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Monthly Current Affairs Magazine
October 2022

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Preface

The UPSC Civil Services (Mains) 2022 Examination was recently conducted in the month of September and according to the recently released UPSC Calendar 2023, the Civil Services (Prelims) Examination 2023, will be held on May 28, 2023. For the aspirants, who are preparing for UPSC CSE 2022 & 2023, needless to say, a thorough study, understanding, and revision of Current Affairs is a must!

To ease the preparation, we are providing monthly current affairs compilation for the aspirants. The magazine contains subject-wise distribution of comprehensive news articles, which have been derived from the sources like PIB, The Hindu, The Indian Express, etc.

A separate section – ‘The Editorials Corner’ has been added to discuss the important Editorial articles published in The Hindu and Indian Express Newspaper. We have also added MCQ Current Affairs questions with solutions. Aspirants should attempt these questions after reading the magazine, in order to evaluate their knowledge of Current Affairs.

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“Successful and unsuccessful people do not vary greatly in their abilities. They vary in their desires to reach their potential”.

- John Maxwell

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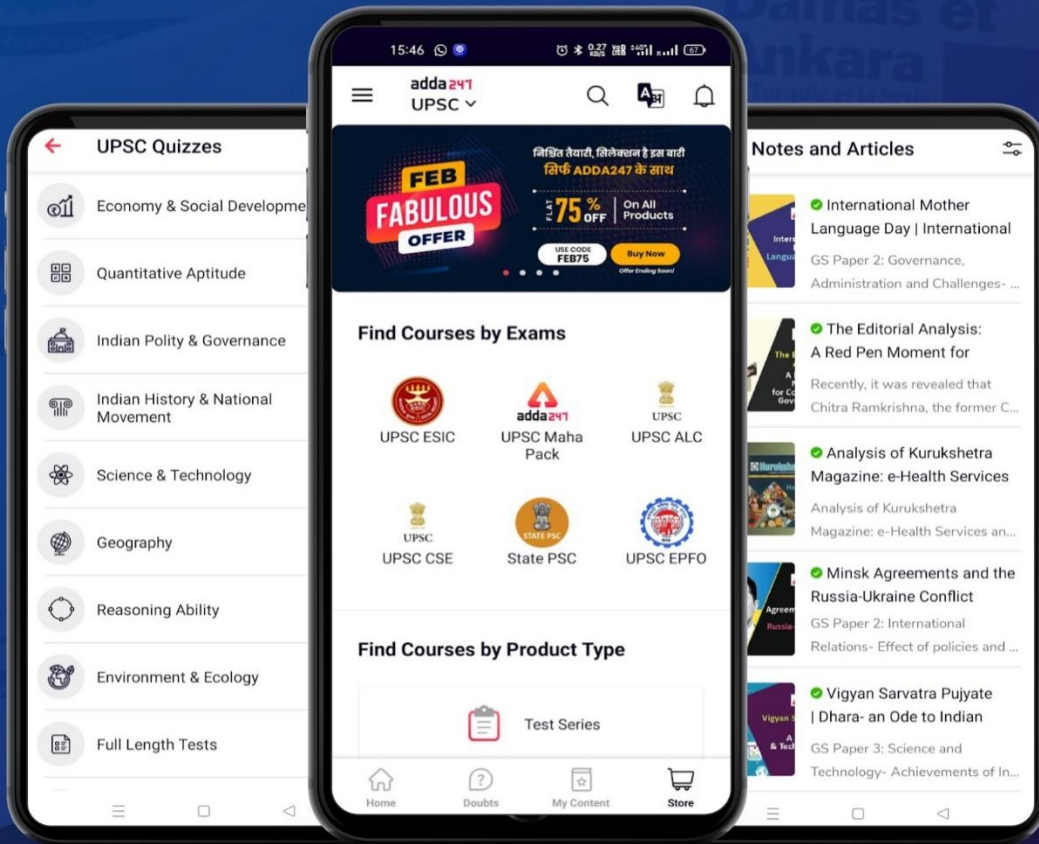
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POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Socialist and Secular in the Preamble

The Supreme Court will hear a petition filed by former MP Dr Subramanian Swamy, seeking the removal of the words "Socialist" and "Secular" from the preamble of the Indian Constitution.

Why in news?

- The petitioners in two similar cases have argued that these words were never intended to be in the Constitution and that such insertion is beyond the amending power of the Parliament under Article 368.
- Similar petitions have been filed earlier too and given rise to debates around the preamble and the role it plays in the Constitution.

How did these words come?

The two terms were inserted into the preamble as part of the 42nd Amendment of the Constitution in 1976 during the Emergency imposed by then PM Indira Gandhi.

What is the purpose of the Preamble?

- A preamble serves as an introduction to a document and contains its basic principles and goals.
- When the Indian Constitution was being drafted, the ideals behind the preamble were first laid down in the Objectives Resolution, adopted by the Constituent Assembly in 1947.
- These ideals emerged out of the numerous debates that took place during the drafting of the Constitution.

Initially, the Preamble said:

"WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens: JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity;

And to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION."

Nature of the preamble

- The Constitution was the product of democratic deliberations and decided upon by the people of India themselves in the wake of freedom from colonial rule.
- The ideals mentioned here were at the core of the newly democratic nation.
- During the Constituent Assembly debates, many suggestions were put forth – including that God should be invoked in the preamble as in the Irish constitution, that Mahatma Gandhi's name should be included, etc.

Is it a part of the Constitution?

- The question of whether the preamble is a part of the Constitution or simply an introduction has been deliberated upon by the highest court.
- This is because the meaning and weight of the objectives mentioned in it, such as equality of status and opportunity, remained unclear from the perspective of law.
- However, in its judgment in the famous LIC case of 1995, the Supreme Court said and the Preamble of the Constitution which is an integral part and scheme of the Constitution, affirming its position as part of the Constitution.
- Additionally, the violation of any principle mentioned in the preamble cannot be a reason to go to court, meaning the preamble is "non-justiciable".
- However, judgments of courts can cite it as an additional factor in their reasoning, given that it constitutes the spirit of the Constitution.

How else has the preamble been debated earlier?

- In 2020 a ruling MP has moved a resolution in Rajya Sabha seeking to remove the word socialism from the preamble.
- It said, that the earlier party which ruled the country for seven decades has changed its direction from being socialist to welfare to neo-liberalism.
- Its new liberal policies adopted in the 1990s have negated its own earlier positions.
- Earlier in 2015, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting used an image of the preamble of the Indian Constitution without the words "socialist" and "secular", leading to some criticism.

The right-wing narrative

- These words were added during the Emergency. Now what is the harm if there is a debate on it?
- In 2008, the Supreme Court rejected a plea demanding the removal of 'socialist'.
- The apex court asked - Why do you take socialism in a narrow sense defined by Communists?
- In a broader sense, it means welfare measures for the citizens. It is a facet of democracy, said the Court.
- It hasn't got any definite meaning. It gets different meanings in different times.

Under what circumstances was the preamble amended?

Over her years in government, Indira Gandhi had attempted to cement her approval among the masses on the basis of a socialist and pro-poor image with slogans such as "garibi hatao" (Eradicate poverty).

- The 42nd Amendment to the Constitution, passed in 1976 when the Emergency was in place, replaced the words "sovereign democratic republic" with "sovereign socialist secular democratic republic".
- It also changed "unity of the nation" to "unity and integrity of the nation".

Were 'Secular' and 'Socialist' debated before Independence?

During the debates in the Constituent Assembly, members such as K T Shah and Brajeshwar Prasad had raised the demand to add these words to the preamble.

However, Dr B R Ambedkar argued: What should be the policy of the State, how the Society should be organised in its social and economic side are matters

which must be decided by the people themselves according to time and circumstances.

It cannot be laid down in the Constitution itself because that is destroying democracy altogether.

Is it inclusive of the Constitution?

Indeed, many principles affirming secularism and socialism were contained in the Constitution originally, such as in the Directive Principles of State Policy that is meant to guide the government in its actions.

- Some examples are provisions related to the "equitable distribution of material resources of the community for the common good", and protecting the rights of workers.
- Similarly, in the fundamental rights that allow the freedom to profess and propagate one's religion, as well as in the government policies that recognize religious occasions across communities, an Indian version of secularism is followed.
- Unlike western secularism which strictly separates the state and religion, the Indian state has over the years acknowledged and involved itself in matters related to all religions.

Citizenship Amendment Act

A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) U U Lalit will hear the challenge to the contentious Citizenship Amendment Act.

Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019

The act sought to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 to make Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian illegal migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, eligible for citizenship of India.

- In other words, it intends to make it easier for non-Muslim immigrants from India's three Muslim-majority neighbours to become citizens of India.
- Under the Citizenship Act, 1955, one of the requirements for citizenship by naturalization is that the applicant must have resided in India during the last 12 months, as well as for 11 of the previous 14 years.

- The amendment relaxes the second requirement from 11 years to 6 years as a specific condition for applicants belonging to these six religions, and the afore mentioned three countries.
- It exempts the members of the six communities from any criminal case under the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport Act, 1920 if they entered India before December 31, 2014.

Illegal migrants
Illegal migrants cannot become Indian citizens in accordance with the present laws.
Under the CAA, an illegal migrant is a foreigner who: (i) enters the country without valid travel documents like a passport and visa, or (ii) enters with valid documents, but stays beyond the permitted time period.
Illegal migrants may be put in jail or deported under the Foreigners Act, 1946 and The Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920.

Exceptions

The Bill provides that illegal migrants who fulfil four conditions will not be treated as illegal migrants under the Act. The conditions are:

1. They are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis or Christians.
2. They are from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan.
3. They entered India on or before December 31, 2014.
4. They are not in certain tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, or Tripura included in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution, or areas under the "Inner Line" permit, i.e., Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, and Nagaland.

Controversy with the Act

- Country of Origin: The Act classifies migrants based on their country of origin to include only Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- Other religious minorities ignored: It is unclear why illegal migrants from only six specified religious minorities have been included in the Act.
- Defiance of purpose: India shares a border with Myanmar, which has had a history of persecution of a religious minority, the Rohingya Muslims.

- Date of Entry: It is also unclear why there is a differential treatment of migrants based on their date of entry into India, i.e., whether they entered India before or after December 31, 2014.
- Against the spirit of Secularism: Further, granting citizenship on the grounds of religion is seen to be against the secular nature of the Constitution which has been recognised as part of the basic structure that cannot be altered by Parliament.

The Challenge in Supreme Court

- The challenge rests primarily on the grounds that the law violates Article 14 of the Constitution that guarantees that no person shall be denied the right to equality before law or the equal protection of law in the territory of India.

The Supreme Court has developed a two-pronged test to examine a law on the grounds of Article 14.

1. First, any differentiation between groups of persons must be founded on "intelligible differentia"
 2. Second, that differentia must have a rational nexus to the object sought to be achieved by the Act
- Simply put, for a law to satisfy the conditions under Article 14, it has to first create a "reasonable class" of subjects that it seeks to govern under the law.
 - Even if the classification is reasonable, any person who falls in that category has to be treated alike.

What happens next?

- The listing of the CAA challenge indicates that the hearing will be fast-tracked.
- The court will have to ensure that all pleadings, written submissions are filed and served to the opposite party before it is listed for final hearing.
- Some petitioners could also seek a referral to a larger Constitution Bench.
- However, the challenge is to a statute and does not directly involve interpretation of the Constitution.
- These issues are also likely to be debated before the court allots time for the final hearing.

Way forward

- India is a constitutional democracy with a basic structure that assures a secure and spacious home for all Indians.

- Being partitioned on religious grounds, India has to undertake a balancing act for protecting the religious minorities in its neighbourhood.
- These minorities are under constant threat of persecution and vandalism.
- India needs to balance its civilization duties to protect those who are prosecuted in the neighbourhood.

4 new tribes added to Scheduled Tribes (ST) List

The Union Cabinet under the chairmanship of PM has approved the addition of four tribes to the list of Scheduled Tribes (ST), including those from Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh.

Who are the Scheduled Tribes?

- The term 'Scheduled Tribes' first appeared in the Constitution of India.
- Article 366 (25) defined scheduled tribes as "such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this constitution".
- Article 342 prescribes procedure to be followed in the matter of specification of scheduled tribes.
- Among the tribal groups, several have adapted to modern life but there are tribal groups who are more vulnerable.
- The Dhebar Commission (1973) created a separate category "Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs)" which was renamed in 2006 as "Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)".

How are STs notified?

- The first specification of Scheduled Tribes in relation to a particular State/ Union Territory is by a notified order of the President, after consultation with the State governments concerned.
- These orders can be modified subsequently only through an Act of Parliament.

Status of STs in India

- The Census 2011 has revealed that there are said to be 705 ethnic groups notified as Scheduled Tribes (STs).
- Over 10 crore Indians are notified as STs, of which 1.04 crore live in urban areas.
- The STs constitute 8.6% of the population and 11.3% of the rural population.

E-Governance

Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw spoke about a comprehensive policy roadmap for India's digital economy and digital governance.

Digital Governance

Electronic governance or e-governance can be defined as the usage of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by the government to provide and facilitate government services, exchange of information, communication transactions and integration of various standalone systems and services.

Global Digital Governance

Global digital governance encompasses the norms, institutions, and standards that shape the regulation around the development and use of these technologies. Digital governance has long-term commercial and political implications.

E-Governance: Objective

The main objective of e-governance is to provide a friendly, affordable, and efficient interface between a government and its people. It is about ensuring greater transparency, accountability and objectivity, resulting in cost-effective and high-quality public service.

E-Governance: Importance

- Under the G20, the International Labour Organisation has already placed a proposal in the employment working group for digital labour platforms to develop an international governance system determining minimum rights and protections for platform workers.
- Similarly, on digital money, a reincarnated Bretton Woods is being advocated to address the distrust in private currencies and to coordinate the

implementation of central bank digital currency projects.

- Finally, in the deeply contested area of digital taxation, the OECD facilitated Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) negotiations and helped arrive at a global solution.
- The internet is splintering and digital sovereignty is now commonplace; yet, there is no better time for countries to come together and build a framework for global digital governance.

E-Governance: Pillars

- E-administration: improving government processes
- E-services: connecting individual citizens with their government
- E-society: building interactions with and within civil society.

E-Governance and the world

- Sectors critical to the global economy are subject to international cooperation frameworks and pacts. Therefore, the idea of setting up a single multilateral organization with a mandate to govern the digital economy is not unprecedented.
- Global aviation has been regulated since 1903 when the International Commission for Air Navigation (ICAN) first met, subsequently replaced by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in 1947.
- Similarly, the modern international banking system is governed by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), an institution initially set up in the interwar period in 1930 to oversee Germany's reparations to the Allies under the Treaty of Versailles. The BIS acquired a more global mandate beginning in the 1950s and is now partially responsible for global financial stability.
- China is emerging as the standard-bearer for this model with its desire to "reinvent the internet." China seeks to champion the concept of "cyber sovereignty," allowing countries to control access to the internet, censor content, and institute data localization requirements, as a pretext to protecting individual national interests.
- European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which provides a more democratic concept for digital governance. This

model primarily seeks to protect the privacy and rights of internet users and online content consumers. Adopted with the overwhelming support of the European Parliament in 2014, the GDPR came into effect in May 2018, giving firms that rely on digital technologies the opportunity to modify their data usage and privacy policies. The adoption of the GDPR has been a turning point for global internet governance as consumers gained unprecedented control over their data in a manner that preserved freedom and openness online.

Conclusion

- The rapid digitalization of the world along with a new focus on trust in the global supply chains for digital products and services presents tremendous opportunities for India and its youth. It is now up to all of us to engage in a collective "sabka prayas" to realise New India's economic potential.

EWS Quota

A five-judge Constitution Bench led by CJI U.U. Lalit are hearing petitions challenging the 10% quota for the economically weaker sections (EWS) and an Andhra Pradesh law that grants reservation to Muslims.

The 103rd Constitutional Amendment, 2019

- The five-judge Bench, led by CJI, is considering the validity of the 103rd Constitutional Amendment.
- The said amendment provides the 10% reservation to economically weaker sections (EWS) of society in government jobs and educational institutions.
- Economic reservation was introduced by amending Articles 15 and 16 and adding clauses empowering the State governments to provide reservation on the basis of economic backwardness.

EWS Quota: A background

- The 10% reservation was introduced through the 103rd Constitution Amendment and enforced in January 2019.
- It added Clause (6) to Article 15 to empower the Government to introduce special provisions for the EWS among citizens except

those in the classes that already enjoy reservation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It allows reservation in educational institutions, both public and private, whether aided or unaided, excluding those run by minority institutions, up to a maximum of 10%.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It also added Clause (6) to Article 16 to facilitate reservation in employment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new clauses make it clear that the EWS reservation will be in addition to the existing reservation.

Significance

- The Constitution initially allowed special provisions only for the socially and educationally backward classes.
- The Government introduced the concept of EWS for a new class of affirmative action program for those not covered by or eligible for the community-based quotas.

What are the court's questions about the criteria?

- Reduction within general category: The EWS quota remains a controversy as its critics say it reduces the size of the open category, besides breaching the 50% limit on the total reservation.
- Arbitrariness over income limit: The court has been intrigued by the income limit being fixed at ₹8 lakhs per year. It is the same figure for excluding the 'creamy layer' from OBC reservation benefits.
- Socio-economic backwardness: A crucial difference is that those in the general category, to whom the EWS quota is applicable, do not suffer from social or educational backwardness, unlike those classified as the OBC.
- Metropolitan criteria: There are other questions as to whether any exercise was undertaken to derive the exceptions such as why the flat criterion does not differentiate between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas.
- OBC like criteria: The question the court has raised is that when the OBC category is socially and educationally backward and, therefore, has additional impediments to overcome.
- Not based on relevant data: In line with the Supreme Court's known position that any reservation or norms for exclusion should be based on relevant data.

- Breaches reservation cap: There is a cap of 50% on reservation as ruled in the Indira Sawhney Case. The principle of balancing equality ordains reservation.

What is the current status of the EWS quota?

- The reservation for the EWS is being implemented by the Union Government for the second year now.
- Recruitment test results show that the category has a lower cut-off mark than the OBC, a point that has upset the traditional beneficiaries of reservation based on caste.
- The explanation is that only a small number of people are currently applying under the EWS category – one has to get an income certificate from the revenue authorities – and therefore the cut-off is low.
- However, when the number picks up over time, the cut-off marks are expected to rise.

Practical issues with EWS Quota

The EWS quota will come in for judicial scrutiny soon. But it's not only a matter for the judiciary, India's Parliament should revisit the law too.

- Hasty legislation: This law was passed in haste. It was passed in both the houses within 48 hours, and got presidential approval the next day.
- Minority appeasement: It is widely argued that the law was passed to appease a certain section of upper-caste society and to suppress the demands for minority reservations.
- Morality put to question: Imagine! A constitutional amendment has been made with few hours of deliberation and without consultation of the targeted group. This is certainly against constitutional morality and propriety.
- Substantial backing is missing: This amendment is based on a wrong or unverified premise. This is at best a wild guess or a supposition because the government has not produced any data to back this point.
- Under-reservation of Backward Classes: The assertion is based on the fact that we have different data to prove the under-representation of SC, ST, OBCs. That implies that 'upper' castes are over-represented (with 100 minus reservation).
- Rationale of 10%: There is one more problem in this regard. The SC and ST quota is based on their

total population. But the rationale for the 10 per cent quota was never discussed.

- Principle of Equality: Economic backwardness is quite a fluid identity. It has nothing to do with historic wrongdoings and liabilities caused to the Backward Classes.

Way forward

- Preserving the merit: We cannot rule out the sorry state of economic backwardness hampering merit in our country.
- Rational criteria: There has to be collective wisdom to define and measure the economic weakness of certain sections of the society in order to shape the concept of economic justice.
- Judicial guidance: Judicial interpretation will pave the way forward for deciding the criterion for EWS Quota.
- Targeted beneficiaries. The centre needs to resort to more rational criteria for deciding the targeted beneficiary of this reservation system. Caste Census data can be useful in this regard.
- Income study: The per capita income or GDP or the difference in purchasing power in the rural and urban areas, should be taken into account while a single income limit was formulated for the whole country.

Conclusion

- Reservation is a constitutional scheme to ensure the participation of backward classes shoulder to shoulder with all citizens in the nation-building process.
- The EWS quota with above discussed ambiguities is the subversion of the constitutional scheme for reservation.

Kerala's Lokayukta Amendment Controversy

The Kerala Legislative Assembly passed the Kerala Lokayukta (Amendment) Bill amid a boycott.

Lokpal – Lokayuktas

- The Lokpal-Lokayukta term was first used in a report of the Administrative Reforms Commission headed by Morarji Desai in 1966.
- A system of an ombudsman should be established to redress public grievances against the leaders and public officials was the need as corruption had become rampant.
- The first Bill on Lokpal was introduced in the Lok Sabha in 1968 which lapsed with the dissolution of the House.
- Anna Hazare's movement and the active involvement of civil society generated a lot of moral pressure on the Government which ultimately led to the passing of the Bill in 2013.

Composition of Lokpal

- The Lokpal is no ordinary investigative body.
- It is headed by the incumbent Chief Justice of India or a retired judge.
- It has eight members, four of whom are judicial members.
- Thus the whole system is staffed with judges or judicial men.
- The Lokpal has an inquiry wing and a prosecution wing to deal with investigation and prosecution, respectively.
- The director of prosecution files the case in the special court based on the findings of the Lokpal.

Who falls under the ambit of Lokpal?

- The Lokpal has jurisdiction to inquire into allegations of corruption against the Prime Minister, Ministers, Members of Parliament, Group A, B, C and D officers and officials of the central government.
- After the conclusion of the investigation, the Lokpal may file a case in the special court in case the findings disclose the commission of offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act by the PM, Ministers or MPs.
- However, the Lokpal does not have the power to ask the President to remove the Prime Minister or a Minister from office.

What about the states?

- The Lokpal and Lokayukta Act delegates the power to States to establish by law the Lokayukta to deal with complaints relating to corruption against public functionaries.
- Some States already have established Lokayuktas. For example, Maharashtra in 1971, and Kerala in 1999.

What is the Keralan controversy?

- In order to get a clearer perspective on the Kerala Lokayukta controversy, it is necessary to understand the scheme of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act enacted by Parliament.
- The long title of the Act says: "An Act to provide for the establishment of a body of Lokpal for the Union and Lokayukta for States to inquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries...."
- Thus, the Lokpal is conceived of as a body which will inquire into allegations of corruption.
- It is basically an investigative body whose task is to conduct prompt and fair investigation and the prosecution of cases of corruption.

