious.
- It affects camels, goats, sheep, certain wild cousins of domesticated small ruminants, and a morbillivirus that is closely linked to the rinderpest virus.
- It is distinguished by high rates of morbidity and death.
- Humans are not infected by the PPR virus.



### Taylor Glacier:

- Scientists have determined the cause of the "crimson red" tongue drool produced by Taylor Glacier in Antarctica.
- It was initially found in 1911 by a British expedition, also known as Blood Falls.
- Little 'iron-rich nanospheres' were the source of the recognisable red colour.
- Antarctica's McMurdo Dry Valleys are the location.
- On Mars, a similar approach may be utilised to learn more about the terrain under the ice.



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## Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI):

- According to GAVI, during the following two years, 18 million doses of the malaria vaccine (Mosquirix) would be distributed to close to 12 nations in Africa.
- Gavi, an international organisation founded in 2000, strives to increase the equitable and sustainable use of vaccinations in order to save lives and safeguard people's health.
- WHO, UNICEF, the World Bank, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are some of the partners.



## Variable Rate Reverse Repo (VRRR):

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) persisted with VRRRs auctions in order to drain the banking sector of excess liquidity.
- Reverse repo is divided into VRRRs. The VRRR auction is conducted to remove cash from the system and minimise excess liquidity.
- Banks lend to the RBI at a set or variable interest rate known as a reverse repo.
- The repo rate is the price at which the RBI lends money to commercial banks when there is a cash shortage.



## Geocoding:

- In an effort to prevent phoney registrations and bogus tax credits, GST Network (GSTN) has begun geocoding for all states and territories.
- Geocoding has been used to assure the precision of address information in GSTN records and to speed up the process of locating and verifying addresses.
- It transforms a location's address or description into geographic coordinates.
- GSTN has already geocoded 1.8 crore major business locations.
- For the purpose of implementing GST, the non-profit organisation GSTN offers taxpayers, state and federal governments, and other stakeholders IT infrastructure and services.

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### Group of Global Crisis Response Group (GCRG):

- India has joined the GCRG of the UN.
- In order to address urgent and crucial global concerns related to interconnected crises in food security, energy, and finance and to coordinate a worldwide response, the UN Secretary General (UNSG) established the Global Crisis Response Group (GCRG) in 2022.
- The Champions Group, which consists of the heads of state or governments of Bangladesh, Barbados, Denmark, Germany, Indonesia, and Senegal, is in charge of it.
- It will assist decision-makers in organising plans and finding solutions to assist vulnerable nations.

### Klotho protein:

- According to a research published in Nature Ageing, injecting Klotho into old monkeys can enhance their cognitive performance.
- New therapeutics for neurological illnesses may result from the results.
- The 'longevity factor' protein klotho is a naturally occurring protein that decreases in our bodies as we age.
- Klotho injections have been found to prolong the lives of mice and improve synaptic plasticity, which is the ability to regulate communication between neurons at junctions known as synapses.

### Porpanaikottai Site:

- At the Porpanaikottai site in Tamil Nadu's Pudukottai district, three artefacts from the Sangam Age have been discovered: a gold stud, a bone point, and a carnelian bead.
- The term "Sangam Age" refers to the era in ancient Tamil Nadu and Kerala's history that ran from the sixth century BCE to around the third century CE.
- The fort location exhibited evidence of waterbodies inside the site, and the excavation site had suggested a burial place.
- The finding of a carnelian bead—which is typically found in Northern India—proved there had been commerce throughout the nation.
- A Porpanaikottai was a site of a weaving business, according to the discovery of bone point tools.



### New Wheat Variety:

- A novel wheat variety known as PBW RS1 was created by the Punjab Agricultural University. RS stands for resistant starch.
- High amylose starch content PBW RS1 is recognised to lower type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease risks.
- It won't immediately and sharply raise blood glucose levels when used in products.
- Instead, high levels of amylose and resistant starch make sure that the bloodstream releases glucose more gradually.
- Slower digestion also makes you feel fuller longer, which helps fight obesity.
- However, this crop's average grain yield is reported as being lower than the average yield.