Issues with the Amendment

- The amendments were related to the competent authority to consider Lok Ayukta recommendations.
- In the case of any unfavourable decision from the Lok Ayukta against the CM, the competent authority will now be the Legislative Assembly instead of the Governor as is prescribed in the existing Act.
- The amendment tries to take away at the powers of the Governor.
- The Lokayukta has indirectly expressed its resentment over the attempt to take away some of its powers.

Arguments by Kerala Government

- The Government, on the other hand, claims that through the amendment, a provision in the original Act which is unconstitutional has been excised.
- Earlier it gave power to the Lokayukta to give directions to the Governor to remove a CM or a Minister on being found guilty of corruption.
- This meant that the Lokayukta was to be over and above the office of Governor.

Legal and Constitutional implications

- One, an investigative body does not have the legal authority to direct the public servant to resign his post on the basis of its findings.
- It can only submit its findings to the competent authority or, as is provided in the Lokpal Act, file a case in the special court.
- The Lokayukta is basically an investigative body with certain powers to carry out an investigation into cases relating to the Prevention of Corruption Act.
- The only special feature of this body is that it is headed by a retired judge of the Supreme Court or a retired Chief Justice of a High Court.
- But that does not alter the basic character of the Lokayukta as an investigative body.
- The Chief Minister or a Minister holds office during the pleasure of the Governor (Article 164).
- The Constitution of India does not contemplate any external pressure on the Governor to withdraw his pleasure.
- The Sarkaria Commission had suggested that the Governor can dismiss a Chief Minister only when he loses his majority in the Assembly and refuses to step down.
- The Supreme Court has accepted this recommendation of the Sarkaria Commission.
- Another occasion when the Governor could withdraw his pleasure is on account of CM having been convicted in a criminal case and sentenced to not less than two years of imprisonment.
- In other words, a Chief Minister cannot be asked to resign when he enjoys a majority in the House.
- The Governor, being a high constitutional authority, cannot be compelled by a law to act in a particular manner so far as his constitutional duties and functions are concerned.

Other contentious provisions

- There are some other provisions as well which may not stand legal scrutiny.
- For example, this law includes the office bearers of political parties within its definition of 'public servant'.

- Basically, the Prevention of Corruption Act deals with corruption in the government and allied agencies, statutory bodies, elected bodies, etc.
- The functionaries of political parties do not come within the mischief of this law. So, it is difficult to understand how they can be brought within the sweep of the Lokayukta Act.
- Another problematic provision in this law is the one which deals with the reports of Lokayukta (Section 12).
- It says that the Lokayukta shall, on the allegation of corruption being substantiated, send the findings along with recommendation of action to the competent authority who is required to take action as recommended by the Lokayukta.
- It further says that if the Lokayukta is satisfied by the action taken by the competent authority, he shall close the case.
- The question is how the Lokayukta can close a corruption case which is a criminal case and which invites imprisonment for three to seven years.
- The Lokpal files the case in the court after the investigation. There is no provision in the central law under which the Lokpal can close the case before it reaches the court.
- The Lokayukta not being a court does not have the legal capacity to close the corruption case under any circumstances.

Way forward

- The Kerala Lokayukta Act should be re-examined by a committee of the Assembly and should be brought on a par with the Lokpal Act.
- Legislation that seeks to punish corrupt functionaries should be placed above controversies.

National Conference of State Tourism Ministers

Recently, National Conference of State Tourism Ministers 2022 was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh.

- Himachal Pradesh government has also started the "Nai Raahein Nai Manzilein" scheme to highlight some of our lesser known tourist destinations.

National Conference of State Tourism Ministers – Key Details

- **About:** Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is organizing National Conference of State Tourism Ministers from 18th to 20th September 2022 to discuss issues related to development of Tourism in the country.
- **Venue:** National Conference of State Tourism Ministers is being organized in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh.
- **Associated Ministry:** National Conference of State Tourism Ministers is being organized under the Chairmanship of Shri G. Kishan Reddy, Minister of Tourism, Culture and DONER.
- **Participation:** The three-day National Conference of State Tourism Ministers will be attended by Central Ministers, Tourism Ministers from States and Union Territories, Governors, Administrators & Seniors Officials of the Central Government, State Governments, and Heads of the Tourism & Hospitality Associations.
- **Themes:** The **National Conference of State Tourism Ministers** is divided into thematic sessions on-
 - Development of Tourism Infrastructure,
 - Cultural, Spiritual & Heritage tourism,
 - Tourism in the Himalayan states,
 - Responsible and sustainable tourism,
 - Role of digital technology for the marketing and promotion of tourism destinations,
 - Emerging importance of homestays in the Indian hospitality sector,
 - Ayurveda, Wellness, and Medical Value travel, and
 - Forest and wildlife tourism.

Nai Raahein Nai Manzilein Scheme

- Under **Nai Raahein Nai Manzilein** scheme, the state govt. of HP will identify unexplored and untapped tourist destinations with an aim to diversify tourism in the state.
- **Nai Raahein Nai Manzilein** scheme will promote tourism in these tourist places located across the countryside particularly focusing on rural areas.
- The total budgetary allocation of **Nai Raahein Nai Manzil** Scheme is Rs. 50 crore.

- Under the “Nai raahein Nai Manizlein scheme in the first phase, Bir Billing in, District Kangra, Chanshal in district Shimla and Janjehli area of District Mandi are being developed from tourism point of view.

National Health Estimates

Recently, NITI Aayog, in presence of Shri Rajesh Bhushan, Secretary, Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare released findings of the National Health Accounts (NHA) Estimates for India for 2018-19.

NHA Estimates on Health Expenditure

- The Union government’s healthcare spend dropped to 1.28% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2018-19 from the previous year’s figure of 1.35%.
- The NHA estimates for 2018-19 show that there has been an increase in the share of government health expenditure in the total GDP of the country.
 - It has increased from 1.15% in 2013-14 to 1.28% in 2018-19.
- Additionally, the share of Government Health Expenditure in Total Health Expenditure has also increased over time.
 - In 2018-19, the share of government expenditure was 40.6%, substantially higher than the share of 28.6% in 2013-14.
- NHA findings also indicate that Government’s health expenditure as a percentage of Current Health Expenditure has increased from 23.2% in 2013-14 to 34.5% in 2018-19.
- It has also been observed that per capita government spending on healthcare has increased by 74% since 2013-14, i.e., Rs. 1042 to Rs. 1815 in 2018-19.
- Primary and secondary care accounts for more than 80% of the current Government Health Expenditure.
 - Between 2013-14 and 2018-19, in government, the share of primary and secondary care has increased from 74% to 86%.

- In case of the private sector, the share of tertiary care has increased but primary and secondary care show a declining trend.
 - In the private sector, the share of primary and secondary care has declined from 82% to 70% during the same period.

NHA Estimates on Out-Of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE)

- Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE) as percentage of total health expenditure has declined substantially by 16% points, from 64.2% to 48.2%.
- Out of pocket expenditure as a percentage of current health expenditure has also declined over time from 69.1% in 2013-14 to 53.2% in 2018-19.
- Per capita out-of-pocket expenditure in the country has decreased by 8% since 2013-14, from Rs. 2,366 to Rs. 2,155 currently.

NHA Estimates 2018-19 Findings on Other Indicators

- Focusing on social security has resulted in expenditure on health as a percentage of total health expenditure growing from 6% to 9.6% now. The NHA also reveals that the government-financed health insurance expenditure has increased by 167% since 2013-14.

Indicators	2017-18 (in Rs Crores)	2018-19 (in Rs Crores)	Percentage change
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	1,70,90,042	1,88,99,668	11%
Government Expenditure (GGE)	45,15,946	50,40,707	12%
Total Health Expenditure (THE)	5,66,644	5,96,440	5%
Government Health Expenditure (GHE)	2,31,104	2,42,219	5%

National Health Account (NHA) estimates:

- **About:** The National Health Account (NHA) estimates for India 2018-19 is the sixth consecutive NHA estimates report prepared by NHSRC.
 - NHSRC designated as National Health Accounts Technical Secretariat (NHATS) in 2014 by the Union Health Ministry.
- **Preparation:** The NHA estimates are prepared by using an accounting framework based on the internationally accepted standard of System of Health Accounts, 2011, developed by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- **Significance:** With the present estimate of NHA, India now has a continuous series of NHA estimates for the country, from 2013-14 to 2018-19.
 - These estimates are not only comparable internationally, but also enable the policymakers to monitor the progress in different health financing indicators of the country.

PARAKH

The Centre is planning to draw up a benchmark framework 'PARAKH' to assess students at the secondary and higher secondary level to bring about "uniformity" across state and central boards.

What is PARAKH?

- PARAKH stands for Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development.
- The proposed regulator will act as a constituent unit of the NCERT.
- It will also be tasked with holding periodic learning outcome tests like the National Achievement Survey (NAS) and State Achievement Surveys.
- The benchmark assessment framework will seek to put an end to the emphasis on rote learning, as envisaged by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- PARAKH, the proposed implementing agency, is also part of the NEP proposal.

Response form States

- Most states endorsed the proposal to hold board exams twice a year, including one for helping students improve their scores.
- States are also on board regarding a proposal to offer two types of papers on mathematics – a standard exam, and another to test higher level competency.
- It will help reduce the fear of maths among students and encourage learning.

Significance of PARAKH

- PARAKH will help tackle the problem of students of some state boards being at a disadvantage during college admissions as compared to their peers in CBSE schools.
- It will develop and implement "technical standards for the design, conduct, analysis and reporting" of tests at all levels of school education.
- PARAKH will eventually become the national single-window source for all assessment related information and expertise, with a mandate to support learning assessment in all forms, both nationally and where applicable, internationally.

Preventive Detentions

Preventive detentions in 2021 saw a rise by over 23.7% compared with the year before, with over 1.1 lakh people being placed under preventive detention, according to statistics released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

What is Preventive Detention?

- Preventive detention means detaining a person so that to prevent that person from committing on any possible crime.
- In other words, preventive detention is an action taken by the administration on the grounds of the suspicion that some wrong actions may be done by the person concerned which will be prejudicial to the state.

Preventive Detention in India

A police officer can arrest an individual without orders from a Magistrate and without any warrant if he gets any information that such an individual can commit any offense.

- Preventive Detention Law, 1950: According to this law any person could be arrested and detained if his freedom would endanger the security of the country, foreign relations, public interests, or otherwise necessary for the country.
- Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) 1968: Within the ambit of UAPA law the Indian State could declare any organization illegal and could imprison anyone for interrogation if the said organization or person critiqued/questioned Indian sovereignty territorially.

What is the difference between Preventive Detention and an Arrest?

- An 'arrest' is done when a person is charged with a crime.
- In the case of preventive detention, a person is detained as he/she is simply restricted from doing something that might deteriorate the law-and-order situation.
- Article 22 of the Indian Constitution provides protection against arrest and detention in certain cases.

Rights of an Arrested Person in India

A/c to Article 22(1) and 22(2) of the Indian constitution:

- A person cannot be arrested and detained without being informed why he is being arrested.
- A person who is arrested cannot be denied to be defended by a legal practitioner of his choice. This means that the arrested person has right to hire a legal practitioner to defend himself/ herself.
- Every person who has been arrested would be produced before the nearest magistrate within 24 hours.
- The custody of the detained person cannot be beyond the said period by the authority of magistrate.

Exceptions for Preventive Detention

Article 22(3) says that the above safeguards are not available to the following:

- If the person is at the time being an enemy alien
- If the person is arrested under certain law made for the purpose of "Preventive Detention"

Constitutional provision

- It is extraordinary that the framers of the Indian Constitution, who suffered most because of the Preventive Detention Laws, did not hesitate to give Constitutional sanctity.
- B.R. Ambedkar was of the opinion that the freedom of the individual should not supersede the interests of the state.
- He had also stated that the independence of the country was in a state of infancy and in order to save it, preventive detention was essential.

NCRB report

- Over 24,500 people placed under preventive detention were either in custody or still detained as of 2021-end – the highest since 2017 when the NCRB started recording this data.
- Over 483 were detentions under the National Security Act, of which almost half (241) were either in custody or still detained as of 2021-end.
- In 2017, the NCRB's Crime in India report found that 67,084 persons had been detained as a preventive measure that year.
- Of these, 48,815 were released between one and six months of their detention and 18,269 were either in custody or still in preventive detention as of the end of the year.

Various provisions invoked for Preventive Detention

- Among other laws under which the NCRB has recorded data on preventive detentions are the:
 1. Goonda Act (State and Central) (29,306),
 2. Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988 (1,331), and
 3. A category classified as "Other Detention Acts", under which most of the detentions were registered (79,514).
- Since 2017, the highest number of persons to be placed under preventive detention has consistently been under the "Other Detention Acts" category.

Concerns over the report

- The number of persons placed under detention has been increasing since 2017 – to over 98,700 in 2018 and over 1.06 lakh in 2019 – before dipping to 89,405 in 2020 (due to lockdowns).

- The number of persons placed under preventive detention has seen an increase in 2021.

Issues with preventive detention

- **Arbitrariness:** The police determinations of whether a person poses a threat are not tested at a trial by leading evidence or examined by legally trained persons.
- **Rights violation:** Quiet often, there is no trial (upto 3 months), no periodic review, and no legal assistance for the detained person.
- **Abuse:** It does not provide any procedural protections such as to reduce detainees' vulnerability to torture and discriminatory treatment, and to prevent officials' misusing preventive detention for subversive activities.
- **Tool for suppression:** In the absence of proper safeguards, preventive detention has been misused, particularly against the Dalits and the minorities.

What has the apex court recently rule?

- Preventive detention is a necessary evil only to prevent public disorder, ruled the Supreme Court in 2021.
- The State should not arbitrarily resort to "preventive detention" to deal with all sundry "law and order" problems, which could be dealt with by the ordinary laws of the country.
- Whenever an order under a preventive detention law is challenged, one of the questions the court must ask in deciding its legality is: was the ordinary law of the land sufficient to deal with the situation?
- If the answer is in the affirmative, the detention order will be illegal.

The Article 21

- Preventive detention must fall within the four corners of Article 21 (due process of law) read with Article 22 (safeguards against arbitrary arrest and detention) and the statute in question, Justice Nariman ruled.
- The Liberty of a citizen is a most important right won by our forefathers after long, historical, and arduous struggles.

Way forward

- Having such kind of acts has a restraining influence on the anti-social and subversive elements.
- India is a large country and many separatist tendencies against the national security and integrity existed and existing and a strict law is required to counter the subversive activities.
- The number of persons detained in these acts is not a very large and due attention is made before preventive detention.
- The state should have very effective powers to deal with the acts in which the citizens involve in hostile activities, espionage, coercion, terrorism, etc.

Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) notified the rules governing The Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022.

Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022

- **Background:** Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022 was passed in March 2022 by the Parliament.
- **About: Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act** seeks to repeal the Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920, which is over 100-years-old.
- **Need:** The old Act's scope was limited to capturing of finger impression, foot-print impressions and photographs of convicted prisoners and certain category of arrested and non-convicted persons on the orders of a Magistrate.
 - The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the bill said that new "measurement" techniques being used in advanced countries are giving credible and reliable results and are recognised world over.
 - It said that the 1920 Act does not provide for taking these body measurements as many of the techniques and technologies had not been developed then.

Key Features of Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022

- **Eligible Authority:** The Act empowers a Magistrate to direct any person to give measurements, which

till now was reserved for convicts and those involved in heinous crimes.

- It also enables the police upto the rank of a Head Constable to take measurements of any person who resists or refuses to give measurements.
- **Data Repository:** The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) under MHA will be the one-stop agency for storing and preserving the data of arrested persons.
- The State governments can also store the data, but it shall provide compatible application programming interfaces for sharing the measurements or record of measurements with the NCRB.
- **Deletion of Records:** The procedure for destruction and disposal of records are yet to be specified by the NCRB.

and the digital and physical format of the measurements etc.

- In case any measurement is collected in physical form or in a non-standard digital format, it shall be converted into standard digital format and thereafter uploaded in the database as per the SOP.
- Only authorised users could upload the measurements in the central database in an encrypted format.
- **Destruction of Records:** The rules state that any request for destruction of records shall be made to the Nodal Officer who is to be nominated by the respective State Government.
 - The nodal officer will recommend the destruction after verifying that such record of measurements is not linked with any other criminal cases.

Rules Governing Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022

- **Definition of Measurement:** As per the Criminal Procedure (Identification) rules 2022, "measurements" include-
 - Finger-impressions, palm-print, footprint, photographs, iris and retina scan, physical, biological samples and
 - Their analysis, behavioural attributes including signatures, handwriting or any other examination referred to in Section 53 or Section 53A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974).
- **DNA Profiling:** Though it has not been specified, analysis of biological samples could also include DNA profiling.
- **Preventive Detention:** The notified rules state that samples of those detained under preventive Sections of the CrPC shall not be taken unless such person is charged or arrested in connection with any other offence punishable under any other law.
 - Above will be applicable on Preventive Sections such as 107, 108, 109, 110, 144, 145 and 151 of the CrPC.
- **Data Collection:** The rules state that the NCRB will issue Stand SOP for collection of measurements which would include specifications of the equipment or devices to be used, specifications

Special Marriage Act, 1954

The Supreme Court has dismissed a writ petition challenging the Constitutional validity of certain provisions of the Special Marriage Act, 1954 under which couples seek refuge for inter-faith and inter-caste marriages.

About Special Marriage Act, 1954

- The Special Marriage Act, 1954 (SMA) was enacted to facilitate the marriage of couples professing different faiths, and preferring a civil wedding.
- However, some practical problems arise in registering such marriages.
- The law's features on prior public notice being given and objections for the safety and privacy of those intending to marry across religions.
- To overcome this, many settle for marriage under the personal law of one of them, with the other opting for religious conversion.

Petition in Supreme Court

- The Supreme Court dismissed a writ petition challenging the Constitutional validity of certain provisions of the SMA under which couples seek refuge for inter-faith and inter-caste marriages.

- The writ petition has called these provisions violative of Article 21, which guarantees the right to privacy.
- Under this act, the couples require to give a notice of 30 days before the date of marriage inviting objections from the public.
- The provisions contravene Article 14 on prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste and sex as well as Article 15 on right to equality as these requirements are absent in personal laws.

Court's Verdict

- The SC Bench rejected the writ petition on the grounds that the petitioner was no longer an aggrieved party as she had already solemnised her marriage under SMA.
- The petitioner's lawyers said that they were now deliberating on an alternative approach to initiate this litigation such as through a public interest litigation involving other victims.
- Another writ petition is admitted by the Supreme Court in 2020 and the government's reply to is awaited.

The Challenged Provisions

- Section 5 of the SMA requires couples getting married under it to give a notice to the Marriage Officer 30 days before the date of marriage.
- Section 6 requires such a notice to be then entered into the Marriage Notice Book maintained by the Marriage Officer, which can be inspected by any person desirous of inspecting the same.
- These notices have to be also affixed at a "conspicuous place" in the office of the Marriage Officer so that anyone can raise an objection to the marriage.
- Section 7 provides the process for making an objection such as if either party has a living spouse, is incapable of giving consent due to "unsoundness of mind" or is suffering from mental disorder resulting in the person being unfit for marriage or procreation.
- Section 8 specifies the inquiry procedure to be followed after an objection has been submitted.

Reason

- The provisions throw the personal information of the individuals open to public scrutiny. This may result into vigilantism.
- This seriously damages one's right to have control over her or his personal information and its accessibility.
- By making the personal details of the couple accessible to everyone, the very right of the couple to be the decision makers of their marriage is being hampered by the state.
- These public notices have been used by anti-social elements to harass couples getting married.
- For many who often marry without their parent's consent this can be life-threatening.
- Many states publicly share the details of couples marrying under SMA on their websites.
- Many also complain about the behaviour of the staff at the SDM's office who often delete or delay applications and dissuade couples from marrying under SMA.
- With as many as 11 States passing anti-conversion (or so-called love-jihad) laws, parents and the State are now armed to punish and harass such couples.

Supreme Court's Basic Structure Doctrine

The basic structure doctrine constitutes a high watermark in the assertion of the Supreme Court's judicial power in the teeth of a determined majoritarian regime.

About basic structure of Constitution

- The basic structure doctrine is one of the fundamental judicial principles connected with the Indian Constitution.
- The doctrine of the basic structure holds that there is a basic structure to the Indian Constitution, and the Parliament of India cannot amend the basic features.

Basic Structure of Constitution: Significance

- The doctrine of basic structure is nothing but a judicial innovation to ensure that the power of amendment is not misused by Parliament.

- The idea is that the basic features of the Constitution of India should not be altered to an extent that the identity of the Constitution is lost in the process.

Basic Structure of Constitution: Background

- Courts are empowered under our Constitution to invalidate not only executive orders, but also legislative enactments that violate any part of the Fundamental Rights guaranteed in Part III of the Constitution (Bill of Rights).
- But as to whether they are also empowered to adjudicate on the validity of constitutional amendments passed with the requisite special majority and following the procedure prescribed in Article 368 the Constitution is silent.

Basic Structure of Constitution: Historical developments

Constitution provided a mechanism for parliament to amend the constitution in the form of article 368 but the nature and scope of this amending power was questioned in Supreme Court on many occasions. Supreme Court gave a series of judgement which ultimately culminated in probably the most landmark judgement- The Basic structure doctrine judgement.

- Shankari Prasad Case- 1951
- Golakh Nath Case- 1967
- Kesvananda Bharati Case- 1973
- Minerva Mills case- 1980
- I.R. Coelho- 2007

Related articles

- Art 13(2) – Any Law abridging fundamental rights mentioned in part 3 shall be null and void to the extent of contravention.
- Art 368 -Procedure to amend the constitution.
- Art 19(f) – freedom to acquire hold on and dispose of property.
- Art 31 – Right to property

The rights were subject to reasonable restriction in public interest and restriction were subject to judicial review.

Important Judgements

Shankari Prasad v. Union of India (1951)

In this case, the constitutional validity of the **First Amendment Act (1951)**, was challenged.

- The Supreme Court ruled that the power of the Parliament to amend the Constitution under **Article 368** also includes the power to amend Fundamental Rights.
- The word 'law' in **Article 13** includes only ordinary laws and not the constitutional amendment acts (constituent laws). Therefore, **the Parliament can abridge or take away any of the Fundamental Rights** by enacting a constitutional amendment act and such a law will not be void under Article 13.

Golaknath v. State of Punjab (1967)

In that case, the Supreme Court ruled that the Parliament cannot take away or abridge any of the Fundamental Rights.

- The Court held that the **Fundamental Rights cannot be amended** for the implementation of the Directive Principles.
- The Parliament reacted to the Supreme Court's judgement in the Golaknath Case (1967) by **enacting the 24th Amendment Act (1971) and the 25th Amendment Act (1971)**.
- The 24th Amendment Act declared that the Parliament has the power to **abridge or take away any of the Fundamental Rights** by enacting Constitutional Amendment Acts.
- The 25th Amendment Act inserted a new Article 31C which contained the following **two provisions**:
 1. No law which seeks to implement the socialistic **Directive Principles specified in Article 39 (b) and (c)** shall be void on the ground of contravention of the Fundamental Rights conferred by Article 14, Article 19, or Article 31.
 2. No law containing a declaration for giving effect to such a policy shall be **questioned in any court** on the ground that it does not give effect to such a policy.