### Entamoeba Moshkovskii:

- A bacteria that causes diarrhoea has been discovered to be in circulation in Kolkata.
- Entamoeba moshkovskii was first identified in 1941 in Moscow and is often found in anoxic sediments (sediments with insufficient oxygen) to brackish coastal pools.
- Entamoeba dispar and E histolytica, two species that are closely related, have physical similarities with E moshkovskii.
- Additionally, they are responsible for amoebiasis, which affects around 50 million individuals in tropical areas.
- E histolytica infections are common among them.

### De-Dollarisation:

- The rupee commerce transaction was started by Bangladesh and India as a move away from the dollar.
- De-Dollarization is the process by which nations increase their trade and economic reserves in their own currencies or other resources while decreasing their reliance on the US dollar.
- The regional currency and commerce will be strengthened.
- Both nations will eventually start using the 'Taka', the currency of Bangladesh, for commerce.
- The exchange rate will be set in accordance with consumer demand and the participation of banks.

### Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC):

- The United Payments Interface (UPI) and central bank digital currency (CBDC) will be made interoperable by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- The RBI introduced CBDC, often referred to as the Digital Rupee (e), in 2022. Its main components are based on blockchain technology (public ledger).
- It is being distributed in the same denominations as coins and paper money.
- Banks, who act as financial middlemen, are responsible for its distribution.
- Users will be able to conduct transactions with e- R using a digital wallet that the banks are providing.



### New Wheat Variety:

- Recently, shelf clouds were seen at Roorkee, Uttarakhand.
- Arcus clouds, often referred to as shelf clouds, are frequently found with strong storm systems and are frequently described as wall clouds, funnel clouds, or rotation.
- These clouds are occasionally visible behind cumulonimbus clouds, which are tall, vertical, and produce heavy rain.
- It develops when a cumulonimbus cloud's chilly downdraft hits the ground. The cold air may spread quickly along the ground, forcing the hot, humid air that already exists upward.
- Water vapour condenses into the shelf cloud-like shapes as the air rises.



### Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB):

- The biggest international organisation in the world for election management is A-WEB, which was founded in 2013.
- 119 Election Management Bodies (EMBs) from 110 nations presently make up this organisation.
- India's Election Commission served as A-WEB's Chair from 2019 to 22 and is currently a member of its Executive Board for the years 2022 to 24.
- For the purpose of teaching A-WEB member officials and exchanging best practises, an India A-WEB Centre has been created in New Delhi.



### Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA):

- IICA is a top organisation in the nation that operates independently under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) and focuses on certain areas of corporate affairs.
- In accordance with the Societies Registration Act, 1860, IICA was established as a society in 2008.
- IICA Society is presided over by the Minister of Corporate Affairs, who also serves as its Ex-officio President.
- In order to promote business growth, reforms, and regulations, it offers policy advocacy, research, and capacity building support to the government, corporations, and other stakeholders.



**Indian Institute of  
Corporate Affairs**  
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### AuditOnline:

- The AuditOnline Action Taken Report (ATR) Module has been introduced.
- An open-source programme called AuditOnline was created as part of the Panchayat Enterprise Suite as part of the e-panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP), which was started by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR).
- To revolutionise how Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) operate, MoPR is adopting e-Panchayat MMP as part of the Digital India Programme.
- A simpler work-based accounting programme called eGramSwaraj was also introduced under this.
- It makes government agencies' internal and external audits easier.



### State Disaster Response Funds (SDRF):

- To SDRF, the Ministry of Finance released a sum.
- Under the Disaster Management Act of 2005, SDRFs are established in each State to handle responses to declared disasters.
- In general states, the central government provides 75% to the SDRF; in north-eastern and himalayan states, it gives 90%.
- According to the Finance Commission's suggestion, the annual Central contribution is distributed in two equal installments.
- When disasters like cyclones, droughts, earthquakes, fires, floods, tsunamis, hailstorms, landslides, avalanches, cloud bursts, pest attacks, and frost and cold waves are reported, the SDRF is only utilised to pay for urgent help for the victims.



### Right to Silence:

- The Supreme Court ruled that all suspects have the right to remain silent and that authorities cannot compel them to testify or confess to a crime.
- Article 20(3), which provides that no one may be forced to testify against oneself, establishes the right to silence.
- only available during criminal trials.
- Since the individual is not "accused of an offence" and is not entitled to legal representation, the right is not applicable to someone who is being questioned under the Customs Act of 1962 or the Foreign Exchange Management Act of 1999.
- In the case of Nandini Satpathy v. P.L. Dani, the SC ruled that it is possible to violate Article 20(3) by forcing someone to answer a question inside of a police station.

### Kaas Plateau:

- A recent study of lake sediments from the Kaas Plateau revealed a significant change in the Indian Summer Monsoons.
- In the Maharashtra district of Satara sits the Kaas plateau, popularly referred to as the pathar or Valley of Flowers. It is a part of the Western Ghats biome.
- Its name is taken from the rudraksha family's Kaasa tree, scientifically known as *Elaeocarpus glandulosus*.
- It is constructed from igneous rocks.
- The Western Ghats are the term given to this plateau on the UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site listings.



### Ambergris (Floating gold):

- Sperm whales generate ambergris, a waxy substance, when they consume inedible objects like squid beaks.
- Uses: Perfumes, evidence of former usage in food, alcoholic beverages, and tobacco flavouring.
- Protection: The trade and possession of ambergris are prohibited in nations including the USA, Australia, and India.
- In accordance with Schedule 2 of the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), sperm whales are a protected species.
- According to the terms of WPA, 1972, it is forbidden to possess or trade any of its byproducts, including Ambergris and its byproducts.



### Agriculture Infra Fund Scheme (AIF):

- BHARAT Campaign was started by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare for banks covered under AIF.
- The AIF is a funding source established in 2020 for the development of post-harvest infrastructure and communal agricultural assets.
- The programme will last for 10 years, from FY 2020 to FY 2029.
- It calls for banks and other financial institutions to lend Rs. 1 billion with an annual interest rate subsidy of 3%.
- Farmers, FPOs, PACS, Marketing Cooperative Societies, SHGs, and others are eligible beneficiaries.



### Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC):

- GEAC is allegedly making judgements without taking the perspective of the State into consideration, according to GMO-haters.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEFCC) in India is responsible for GEAC, which is the top biotech regulatory authority.
- According to the Environmental Protection Act of 1986, it has been reported.
- The GEAC is the agency in charge of evaluating requests to "release" genetically modified organisms and products—which are typically regarded as hazardous—into the environment.

### Namda Art:

- According to legend, Namda Art got its start in the 16th century when Mughal Emperor Akbar needed a covering to keep his horses warm.
- The Namda art is said to have been brought to Kashmiris by the Sufi saint Shah-e-Hamdan.
- Wool is felted rather than woven, which is a distinctive property.
- The works of Namda are incorporated into carpets, rugs, floor mats, etc.



### Sand and Dust Storms (SDS):

- On July 12, 2023, the UN commemorated the first-ever International Day of Combating SDS in an effort to foster more collaboration in the management and mitigation of SDS's consequences.
- Strong winds collide with bare or dry soil during SDS, pushing tonnes of sand and dust into the skies.
- Every year, almost 2 million tonnes of sand and dust are released into the sky.
- The Sahara Desert, the Middle East, the Taklamakan Desert in northwest China, southwest Asia, etc. are major hotspots.
- Food security may be impacted by SDS, and breathing in the small particles transported by these storms may induce allergies and lung problems.