Kesavananda Bharati

- He **challenged the Kerala land reforms legislation in 1970**, which imposed restrictions on the management of religious property.
- The case was **challenged under Article 26**, concerning the right to manage religiously

owned property without government interference.

- The landmark judgement was delivered on 24th April 1973 by a **thin majority of 7:6** wherein the majority held that **any provision of the Indian Constitution can be amended by the Parliament** in order to fulfil its socio-economic obligations that were guaranteed to the citizens as given in the Preamble, provided that such amendment **did not change the Constitution's basic structure**.
 - The minority, however, in their dissenting opinion, were wary of giving the Parliament unlimited amending power.
 - The court held that the **24th Constitutional Amendment was entirely valid**. But it found the **second part of the 25th Constitutional Amendment to be ultra vires**.
 - The Supreme Court declared the **Article 31C** as unconstitutional and invalid on the ground that judicial review is basic structure and hence cannot be taken away.
 - Despite the ruling that Parliament cannot breach fundamental rights, the court upheld the amendment that removed the fundamental right to property.
 - The court ruled that in spirit, the amendment would not violate the "basic structure" of the Constitution.

Minerva Mills v. Union of India (1980)

Main Theme: The Supreme Court reiterated that Parliament can amend any part of the Constitution but it cannot change the "Basic Structure" of the Constitution.

- In the **Minerva Mills case**, the Supreme Court held that 'the Indian Constitution is founded on the bedrock of the balance between the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles.
 - They together constitute the **core of the commitment to social revolution**.
- The goals set out by the Directive Principles have to be achieved without the abrogation of the means provided by the Fundamental Rights.
- Therefore, the present position is that the Fundamental Rights enjoy supremacy over the **Directive Principles**.

- Yet, this does not mean that the Directive Principles cannot be implemented.
- The Parliament **can amend the Fundamental Rights for implementing the Directive Principles**, so long as the amendment does not damage or destroy the basic structure of the Constitution.

Conclusion

By restraining the amending powers of legislative organ of State, Supreme court provided basic Rights to Citizens which no organ of State can overrule. Being dynamic in nature, it is more progressive and open to changes in time unlike the rigid nature of earlier judgements.

Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal

The Supreme Court drew an assurance from the State of Punjab that it will meet the Haryana counterpart within this month to discuss the construction of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal which has been languishing for two decades.

About Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal

Sutlej Yamuna Link Canal or SYL as it is popularly known, is an under construction 214 kilometer long canal in India to connect the Sutlej and Yamuna rivers.

Historical Background

- The construction of Punjab's portion of the canal had led to militant attacks in the 1980s.
- The issue had also been a political thorn for successive governments in Punjab, so much so that it led to the State's unilateral enactment of the controversial Punjab Termination of Water Agreements Act of 2004.
- This law was, however, struck down by a Constitution Bench in 2016, dashing the hopes of Punjab's farmers to reclaim lands acquired for the SYL canal project.

The SYL canal issue

- Before the reorganization, in 1955, out of 15.85 MAF of Ravi and Beas, the Centre had allocated 8

MAF to Rajasthan, 7.20 MAF to undivided Punjab, 0.65MAF to Jammu and Kashmir.

- Out of 7.20 MAF allocated, Punjab did not want to share any water with Haryana and thus at the time of reorganization of Punjab in 1966, the issue of sharing of river waters between both the states emerged.
- Punjab refused to share waters of Ravi and Beas with Haryana stating it was against the riparian principle.
- In March 1976, when the Punjab Reorganization Act was implemented, the Centre notified fresh allocations, providing 3.5 MAF to Haryana.
- Later, in 1981, the water flowing down Beas and Ravi was revised and pegged at 17.17 MAF, out of which 4.22 MAF was allocated to Punjab, 3.5 MAF to Haryana, and 8.6 MAF to Rajasthan.
- Finally, to provide this allocated share of water to southern parts of Haryana, a canal linking the Sutlej with the Yamuna, cutting across the state, was planned.
- Finally, the construction of 214-km SYL was started in April 1982, 122 km of which was to run through Punjab and the rest through Haryana.
- Haryana has completed its side of the canal, but work in Punjab has been hanging fire for over three decades.

The Supreme Court's intervention

- The issue is back on centre stage after the Supreme Court directed the CMs of Punjab and Haryana to negotiate and settle the SYL canal issue.
- The apex court asked for a meeting at the highest political level to be mediated by the Centre so that the states reach a consensus over the completion of the SYL canal.
- The meeting remained inconclusive with the Centre expressing the view that the construction of the SYL canal should be completed. But Punjab CM refused categorically.

Punjab's resentment with the project

- The dispute is based on the bloody history around the SYL canal. The trouble-torn days of terrorism

in Punjab started in the early 1980s when work on the SYL started.

- Punjab feels it utilized its precious groundwater resources to grow the crop for the entire country and should not be forced to share its waters as it faces desertification.
- It is feared that once the construction of the canal restarts, the youth may start feeling that the state has been discriminated against.
- The Punjab CM fears Pakistan and secessionist organisations could exploit this and foment trouble in the state.

Water crisis in Punjab

- Punjab is facing severe water crisis due to over-exploitation of its underground aquifers for the wheat/paddy monocycle.
- According to the Central Underground Water Authority's report, its underground water is over-exploited to meet the agriculture requirements in about 79 per cent area of the state.
- Out of 138 blocks, 109 are "over-exploited", two are "critical" five are "semi-critical" and only 22 blocks are in "safe" category.

Punjab expects a new tribunal

- The state wants a tribunal seeking a fresh time-bound assessment of the water availability.
- The state has been saying that till date there has been no adjudication or scientific assessment of Punjab River waters.

'SymphoNE' Conference

Recently, Minister for DoNER, Tourism & Culture Shri G. Kishan Reddy launched the two-day virtual conference 'SymphoNE'.

'SymphoNE' Conference

- **About:** The Virtual Conference 'SymphoNE' being organized by Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region on the occasion of World Tourism Day.
- **Mandate:** 'SymphoNE' 2022 aim to create a roadmap to showcase the unexplored beauty of North East India & boost the tourism Sector in North Eastern Region.

- **Participation:** It would ideate, discuss & formulate the ideas & suggestions by Thought Leaders, Policy Thinkers, Social Media Influencers, Travel & Tour Operators and The Senior Officials of Ministry of DoNER and State Departments.
- **Significance:** SymphoNE aims to develop one-stop solution to eliminate all obstacles that are being faced by the tourists, and the tour operators while carrying out the operations for the visitors while-
 - Solving Logistics & infrastructural facilities,
 - Lack of awareness about the locations among the tourist and
 - Spreading necessary information among the people, and marketing/promotional activities.

Delhi's new Liquor policy

The Excise Policy 2021-22, implemented on November 17, 2021, has been withdrawn by the Delhi government amid allegations of irregularities in its implementation. Delhi returned to the old excise policy regime with the opening of government-run liquor vends in the city and exit of private players from retail business.

Alcohol laws in India: A background

- The legal drinking age in India and the laws which regulate the sale and consumption of alcohol vary significantly from state to state.
- In India, consumption of alcohol is prohibited in the states of Bihar, Gujarat, Nagaland and Mizoram.
- There is partial ban on alcohol in some districts of Manipur.
- All other Indian states permit alcohol consumption but fix a legal drinking age, which ranges at different ages per region.
- In some states the legal drinking age can be different for different types of alcoholic beverage.

Regulation

- Alcohol is a subject in the State List under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India.

- Therefore, the laws governing alcohol vary from state to state.
- Liquor in India is generally sold at liquor stores, restaurants, hotels, bars, pubs, clubs and discos but not online.
- Some states, like Kerala and Tamil Nadu, prohibit private parties from owning liquor stores making the state government the sole retailer of alcohol in those states.
- In some states, liquor may be sold at groceries, departmental stores, banquet halls and/or farm houses.
- Some tourist areas have special laws allowing the sale of alcohol on beaches and houseboats.

Dry days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry days are specific days when the sale of alcohol is not permitted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the Indian states observe these days on major national festivals/occasions such as Republic Day (26 January), Independence Day (15 August) and Gandhi Jayanti (2 October).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry days are also observed during elections in India.

Taxation on Alcohol

- Most states levy either Value added Tax (VAT) or Excise duty or both.
- Excise duty is a tax levied to discourage the consumption of a product.
- It is calculated on a per-unit basis. Meaning, if you buy 1 litre of liquor, you pay a fixed excise duty of Rs 15.
- Value-added Tax is charged in the proportion of the product. If a bottle costs Rs 100, and the state levies 10 percent VAT, the price rises to Rs 110.

Tax rates in States

- The 29 states/UTs in India approach liquor taxation differently.
- For instance, Gujarat has banned its citizens from consuming liquor since 1961.
- But outsiders with special licenses can still buy.
- Puducherry, on the other hand, earns most of its revenue from alcohol trading.

- Bihar has prohibited alcohol consumption entirely, meaning the state's revenue from liquor consumption is nil.
- Its neighbor, Uttar Pradesh, earns the most excise duty on liquor.
- The state does not levy VAT but a special duty on liquor, collecting funds for particular purposes.

Death Penalty

The Supreme Court has said that fundamental aspects of death penalty sentencing need re-examination. A three-judge bench acknowledged that there are serious problems in India's death penalty regime, indicating that the current state of death penalty sentencing is untenable.

What is Death Penalty?

- The death penalty, also known as capital punishment, is the harshest form of punishment available under any criminal law in existence anywhere in the world.
- It should be distinguished from extrajudicial executions carried out without due process of law.
- The term death penalty is sometimes used interchangeably with capital punishment, though imposition of the penalty is not always followed by execution, because of the possibility of commutation to life imprisonment.

Death Penalty: Historical Background

- In 'Jagmohan Singh vs State of UP' (1973), then in 'Rajendra Prasad vs State of UP' (1979), and finally in 'Bachan Singh vs State of Punjab' (1980) the Supreme Court affirmed the constitutional validity of the death penalty.
- It said that if capital punishment is provided in the law and the procedure is a fair, just and reasonable one, the death sentence can be awarded to a convict.

- This will, however, only be in the "rarest of rare" cases, and the courts should render "special reasons" while sending a person to the gallows.

Death Penalty: Sentencing

- The term "Capital Punishment" stands for most severe form of punishment.
- It is the punishment which is to be awarded for the most heinous, grievous and detestable crimes against humanity.
- While the definition and extent of such crimes vary, the implication of capital punishment has always been the death sentence.

Death Penalty: International framework

- **ICCPR:** Despite the fact that the death penalty was still in practice in the majority of countries in the early 1960s, the drafters of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) have already begun efforts to have it abolished in international law. Although Article 6 of the ICCPR allows for the use of the death penalty in restricted circumstances, it also states that nothing in this Article shall be invoked to delay or hinder any State Party to the present Covenant from abolishing capital punishment. The ICCPR's Second Optional Protocol aims to abolish the death penalty.
- **UN ECOSOC:** The UN Economic and Social Council enacted Safeguards in 1984, ensuring that persons facing the death penalty have their rights protected.
- The UN General Assembly ratified the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR in 1989, 33 years after the adoption of the Covenant itself, giving abolition a powerful fresh boost. Members of the Protocol's signatories pledged not to execute anyone within their domains.
- **Resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly:** The General Assembly urged states to observe international standards that protect the rights of persons facing the death sentence in a series of resolutions enacted in 2007, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018, and to gradually reduce the number of offences punishable by death.

Why death penalty should be abolished?

- Innocent execution: Innocent individuals have been executed in the past and will continue to be executed in the future. Between 2000 and 2014, the Supreme Court and high courts acquitted a fifth of individuals sentenced to death by trial courts.
- Arbitrariness: The possibility of the death penalty being applied arbitrarily cannot be ruled out. According to the National Law University Delhi's Death Penalty India Report 2016 (DPIR), approximately 75% of all convicts sentenced to death in India are from socio-economically underprivileged categories, such as Dalits, OBCs, and religious minorities.
- Eye for an eye: Reformatory justice is more productive, that innocent people are often killed in the search for retribution, and that "an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.
- Deterrence is a myth: Death penalty is not a deterrent to capital crimes state that there is no evidence to support the claim that the penalty is a deterrent.

Conclusion

The death penalty is one of the most controversial issues in the world, and it is a topic that is constantly being debated. Over 70% of the world's countries have abolished capital punishment in law or practice. New appropriate regulations should be created to ensure the successful execution of alternatives to capital punishment, as well as advice from professionals.

Hijab and the Doctrine of Essentiality

A two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court of India is presently hearing arguments on the correctness of a Karnataka High Court judgment that upheld the ban on the use of the hijab by students in Karnataka which raises question on doctrine of essentiality.

What is 'Doctrine of Essentiality'?

A seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court invented the doctrine of "essentiality" in the Shirur Mutt case in 1954. The court held that the term "religion" will cover all rituals and practices "integral" to a religion.

Doctrine of Essentiality: Importance

In the legal framework, the doctrine of essentiality is a doctrine that has evolved to protect the religious practices that are essential or integral and does not violate any fundamental right. India being a secular country has discrete religious beliefs and to deny any is to violate the freedom of religion.

Is hijab essential?

- Wearing of hijab (head scarf) by Muslim women does not form a part of essential religious practices in Islamic faith and it is not protected under the right to freedom of religion guaranteed under Article 25 of the Constitution of India, the High Court of Karnataka declared on March 15 2022.
- The Qur'an instructs Muslim women and men to dress modestly, and for some, the hijab is worn by Muslim girls and women to maintain modesty and privacy from unrelated males. According to the Encyclopedia of Islam and Muslim World, modesty concerns both men's and women's "gaze, gait, garments, and genitalia".

Identifying Essential religion practice

- The Court observed that in order to determine whether or not a particular practice is an essential part of religion, the test must be whether the absence of the practice itself

Examples of the essential religious practices test

- While these issues are largely understood to be community-based, there are instances in which the court has applied the test to individual freedoms as well.
- In a 2004 ruling, the Supreme Court held that the Ananda Marga sect had no fundamental right to perform the Tandava dance in public streets since it did not constitute an essential religious practice of the sect.
- For example, in 2016, the Supreme Court upheld the discharge of an airman from the Indian Air Force for keeping a beard.

- It distinguished the case of a Muslim airman from that of Sikhs who are allowed to keep a beard.
- In 2015, the Supreme Court restored the Jain religious practice of Santhara/Sallekhana (a ritualistic fast unto death) by staying an order of the Rajasthan HC.

Article 26

- Freedom to manage religious affairs Subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right.

Supreme Court's judgement on Doctrine of Essentiality

- The doctrine of "essentiality" was invented by a seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court in the 'Shirur Mutt' case in 1954.
- It is a contentious doctrine evolved by the court to protect only such religious practices which were essential and integral to the religion.
- The court held that the term "religion" will cover all rituals and practices "integral" to a religion, and took upon itself the responsibility of determining the essential and non-essential practices of a religion.
- Referring to the Ayodhya case, the Constitution Bench had ruled in 1994 that A mosque is not an essential part of the practice of the religion of Islam and namaz (prayer) by Muslims can be offered anywhere, even in open.

Arguments over Doctrine of Essentiality

- The 'essentiality doctrine' of the Supreme Court has been criticized by several constitutional experts.
- Scholars of constitutional law have argued that the essentiality/integrality doctrine has tended to lead the court into an area that is beyond its competence, and given judges the power to decide purely religious questions.
- As a result, over the years, courts have been inconsistent on this question – in some cases they have relied on religious texts to determine essentiality.
- In others it relied on the empirical behaviour of followers, and in yet others, based on whether the practice existed at the time the religion originated.

Issues

- In the beginning, the court engaged with the question of whether untouchability, manifested in restrictions on entry into temples, was an "essential part of the Hindu religion".
- After examining selected Hindu texts, it came to the conclusion that untouchability was not an essential Hindu practice.
- The idea of providing constitutional protection only to those elements of religion which the court considers "essential" is problematic as it assumes that one element or practice of religion is independent of other elements or practices.
- So, while the essentiality test privileges certain practices over others, it is, in fact, all practices taken together that constitute a religion.

Effect on society

- Narrowing of safeguards to religious customs: It has allowed the Court to narrow the extent of safeguards available to religious customs by directly impinging on the autonomy of groups to decide for themselves what they deem valuable, violating, in the process, their right to ethical independence.
- Negated legislation that might otherwise enhance the cause of social justice: It has also negated legislation that might otherwise enhance the cause of social justice by holding that such laws cannot under any circumstances encroach on matters integral to the practice of a religion. For example, in 1962, the Court struck down a Bombay law that prohibited excommunications made by the Dai of the Dawoodi Bohra community when it held that the power to excommunicate is an essential facet of faith and that any measure aimed at social welfare cannot reform a religion out of its existence.
- A principle of anti-exclusion: Its application would require the Court to presume that a practice asserted by a religious group is, in fact, essential to the proponents of its faith. But regardless of such grounding, the Constitution will not offer protection to the practice if it excludes people on grounds of caste, gender, or other discriminatory criteria.

Conclusion

- For now, any Court hearing a matter touching upon a matter of faith has the unenviable task of acting not merely as an expert on law but also as an expert on religion.

LGBTQ and Human Rights

Four years after landmark LGBTQ verdict: The march to full citizenship. On September 6, 2018, exactly four years ago, in Navtej Singh Johar and Ors v Union of India, a five-judge constitution bench of the Supreme Court, in a beautifully elaborate decision, liberated LGBTQ Indians from the darkness of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860.

What is LGBTQ?
 LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. In use since the 1990s, LGBTQ as well as some of its common variants, functions as an umbrella term for sexuality and gender identity.

What is Section 377 of the IPC?

- It states – Unnatural offences: Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.
- The terms “carnal intercourse” and “against the order of nature” are not defined precisely anywhere in the code.

Role played by the Judiciary

- The Delhi High Court’s verdict in Naz Foundation vs. Government of NCT of Delhi (2009) was a landmark in the law of sexuality and equality jurisprudence in India.
- The court held that Section 377 offended the guarantee of equality enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution, because it creates an unreasonable classification and targets homosexuals as a class.
- In a retrograde step, the Supreme Court, in Suresh Kumar Koushal vs Naz Foundation (2013), reinstated Section 377 to the IPC.

- However, the Supreme Court in Navtej Singh Johar & Ors. vs Union of India (2018) declared that the application of Section 377 IPC to consensual homosexual behavior was “unconstitutional”.
- This Supreme Court judgment has been a great victory to the Indian individual in his quest for identity and dignity.
- It also underscored the doctrine of progressive realization of rights.

Road Ahead

- Overarching legislation is needed to guarantee equality to all persons on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex, caste, religion, age, disability, marital status, pregnancy, nationality, and other grounds.
- The law should impose obligations of equality and non-discrimination on all persons, public and private, and in the areas of education, employment, healthcare, land and housing and access to public places.
- It should provide for civil remedies to stop discriminatory behavior, costs and damages, and positive action to make reparations.
- We need an equality law to define what equality would encompass.
- Supreme Court comes held in its privacy judgment in K.S. Puttuswamy v. Union of India (2017) that equality and liberty cannot be separated, and equality encompasses the inclusion of dignity and basic freedoms.

Way forward

- Schools and colleges must bring changes in curriculum for a better understanding of the community.
- People of a different sexual orientation or gender identity often narrate harrowing tales of bullying, discrimination, stigma and ostracization.
- Gender-neutral restrooms should be compulsory in educational institutes and other places.
- Parents too need to be sensitized, because the first point of misunderstanding and abuse often begins at home, with teenagers being forced to opt for “conversion” therapies.

Conclusion

Justice Chandrachud, speaking on the fourth anniversary of Johar and the journey ahead, while quoting the Beatles classic “All you need is love”, notes that “simply love is not enough”. Rights are necessary which will enhance dignity of the community.

New Adoption Rules

There is confusion over the implementation of new adoption rules that require the transfer of adoption petitions from courts to District Magistrates (DMs).

- DMs have been empowered to give adoption orders instead of courts.
- All cases pending before courts have to be now transferred.
- Hundreds of adoptive parents in the country are now concerned that the transfer process will further delay what is already a long and tedious process.
- There are questions whether an order passed by the executive will pass muster when an adopted child’s entitlements on succession and inheritance are contested before a court.

Adoption in India: A background

- In 2015, the then Minister for Women and Child Development centralized the entire adoption system by empowering Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA).
- It was empowered to maintain in various specialized adoption agencies, a registry of children, prospective adoptive parents as well as match them before adoption.
- This was aimed at checking rampant corruption and trafficking as child care institutions and NGOs could directly give children for adoption after obtaining a no-objection certificate from CARA.

DMs to issue Adoption Orders

- The Parliament passed the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill, 2021

in order to amend the Juvenile Justice Act (JJ Act), 2015.

- The key changes include authorizing District Magistrates and Additional District Magistrates to issue adoption orders under Section 61 of the JJ Act by striking out the word “court”.
- This was done “in order to ensure speedy disposal of cases and enhance accountability,” according to a government statement.
- The DMs have also been empowered under the Act to inspect child care institutions as well as evaluate the functioning of district child protection units, child welfare committees, juvenile justice boards, specialized juvenile police units, child care institutions etc.

Concern over the revised rules

- Parents, activists, lawyers and adoption agencies will have to be transferred and the process will have to start afresh.
- A delay in such an order can often mean that a child can’t get admission into a school because parents don’t yet have a birth certificate.
- Parents and lawyers also state that neither judges, nor DMs are aware about the change in the JJ Act leading to confusion in the system and delays.
- DMs don’t handle civil matters that bestow inheritance and succession rights on a child.
- If these rights are contested when a child turns 18, a judicial order is far more tenable to ensure the child is not deprived of his or her entitlements.
- The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) says there are nearly 1,000 adoption cases pending before various courts in the country.
- This is not such a huge burden.

The Adoption procedure in India

- Adoptions in India are governed by two laws:
 1. **Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 (HAMA):** It is a parent-centric law that provides son to the son-less for reasons of succession, inheritance, continuance of family name and for funeral rights and later adoption of daughters was incorporated because kanyadaan is considered an important part of dharma in Hindu tradition.

2. **Juvenile Justice Act, 2015:** It handles issues of children in conflict with law as well as those who are in need of care and protection and only has a small chapter on adoptions.

- Both laws have their separate eligibility criteria for adoptive parents.
- Those applying under the JJ Act have to register on CARA's portal after which a specialized adoption agency carries out a home study report.
- After it finds the candidate eligible for adoption, a child declared legally free for adoption is referred to the applicant.
- Under HAMA, a "dattaka hom" ceremony or an adoption deed or a court order is sufficient to obtain irrevocable adoption rights.

Issues with child adoption in India

- **Parent-centrism:** The current adoption approach is very parent-centered, but parents must make it child-centered.
- **Age of child:** Most Indian parents also want a child between the ages of zero and two, believing that this is when the parent-child bond is formed.
- **Institutional issues:** Because the ratio of abandoned children to children in institutionalized care is lopsided, there are not enough children available for adoption.
- **Lineage discrimination:** Most Indians have a distorted view of adoption because they want their genes, blood, and lineage to be passed down to their children.
- **Red-tapism:** Child adoption is also not so easy task after the Juvenile Justice Rules of 2016 and the Adoption Regulations of 2017 were launched.

Practical issues in adoption

- There are no rules for monitoring adoptions and verifying sourcing of children and determining whether parents are fit to adopt.
- There are many problems with the adoption system under CARA but at the heart of it is the fact that there are very few children in its registry.
- According to the latest figures there are only 2,188 children in the adoption pool, while there are more than 31,000 parents waiting to adopt a child.

SC quota for Dalit Muslims and Christians

The Centre is likely to soon decide on setting up a national commission to study the social, economic and educational status of Dalits who converted to religions other than Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism.

- Several petitions are pending before the Supreme Court seeking Scheduled Caste (SC) reservation benefits for Dalits who converted to Christianity or Islam.

Dalit and Quota Benefits

- The original rationale behind giving reservation to Scheduled Castes was that these sections had suffered from the social evil of untouchability, which was practiced among Hindus.
- Under **Article 341** of the Constitution, the President may specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which shall...be deemed to be Scheduled Castes.
- The first order under this provision was issued in **1950** and covered only Hindus.
- Following demands from the Sikh community, an order was issued in **1956**, including Sikhs of Dalit origin among the beneficiaries of the SC quota.
- In **1990**, the government acceded to a similar demand from Buddhists of Dalit origin, and the order was revised to state: **"No person who professes a religion different from the Hindu, the Sikh or the Buddhist religion shall be deemed to be a member of Scheduled Caste."**

Historical Background

- After 1990, a number of Private Member's Bills were brought in Parliament for this purpose.
- In 1996, a government Bill called The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Orders (Amendment) Bill was drafted, but in view of a divergence of opinions, the Bill was not introduced in Parliament.
- Then government headed by PM Manmohan Singh set up two important panels:

1. **Ranganath Misra Commission:** The National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, popularly known as the Ranganath Misra Commission, in October 2004

2. **Sachar Committee:** A seven-member high-level committee headed by former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court Rajinder Sachar to study the social, economic, and educational condition of Muslims in March 2005.

Recommendation

- The Sachar Committee Report observed that the social and economic situation of Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians did not improve after conversion.
- The Ranganath Misra Commission, which submitted its report in May 2007, recommended that SC status should be completely de-linked from religion and Scheduled Castes should be made fully religion-neutral like Scheduled Tribes.

Response to the recommendations

- The report was tabled in Parliament in 2009, but its recommendation was not accepted in view of inadequate field data and corroboration with the actual situation on the ground.
- Few studies, commissioned by the National Commission for Minorities, was also not considered reliable due to insufficient data.

Way Forward

- Based on the recommendations of the Ranganath Misra Commission, there are some petitions pending before the Supreme Court, seeking reservation benefits for Christians and Muslims of Dalit origin.
- In the last hearing, a three-judge Bench gave the Solicitor General of India three weeks' time to present the stand of the Union government on the issue.
- The next hearing is awaited.

Swachh Toycathon

Recently, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched **Swachh Toycathon under the National Action Plan for Toys**.

- Secretary, MoHUA, Mr. Manoj Joshi launched the Swachh Toycathon by unveiling the online platform on MyGov portal and releasing the toolkit.

Swachh Toycathon: Key details

- **About:** Swachh Toycathon is a competition for new ideas to transform waste into toys.
 - **Swachh Toycathon** competition is being launched under the 'Swachh Amrit Mahotsav'.
- **Mandate:** Swachh Toycathon aims to the toy industry environment friendly, and a step towards achieving circularity in toy sector.
 - The Swachh Toycathon competition seeks to explore solutions for use of waste in creation or manufacturing of toys.
- **Participation:** The **Swachh Toycathon** is a national competition for individuals and groups.
- **Themes:** It is based on three broad themes-
 - **FUN & LEARN:** It seeks ideas for design and early prototype of toys from waste at home, workplace and surroundings,
 - **USE & ENJOY:** It seeks ideas for design and models of games and play in the park/open spaces made from waste and
 - **NEW & OLD:** It seeks ideas/solutions/working models for circularity in toy industry.
- **Assessment Criteria:** The assessment criteria will be based on-
 - Novelty of Idea
 - Design
 - Safety
 - Usage of Waste Material
 - Scalability and Replicability
 - Future Waste and climate and social implications.
- **Organisers:** Swachh Toycathon is being organized by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.
 - The Center for Creative Learning, IIT Gandhinagar is MoHUA's Knowledge Partner for the initiative, they will be providing support on aspects of pedagogy and creativity.

What is Swachh Amrit Mahotsav?

- **Swachh Amrit Mahotsav** is a fortnight of activities to galvanize action around Swachhata from 17th Sept. 2022, Seva Diwas, till 2nd Oct. 2022, Swachhata Diwas.

India's Toy Industry

- The Toy Industry in India has historically been import-dependent. Lack of raw-material,

technology, design capability etc. led to huge imports of Toys and its components.

- In 2018-19, Toys worth USD 371 Mn (Rs. 2960 cr.) were imported into our country. A large proportion of these toys were unsafe, substandard, counterfeit, and cheap.
- To address the import of low-quality and hazardous toys and to enhance domestic manufacturing of toys, several strategic interventions have been taken by government.

- Some key initiatives include increase of Basic Custom Duty from 20% to 60%, implementation of Quality Control Order, mandatory sample testing of imported toys, granting more than 850 BIS licenses to domestic toy manufacturers, development of toy clusters etc.
- Several promotional initiatives including The India Toy Fair 2021, Toycathon 2021, Toy Business League 2022 were conducted to promote indigenous toys to encourage innovation and new-age design to suit global requirements.



International Relations

19th ASEAN-India Economic Ministers' Meeting

Recently, Smt. Anupriya Patel, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry along with H.E. Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce, Kingdom of Cambodia co-chaired the 19th ASEAN-India Economic Ministers' meeting 2022.

19th ASEAN-India Economic Ministers' Meeting

- **19th ASEAN-India Economic Ministers' Meeting** was held on 16th September 2022 in Siem Reap City, Cambodia.
- The Economic Ministers or their representatives from all the 10 ASEAN countries Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam attended the 19th ASEAN-India Economic Ministers' Meeting.



Key Outcomes of ASEAN-India Economic Ministers' Meet 2022

- **Bilateral Trade:** The members highlighted that the two-way trade between ASEAN and India reached USD 91.5 billion in 2021 increasing by 39.2 per cent year-on-year.
 - The Ministers also took note of the recommendations made by ASEAN India Business Council (AIBC) to enhance the ASEAN India economic partnership and the activities undertaken by AIBC in 2022.
- **Post Covid-19 Recovery:** The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to take collective actions to mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic

and work towards a sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery.

- **Supply Chain Strengthening:** The Ministers welcomed ASEAN and India to forge collective actions in securing a robust supply chain connectivity to maintain the flow of essential goods and services through-
 - Launching of ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) Upgrade Negotiations,
 - Mutual recognition of COVID-19 vaccination, vaccines production, public health surveillance, and medical technologies in moving forward with the post-pandemic recovery responses and facing future health crises.
- **Mutual Support in WTO:** The Ministers welcomed the successful outcomes of the Twelfth World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference held on 12-17 June 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland.
 - They also reiterated their support for a rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, fair, inclusive, equitable, and transparent multilateral trading system, as embodied in the WTO.
- **Strengthening AITIGA:** Ministers endorsed the Scope of the Review of the AITIGA to make it more user-friendly, simple, and trade facilitative for businesses, as well as responsive to the current global and regional challenges including supply chain disruptions.
 - The Ministers also activated the AITIGA Joint Committee to undertake the review of AITIGA expeditiously.

INDIA-ASEAN Relations

After independence India did not have good relations with ASEAN because of ideological difference with ASEAN which was under the US camp during the Cold War. After the end of Cold War, India – ASEAN relations have evolved from just economic ties to strategic heights owing to common threats and aspirations.

- 1996- India became a member of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) for security dialogue in Asia in which members can discuss current regional security issues and develop cooperative measures to enhance peace and security in the region.

- 2002- India and ASEAN begin to hold annual summit level meetings.
- 2009- India- ASEAN Free Trade Agreement in Goods was concluded.
- 2012- India – ASEAN Strategic Partnership was concluded
- 2014- India – ASEAN Free Trade Agreement in Services and Investment was signed with an aim to facilitate movement of manpower and investments between India and ASEAN.
- 2018- India ASEAN celebrated 25 years of their relationship by holding a commemorative Summit. Leaders of all ten ASEAN countries were invited as Chief Guests for the Republic Day parade on January 26,2018.

India-ASEAN Economic Cooperation

- ASEAN is India's fourth largest trading partner.
- The ASEAN-India Free Trade Area has been completed.
- ASEAN India-Business Council (AIBC) was set up in 2003 to bring key private sector players from India and the ASEAN countries on a single platform.
- Financial assistance has been provided to ASEAN countries from the following Funds:
 - ASEAN-India Cooperation Fund
 - ASEAN-India S&T Development Fund
 - ASEAN-India Green Fund
- Delhi Declaration identifies cooperation in the Maritime Domain.
- **Delhi Dialogue:** Annual dialogue for discussing politico-security and economic issues between ASEAN and India.
- **ASEAN-India Centre (AIC):** To undertake policy research, advocacy and networking activities with organizations and think-tanks in India and ASEAN.
- **Political Security Cooperation:** India places ASEAN at the centre of its Indo-Pacific vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region.

BRICS Tourism Ministers' Meeting 2022

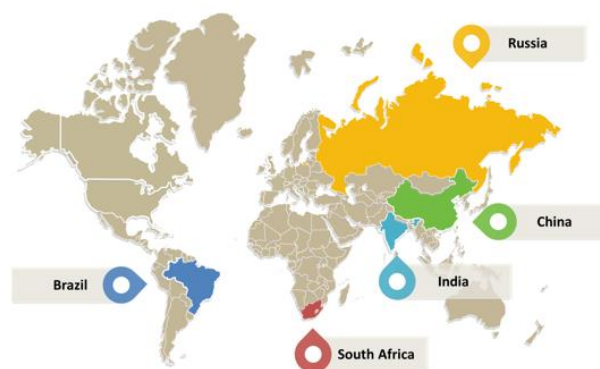
Recently, Shri G. Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of Tourism, Culture and DONER participated in the Tourism Ministers meeting of the BRICS member countries.

About BRICS Tourism Ministers' Meeting 2022

- **Participation:** The Tourism Ministers' of the BRICS countries viz Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa participated in **BRICS Tourism Ministers' Meeting**.
- **Theme: BRICS Tourism Ministers' Meeting 2022** adopted the Communique on the theme Green Growth, Sustainable Development and Resilient Recovery.
- **BRICS Presidency 2022: China took Presidency of the BRICS Council in 2022 from India.**
 - During India's chairmanship of BRICS in 2021 key emphasis was put on sustainability, shift to renewable resources, job creation, encouraging green and sustainable tourism practices for accelerating tourism recovery.

India at BRICS Tourism Ministers' Meeting 2022

- **BRICS alliance for Green Tourism:** Indian Tourism Minister stated that India had launched the BRICS alliance for Green Tourism during BRICS chairmanship of India in 2021.
- **Sustainable Development of Tourism:** India also attaches great importance to implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to promoting sustainable development in the tourism sector.
 - This is to address the challenges in environmental protection and climate change, especially on Tourism sector.
- **Response to COVID-19 Pandemic**



BRICS alliance for Green Tourism

- About: **BRICS alliance for Green Tourism** promotes measures which can shape a more resilient, sustainable and inclusive tourism sector.
 - It can accelerate the recovery and development of tourism on sustainable lines.

- India also attaches great importance to implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to promoting sustainable development in the tourism sector to address the challenges in environmental protection and climate change.
- The Ministry's approach is to focus on post COVID growth and development of tourism sector and priority areas like Cultural Tourism, Adventure tourism, MICE, Medical, Wellness Tourism and Rural Tourism for which the following major initiatives have been identified: -
 - (i) Green Growth and sustainable development
 - (ii) Digital Tourism
 - (iii) Destination Management
 - (iv) Tourism and Hospitality Skill Development & MSME Development
- This will also be reflected in India's SCO Presidency and G20 Presidency in 2022-23.

- This year, the Forum aimed at connecting the Far East with the Asia-Pacific.

Eastern Economic Forum (EEF)

Russia hosted the seventh Eastern Economic Forum- EEF in Vladivostok. The four-day forum is a platform for entrepreneurs to expand their businesses into Russia's Far East (RFE).

About Eastern Economic Forum (EEF)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EEF was established in 2015 aiming to encourage foreign investments in the RFE to display:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic potential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suitable business conditions and
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investment opportunities in the region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agreements focus on infrastructure, transportation projects, mineral excavations, construction, industry and agriculture.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With EEF, Russia is trying to attract the Asian economies in investing and developing the Far East.

Eastern Economic Forum: Aim

- The primary objective of the EEF is to increase the Foreign Direct Investments in the Russia's Far East.
- The region encompasses one-third of Russia's territory and is rich with natural resources such as fish, oil, natural gas, wood, diamonds and other minerals.
- The sparse population living in the region is another factor for encouraging people to move and work in the Far East.
- The region's riches and resources contribute to five percent of Russia's GDP.

Eastern Economic Forum: Success

- Agreements signed at the EEF increased from 217 in 2017 to 380 agreements in 2021, worth 3.6 trillion roubles.
- As of 2022, almost 2,729 investment projects are being planned in the region.

Eastern Economic Forum: Major Participants

- China is the biggest investor in the region as it sees potential in promoting the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative and the Polar Sea Route in the Russia's Far East.
- China's investments in the region account for 90% of the total investments.
- South Korea has invested in shipbuilding projects, manufacturing of electrical equipment, gas-liquefying plants, agricultural production and fisheries.
- Japan is another key trading partner. In 2017, its investments through 21 projects amounted to \$16 billion.

Eastern Economic Forum: Russia's response to China's investment

- Russia has been welcoming Chinese investments since 2015; more now than ever due to the economic pressures caused by the war in Ukraine.

- The Trans-Siberian Railway has further helped Russia and China in advancing trade ties.
- The countries share a 4000-km-long border, which enables them to tap into each other's resources with some infrastructural assistance.
- China is also looking to develop its Heilongjiang Province which connects with the RFE.
- Both nations have invested in a fund to develop connectivity between the cities of Blagoveshchensk and Heihe.

Eastern Economic Forum: India and Russia

- India seeks to expand its influence in the Russia's Far East.
- In 2019, India also offered a \$1 billion line of credit to develop infrastructure in the region.
- During the forum, PM Modi expressed the country's readiness in expanding trade, connectivity and investments in Russia.
- India is keen to deepen its cooperation in energy, pharmaceuticals, maritime connectivity, healthcare, tourism, the diamond industry and the Arctic.

Eastern Economic Forum: Strategic significance for Russia

- Gateway to Asia: The Russia's Far East is geographically placed at a strategic location; acting as a gateway into Asia.
- Negating the Ukrainian war impact: The Ukraine war is a worrying issue as it affects the economic growth of the country.
- Surviving sanctions: Although, the EEF is an annual gathering, the forum comes at an opportune time for Russia who is dealing with the impact of the sanctions.
- Supply chain resilience: The IPEF will also play a key role in building resilient supply chains.

Conclusion

- India understands the benefits of being involved in the development in the RFE but it also perceives the IPEF as a vital platform to strengthen its presence in the Indo-Pacific region.
- India's participation in the forum will help in disengaging from supply chains that are dependent on China and will also make it a part of the global supply chain network.

G20 Joint Environment and Climate Ministers

Recently, the Union Minister for Environment Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, attended the G20 Joint Environment and Climate Ministers Meeting (JECMM) held at Bali, Indonesia.

- He also extended heartfelt and warm invitation to all the G 20 countries for the next Environment Deputies Meeting and Climate Sustainability Working Group related events during India's G 20 Presidency.

India at G20 Environment Ministers Meeting 2022

- **Cooperative and Collaborative Approach:** India underlined the need to work together for stronger recovery and resilience across globe, leaving no one behind especially most vulnerable sections of the society.
- **Sustainable Recovery:** India reminded G20 that Sustainable recovery is at the heart of the 2030 agenda of sustainable development and should lead towards Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities & Respective Capabilities (CDRRC):** India again highlighted that any initiative to address the contemporary environmental challenge should be on the basis of Equity and principle of CDRRC in the light of the national circumstances and priorities.
- **Redefine Prosperity:** India highlighted the need to redefining prosperity to ensure affordable, servable and sustainable lifestyle for all.
- **'whole of the world' approach:** India stands for a 'whole of the world' approach that recognizes the interdependence of countries, economies and communities.

India - Bangladesh Relations 2022

Recently, H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, paid a State Visit to India at the invitation of Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi.

India - Bangladesh Relations 2022: Key Outcomes

- **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Student Scholarship:** It was launched by PM Sheikh Hasina for 200 descendants of Indian Armed Forces personnel martyred and critically injured during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971.
- Both held discussions on bilateral cooperation areas, including political and security cooperation, defence, border management, trade and connectivity, water resources, power and energy, development cooperation, cultural and people-to-people links.
 - They also agreed to collaborate in new areas of cooperation, such as, environment, climate change, cyber security, ICT, space technology, green energy and blue economy.
- **Connectivity Cooperation:** the two Leaders underscored the importance of implementing bilateral and sub-regional rail, road, and other connectivity initiatives. Both sides welcomed the ongoing bilateral initiatives, such as-
 - Conversion to dual-gauge of Tongi-Akhaura line,
 - Supply of railway rolling stock,
 - Capacity building for the personnel of Bangladesh Railway,
 - Sharing of IT solutions for improved services of Bangladesh Railway etc.
- **Border Management:** Recognizing that peaceful management of India-Bangladesh border is a shared priority, the two Leaders directed the officials to expedite work to complete all pending developmental works within 150 yards of the Zero Line.
 - These include fencing starting with the Tripura sector with the objective of maintaining a tranquil and crime-free border.
 - Noting with satisfaction that the number of deaths due to incidents along the border has significantly reduced, both sides agreed to work towards bringing the number down to zero.
 - Both sides noted with appreciation the stepped up efforts by the two border guarding forces against smuggling of arms, narcotics and fake currency and to prevent trafficking, particularly of women and children.
- **Vehicle Connectivity:** The two Leaders agreed to expedite efforts to improve bilateral and sub-regional connectivity through early operationalisation of the BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement.
 - Bangladesh reiterated its eagerness to partner in the ongoing initiative of the India – Myanmar - Thailand trilateral highway project.
- **Economic Cooperation:** The two Leaders welcomed the recent finalization of a Joint Feasibility Study which recommended that Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) will be beneficial for both countries.
 - They directed trade officials on both sides to start negotiations within the calendar year 2022 and to complete these at the earliest, in time for Bangladesh's final graduation from LDC status.
- **Key Announcements:** The following were unveiled/announced/released during the visit:
 - Unveiling of Unit-I of Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant, Rampal, Bangladesh;
 - Inauguration of Rupsha railway bridge;
 - Announcement of signing of project management consultancy contracts for Khulna – Darshana railway line and Parbotipur – Kaunia railway line.
 - Presentation of the book containing translation of the historic '7th March Speech' of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 23 Indian and 5 languages of other South Asian countries, by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
 - Announcement regarding offer of 20 broad gauge locomotives to Bangladesh Railway on grant basis.
 - Announcement regarding supply of road construction equipment and machinery to Road and Highways Department, Government of Bangladesh.



Seven MoUs signed between India and Bangladesh

The following MoUs and Agreements were signed and exchanged during the visit:

- MoU between the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India and Ministry of Water Resources, Government of Bangladesh on Withdrawal of Water by India and Bangladesh from Common Border River Kushiya;
- MoU between the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board), Government of India and the Ministry of Railways, Government of Bangladesh on Training of Bangladesh Railway Personnel in India;
- MoU between the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board), Government of India and the Ministry of Railways, Government of Bangladesh on Collaboration in IT systems such as FOIS and other IT Applications for Bangladesh Railway;
- MoU on Scientific and Technological Cooperation between Council for Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), India and Bangladesh Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (BCSIR), Bangladesh;
- MoU on Cooperation in the Areas of Space Technology between Newspace India Limited and Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited;
- MoU between the Prasar Bharti and Bangladesh Television (BTV) on Cooperation in Broadcasting; &
- MoU between the National Judicial Academy, India and the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on Training and Capacity Building Programme for Bangladesh Judicial Officers in India.

India's current policy of multi alignment

Forthcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Samarkand, Uzbekistan is leading India to multi alignment.

Background

India's journey of foreign policy from being the founder of non-alignment to the multi-alignment. In his book The India Way, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar offers a critique of India's traditional policy of "non-alignment", where he distinguishes between the "optimistic non-alignment" of the past, which he feels has failed, that must give way to more realistic "multiple engagements of the future".

Shanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO)

- SCO is a Eurasian political, economic and security organization.
- It is the world's largest regional organization,
- 40% of the world population
- More than 30% of global GDP.
- Members: 8-China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan.

SCO Summit, 2022

- Host- Uzbekistan,
- Uzbekistan will host a full house: 15 leaders including eight member states from four Central Asian States, China, India, Pakistan and Russia,
- The observer states: Belarus, Mongolia and Iran (which will become member this year)
- Afghanistan is not invited
- Leaders of guest countries -Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Turkmenistan

What is non alignment?

- It's a policy, a brainchild of Nehru. Non alignment movement emerged after second world war.
- Non alignment means not having an alliance with any of superpower, either USSR or USA. Decolonized nations of Asia and Africa was largely a part of this group.

India's policy of non-alignment

- At Bandung conference in 1955 non-alignment movement started with India as one of the founding members.
- With policy of non-alignment India refused to gravitate towards USA or USSR.
- India was the leader of non-alignment.

What is India's current policy of multi- alignment?

- Since the start of his tenure from 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi have not attended any conference of non-alignment.
- External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar in his book, The Indian way have criticized the non-alignment.
- In the words of Former Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale India is no longer the non-align nation.

How it is a Multi Alignment Policy?