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### Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC):

- India and its partner nations resolve to create the Mekong Ganga Cooperation Business Council at the 12th MGC summit in order to increase communication in agricultural and water resource management.
- In 2000, the MGC programme, which includes six nations—India, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam—was started.
- It seeks to advance collaboration in a number of fields, such as networking, education, tourism, and culture.

### Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM):

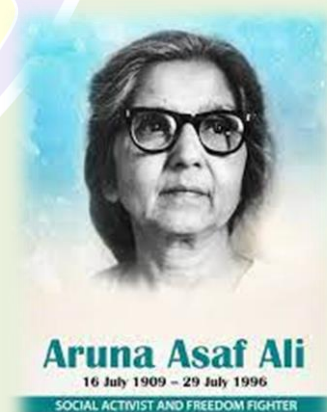
- Hwasong-18 ICBM has been tested by North Korea. Hwasong-18 can fire more swiftly and accelerate more quickly upon takeoff because to the usage of solid propellants.
- ICBMs are ballistic missiles with a range of more than 5,500 km and the capability to deliver nuclear bombs.
- Currently, Russia, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, China, India, and Israel are known to possess land-based ICBMs.
- The Indian ICBM is called Agni-5. Under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme, it was created.

ICBM SIZE COMPARISON



### Aruna Asaf Ali (1909- 1996):

- She is frequently referred to as the Independence Movement's "Grand Old Lady."
- In 1930, she took an active part in the Salt Satyagraha.
- She is renowned for raising the Indian flag during the 1942 Quit India Movement at Mumbai's Gowalia Tank Maidan.
- After independence, she promoted women's education in an effort to elevate women's standing. 'Weekly' and 'Patriot', a weekly magazine and newspaper, were launched with the aim of achieving this.
- She was Delhi's first elected mayor in 1958.
- Awards: Bharat Ratna (1997) and Padma Vibhushan (1992).



### Advance Authorisation Scheme:

- The Foreign Trade Policy is implemented by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) through the Advance Authorization Scheme.
- Duty-free imports of inputs that are actually integrated into an export product are permitted under the advance authorization scheme.
- In addition to all other inputs, packing materials, gasoline, oil, and catalyst used in the manufacturing of export products are also permitted.
- Manufacturer exporters or merchant exporters connected to the sponsoring manufacturer(s) are covered by advance authorization.

### Gambusia affinis (G affinis):

- Gambusia fish were introduced into the waterways of Andhra Pradesh to fight mosquito-borne illnesses including malaria and dengue.
- South-eastern United States is home to the Gambusia affinis species.
- Fish, commonly referred to as mosquitofish, is a popular biological control method for mosquito larvae.
- Gambusia is classified as an invasive species in a number of nations, including India.
- Fish have a large breeding potential.
- They have been seen to consume the tadpoles and eggs of rival fish species.



### Steel slag:

- Steel slag is a by-product of the steel-making process that is created in steel-making furnaces as the molten steel is separated from the impurities.
- Compared to roads made of natural aggregates, construction costs are approximately 30% lower and the roads are less thick, more durable, and have a reduced carbon impact.
- Due to its capacity to reduce soil acidity, silicate fertiliser, which can supply silicon to plants, the production of cement, and the treatment of acidic water, it also finds use in the agricultural sector.

### Steel slag:

- The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) for cross-border remittances via the global postal network will be evaluated by UPU.
- In 1874, the UPU (headquarters: Bern, Switzerland) was founded. India is one of the 192 nations that are members of the UPU, a specialised UN institution.
- Any nation that is not a member of the United Nations may apply to join the UPU as long as at least two thirds of the other UPU members agree.
- The UPU seeks to develop international postal laws and to foster postal cooperation.