- India to truly multi aligned or all aligned by being a part of every major grouping.
- India is a part of BRICS and Prime Minister Modi is attending the SCO SUMMIT in Samarkand.
- On parallel to rival groups India is also the part of Quad and Indo pacific economic framework.
- India is buying the discounted Russian oil and reusing to buckle under pressure from west and USA.
- S-400 purchase is happening and India have dodged the bullet of sanctions from USA.
- India is choosing the bilateral Free trade agreement like with Australia and UAE and withdrew from groupings like RCEP and Most recently IPEF. This policy are is said to be in the economic interest of India.

Advantages of Multi alignment

- India no longer wants to repeat the mistake of missing out of P5 Security council ("Permanent membership in the Security Council was granted to five states based on their importance in the aftermath of World War II).
- If any group work against your interest it is better to be part of group rather than remain outside and do nothing
- With retreating USA and its collapsing hegemony world is moving towards multiple polar world order.

Disadvantages

- Major disadvantage of non-alignment is you no longer have influence over adverse policy of friendly country.
- For example: Russia sells S-400 to India but it also sold the same weapon to china.
- USA and India are strategically getting closer day by day but USA recently approved the sale of \$450 million F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan.

Conclusion

- Multi alignment will serve India its best national interest.
- So far India has managed the rival parties at world stage to secure its foreign policy objectives but with Russian aggression and Chinese assertion and divided world will pose a significant challenge to India's multi alignment policy.

India-Bangladesh set for CEPA

India and Bangladesh will soon commence negotiations on a Bilateral Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

Bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh

- India is Bangladesh's second biggest trade partner, and its largest export market in Asia.
- Despite Covid-19 related disruptions, bilateral trade grew at an unprecedented rate of almost 44 per cent from \$10.78 billion in 2020-21 to \$18.13 billion in 2021-22.
- In 2021-22, Bangladesh has emerged as the largest trade partner for India in South Asia and the fourth largest destination for Indian exports worldwide.
- India's main exports to Bangladesh are raw cotton, non-retail pure cotton yarn, and electricity, and its main imports from the country are pure vegetable oils, non-knit men's suits, and textile scraps.

What is CEPA?

- The partnership agreement or cooperation agreement is more comprehensive than a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).
- CECA/CEPA also looks into the regulatory aspect of trade and encompasses an agreement covering the regulatory issues.

- CECA have the widest coverage. CEPA covers negotiation on the trade in services and investment and other areas of economic partnership.
- It may even consider negotiation in areas such as trade facilitation and customs cooperation, competition, and IPR.
- India has signed CEPAs with South Korea and Japan.

CEPA Objectives

- While informal talks on CEPA have been happening since 2018, officials said that the pandemic has brought urgency.
- Chinese investments were an initial trigger for India, but New Delhi and Dhaka want to step up the pace following the economic shock faced by the two economies.
- The CEPA is likely to focus on trade in goods, services, and investment, with a key objective being the reduction of the trade gap between the two countries.
- As Bangladesh prepares to graduate into a developing nation by 2026 – after which it may no longer qualify for trade benefits that it currently enjoys as a least-developed country – it is keen to clinch the CEPA in a year.



The Existing Frameworks

The current institutional frameworks for trade and investment include:

- During the visit of Prime Minister Modi to Bangladesh in June 2015, the bilateral trade agreement between the two countries was renewed for a period of five years with a provision for auto renewal.
- Under the provisions of the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA), Bangladesh extends preferential

tariffs to Indian exports of products outside the 'sensitive list' of 993 items.

- In 2011, India announced duty-free, quota-free access to Bangladesh for all tariff lines except tobacco and alcohol.
- An Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investments has been in force since 2011.
- Joint Interpretative Notes to the agreement were signed during the visit of the Indian Finance Minister to Bangladesh in October 2017.
- To facilitate trade and transit through inland waterways, a Protocol on Inland Waterways Trade and Transit (PIWTT) has been in place since 1972. It was renewed in 2015.
- Direct sea movement of containerized/ bulk/ dry cargo began after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Coastal Shipping in June 2015.
- MoUs were signed in 2015 on the use of the Chittagong and Mongla Ports for Movement of Goods to and from India.
- The MoU on Border Haats on the India-Bangladesh border was renewed in April 2017 during the visit of Prime Minister Hasina to India. Currently, four Border Haats – two each in Meghalaya (Kalaichar and Balat) and Tripura (Srinagar and Kamalagar) – are functional.

India-Japan 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue

Recently, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh participated in the India-Japan 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in Tokyo.

- India-Japan 2+2 Ministerial meeting was the first 2+2 ministerial meeting after the inaugural dialogue was set up in 2019.

About India Japan 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue

Background: The first India Japan talks in the 2+2 format were held between India and Japan in November 2019 in New Delhi.

About: India Japan 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue is a format of meeting of the foreign and defence ministers of India and Japan on strategic and security issues.

Objective: India Japan 2+2 Ministerial meeting is aimed at creating a mechanism under which the bilateral relationship takes a decisive strategic turn with greater integration of defence, security and intelligence apparatus.

What is 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue?

- **About:** The 2+2 dialogue is a format of meeting of the foreign and defence ministers of India and its allies on strategic and security issues.
- **Importance:** A 2+2 ministerial dialogue enables the partners to better understand and appreciate each other's strategic concerns and sensitivities taking into account political factors on both sides.
 - This results in a stronger, more integrated strategic relationship in a rapidly changing global environment.
- India has 2+2 dialogues with four key strategic partners: the US, Australia, Japan, and Russia. Besides Russia, the other three countries are also India's partners in the Quad.



India-Japan 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue-Joint Statement

- **Rules-based global order:** Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to a rules-based global order that respects sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations.
 - They emphasized the need for all countries to seek peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law without

resorting to threat or use of force or any attempt to unilaterally change the status quo.

- **Free and open Indo-Pacific:** The Ministers highlighted their commitment to a common strategic goal of achieving a free and open Indo-Pacific, that is inclusive and resilient, based on the rule of law and free from coercion.
- **Support for ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP):** Ministers also reiterated their strong support for ASEAN's unity and centrality and their full support for the "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)".
 - AOIP upholds the principles such as the rule of law, openness, freedom, transparency and inclusiveness.
- **Defence cooperation:** Acknowledging Japan's determination to reinforce its defence capabilities, Indian side expressed its support to work towards enhanced security and defence cooperation.
 - The Ministers welcomed the participation of Japan for the first time in the multilateral exercise MILAN.
 - The Ministers expressed their commitment to continuing bilateral and multilateral exercises including "Dharma Guardian", JIMEX and "Malabar."
- The Ministers concurred to launch the Joint Service Staff Talks between the Japan Joint Staff and the Indian Integrated Defence Staff.
 - The Ministers also committed to seek deeper cooperation on HA/DR and response to infectious diseases and pandemics.

Conclusion

The Ministers welcomed that the 2+2 meetings, through intensive discussions, have provided a strategic guidance for enhancing the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership, and decided to hold the next 2+2 Ministerial Meeting in India.

India-UAE CEPA

Recently, government informed that, the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) which came into effect on the 1st of May 2022 is already creating a significant positive impact on India-UAE trade.

Impact of India-UAE CEPA on India-UAE Trade

- Indian exports to the UAE, excluding petroleum products grew from US\$ 5.17 billion during June-August 2021 to US\$ 5.92 billion during June-August 2022, which denotes an increase of 14%.
- It is pertinent to note that India's global non-petroleum exports during the same period (Jun-Aug 2022) grew by 3% on an annual basis.
 - This implies the growth rate of India's non-petroleum exports to the UAE is almost 5 times as that of India's non-petroleum exports to the world.
- Excluding petroleum related imports, Indian imports from the UAE during the same three-month period grew from US\$ 5.56 billion (June-August 2021) to US\$ 5.61 billion (June-August 2022) or an increase of 1% in percentage terms.

India's Export Growth Trajectory in Recent Past

- India's non-oil export growth of around 14% on year-on-year basis comes in the context of significant macroeconomic headwinds such as-
 - Conflict in Ukraine,
 - COVID-19 related lockdowns in China,
 - Rising inflationary pressures,
 - Expected Policy tightening in advanced economies,
 - Global growth slowdown and consequent reduced demand,
 - Reduction in global merchandize trade (growth slowed down to 3.2% in Q1 2022 vis-a-vis 5.7% in Q4 2021) etc.



India-UAE CEPA: Key Features

- **Tariff Reduction:** India-UAE FTA is set to reduce tariffs for 80 per cent of goods and give zero-duty access to 90 per cent of India's exports to the UAE.
 - Annual exports worth about \$26 billion from India that currently attract a 5-per cent import duty in the UAE are set to benefit.
- **Scope:** The India-UAE CEPA agreement covers areas including-
 - Goods,
 - Services,
 - Rules of origin,
 - Customs procedures,
 - Government procurement,
 - Intellectual property rights, and
 - E-commerce.
- **Rules of Origin:** India-UAE CEPA includes robust rules of origin to protect both economies from misuse of the agreement by third countries, including a requirement of "melt and pour" for steel exports to qualify as domestically produced products from either country.
- **Safeguard Mechanism:** The agreement also provides a permanent safeguard mechanism to protect businesses in both countries to prevent "any unnecessary or unwarranted surge in volumes of (imports) any particular product"
- **Speedy Regulatory Approval for Medical Products:** Under the India-UAE CEPA, the UAE agreed to facilitate market access and regulatory approval within 90 days for Indian pharmaceutical products and medical products.
 - This facility is available to the products that have been approved in developed jurisdictions such as the US, the UK, the EU, Canada and Australia.
- **Focus on Technology and Sustainability:** Technology, digital trade and sustainability have a big focus in the New India-UAE partnership.
- An MoU among APEDA, DP World & Al Dahra on the UAE side regarding the "Food Security Corridor Initiative" has been prepared, under which India will be able to play an important role in food security of the UAE.

India-UAE MoU on Education

Recently, Union Cabinet has approved to sign a MoU between the Ministry of Education, Government of India and the Ministry of Education of the Government of United Arab Emirates on cooperation in the field of Education.

About India-UAE MoU on Education

- **Background of India-UAE MoU on Education**
 - An MoU was signed in 2015 with UAE in the field of Education which expired in 2018.
 - In 2019, at a meeting between Education Ministers of the two countries, UAE side proposed to sign a new MoU.
- **About:** The new India-UAE MoU incorporates changes brought in by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India's education ecosystem.
- **Key Objective:** Objective of the India-UAE MoU on Education is to further strengthen our ongoing educational collaboration between India and UAE and widen the scope of our engagements.
- **Mandate:** India-UAE MoU on Education aims to-
 - Promote Exchange of Information Education, Capacity Development of Technical and vocational Education and Training (TVET) teaching staff,
 - Facilitation of academic collaboration between Higher Education Institutions in both the countries for offering Twinning,
 - Joint Degree and Dual Degree Programmes and any such other areas agreed upon.

India-UAE MoU on Education

- The new MoU incorporates changes brought in by the National Education Policy 2020 in India's education ecosystem.
- **India-UAE MoU on Education** will rejuvenate educational cooperation and increase academic mobility between India and UAE besides facilitating exchange information in order to promote mutual recognition of these qualifications.

- It also covers cooperation in TVET as UAE is a major work destination for Indians.
- **India-UAE MoU on Education** will be valid for a period of five years from the date of signing and will be automatically renewable with the consent of both parties.
 - Once signed, this MoU shall supersede the earlier MoU signed with UAE in 2015, which will then cease to have effect.

Key points About NEP-2020

- It is the **third education policy** of our country. The earlier two was launched in **1968 and 1986**. This national policy came after a gap of 34 years.
- It is based on the recommendations of **Kasturirangan committee**.
- It renames the Ministry of Human Resource Development to **Ministry of Education**.
- It proposes a **5+3+3+4** curricular and pedagogical structure.

Stages	Years	Class	Features
Foundational	3-8	3 years of pre-primary and 1-2	Flexible, multi-level, activity-based learning
Preparatory	9-11	3-5	Light textbooks, more formal but interactive classroom learning
Middle	12-14	6-8	Introduction of subject teachers for learning of more abstract concepts, experimental learning
Secondary	15-18	9-12	Reading in-depth, critical thinking, greater attention to life aspirations

Implementation of NEP-2020

- There will be an apex body called **Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)**, which will resolve disputes among the following bodies.

Bodies	Features
NHERA (National Higher Education Regulatory Authority)	Light but tight regulation
NAC (National Accreditation Commission)	Meta-accrediting agency
HEGC (Higher Education Grants Council)	Responsible for funding
GEC (General Education Council)	frame expected learning outcomes for higher education programmes.

International Conference on Consciousness

Recently, the Union Minister of Ayush Shri Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the International Conference on Consciousness at NIMHANS, Bengaluru.

- He also inaugurated the Centre of Excellence (CoE) project in the Department of Integrative Medicine, NIMHANS, Bengaluru.
- CoE project was inaugurated as part of "AYURSWASTHYA YOJANA", a flagship programme under Ministry of Ayush.

About International Conference on Consciousness

- **About:** Conference on Consciousness will bring together-
 - Some of the most eminent researchers and inventors in the areas of physics, biology, neuroscience, artificial intelligence, cybernetics, quantum computing and allied fields as well as
 - Scholars and spiritual teachers of the major Indic Spiritual and psychological disciplines and doctrines.
- **Organizing Body:** International Conference on Consciousness is being organized by India Foundation and NIMHANS and supported by Ministry of Ayush.

- **Theme:** Conference on Consciousness 2022 theme is "Exploring Consciousness- From Non- Locality to Non- Duality: The Man- Machine Debate".

Centre of Excellence (CoE) project at NIMHANS

- **About:** The Centre of Excellence (CoE) project was launched with an aim to strengthen competencies of Ayush professionals in Education technology, Research & innovation and others.
- **Main objectives:** CoE project at NIMHANS main objective is to-
 - Conduct clinical trials in four neuro-psychiatric disorders to establish efficacy, safety and proposed mechanism of Integrated Yoga and Ayurveda treatment approaches.
 - Understand the Integrative neurobiology of Neuropsychiatric Disorders ("Doshic-Brain"),
 - Create a unified digital database and
 - Train and develop clinician-scientists who have niche skills-sets in examining brain-health from both traditional and modern scientific approaches.

National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS)- Key Points

- **About NIMHANS:** The National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) is a multidisciplinary institute for patient care and academic pursuit in the field of mental health and neurosciences.
- **Headquarter:** National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences is a premier medical institution located in Bengaluru, India.
- NIMHANS is the apex centre for mental health and neuroscience education in the country.
- **Parent ministry:** NIMHANS Institute operates autonomously under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- **An Institute of National Importance:** NIMHANS, Bangalore Act 2012 declares NIMHANS to be an Institute of National Importance and provides for its incorporation and matters connected therewith.
- Earlier, the Central Government recognized NIMHANS's eminent academic position, growth and contributions, and declared it a 'Deemed University in 1994.

JIMEX 22

Recently, the sixth edition of the Japan India Maritime Exercise 2022, JIMEX 22 was hosted by the Indian Navy.

- JIMEX 2022 concluded with the two sides bidding farewell to each other with a customary steam past.

Japan India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX)

- **Background:** the JIMEX series of naval exercises began in January 2012 with a special focus on maritime security cooperation between Japan and India.
 - The first ever Japan-India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX) was conducted in the Bay of Bengal (India) from 19th December to 22nd December 2013.
- **About:** Japan India Maritime Exercise 2022 (JIMEX 22) is a bilateral naval exercise between India and Japan to strengthen the naval cooperation and build trust and confidence between navies of India and Japan.
- **Mandate:** JIMEX aims to develop a common understanding of operational procedures and enhance interoperability between the Navies of India and Japan.
 - This is to be achieved through the conduct of drills across the complete spectrum of maritime operations in surface, sub-surface, and air domains.
- **Significance:** Over the period of time, Japan India Maritime Exercise 2022 (JIMEX 22) has consolidated the mutual understanding and interoperability between the two navies.

JIMEX 22: Key Details

- **Participation:** Both countries led by following official participated in the week-long JIMEX Exercise 2022.
 - Indian Naval ships led by Rear Adm Sanjay Bhalla, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet and
 - Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF) Ships Izumo and Takanami led by Rear Adm Hirata Toshiyuki, Commander Escort Flotilla Four.

Key Activities:

- JIMEX 22 witnessed some of the most complex exercises undertaken jointly by the two navies.
- Both sides engaged in advanced level anti-submarine warfare, weapon firings and Air Defence exercises.
- Shipborne helicopters, fighter aircraft and submarines also participated in the exercise.
- IN and JMSDF ships replenished each other at sea under the agreement on Reciprocal Provision for Supply and Services (RPSS).

Kushiyara River Treaty

For the first time in 26 years, India and Bangladesh agreed to share the waters of a significant transboundary river, the Kushiyara, while negotiations over a long-delayed agreement to share the Teesta River's waters, which are politically sensitive are still ongoing.

India-Bangladesh water disputes

- The Teesta River and the Ganges River dispute are the two main long-standing water conflicts between India and Bangladesh.
- Both rivers are important supplies of water for fishermen, farmers, and boatmen in both nations.
- Since the sacred river flows from India to Bangladesh, the Ganga River dispute has been a source of contention between the two countries for the past 35 years.
- There hasn't been a long-term solution for sharing water offered despite several rounds of bilateral negotiations failing.
- In order to establish a water sharing arrangement for the following 30 years, a treaty was signed in 1996 which is about to expire.

The Kushiyara River Treaty

- The first such deal since the 1996 signing of the Ganga water treaty, India and Bangladesh reached an interim agreement on water sharing for the Kushiyara River.

- India withdrew its objection to withdrawal of Kushiara's waters by Bangladesh through the Rahimpur Canal.
- Over the last century, the flow of the Barak River has changed in such a way that the bulk of the river's water flows into Kushiara while the rest goes into Surma.
- The agreement is aimed at addressing part of the problem that the changing nature of the river has posed before Bangladesh as it unleashes floods during the monsoon.
- It goes dry during the winter when demand of water goes up because of a crop cycle in Sylhet.

Benefits to Bangladesh

- The water of Kushiara will be channelled through the Rahimpur Canal project in Sylhet.
- The eight km long canal is the only supplier of water from the Kushiara to the region and Bangladesh has built a pump house and other facilities for withdrawal of water that can now be utilised.
- It is generally understood that approximately 10,000 hectares of land and millions of people will benefit from the water that will flow through a network of canals in Sylhet.
- It will benefit the farmers involved in Boro rice, which is basically the rice cultivated during the dry season of December to February and harvested in early summer.
- Bangladesh has been complaining that the Boro rice cultivation in the region had been suffering as India did not allow it to withdraw the required water from the Kushiara.

Why is the water from the Kushiara so important for Rahimpur Canal?

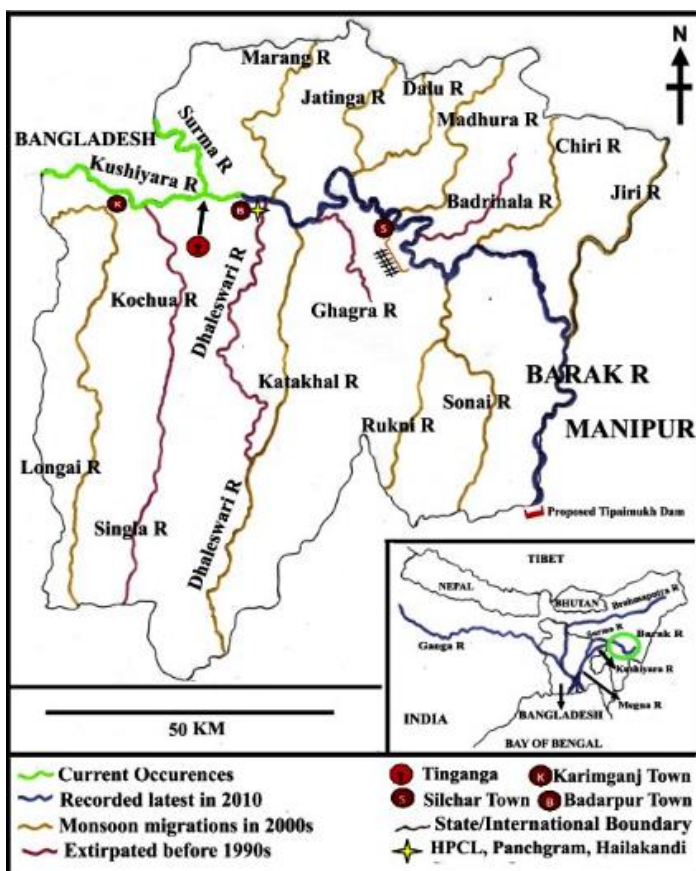
- The water of the Kushiara has been used for centuries in Sylhet's subdivisions like the Zakiganj, Kanaighat and Beanibazar areas.
- But Bangladesh has witnessed that the flow and volume of water in the canal has reduced during the lean season.
- The utility of the river and the canal during the lean/winter season had gone down, affecting cultivation of rice as well as a wide variety of vegetables for which Sylhet is famous.

India's objection to the Rahimpur Canal

- India objected to the clearing and dredging of canal.
- It claimed that the dyke and other infrastructure interfered in border security as Kushiara itself forms part of the border between the two sides.
- However, the agreement indicates that the economic benefits possible from the river outweighed the security

Hurdles to the Teesta agreement

- The Kushiara agreement is relatively smaller in scale in comparison to Teesta that involves West Bengal, which has problems with the proposal.



Terms of the treaty

- Under this MoU, Bangladesh will be able to withdraw 153 cusecs (cubic feet per second) of water from the Kushiara out of the approximately 2,500 cusecs of water that is there in the river during the winter season.
- The agreement addresses Bangladesh's concern over water supply along the river, during the winter months but flood control in the basin of Kushiara is expected to require much more work.

- The Kushiyara agreement did not require a nod from any of the States like Assam from which the Barak emerges and branches into Kushiyara and Surma.

Nord Stream Pipeline

Russia has denied to resume the supply of natural gas through a key pipeline to Germany for now because of what it said was a need for urgent maintenance work.

- There are growing concerns in European countries that Russia would shut down its gas supplies in retaliation against the current sanctions against Moscow.

What is Nord Stream 1?

- It is a system of offshore natural gas pipelines running under the Baltic Sea from Russia to Germany.
- Nord Stream 1 is a 1,224 km underwater gas pipeline that runs from Vyborg in northwest Russia to Lubmin in northeastern Germany via the Baltic Sea.
- Two further pipelines under construction running from Ust-Luga to Lubmin termed Nord Stream 2.
- Majority owned by the Russian energy giant Gazprom, the pipeline is the primary route through which its gas enters Germany.

Nord Stream pipelines from Russia
Leaks detected on both pipelines near Bornholm



Worry for Europe

- There have been growing concerns that there could be further restrictions to European gas supplies.
- European countries rely on Russian energy for their cold winters.
- But now they believe that Russia could weaponized their dependency as a response to their sanction due to the conflict in Ukraine.

What are Europe's alternative sources of energy?

- As an alternative source for energy, European countries have increasingly turned towards the US, from whom they purchase liquified natural gas (LNG) that comes via ships.
- Since ship-delivered gas ends up being far more expensive, there are also attempts to get non-Russian pipeline gas from Norway and Azerbaijan.
- While EU countries were earlier seeking to phase out fossil fuels and emphasize renewable forms of energy, many are now returning to coal to deal with the energy crisis.

Strategic partnership between India and Japan

China's growing military capabilities and assertiveness on territorial disputes are at the heart of the deteriorating environment of India and Japan.

The 2+2 talks between India and allies

- The 2+2 dialogue is a format of meeting of the foreign and defense ministers of India and its allies on strategic and security issues.
- A 2+2 ministerial dialogue enables the partners to better understand and appreciate each other's strategic concerns and sensitivities taking into account political factors on both sides.
- This helps to build a stronger, more integrated strategic relationship in a rapidly changing global environment.
- India has 2+2 dialogues with four key strategic partners: US, Australia, Japan, and Russia.

Recent developments in India-Japan Relationship

- Recently India, Australia and Japan formally launched the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative.

The initiative was launched to counter the dominance of China in the Global Supply Chain.

- It aims to prevent disruptions in the supply chain as seen during COVID-19 pandemic.
- The initiative will mainly focus on diversification of investment and digital technology adoption.
- The Act East Forum, established in 2017, aims to provide a platform for India-Japan collaboration under the rubric of India's "Act East Policy" and Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Vision".
- At the Second meeting of the Act East forum, both sides agreed to focus on expanding of Japanese language in North East, training of caregivers under Technical Intern Training Program (TITP), capacity building in area of bamboo value chain development and Disaster Management.
- The inaugural India-Japan Space Dialogue was held in Delhi for enhancing bilateral cooperation in outer space and information exchange on the respective space policies.
- Japan and India have entered into a \$75-billion currency swap arrangement that will bolster the country's firepower as it battles a steep drop in the rupee's value.
- A currency swap is an agreement between two parties to exchange a series of cash flows denominated in one currency for those denominated in another for a predetermined period of time.
- The deal will help the two countries to swap their currencies for U.S. dollars to stabilize the rupee which has witnessed the steepest fall in recent years.

Japan's strategy:

- Capacity building: To cope with Chinese power involves three broad elements reorienting Japan's diplomacy, boosting national capabilities to deter aggression and deepening defense partnerships.
- Realism diplomacy: In his address to the annual Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore this June, Japanese PM Fumio Kishida talked of a new "realism diplomacy" that will allow Japan to meet the new security challenges through pragmatism and firmness.

- Increase in budget: On the question of deterrence, Kishida declared his commitment to "fundamentally reinforce Japan's defense capabilities within the next five years and secure substantial increase of Japan's defense budget needed to effect it".
- No apology: Japan is no longer apologetic about its new determination to protect itself. For different reasons, both Tokyo and Delhi had tended to be far too deferential to China and hesitant to call out Beijing's unacceptable actions.

Security and Defense cooperation

- QUAD: Formed in 2007 and revived in 2017 The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD, also known as the Quad) is an informal strategic dialogue between the United States, Japan, Australia and India.
- Exercise Malabar: The dialogue was paralleled by joint military exercises of an unprecedented scale, titled Exercise Malabar.
- JIMEX: In spite of the pandemic, complex exercises in all domains were conducted including Japan India maritime exercise (JIMEX 2020) and PASSEX, showcasing the trust and interoperability between the navies.

Challenges

- The two countries are too far apart to be meaningful partners in any confrontation between one of them and China.
- No partnership has the military muscle or diplomatic heft to achieve its objectives in countering China.
- At the diplomatic level, neither pulls the kind of power that can counter Beijing and this is not just because they are not UNSC members, unlike China.
- Japan obviously has a very advanced high-technology industrial sector its military industry is insignificant. It's better not to invoke the DRDO.

Way forward

- Although the Covid-19 situation remains challenging, people-to-people exchanges between two countries are also being advanced.

- Cooperation has also taken great strides in the area of security, including joint exercises between the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the Indian Armed Forces.
- Taking advantage of its considerable assets – the world’s third-largest economy, substantial high-tech skills, Japan is largely perceived as a natural ally to India.
- If Japan and India continue to add concrete security content to their relationship, their strategic partnership could potentially be a game-changer in Asia.

Conclusion

Both should inject substantive military content into the strategic partnership between India and Japan. For there is much that Delhi and Tokyo could do together in meeting their common security challenges.

Trade pillar of IPEF

India stayed out of the joint declaration on the trade pillar of the US-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) ministerial meet in Los Angeles, with Union Commerce Minister citing concerns over possible discrimination against developing economies.

Why did India opt out of the trade pillar?

- One of the reasons for staying out of the trade pillar was that the contours of the framework had not emerged yet.
- This is particularly about the kind of commitment each country would have to make on “environment, labour, digital trade and public procurement”.
- India’s decision also mirrors the decision to walk out after seven years of negotiations from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

What is IPEF?

- It is a US-led framework for participating countries to solidify their relationships and engage in crucial economic and trade matters that concern the region, such as building

resilient supply chains battered by the pandemic.

- It is not a free trade agreement. No market access or tariff reductions have been outlined, although experts say it can pave the way to trade deals.

Members of IPEF

- The member nations include Australia, Brunei, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.
- It includes seven out of 10 members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), all four Quad countries, and New Zealand.
- Together, these countries account for 40 per cent of the global GDP.

Four pillars of IPEF

1. Trade that will include digital economy and emerging technology, labor commitments, the environment, trade facilitation, transparency and good regulatory practices, and corporate accountability, standards on cross-border data flow and data localisations;
2. Supply chain resilience to develop “a first-of-its-kind supply chain agreement” that would anticipate and prevent disruptions;
3. Clean energy and decarbonization that will include agreements on “high-ambition commitments” such as renewable energy targets, carbon removal purchasing commitments, energy efficiency standards, and new measures to combat methane emissions; and
4. Tax and anti-corruption, with commitments to enact and enforce “effective tax, anti-money laundering, anti-bribery schemes in line with [American] values”.

How do members participate?

- Countries are free to join (or not join) initiatives under any of the stipulated pillars but are expected to adhere to all commitments once they enrol.
- Negotiations are meant to determine and list the provisions under each pillar and open the floor for countries to choose their ‘commitments’.
- The framework would be open to other countries willing to join in the future provided they are willing

to adhere to the stipulated goals and other necessary obligations.

Reasons for the creation of IPEF

- US regaining lost credibility: IPEF is also seen as a means by which the US is trying to regain credibility in the region after Trump pulled out of the Trans Pacific Partnership TPP).
- Rising Chinese influence: Since then, there has been concern over the absence of a credible US economic and trade strategy to counter China's economic influence in the region.
- Competing RCEP: It is also in the 14-member Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, of which the US is not a member (India withdrew from RCEP).
- "Pivot to Asia" strategy: US has intensified its engagement with the wider Asia-Pacific region to advance its economic and geopolitical interests.

India's perception of IPEF

- PM Modi described the grouping as born from a collective desire to make the Indo-Pacific region an engine of global economic growth.
- India has called for common and creative solutions to tackle economic challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.

What does it have to do with China?

- The US strategists believe the US lacks an economic and trade strategy to counter China's increasing economic influence in the region since 2017.
- US companies are looking to move away from manufacturing in China.
- IPEF would therefore offer an advantage to participating countries, allowing them to bring those businesses into their territory.
- However, it officially excluded Taiwan despite its willingness and economic merit to join.
- This exhibits Washington's geopolitical caution.

Reactions from the opponents

- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi criticized the initiative as an attempt to further economic decoupling from China.
- He argued that the initiative, and the US Indo-Pacific strategy as a whole, created divisions and

incited confrontation. It is destined to be ultimately be a failure.

- Taiwan was excluded in order to appease key "fence-sitter" countries such as Indonesia whose governments feared angering China.

Issues with IPEF framework

- IPEF would neither constitute a 'free trade agreement,' nor a forum to discuss tariff reductions or increasing market access.
- Unlike a traditional trade agreement, the US administration will not need congressional approval to act under the IPEF. Hence its legal status is questionable.
- This also raises doubts among potential participants about their reluctance to offer significant concessions under the agreement.
- The volatility of US domestic politics has raised concerns about IPEF's durability.
- Unlike traditional FTAs, the IPEF does not subscribe to the single undertaking principle, where all items on the agenda are negotiated simultaneously.

Given the divisive nature of American politics, it is unclear whether the IPEF will survive past the Biden administration.

Way forward

- The IPEF's launch in Tokyo was symbolic in nature; bringing the IPEF to fruition will involve significant domestic and international challenges.
- Without ratification by Congress, the IPEF's fortunes will remain in limbo.
- Going forward, the US and the founding partners need to develop the process and criteria by which other countries from the region will be invited to join the negotiations on the IPEF.

US Startup SETU

Recently, the Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal launched the US Startup SETU - Supporting Entrepreneurs in Transformation and Upskilling programme in the Bay Area of San Francisco.

- The **US Startup SETU** programme was launched at a luncheon interaction focused on specific issues related to start-up ecosystem in India.

US Startup SETU: Key Details

- **About:** The US Startup SETU initiative would connect start-ups in India to US-based investors and start-up ecosystem leaders with mentorship and assistance in various areas including funding, market access and commercialization.
- **Mandate:** SETU is designed to break the geographical barriers between mentors based in US that are willing to invest in entrepreneurship and sunrise startups in India.
- **Need:** It is estimated that about 90% of the start-ups and more than half of the well-funded startups fail in their early days.
 - Lack of experience in handling the business is a key issue, and founders require the right guidance for taking a decision and moral support.
- **Implementation:** The interaction will be supported through the mentorship portal under the Startup India initiative MAARG, or the Mentorship, Advisory, Assistance, Resilience, and Growth program.
- **Significance:** SETU programme will support entrepreneurs through transformation and upskilling initiatives.

MAARG Initiative

- **About:** MAARG Initiative is a single-stop solution finder for startups in India. MAARG is inviting applications from Mentors across the world.
- **Mandate:** The **MAARG** portal has been developed with the idea to be accessible from every corner of the country to connect with a mentor.
 - A mentor will offer human intelligence in guiding the startups.
- **Performance:** It may be noted that till date, more than 200 mentors have been

successfully onboarded on MAARG across the globe.

- The applications have come from distinguished individuals representing the industry and the startup ecosystem.

- **Key Functions:** The core functions of MAARG are-

- To improve ease of access, use Artificial Intelligence for Matchmaking, schedule meetings virtually, host masterclasses, provide a custom dashboard for relevant information, analytics, features, etc.,

- Host cohort-based programs that will allow start-up ecosystem enablers to become a part of the program and enable outcome driven activities.

SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital

Recently, Varanasi has been nominated as the first-ever SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital during the period 2022-2023 at the 22nd Meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Heads of State in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on September 16, 2022.

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had participated in the SCO Summit 2022.

Varanasi as the First-ever SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital

- **Background:** The regulations for nomination of the SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital were adopted at the Dushanbe SCO Summit in 2021.
- **Objective:** SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital is adopted with an objective of promoting cooperation between the SCO Member States in the field of culture and tourism.
- **Significance:** The nomination of Varanasi as the first ever SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital will promote tourism, cultural and humanitarian exchanges between India and the SCO member Countries.
 - It also underlines India's ancient civilizational links with Member States of SCO, especially the Central Asian Republics.

- **Key Events Planned:** Under the framework of the **SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital** outreach program, a number of events will be hosted in Varanasi during 2022-23 for which guests will be invited to participate from SCO Member States.
 - These events are expected to attract Indologists, scholars, authors, musicians and artists, photo journalists, travel bloggers and other invited guests.

About Varanasi
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varanasi is also known as Banaras or Kashi. It is one of the oldest cities in the world.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city is known for Hindu mythology and history. Ancient temples like Kashi Vishwanath is located here.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gautam Buddha is believed to have given first sermon to his disciples in Varanasi (Sarnath)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city is linked with spiritualism, yoga, Hindu mythology, culture, and the Sanskrit language.

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)- Key Points

- **About SCO:** Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a permanent intergovernmental international organization created through **SCO Charter in 2002** and entered into force in 2003.

- **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** was preceded by the Shanghai Five mechanism.
- **Type:** Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a Eurasian political, economic and military organization.
- **SCO Secretariat:** Shanghai, China.
- **Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS):** Tashkent
- **Mandate:** Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) aims to maintain peace, security and stability in the region.

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)- Member States

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) comprises nine member states (recently, Iran has been accepted as the ninth full member) namely-

1. The Republic of India,
2. The Republic of Kazakhstan,
3. The People's Republic of China,
4. The Kyrgyz Republic,
5. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan,
6. The Russian Federation,
7. The Republic of Tajikistan, and
8. The Republic of Uzbekistan
9. Iran

Economy

DESH Bill 2022

Recently, a Workshop on Development of Enterprises and Services Hub (DESH) Bill, 2022 was organized by Department of Commerce in Vanijya Bhawan, New Delhi to have discussion on the DESH Bill with stakeholders from various segments.

DESH Bill 2022- Key Features

- The new DESH Bill 2022 will replace the existing law governing Special Economic Zones (SEZs).
 - The announcement of a new law was made by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Union Budget in February 2022.
- Development Hubs: Such hubs will also include existing SEZs. Draft DESH Bill seeks to set up “development hubs” for-
 - Promoting economic activity,
 - Generating employment,
 - Integrating with global supply and value chains and maintaining manufacturing and export competitiveness,
 - Developing infrastructure facilities,
 - Promoting investments, including in research and development (R&D).
- Enterprise and Service Hubs: Development hubs will be further classified into enterprise and service hubs.
 - While enterprise hubs will permit both manufacturing and services activities, services hubs will permit only services activities.
- Infrastructure Status: Government plans to give these hubs infrastructure status, at par with sectors such as road, rail waterways, airports to improve access to finance and enable long-term borrowing from lenders at easier terms.
- Single-Window Portal: An online single-window portal has also been provided under the draft DESH Bill for the grant of time-bound approvals for establishing and operating the hubs.
- Simplifying rules: Development of Enterprise and Service Hubs (DESH) will be freed from many of the rules that burden SEZs: for instance-

- They will no longer be required to benefit foreign exchange positive and
- They will be allowed to sell in the domestic market much more easily.
- WTO Compliant DESH: The units operating within the new hubs will no longer benefit from direct tax incentives, which will be scrapped – a move that will make the hubs compliant with World Trade Organization rules.
- Promoting Domestic Manufacturing: development hubs will be allowed to sell outside the demarcated area or in the domestic market with duties only to be paid on the imported inputs and raw materials instead of the final product.

Special Economic Zones- Key Points

- About Special Economic Zone (SEZ): It is an area within a country's national borders in which the business and trade laws are different from the rest of the country.
- Key Purpose: SEZs are established for different purposes like increasing trade balance (by promoting export), employment, increased investment, job creation and effective administration.
- The SEZs are expected to be engines for economic growth.
- Relaxation offered by the government in SEZs: government formulates various financial policies to encourage businesses to set up in the SEZs. These policies are typically related to investing, taxation, trading, quotas, customs, and labour regulations.
 - In the initial period, the government often offers tax holidays (a period of lower taxation).
 - The government also ensures the ease of doing business in these areas.

Special Economic Zones in India

- Origin:
 - Asia's first EPZ (Export Processing Zones) was established in 1965 at Kandla, Gujarat.
 - SEZs are similar in structure to EPZs.

- Indian SEZs are modelled on the success of Chinese SEZs.
- The government began to establish SEZs in 2000 under the Foreign Trade Policy to redress the infrastructural and bureaucratic challenges that were seen to have limited the success of EPZs.
- Legislative backing: The Special Economic Zones Act was passed in 2005 to provide legislative support to SEZs. The Act came into force along with the SEZ Rules in 2006.
 - SEZs Act 2005: "It is defined as an Act to provide for the establishment, development and management of the Special Economic Zones for the promotion of exports and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto."
 - Between 2000-2006, SEZs were operational under the Foreign Trade Policy.
- Present status: 379 SEZs are notified by the government, out of which 265 are operational.
 - Regional Distribution of SEZs in India: about 64% of the SEZs are located in five states- Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.
- Baba Kalyani Committee: It was constituted by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to study the existing SEZ policy of India and had submitted its recommendations in November 2018.

Ease of doing business

Ease of doing business in India remains low. Recent reforms have improved the business climate somewhat, but there is a long way to go.

About Ease of Doing Business index
● It is an index designed by the World Bank to rank 190 economies.
● A higher rank (closer to 1) means the country's regulatory environment is favorable to business operations.
● India was ranked 63rd in the overall index in 2020.
● World Bank has now discontinued the Doing Business index.

Ranking Indicators

The ranking is calculated on the basis of indicators such as:

1. Starting a Business
2. Dealing with Construction Permits
3. Getting Electricity
4. Registering Property
5. Getting Credit
6. Protecting Minority Investors, Paying Taxes
7. Trading across Borders
8. Enforcing Contracts and
9. Resolving Insolvency

How is 'Enforcing Contracts' measured?

- In 2020, in the parameter of 'Enforcing Contracts', India was ranked 163rd, against 186th in 2015. The parameter considers time, cost and quality of the judicial process.
 - Time considers the number of days to resolve a commercial dispute in courts.
 - Cost measures the expenses of attorney, courts and enforcement as a percentage of claim value.
 - Quality considers the use of best practices which can promote efficiency and quality i.e., court proceedings, case management, alternative dispute resolution and court automation.
 - Each of the three indicators have a 33.3% weightage.

India's Performance

- At 163rd position in 2020, the country continues to struggle, with the time taken to resolve a commercial dispute being approximately 1,445 days in the Doing Business Report 2020.
- However, as of August 2022, law ministry data shows a marked improvement of close to 50% in days taken to resolve a dispute to 744 days in New Delhi and 626 days in Mumbai.

Reforms taken to improve

- The Department of Justice, the nodal point for 'Enforcing Contracts' indicator along with the eCommittee of the Supreme Court, has undertaken a series of reforms.
- Some of the steps include the establishment of dedicated commercial courts with monetary jurisdiction up to ₹3 lakhs.

- There also exists online case filing, e-payment of court fees, electronic case management, special courts for infrastructure project contracts, as well as automatic and random allocation of commercial cases thereby eliminating human intervention.

Way Forward

- An efficient judiciary instils confidence in investors and signals the commercial viability of transactions.
- The number of court hearings should be minimized too; often, lawyers have an incentive to stretch out the process.
- The judicial system should encourage out-of-court settlements through the respective lawyers as practised in advanced countries.
- It is equally important that the judiciary leaves matters relating to economic governance to governments.

IDF World Dairy Summit 2022

Recently, the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated International Dairy Federation World Dairy Summit (IDF WDS) 2022 organised at India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida.

IDF World Dairy Summit 2022: Key Details

- **About:** The IDF World Dairy Summit 2022 is an annual meeting of the global dairy sector, bringing together approximately 1500 participants from all over the world.
 - The last such Summit was held in India about half a century ago in 1974.
- **Participation:** Around 1500 participants from 50 countries are expected to participate in IDF WDS 2022.
 - The participant profile includes CEOs and employees of dairy processing companies, dairy farmers, suppliers to the dairy industry, academicians, government representatives, etc.
- **Theme:** The theme of the IDF World Dairy Summit 2022 is 'Dairy for Nutrition and Livelihood'.
- **Key Activities:** The IDF World Dairy summit is composed of a series of scientific and technical conferences and social events including a

Welcome Reception, Farmers' Dinner, Gala Dinner as well as Technical and Social Tours.

- Participants will get an opportunity to acquire knowledge on latest research findings and experiences relevant to the global dairy sector in the broadest sense.

- **Mandate:** The IDF World Dairy Summit 2022 will provide a forum to industry experts to share knowledge and ideas on how the sector can contribute to nourish the world with safe and sustainable dairying.

IDF World Dairy Summit 2022- Importance

- The Indian dairy industry is unique because it is based on a cooperative model that empowers small and marginal dairy farmers, especially women.
- Driven by the vision of the Prime Minister, the government has taken multiple steps for the betterment of the dairy sector resulting in an increase in milk production by more than 44% in the last eight years.
- The success story of the Indian dairy industry, accounting for about 23% of global milk, producing around 210 million tonnes annually, and empowering more than 8 crore dairy farmers, will be showcased at the IDF WDS 2022.
- The International Dairy Federation World Dairy Summit (IDF WDS) 2022 will also help Indian dairy farmers gain exposure to global best practices.

IFSCA FinTech Incentive Scheme

Recently, the IFSCA (FinTech Incentive) Scheme for providing financial support to FinTech activities in the form of specific grant(s) was launched by the International Financial Services Centres Authority ("IFSCA").

- IFSCA aims to promote the establishment of a world-class FinTech Hub, at GIFT International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in India,

IFSCA FinTech Incentive Scheme 2022- Eligible FinTechs

IFSCA FinTech Incentive Scheme shall be open to-

Domestic FinTechs-

○ Seeking access to overseas markets;
○ Seeking listing on IFSCA recognised stock exchanges;
○ Extending business to the IFSCs either by way of authorisation or registration or through the regulatory sandbox.
● Foreign FinTechs:
○ Seeking market access to IFSCs in India and work within the Authority's regulatory framework;
○ Seeking access to domestic market under Inter-Operable Regulatory Sandbox (IORS) framework;

- Who are part of the Authority's Regulatory or Innovative Sandbox;
- Which are referred to the Authority under a FinTech bridge arrangement with a Counterpart Regulator
- Which have either participated or are participating in any Accelerator or Cohort or Special Programme supported or recognised by the Authority; or
- Who are referred to by the entity(ies) including regulatory or supervisory bodies having Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or collaboration or special arrangement with the Authority.

Incentives under IFSCA FinTech Incentive Scheme

The types of incentives for eligible applicants are:

- **FinTech Start-up grant-** This grant shall be utilized for developing a product or a service and related 'go-to market' initiatives for a start-up with a novel FinTech idea or solution with a focus on converting the idea into an MVP.
- **Proof of Concept (PoC) grant-** This grant shall be utilized for the purpose of conducting a PoC by an early or mature FinTech Entity (FE) in domestic market or overseas.
- **Sandbox grant-** This grant shall be utilized by FEs to experiment with innovative products or services in a sandbox.
- **Green FinTech Grant-** This grant shall be utilized towards developing solutions facilitating sustainable finance and sustainability linked finance, including 'Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)' investments.
- **Accelerator Grant-** This grant shall be utilized for supporting accelerators at the IFSC for capacity building, build capabilities around mentors, bringing investors, bringing more projects or PoC, tie ups, etc.
- **Listing Support Grant -** The grant shall be utilized for supporting Domestic FE aspiring to go for listing on stock exchanges recognised by the Authority.