### Public Accounts Committee (PAC):

- The government has been blamed by the state legislature's PAC for managing the COVID-19 epidemic improperly.
- As a result of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms, the PAC was established in 1921 and is the oldest Parliamentary Committee.
- The other two financial parliamentary committees are the committee on public undertakings and the estimates committee.
- It has 22 members, 15 from the Lok Sabha and 7 from the Rajya Sabha.
- It is established by Parliament each year to examine government appropriation accounts and reports from the CAG of India thereupon.

### Cicada:

- In South India, there is a 'foreign' cicada that has adopted an Indian appearance.
- Insect species Purana cheeveeda, also known as Cheeveedu in Malayalam, used to be confused with Purana tigrina, which was discovered in Malaysia in 1850.
- Cicadas are insects of the Hemiptera family, which includes several insects that make noise.
- Annual and periodical cicadas are the two main forms of cicadas.
- Cicadas may have a positive impact on the environment by giving birds a vital food source, aerating lawns to increase water filtration, and adding minerals to the soil.



### Invest India:

- The position of Managing Director and CEO of Invest India has changed.
- Investors seeking chances and choices for investments in India are assisted by the National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency.
- It was established in accordance with Companies Act of 1956 Section 25.
- It has been established as a joint venture between industry associations (17% each of FICCI, CII, and NASSCOM) and the remaining 49% of the Central and several State Governments.
- Contrary to the India Brand Equity Foundation, a Trust formed by the Department of Commerce for the purpose of building the India brand, Invest India is essentially a private corporation.

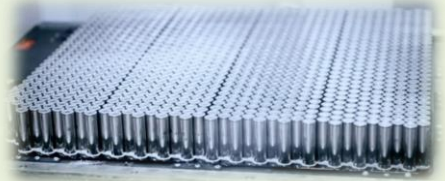


## INVEST INDIA

NATIONAL INVESTMENT PROMOTION  
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**Advanced Chemistry Cells (ACC) Battery:**

- Rebidding of ACC production under PLI Scheme on "National Programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery Storage" was announced by the Ministry of Heavy Industries.
- ACCs are a new category of sophisticated storage technologies that have the ability to store electrical energy as chemical or electrochemical energy and then convert it back to electrical energy as needed.
- They will serve the consumer electronics sector, solar roofs, and power grids in addition to electric automobiles.

**Tankai Shipbuilding Method:**

- A effort to resurrect the Tankai method, a shipbuilding technology that dates back 2000 years, will be launched by the Indian Navy and the Ministry of Culture.
- Instead of using nails, this approach involves sewing together wooden planks to build the ship.
- This approach provided adaptability and toughness, reducing their vulnerability to shoal and sandbar damage.
- The introduction of European ships caused a change in shipbuilding methods.

**Solar Technology Application Resource Centre [STAR C] Initiative:**

- India has lately considered bringing the STAR-C concept of the International Solar Alliance to Pacific Island nations.
- The goal of the initiative is to construct STAR centres, which will serve as technological, knowledge, and expertise hubs for solar energy.
- The project is being carried out by the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), with funds provided by the French government.
- It carries out the following four main tasks: knowledge management, testing, innovation, and capacity building.

**India Climate Energy Dashboard (ICED) 3.0:**

- The ICED 3.0 platform, which is a one-stop shop for near real-time data on the energy industry, the environment, and associated economic information based on publicly available sources, was made available by NITI Aayog.
- It was created as a user-friendly platform that allows users to freely access and use an analytical engine to evaluate datasets.
- Identifies the main difficulties while facilitating insights and improving understanding of the energy and climate industries.
- Really helpful in tracking India's shift to sustainable energy's progress.



### Initiatives launched during Global Food regulators summit 2023:

- The FSSAI is working to establish a global forum for food regulators to discuss improving the systems and regulatory framework for food safety.
- Food-o-Copoeia, a compilation of food category-specific monographs and a central repository for all relevant standards for a certain product category, has been published.
- SaNGRAH, a platform for common regulators, is a database of food regulatory authorities from 76 different nations, together with information about their mandates and resources for food testing.