Criteria for Receiving Grants under FinTech Incentive Scheme

The Grants contemplated under the FinTech Incentive scheme shall be available to eligible FinTech Entities (Fes):

Integration of ODOP Initiative with ONDC

Recently, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry called for the integration of One District One Product (ODOP) initiative with Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC).

- ONDC would help in further expanding the frontiers of ODOP by bringing buyers and sellers together on a democratic platform.
- The Minister asked that flagship programs of the government such as Startup India, Make in India, district as export hubs etc. be converged with the vision of ODOP.

He asked all the Ministries of GoI to help further expand the mandate of ODOP through complementary initiatives.

What is Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)?

- **About:** ONDC is a network based on open protocol that will enable local commerce across segments, such as mobility, grocery, food order and delivery, hotel booking and travel, among others, to be discovered and engaged by any network-enabled application.
- **Mandate:** The ONDC platform aims to create new opportunities, curb digital monopolies and

by supporting micro, small and medium enterprises and small traders and help them get on online platforms.

- **Associated Ministry:** ONDC is an initiative of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

How will ONDC work?

- ONDC initiative would work like the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) project.
- Just as the UPI allowed people to send or receive money, irrespective of the payment platform, the ONDC initiative will allow buyers and sellers in the e-commerce market to transact regardless of the platform they are registered to.

What is One District One Product (ODOP) initiative?

- **Background:** One District One Product (ODOP) initiative is operationally merged with the 'Districts as Export Hub' initiative.
- **About:** One District One Product (ODOP) is an initiative that is seen as a transformational step forward towards realizing the goal of AtmaNirbhar Bharat.
- **Mandate:** One District One Product (ODOP) scheme aims to realize the true potential of a district, fuel economic growth and generate employment and rural entrepreneurship.
- **Implementation:** ODOP initiative is being implemented by DGFT, Department of Commerce, with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) as a major stakeholder.
 - The Department of Commerce through DGFT is engaging with State and Central Government agencies to promote the initiative of One District One Product.
 - State Export Promotion Committee (SPEC) and District Export Promotion Committee (DEPC) have been constituted in states under the ODOP initiative.
 - DEPC is constituted in all districts of India, except districts of the state of West Bengal.
- **Marketing Avenues:** All the products under ODOP scheme will be available at NAFED Bazaars, E-commerce platforms, and prominent retail stores across India.

One District One Product (ODOP)- Key Objectives

- **Transforming Districts into Export Hubs:** One District One Product (ODOP) scheme aims to convert each District of the country into an Export Hub by-
 - Identifying products with export potential in the district,
 - Addressing bottlenecks for exporting these products,
 - Supporting local exporters/manufacturers to scale up manufacturing, and find potential buyers outside India.
- **Promoting Industry and Export:** One District One Product (ODOP) initiative aims to promote the manufacturing & services industry in the District, along with promoting exports of identified products.
- **Generating Employment:** One of the key goals of the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative is to generate employment for the local people in the District.

LEADS Survey 2022

Recently, the Logistics Division of DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry completed the Survey for LEADS 2022 (Logistics Ease Across Different States).

About LEADS Survey 2022

- **Background:** The first Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEAD) report was released in 2018.
 - LEADS 2020 ranking was not released due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **About:** "Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS)" survey is an annual exercise taken in all States/ UTs to assess and suggest various improvements in logistics sector of the country.
 - In the annual LEADS Report for 2021, Gujarat, Haryana and Punjab held top three ranks among States respectively.
 - On the other hand, Jammu Kashmir, Sikkim and Meghalaya were top three in North-eastern States and Himalayan UTs respectively.

- **Mandate:** LEADS Survey aims to develop a robust and cost-efficient logistics ecosystem in Indian States/UTs.
- **Parent Ministry:** LEADS Survey is conducted by the logistics division of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **LEADS Survey 2022:** The LEADS 2022 exercise is scheduled to be completed by the end of September 2022, which shall be followed by release of LEADS 2022 Report in October 2022.
- **Parameters Used:** LEADS Survey is based on the following eight parameters-

- Infrastructure,
- Services,
- Timeliness,
- Track and trace,
- Competitiveness of pricing,
- Safety of cargo,
- Operating environment and
- Regulatory process.

LEADS Survey Assessment and Ranking Process

- The LEADS survey assesses viewpoints of various users and stakeholders across value chain to understand the 'enabler' and 'impediments' to logistics ecosystem in the country.
 - Various Stakeholders across logistics value chain are Shippers, Terminal Infrastructure Service Providers, Logistics Service Providers, Transporters and Government agencies.
- The annual **LEADS** survey, processes the data received from stakeholders (perception data) and States/ UTs (objective data) and ranks logistics ecosystem of each State/ UT using a statistical model.

Significance of LEADS Survey 2022

- The LEADS 2022 survey, along with PM GatiShakti's transformative approach, is to break the silos and improve the logistics efficiency of the country.
- The LEADS 2022 survey further propels the transformative approach by of PM-Gati Shakti.

- This will also reflect positively on international indices, such as Logistics Performance Index (LPI) conducted biennially by the World Bank.
- **LEADS Survey** identifies issues and bottlenecks which need immediate action and can help synergize supply chain.

Mandatory requirements for Packaged Commodities

The Department of Consumer Affairs, Legal Metrology Division has notified a draft amendment to the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules 2011 making some compulsions.

The mandatory provisions under the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011

- It is mandatory under the Rules, to ensure a number of declarations, such as the:
 1. Name and address of the manufacturer/packer/importer.
 2. Country of origin.
 3. Common or generic name of the commodity.
 4. Net quantity.
 5. Month and year of manufacture.
 6. Maximum Retail Price (MRP).
 7. Consumer care information.
- As a consumer-oriented policy, all pre-packaged commodities should also be inspected.
- Rule 9(1)(a) provides that the declaration on the package must be legible and prominent.
- The consumers' 'right to be informed' is violated when important declarations are not prominently displayed on the package.

What are the proposed amendments?

- As many blended food and cosmetic products are sold on the market, the key constituents need to be mentioned on the product packaging.
- Additionally, the front side of the package must contain the percentage of the composition of the unique selling proposition (USP).
- Also, packages displaying key constituents must display a percentage of the content used to make the product.

- The new amendments have suggested that at least two prime components should be declared on the package's front side along with the brand name.
- Currently, manufacturers list the ingredients and nutritional information only on the back of the packaging.
- This declaration must also include the percentage/quantity of the USPs of the product in the same font size as the declaration of the USPs. However, mechanical or electrical commodities are excluded from this sub-rule.

Discrepancies over Packaged Commodities

- The Division has observed that many manufacturers/packagers/importers do not clearly label necessary declarations or prime constituents on the front of packaged commodities.
- It is common for consumers to assume that brands' claims are accurate, but such claims are usually misleading.
- Such disclosure is deemed essential in order to protect consumer rights.

The Consumer Right

Consumer right is an insight into what rights consumer holds when it comes to the seller who provides the goods.

The consumer rights in India are listed below:

(1) Right to Safety

- Means right to be protected against the marketing of goods and services, which are hazardous to life and property.
- The purchased goods and services should not only meet their immediate needs, but also fulfil long term interests.
- Before purchasing, consumers should insist on the quality of the products as well as on the guarantee of the products and services. They should preferably purchase quality marked products such as ISI, AGMARK, etc.

(2) Right to be Informed

- Means right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods so as to protect the consumer against unfair trade practices.

- Consumer should insist on getting all the information about the product or service before making a choice or a decision.
- This will enable him to act wisely and responsibly and also enable him to desist from falling prey to high pressure selling techniques.

(3) Right to Choose

- Means right to be assured, wherever possible of access to variety of goods and services at competitive price. In case of monopolies, it means right to be assured of satisfactory quality and service at a fair price.
- It also includes right to basic goods and services. This is because unrestricted right of the minority to choose can mean a denial for the majority of its fair share.

(4) Right to be Heard

- Means that consumer's interests will receive due consideration at appropriate forums. It also includes right to be represented in various forums formed to consider the consumer's welfare.

(5) Right to Seek redressal

- Means right to seek redressal against unfair trade practices or unscrupulous exploitation of consumers. It also includes right to fair settlement of the genuine grievances of the consumer.
- Consumers must make complaint for their genuine grievances. Many a times their complaint may be of small value but its impact on the society as a whole may be very large.

(6) Right to Consumer Education

- Means the right to acquire the knowledge and skill to be an informed consumer throughout life.
- Ignorance of consumers, particularly of rural consumers, is mainly responsible for their exploitation.

National Logistics Policy (NLP)

Recently, the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi launched the National Logistics Policy (NLP) at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

- PM Modi called the launch of the National Logistics Policy a significant step in fulfilling the 'Pran' of India being a developed country.

About National Logistics Policy (NLP)

- **Background:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman mentioned the need of a comprehensive National Logistics Policy (NLP) in her Union Budget 2020-21 Speech.
- **Need:** The need for a national logistics policy was felt since the logistics cost in India is high as compared to other developed economies.
 - It is imperative to reduce the logistics cost in India for improving the competitiveness of Indian goods both in domestic as well as export markets.
 - Reduced logistics cost improves efficiency cutting across various sectors of the economy, encouraging value addition and enterprise.
- **About:** National Logistics Policy is a comprehensive effort to address issues of high cost and inefficiency by laying down an overarching interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral and multi-jurisdictional framework for the development of the entire logistics ecosystem,
- **Key Objectives:** National Logistics Policy 2022 aims to ensure seamless movement of goods and services across the country and cut elevated logistics costs, often considered the biggest structural bottleneck for both external and internal trade in India.
 - National Logistics Policy 2022 aims to trim the country's logistics costs from as much as 13-14 per cent of its GDP to a single digit over the next few years.
- **Parent Ministry:** The National Logistics Policy formulated by the Commerce and Industry Ministry.

Significance of National Logistics Policy (NLP) 2022

- National Logistics Policy (NLP) will help in improving both, Ease of Doing Business and Ease of Living in India.
- The policy is an endeavour to improve the competitiveness of Indian goods, enhance economic growth and increase employment opportunities.
- National Logistics Policy will complement other initiatives such as PM Gati Shakti Pariyojna and Bharatmala Initiative to break the silos and improve the logistics efficiency of the country.

- National Logistics Policy 2022 will improve India's trade competitiveness, create more jobs, improve India's performance in global rankings and pave the way for India to become a logistics hub.

Key Features of National Logistics Policy (NLP) 2022

New Logistic Policy 2022 has following four critical features

- **Integration of Digital System (IDS):** 30 different systems of seven different departments will be integrated digitally including the road transport, railway, customs, aviation, foreign trade and commerce ministries. It will improve shorter cargo movement.
- **Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP):** It will bring all the digital services related to the transportation sector into a single portal, freeing the exporters from a host of very long and cumbersome processes. It will also lead to smooth cargo movement.
- **Ease of Logistics (ELOG):** A new policy will be implemented to simplify the rules and ease the logistics business.
 - Through this portal, industry associations can directly take up any such matters which are causing problems in their operations and performance with the government agencies.
 - A complete system has also been put in place for the speedy resolution of such cases.
- **System Improvement Group (SIG):** monitoring all logistics-related projects regularly and tackling all obstacles.

Status of logistics Sector in India

- India's logistics sector is highly defragmented and the aim is to reduce the logistics cost from the present 14% of GDP to less than 10% by 2022.
- India's logistics sector is very complex with more than 20 government agencies, 40 PGAs, 37 export promotion councils, 500 certifications, 10000 commodities, 160 billion market size.
- It also involves 12 million employment base, 200 shipping agencies, 36 logistics services, 129 ICDs, 168 CFSS, 50 IT ecosystems and banks & insurance agencies.

- Further, 81 authorities and 500 certificates are required for EXIM.
- The Indian logistics sector provides livelihood to more than 22 million people and improving the sector will facilitate 10 % decrease in indirect logistics cost leading to the growth of 5 to 8% in exports.
- Further, it is estimated that the worth of Indian logistics market will be around USD 215 billion in next two years compared to about USD 160 billion at present.

New Foreign Trade Policy

The government has extended the launch of new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) (2022-27) by six more months and would continue with the existing one.

New Foreign Trade Policy: The Delay

- The geo-political situation is not suitable for long-term foreign trade policy, said Union Commerce Minister.
- Currently, fears of a recession in major economies like the US and Europe have escalated a panic among investors.
- Foreign investors have begun to pull back their money from equities.
- The US Dollar is at a 22-year high, while the Rupee hit a new all-time low of \$81.6.
- The trade deficit widened by more than 2-folds to \$125.22 billion (April – August 2022) compared to \$53.78 billion in the same period last year.

What is a Foreign Trade Policy?

- India’s Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) is a set of guidelines for goods and services imported and exported.
- These are developed by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), the Ministry of Commerce and Industry’s regulating body for the promotion and facilitation of exports and imports.
- FTPs are enforceable under the Foreign Trade Development and Regulation Act 1992.

India’s Foreign Trade Policy

- In line with the ‘Make in India,’ ‘Digital India,’ ‘Skill India,’ ‘Startup India,’ and ‘Ease of Doing Business initiatives, the Foreign Trade Policy (2015-20) was launched on April 1, 2015.
- It provides a framework for increasing exports of goods and services, creating jobs, and increasing value addition in the country.
- The FTP statement outlines the market and product strategy as well as the steps needed to promote trade, expand infrastructure, and improve the entire trade ecosystem.
- It aims to help India respond to external problems while staying on top of fast-changing international trading infrastructure and to make trade a major contributor to the country’s economic growth and development.

Issues with FTP (2015-2020)

- Acting on Washington’s protest, a WTO dispute settlement panel ruled in 2019 that India’s export subsidy measures are in violation of WTO norms and must be repealed.
- Tax incentives under the popular Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) (now renamed as RODTEP Scheme) and Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS) programmes were among them.
- The panel found that because India’s per capita gross national product exceeds \$1,000 per year, it may no longer grant subsidies based on export performance.

Way forward

- With incentives under MEIS and SEIS in the cloud, WTO-compliant tax benefits are a must.
- Credit availability has long been a need of exporters, particularly MSMEs.
- China’s network of ports, motorways, and high-speed trains, which are among the greatest in the world, is one of the reasons it is a manufacturing and export powerhouse.
- India requires innovative trading procedures as a result of Covid-19 breaking old supply channels.

Patent System

Increasing the efficiency of processing patent applications and wider academia-industry collaboration are crucial steps for patent system.

What is a Patent System?

A patent system is a type of intellectual property that gives its owner the legal right to exclude others from making, using, or selling an invention for a limited period of time in exchange for publishing an enabling disclosure of the invention.

Importance of Patents

A patent is important because it can help safeguard our invention. It can protect any product, design or process that meets certain specifications according to its originality, practicality, suitability, and utility. In most cases, a patent can protect an invention for up to 20 years.

How to get a Patent?

- To get a patent, technical information about the invention must be disclosed to the public in a patent application.
- The patent owner may give permission to, or license, other parties to use the invention on mutually agreed terms.
- The owner may also sell the right to the invention to someone else, who will then become the new owner of the patent.
- Once a patent expires, the protection ends, and an invention enters the public domain; that is, anyone can commercially exploit the invention without infringing the patent.

Terms of Patent

- Patents may be granted for inventions in any field of technology, from an everyday kitchen utensil to a nanotechnology chip.
- An invention can be a product – such as a chemical compound, or a process, for example – or a process for producing a specific chemical compound.

- Patent protection is granted for a limited period, generally 20 years from the filing date of the application.
- Patents are territorial rights. In general, the exclusive rights are only applicable in the country or region in which a patent has been filed and granted, in accordance with the law of that country or region.

Patent System: Significance for inventors

- Patents recognize and reward inventors for their commercially-successful inventions. As such they serve as an incentive for inventors to invent. With a patent, an inventor or small business knows there is a good chance that they will get a return on the time, effort and money they invested in developing a technology. In sum, it means they can earn a living from their work.
- When a new technology comes onto the market, society as a whole stand to benefit – both directly, because it may enable us to do something that was previously not possible, and indirectly in terms of the economic opportunities (business development and employment) that can flow from it.
- The revenues generated from commercially successful patent-protected technologies make it possible to finance further technological research and development (R&D), thereby improving the chances of even better technology becoming available in the future.
- A patent effectively turns an inventor's know-how into a commercially tradeable asset, opening up opportunities for business growth and job creation through licensing and joint ventures, for example.
- Holding a patent also makes a small business more attractive to investors who play a key role in enabling the commercialization of a technology.
- The technical information and business intelligence generated by the patenting process can spark new ideas and promote new inventions from which we can all benefit and which may, in turn, qualify for patent protection.
- A patent can help stop unscrupulous third parties from free riding on the efforts of the inventor.

What is KAPILA Initiative?

- KAPILA is an acronym for Kalam Program for IP (Intellectual Property) Literacy and Awareness.
- Under this campaign, students pursuing education in higher educational institutions will get information about the correct system of the application process for patenting their invention and they will be aware of their rights.
- The program will facilitate the colleges and institutions to encourage more and more students to file patents.

Patent System: Way forward

- As the patent system is a critical aspect of the national innovation ecosystem, investing in the patent ecosystem will help in strengthening the innovation capability of India.
- The right interventions should be made for the promotion of the quality of patent applications and collaboration between academia and industry.

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

- Recently, the National Statistical Office (NSO) released the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) report for the period of April-June, 2022.
- NSO's Quarterly Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) report found that unemployment rate dips to 7.6% in April-June 2022.

15th Quarterly Bulletin of PLFS 2022 (April-June) findings

- **Unemployment Rate in Urban Areas:** The unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above in urban areas dipped to 7.6% during April-June 2022 from 12.6% a year ago.
 - The unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above in January-March 2022 was 8.2% in urban areas.
- **Unemployment Rate among Male/Female (Urban):** unemployment rate among females (aged 15 years and above) in urban areas declined to 9.5%

in April-June, 2022 from 14.3% a year ago. It was 10.1% in January-March, 2022.

- Among males, the unemployment rate in urban areas dipped to 7.1% in April-June 2022 compared to 12.2% a year ago. It was 7.7% in January-March 2022.
- **Labour force participation rate in CWS (Current Weekly Status) in urban areas:** for persons aged 15 years and above, it increased to 47.5% in the April-June quarter of 2022, from 46.8% in the same period a year ago.
 - It was 47.3% in January-March 2022.
- **Worker Population Ratio (WPR) in CWS in urban areas:** for persons aged 15 years and above, it stood at 43.9% in April-June, 2022, up from 40.9% in the same period a year ago.
 - It was 43.4% in January-March 2022.

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

- **About:** Considering the importance of availability of labour force data at more frequent time intervals, National Statistical Office (NSO) launched Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) in April 2017.
- **Objectives:** The objective of PLFS is primarily twofold:
 - To estimate the key employment and unemployment indicators (viz. WPR, LFPR, Unemployment Rate) in the short time interval of three months for the urban areas only in the 'Current Weekly Status' (CWS).
 - To estimate employment and unemployment indicators in both 'Usual Status' (ps+ss) and CWS in both rural and urban areas annually.
- **Annual Reports of PLFS:** PLFS Annual Reports are released covering both rural and urban areas giving estimates of all important parameters of employment and unemployment in both usual status and current weekly status (CWS).
 - On the basis of the data collected in PLFS, four Annual Reports of PLFS corresponding to the periods July 2017 - June 2018, July 2018 - June 2019, July 2019 - June 2020 and July 2020 - June 2021 have been released.
- **PLFS Quarterly Report:** On the basis of PLFS, a quarterly bulletin is brought out giving estimates of-

- labour force indicators namely unemployment rate,
- Worker Population Ratio (WPR),
- Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR),
- Distribution of workers by broad status in employment and industry of work in CWS.

PM PRANAM

In order to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers by incentivizing states, the Union government plans to introduce a new scheme – PM PRANAM, which stands for PM Promotion of Alternate Nutrients for Agriculture Management Yojana.

What is the PM PRANAM scheme?

- The proposed scheme intends to reduce the subsidy burden on chemical fertilizers.
- This burden if un eased, is expected to increase to Rs 2.25 lakh crore in 2022-2023, which is 39% higher than the previous year's figure of Rs 1.62 lakh crore.
- The scheme will not have a separate budget and will be financed by the "savings of existing fertilizer subsidy" under schemes run by the Department of fertilisers.

PM PRANAM: Subsidies

Further, 50% subsidy savings will be passed on as a grant to the state that saves the money and that 70% of the grant provided under the scheme can be used for asset creation related to technological adoption of alternate fertilizers.

- It would create alternate fertilizer production units at village, block and district levels.
- The remaining 30% grant money can be used for incentivizing farmers, panchayats, farmer producer organizations and self-help groups that are involved in the reduction of fertilizer use and awareness generation.
- The government will compare a state's increase or reduction in urea in a year, to its average consumption of urea during the last three years.

India's fertilizer requirement

- The kharif season (June-October) is critical for India's food security, accounting for nearly half the year's production of foodgrains, one-third of pulses and approximately two-thirds of oilseeds.
- A sizable amount of fertilizer is required for this season.
- The Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare assesses the requirement of fertilizers each year before the start of the cropping season, and informs the Ministry of Chemical and fertilizers to ensure the supply.
- The amount of fertilizer required varies each month according to demand, which is based on the time of crop sowing, which also varies from region to region. For example, the demand for urea peaks during June-August period, but is relatively low in March and April, and the government uses these two months to prepare for an adequate amount of fertilizer for the kharif season.

PM PRANAM: Need

- Due to increased demand for fertilizer in the country over the past 5 years, the overall expenditure by the government on subsidy has also increased.
- The final figure of fertilizer subsidy touched Rs 1.62 lakh crore in 2021-22.
- The total requirement of four fertilizers – Urea, DAP (Di-ammonium Phosphate), MOP (Muriate of potash), NPKS (Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium) – increased by 21% between 2017-2018 and 2021-2022, from 528.86 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) to 640.27 LMT.
- PM PRANAM, which seeks to reduce the use of chemical fertilizer, will likely reduce the burden on the exchequer.
- The proposed scheme is also in line with the government's focus on promoting the balanced use of fertilizers or alternative fertilizers in the last few years.

SCALE App

Recently, Minister of Education and Skill Development Shri Dharmendra Pradhan launched the SCALE (Skill Certification Assessment for Leather Employees) app for skill development in leather sector at CSIR- Central Leather Research Institute, Chennai.