### Amrit Bharat Station Scheme:

- Amrit Bharat Station Scheme has designated 1309 railway stations for development.
- The Ministry of Railways started the programme to modernise train stations.
- With a long-term perspective, it envisions continued station growth.
- To improve the facilities at the stations, master plans must be created and implemented in stages.
- At the station, Roof Plazas and urban cores are intended to be built.
- It seeks to group several waiting areas of various grades and sorts and offer top-notch restaurant and retail amenities.

**ABOUT THE SCHEME**

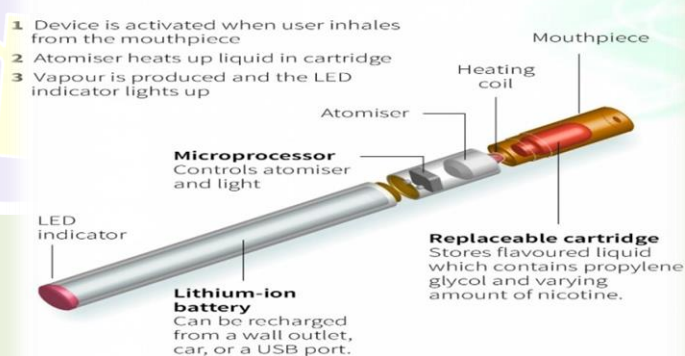
- Attempts shall be made to club different grades/types of waiting halls and provide good cafeteria/retail facilities
- Provision for two stalls for 'One Station One Product'
- Space for executive lounges and places for small business meetings
- Aesthetically designed hoarding on each side of the circulating area at prominent location
- Station approaches to be improved to ensure smooth access by widening roads, dedicated pedestrian pathways, parking areas, etc
- Landscaping, green patches, local art and culture to be used to create pleasant experience for station users
- High-level platforms (760-840 mm) shall be provided at all categories of stations. Length of platforms be 600 metres



### Electronic Cigarettes (e-cigarettes):

- A website reporting breaches of the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes (Production, Manufacture, Import, Export, Transport, Sale, Distribution, Storage and Advertisement) Act (PECA) was created by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- The PECA forbids the use of any type of electronic nicotine delivery system, including e-cigarettes.

#### How e-cigarettes work



Sources: Reuters; Howstuffworks

- E-cigarettes are battery-powered devices that use heat to transform a material (liquid or solid) that includes nicotine and frequently flavours into an aerosol that can be inhaled.
- Nicotine, carcinogens, heavy metals like nickel, tin, and lead, as well as compounds that cause lung disorders like diacetyl are all present in the aerosols of e-cigarettes.

### Cannabis:

- The CSIR-IIIM Jammu's Cannabis Research Project is a pioneering initiative to utilise drugs of abuse for the benefit of humanity.
- The dried flowering tops, leaves, stems, and seeds of the Cannabis sativa (hemp) plant are used to make cannabis-based goods.
- It has ingredients that make it effective as a medication. Among other things, it can have euphoric, analgesic, and psychotropic effects.
- Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which is found in cannabis, is a key psychoactive component.
- Cannabis is by far the most popular illicit substance in terms of cultivation, trafficking, and abuse.



### Ludwigia peruviana:

- In Tamil Nadu, an invasive plant called Ludwigia peruviana is endangering elephant habitats and feeding areas.
- The bulk of the vayals, or wetlands, in the hill station are plagued with it.
- Primrose willow is the common name for this native of Central and South America, especially Peru.
- Because of its small yellow blooms, it is grown as an attractive plant.
- It quickly expands near water.
- It is one of Tamil Nadu's 22 priority invasive plants.



### Fragile X or Martin-Bell Syndrome:

- A genetic condition called fragile X syndrome (FXS) causes intellectual impairment and autism.
- A gene termed Fragile X Messenger Ribonucleoprotein 1 (FMR1) alterations lead to FXS.
- A protein termed FMRP that is required for brain development is typically produced by FMR1.
- For FXS, there is no treatment. However, therapy programmes can aid in the development of critical abilities.



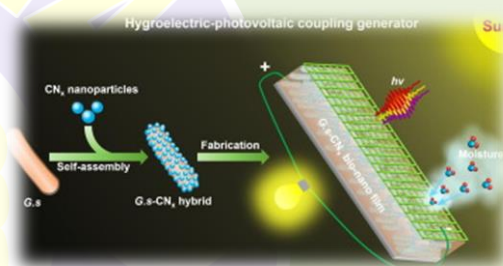
### Industrial License:

- To encourage ease of doing business, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) increased the industrial license's existing three-year validity length to fifteen years.
- In the event that the licence holder has not started commercial production within 15 years of the license's issuance, the concerned administrative ministry may also grant a three-year extension.
- Any industrial licence that hasn't been put into use for commercial production for a significant amount of time (15+3 years) will be deemed to have expired.
- The Industries (Development and Regulation) Act (IDRA), 1951 governs the granting and regulation of industrial licences in India.



### Hygroelectricity:

- This technique, which can produce power from humid air, has successfully been created by researchers.
- Hygroelectricity is a method for generating electricity from air that involves absorbing gaseous or vaporous water molecules, which are present in large amounts in the environment.
- Versatility: Air humidity is a sustainable energy source since it is constantly accessible, unlike other renewable energy sources like sun and wind.
- The biggest challenge is scaling up the technology to meet realistic energy demands.



### Fluorochemicals:

- A safer way to produce fluorochemicals has been developed by scientists without the use of harmful hydrogen fluoride (HF) gas.
- A new technique draws inspiration from the biomineralization process that naturally creates teeth and bones.
- In this process, the manufacturing of HF is avoided and fluorochemicals are generated straight from fluorspar.
- Numerous industrial products, such as plastics, agrochemicals, medicines, and lithium-ion batteries, use fluorochemicals.
- At the moment, all fluorochemicals are produced by an extremely energy-intensive process from corrosive and poisonous HF gas.
- Sulfuric acid and fluorspar (calcium fluoride) react to form HF.





### Women reservation in ULBs in Nagaland:

- The Supreme Court demanded explanations from the federal government and the Nagaland government for the failure to implement a women's quota in urban local body (ULB) elections.
- The Nagaland Municipal Act of 2001 had previously been updated in 2006 to include a provision for women's reservation in accordance with the 74th constitutional amendment of 1992.
- Naga tribal organisations oppose a women's quota in ULBs on the grounds that it violates special rights protected by Article 371(A).
- Patriarchal sociocultural norms and tribal customs of the Naga people limit women's ability to make decisions.

### Communities added to Schedule Tribe:

- The Constitution (Schedule Tribes) Order, 1950 was amended by a bill passed by the Rajya Sabha to add several communities to the list of Chhattisgarh's Schedule Tribes.
- Dhanuhar, Dhanuwar, Kisan, Saundra, Saonra, and Binjhia are new communities, as well as three Devanagari iterations of the Pando community.
- With accordance with Article 342, the President may inform the STs with reference to any State/UT and, in the case of a State, after consulting with the Governor.
- A notice issued by the government may provide a list of STs, which the Parliament may by legislation add to or remove.

### Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) 5.2:

- Launched by the Minister of Steel and Civil Aviation, UDAN 5.2 is a Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS).
- It was started in order to provide connection to the nation's rural and regional communities.
- Last-mile connectivity will be accomplished using tiny aircraft like the 1A (9 passengers) and Category 1 (20 seats).
- A market-driven programme called UDAN intends to increase regional air connectivity from underserved and unserved airports and lower the cost of air travel.
- It was created in accordance with the 2016 National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) revision.

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