SCALE App: Key Details

- **About:** SCALE App is developed to provide a one-stop solution for the skilling, learning, assessment, and employment needs of the leather industry.
- **Design and Development:** Leather Skill Sector Council developed Android App SCALE to change the way skill development programs are designed and delivered to the trainees in leather industry.
- **Importance:** The SCALE studio App developed by Leather SSC allows people from all age groups interested in leather craft to access online live streamed classes from the state-of-the-art studio at its office.
 - The leather sector plays a major role in generating large-scale employment in the country with over 44 lakh people currently working.

Role of CSIR-CLRI

- CSIR-CLRI is playing an important role in the development of this sector with a perfect blend of academics and skill development.
- CLRI is also promoting entrepreneurship among the youth and is aiding in the setting up of many startup companies.
 - This will enable in realizing our national goals during the on-going Amrit Kaal leading to 100 years of Indian Independence.

Way Forward

- **Collaborative Approach:** National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and CSIR-CLRI need to work together for addressing the skilling needs of the Leather sector.
 - Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, NSDC, CLRI and Leather

Sector Skill Council will collaborate to set up Common Facility and Skilling Centre across India, including Chennai.

- **Focus on Capacity Building:** National level capacity building program can be held at CSIR-CLRI for augmenting the capacities of professionals working in the leader sector.
- **Use of Technology:** young professionals in the leader sector need to leverage technology, innovation, entrepreneurship to become job-creators.
 - They must handhold craftsmen to connect them to opportunities available in the digital space including e-commerce.

Windfall Tax

Finance Minister has defended the windfall tax imposed by the Centre on domestic crude oil producers, saying that it was not an ad hoc move but was done after full consultation with the industry.

What is a Windfall Tax?

- Windfall taxes are designed to tax the profits a company derives from an external, sometimes unprecedented event – for instance, the energy price-rise as a result of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.
- These are profits that cannot be attributed to something the firm actively did, like an investment strategy or an expansion of business.
- The US Congressional Research Service (CRS) defines a windfall as an “unearned, unanticipated gain in income through no additional effort or expense”.
- One area where such taxes have routinely been discussed is oil markets, where price fluctuation leads to volatile or erratic profits for the industry.

When did India introduce this?

- In July this year, India announced a windfall tax on domestic crude oil producers who it believed were reaping the benefits of the high oil prices.
- It also imposed an additional excise levy on diesel, petrol and air turbine fuel (ATF) exports.

- Also, India's case was different from other countries, as it was still importing discounted Russian oil.

How is it levied?

- Governments typically levy this as a one-off tax retrospectively over and above the normal rates of tax.
- The Central government has introduced a windfall profit tax of ₹23,250 per tonne on domestic crude oil production, which was subsequently revised fortnightly four times so far.
- The latest revision was on August 31, when it was hiked to ₹13,300 per tonne from ₹13,000.

Need in India

- There have been varying rationales for governments worldwide to introduce windfall taxes like:

1. Redistribution of unexpected gains when high prices benefit producers at the expense of consumers,
2. Funding social welfare schemes, and
3. Supplementary revenue stream for the government

Windfall Tax and the world

- Prices of oil, gas, and coal have seen sharp increases since last year and in the first two quarters of the current year, although they have reduced recently.
- Pandemic recovery and supply issues resulting from the Russia-Ukraine conflict shored up energy demands, which in turn have driven up global prices.
- The rising prices meant huge and record profits for energy companies while resulting in hefty gas and electricity bills for households in major and smaller economies.
- Since the gains stemmed partly from external change, multiple analysts have called them windfall profits.

Issues with imposing such taxes

- Companies are confident in investing in a sector if there is certainty and stability in a tax regime.
- Since windfall taxes are imposed retrospectively and are often influenced by unexpected events,

they can brew uncertainty in the market about future taxes.

- IMF says that taxes in response to price surges may suffer from design problems—given their expedient and political nature.
- It added that introducing a temporary windfall profit tax reduces future investment because prospective investors will internalise the likelihood of potential taxes when making investment decisions.
- There is another argument about what exactly constitutes true windfall profits; how can it be determined and what level of profit is normal or excessive.
- Another issue is who should be taxed – only the big companies responsible for the bulk of high-priced sales or smaller companies as well—raising the question of whether producers with revenues or profits below a certain threshold should be exempt.

PLI Scheme for Solar Energy Sector

Recently, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has approved proposal for implementation of the Production Linked Incentive Scheme (Tranche II) on 'National programme on High Efficiency Solar PV Modules'.

- The proposal to implement PLI scheme on 'National programme on High Efficiency Solar PV Modules' was forwarded by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy.

PLI Scheme on 'National programme on High Efficiency Solar PV Modules'

- **About:** The national programme on High Efficiency Solar PV Modules aims to build an ecosystem for manufacturing of high efficiency solar PV modules in India.
- **Associated Ministry:** National programme on High Efficiency Solar PV Modules is being implemented under overall guidance and supervision of Ministry of New & Renewable Energy.

- **Funding:** Under it, government has provided with an outlay of Rs. 19,500 crore for achieving manufacturing capacity of Giga Watt (GW) scale in High Efficiency Solar PV Modules.
- **Selection Process and Tenure:** Solar PV manufacturers will be selected through a transparent selection process.
 - PLI will be disbursed for 5 years post commissioning of solar PV manufacturing plants on sales of high efficiency solar PV modules from the domestic market will be incentivised.
- **Significance:** national programme on High Efficiency Solar PV Modules will strengthen the Atamnirbhar Bharat initiative and generate employment.
 - National programme on High Efficiency Solar PV Modules will help in reducing country's

import dependence in the area of Renewable Energy.

Associated Benefits/Outcomes of PLI Scheme

The outcomes/benefits expected from the scheme are as follows:

- It is estimated that about 65,000 MW per annum manufacturing capacity of fully and partially integrated, solar PV modules would be installed.
- The scheme will bring direct investment of around Rs. 94,000 crores.
- Creation of manufacturing capacity for Balance of Materials like EVA, Solar glass, Backsheet, etc.
- Direct employment of about 1,95,000 and indirect employment of around 7,80,000 persons.
- Import substitution of approximately Rs.1.37 lakh crore.
- Impetus to Research and Development to achieve higher efficiencies in Solar PV Modules.



Social Issues

Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2022

The Ministry of Women and Child Development celebrated the 5th Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2022 from 1st to 30th September 2022.

Key Points about Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2022

- **About:** Rashtriya Poshan Maah serves as a platform to bring focus to the discourse of nutrition and good health.
- **Aim:** In the 5th Rashtriya Poshan Maah the aim is to convert Jan Andolan into Jan Bhagidari to fulfill the Hon'ble PM's vision of a Suposhit Bharat.
- **Objective:** This year, the objective of Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2022 is to trigger Poshan Maah through Gram Panchayats as Poshan Panchayats with key focus on "Mahila aur Swasthya" and "Bacha aur Shiksha".
- **Parent Ministry:** Ministry of Women and Child Development is responsible for Organizing the Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2022 in cooperation with States/UTs and Local Governments.
- **Key Activities:** In order to realise the vision of 'Swasth Bharat', the month long **Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2022** event will witness intensive activities across the country for awareness about nutrition at the ground level through-
 - Sensitization drives,
 - Outreach programmes,
 - Identification drives, camps and fairs with special focus on pregnant and lactating women, children below six years and adolescent girls.
- **Awareness Drives:** Awareness drives on Anganwadi Services and good health practices will also be organised.
 - Growth Measurement drives will be conducted to bring more beneficiaries under the ambit of Anganwadi Services.
 - Growth Measurement drives under Swasth Balak Spardha will be conducted by States with the help of AWWs, AWHs, ASHA, district functionaries and agencies such as Lions Club, Rotary Club etc.

- Health camps for anemia check-ups will be especially organised at AWCs for adolescent girls.

Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2022 at Various Level

- **National Level:** A national level toy-creation workshop will be organized to promote use of indigenous and local toys for learning in Anganwadi Centres.
- **State Level:** Under the State – level activities, '*Amma ki Rasoi*' or Grandmother's Kitchen of traditional nutritious recipes will be organised.
 - Extensive efforts will be made to link traditional foods with local festivals during the month.
 - State/UT women and child development depts. through its functionaries, will carry out various thematic activities and spread the message of the importance of holistic nutrition throughout the month to ensure a healthier future for women and children.
- **Panchayat level:** awareness activities will be conducted by local functionaries under the guidance of the concerned District Panchayati Raj Officers and CDPOs.
 - Poshan Panchayat Committees will work closely with field level workers (FLWs) – AWWs, ASHAs, ANMs.
 - This is to support problem solving and enabling service delivery through Anganwadi Centres (AWCs), Village Health and Nutrition Day (VHNDs), and other relevant platforms.
 - The aim is to ensure all pregnant and lactating women, children below six years, and adolescent girls receive basic Integrated Child Development services.

POSHAN Abhiyaan

- **About:** POSHAN Abhiyaan is Government of India's flagship programme to improve nutritional outcomes for children under 6 years of age, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
 - **POSHAN Full form:** Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition Abhiyaan

- **Mandate:** POSHAN Abhiyaan aims to address the challenge of malnutrition in a mission-mode.
- **Mission Poshan 2.0:** Focusing on the aims of POSHAN Abhiyaan, Mission Poshan 2.0 (Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0) has been launched.
- It is an integrated nutrition support program to strengthen nutritional content, delivery, outreach and outcomes with focus on developing practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity to disease and malnutrition.

ADIP Scheme

Recently, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways under National Vayoshree and Adip (Assistance to Disabled Persons) scheme provided free equipment and materials to senior citizens and differently-abled persons.

ADIP Scheme: Key Details

- **About:** The ADIP Scheme is in operation since 1981 with the main objective to assist the needy disabled persons in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and appliances.
 - These appliances will promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation by reducing the effects of disabilities and enhance their economic potential.
- **Mandate:** ADIP Scheme aims to promote physical, social and psychological rehabilitation, of disabled people by reducing the effects of disabilities and enhance their economic potential.
- **Implementing Ministry:** Assistance to Disabled Persons (ADIP) Scheme is being implemented under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
 - The ADIP scheme is implemented through implementing agencies such as the NGOs, National Institutes under this Ministry and ALIMCO (a PSU).

Eligibility Criteria for Beneficiaries under ADIP Scheme

A person with disabilities fulfilling following conditions would be eligible for assistance under ADIP Scheme through authorized agencies:

- He/she should be an Indian citizen of any age.
- Should be certified by a Registered Medical Practitioner that he/she is disabled and fit to use prescribed aid/appliance. Holds a 40% Disablement Certificate.
- Person who is employed/self-employed or getting pension and whose monthly income from all sources does not exceed Rs. 20,000/- per month.
- In case of dependents, the income of parents/guardians should not exceed Rs. 20,000/- per month.
- Persons who have not received assistance from the Government, local bodies and Non-Official Organisations during the last 3 years for the same purpose. However, for children below 12 years of age this limit would be 1 year.

What are the eligibility criteria for Implementing Agencies?

The following agencies would be eligible to implement the Scheme on behalf of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, subject to fulfillment of laid down terms and conditions:

- Societies, registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 and their branches, if any, separately.
- Registered charitable trusts
- District Rural Development Agencies, Indian Red Cross Societies and other Autonomous Bodies headed by District Collector/Chief Executive Officer/District Development Officer of Zilla Parishad.
- National/Apex Institutes including ALIMCO functioning under administrative control of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment/Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- State Handicapped Development Corporations.
- Local Bodies- Zilla Parishad, Municipalities, District Autonomous Development Councils and Panchayats.
- Hospitals registered as separate entity, as recommended by state/central government
- Nehru Yuvak Kendras.

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY)- Key Points

- **About:** Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY) is a scheme for providing Physical Aids and Assisted-living Devices for Senior citizens belonging to the BPL category.
- **Ministry:** Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY) is a central sector scheme of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- **Funding:** The expenditure for implementation of Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY) will be met from the "Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund".
- **Implementing Agency:** It will be implemented through the sole implementing agency - Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO), a PSU under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- **Eligibility:** The main criteria for the senior citizens to get full benefits of Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY) scheme is that they must belong to the BPL family and should hold valid BPL card issued by the concerned authority.

Assisted Suicide

A renowned French filmmaker died by assisted suicide at the age of 91.

Assisted Suicide: Definition

- Assisted suicide and euthanasia are practices under which a person intentionally ends their life with active assistance from others.
- These have long been contentious topics of debate as they involve a complex set of moral, ethical and in some cases, religious questions.
- Several European nations, some states in Australia and Colombia in South America allow assisted suicide and euthanasia under certain circumstances.

Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia: The Difference

- Euthanasia is the act of intentionally ending a life to relieve suffering – for example a lethal injection administered by a doctor.
- Intentionally helping another person to kill themselves is known as assisted suicide.

- This can include providing someone with strong sedatives with which to end their life or buying them a ticket to Switzerland (where assisted suicide is legal) to end their life
- The practice of passive euthanasia involves simply stopping lifesaving treatment or medical intervention with the consent of the patient or a family member or a close friend representing the patient. Active euthanasia, which is legal in only a few countries, entails the use of substances to end the life of the patient.

Assisted suicide and India

- In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court of India legalised passive euthanasia in 2018, stating that it was a matter of 'living will'.
- According to the judgment, an adult in his conscious mind is permitted to refuse medical treatment or voluntarily decide not to take medical treatment to embrace death in a natural way, under certain conditions.
- In the 538-page judgment, the court laid down a set of guidelines for 'living will' and defined passive euthanasia and euthanasia as well.
- It also laid down guidelines for 'living will' made by terminally ill patients who beforehand know about their chances of slipping into a permanent vegetative state.
- The court specifically stated that the rights of a patient, in such cases, would not fall out of the purview of Article 21 (right to life and liberty) of the Indian Constitution.

The case of Aruna Shanbaug

- While ruling on a petition on behalf of Aruna Shanbaug Case, the court had allowed passive euthanasia for the nurse who had spent decades in a vegetative state.
- Shanbaug had become central to debates on the legality of right to die and euthanasia in India.
- Shanbaug died of pneumonia in March 2015 at the age of 66, 42 years of which she had spent in a room at KEM Hospital in Mumbai, after a brutal rape left her in a permanent vegetative state.

Recent cases in India

- In 2018, an old couple from Mumbai wrote to then President Kovind, seeking permission for active

euthanasia or assisted suicide though neither of them suffered from a life-threatening ailment.

- The couple stated in their plea that they had lived a happy life and didn't want to depend on hospitals for old age ailments.

Justification for Euthanasia/Assisted Suicide

- It provides a way to relieve extreme pain
- Euthanasia can save life of many other people by donation of vital organs.

Issues

- Euthanasia can be misused.
- Many psychiatrists are of the opinion that a terminally ill person or someone who is old and suffering from an incurable disease is often not in the right frame of mind to take a call
- Family members deciding on behalf of the patient can also lead to abuse of the law legalizing euthanasia as it can be due to some personal interest.

Anaemia and Iron Fortification

The recent National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) data shows anaemia rates increased from 53 per cent to 57 per cent in women and 58 per cent to 67 per cent in children in 2019-21.

Anaemia: Definition

The WHO defines anaemia as a condition where the number of red blood cells or the haemoglobin concentration within them is lower than normal. This compromises immunity and impedes cognitive development.

Anaemia: A Concern

- Adverse effects of anaemia affect all age groups lower physical and cognitive growth and alertness among children and adolescents, and lesser capacity to learn and play, directly impacting their future potential as productive citizens.
- Anaemia among adolescent girls (59.1 per cent) advances to maternal anaemia and is a major

cause of maternal and infant mortality and general morbidity and ill health in a community.

Anaemia: Causes

- **Imbalanced diet:** Cereal-centric diets, with relatively less consumption of iron-rich food groups like meat, fish, eggs, and dark green leafy vegetables (DGLF), can be associated with higher levels of anaemia.
- **Underlying factors:** High levels of anaemia are also often associated with underlying factors like poor water quality and sanitation conditions that can adversely impact iron absorption in the body.
- **Iron deficiency is major cause:** A diet that does not contain enough iron, folic acid, or vitamin B12 is a common cause of anaemia.
- **Some other conditions:** That may lead to anaemia include pregnancy, heavy periods, blood disorders or cancer, inherited disorders, and infectious diseases.

Anaemia in India

- Low vitamin intake: Iron-deficiency and vitamin B12-deficiency anaemia are the two common types of anaemia in India.
- High population and nutrition deprivation: Among women, iron deficiency prevalence is higher than men due to menstrual iron losses and the high iron demands of a growing foetus during pregnancies.
- Overemphasis on cereals: Lack of millets in the diet due to overdependence on rice and wheat, insufficient consumption of green and leafy vegetables could be the reasons behind the high prevalence of anaemia in India.

Iron Fortification meaning

Iron fortification of food is a methodology utilized worldwide to address iron deficiency. Iron fortification programs usually involve mandatory, centralized mass fortification of staple foods, such as wheat flour.

Iron Fortification: Need

- Iron deficiency anaemia is due to insufficient iron.
- Without enough iron, the body can't produce enough of a substance in red blood cells that enables them to carry oxygen (haemoglobin).

- Severe anaemia during pregnancy increases risk of premature birth, having a low-birth-weight baby and postpartum depression. Some studies also show an increased risk of infant death immediately before or after birth.

Anaemia Mukd Bharat

- The scheme aims to reduce the prevalence of anaemia in India.
- It provides bi weekly iron Folic acid supplementation to all under five children through Asha workers.
- Also, it provides biannual Deworming for children and adolescents. The scheme also establishes institutional mechanisms for advanced research in anaemia.
- It also focuses on non-nutritional causes of anaemia.

Anaemia: Areas to focus

- Prophylactic Iron and Folic Acid supplementation.
- Intensified year-round Behavior Change Communication Campaign (Solid Body, Smart Mind).
- Appropriate infant and young child feeding practices.
- Increase in intake of iron-rich food through diet diversity/quantity/frequency and/or fortified foods with focus on harnessing locally available resources.
- Testing and treatment of anaemia, using digital methods and point of care treatment, with special focus on pregnant women and school-going adolescents
- Mandatory provision of Iron and Folic Acid fortified foods in government-funded public health programmes

Anaemia: Way forward

- India's nutrition programmes must undergo a periodic review.
- The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), which is perceived as the guardian of the nation's nutritional well-being must reassess itself and address critical intervention gaps, both conceptually and programmatically, and produce rapid outcomes.

- The nutritional deficit which ought to be considered an indicator of great concern is generally ignored by policymakers and experts. Unless this is addressed, rapid improvement in nutritional indicators cannot happen.

Anaemia: Conclusion

When a person is anaemic, the capacity of his blood cells to carry oxygen decreases. This reduces the productivity of the person which in turn affects the economy of the country. Therefore, it is highly important to cover Anaemia under National Health Mission.

Old age problems

India will be facing the immediate challenge – The ageing of the population. Challenge to ensure a decent quality of life for the old age people in the near future, planning and providing for it must begin today.

Background

- Life expectancy in India has more than doubled since Independence from around 32 years in the late 1940s to 70 years or so today, a historical achievement.
- Over the same period, the fertility rate has crashed from about six children per woman to just two, which liberated women from the cycle of continuous child bearing and child care.

Ageing of the Population

- Population ageing is a shift in the distribution of a country's population towards older ages.
- Decline in the fertility rate and Rise in the life expectancy. An increase in longevity increases the average age of the population by increasing the numbers of surviving older people.
- Impact of ageing population can be seen in labor supply shortage, change in patterns of saving and investment, deteriorate fiscal balance, lack of adequate welfare system etc.
- Social security, elderly Healthcare, Dependence on the family etc. are some of the challenges of ageing population.

Status in India

- According to the National Commission on Population, the share of the elderly (persons aged 60 years and above) close to 9% in 2011.
- It is growing fast and may reach 18% by 2036.

Problems faced by elderly

- Depression: According to survey by Abdul Latif Jameel foundation in Tamilnadu, 30-50% of people above age of 60 has a symptoms of depression. The proportion with depression symptoms is much higher for women than men, and rises sharply with age. In most cases, depression remains undiagnosed and untreated.
- Loneliness: Loneliness one the major factor leading to depression. A large majority of elderly persons living alone are women, mainly widows.
- Hardship of age: Monetary assistance can certainly help to cope with many health issues.
- Poverty and poor health: Old-age pensions are vital. Cash helps to lead a dignified life.

Government schemes for elders

Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Scheme – This is one of the most popular senior citizen pension schemes in India.

- Designed for senior citizens above 60 years of age, the policy term of this Prime Minister Senior Citizen Scheme extends to ten years.
- The pensioner can choose the frequency of the payment – monthly / quarterly / half - yearly / annually.
- You can earn interest of 8% per annum over this scheme.
- The minimum and maximum capping of pension are Rs. 3,000 per month and 10,000 per month, respectively

National Programme for the Health Care of Elderly (NPHCE)

- Introduced in 2010, this scheme concentrates on preventive as well as promotive, care for the maintenance of overall health.
- This program was launched to address the health issues faced by seniors.
- The district-level objectives include providing dedicated health facilities in district hospitals,

community health centres (CHC), primary health centres (PHC), and sub-centres (SC) levels through State Health Society.

- These facilities maybe free or highly subsidized.

Varishtha Mediclaim Policy

- This policy aids seniors by covering the cost of medicines, blood, ambulance charges, and other diagnosis related charges.
- Designed for senior citizens between the age of 60 and 80 years, this helps meet the health-related expenses of senior citizens.
- Income tax benefits are allowed for payment of premium.
- Although the policy period is for one year, you can extend the renewal up to the age of 90 years.

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana

- This scheme provides physical aids and assisted-living devices to the elderly above 60 years of age that belong to the BPL (below the poverty line) category.
- If senior citizens wish to avail this, then they must have a BPL card.
- This is a Central Sector Scheme and is entirely funded by the Central Government.

Varishta Pension Bima Yojana

- This pension scheme, launched by the Ministry of Finance, is for senior citizens above 60 years.
- The LIC of India has the authority to operate this scheme.
- Any Medical check-ups is not necessary to avail this policy.
- It offers assured pension with a guaranteed interest rate of 8% per annum for up to 10 years –
- You can opt for monthly, quarterly, half-yearly, and yearly pension – depends on how you'd like to receive it.

Vayoshreshtha Samman

This scheme focuses on those seniors who have made significant contributions in their disciplines and recognized their efforts. It was upgraded to the National Award in 2013, and since then, awards have been granted below thirteen categories.

Conclusion

- Social security pensions, of course, are just the first step towards a dignified life for the elderly.
- They also need other support and facilities such as health care, disability aids and assistance with daily tasks, recreation opportunities and a good social life.
- They can be the active contributor to the economy having the years of experience and mentorship to the demographic dividend.

PM SHRI Scheme

Prime Minister has announced that under the PM SHRI Scheme, as many as 14,500 schools will be “upgraded” across India to showcase the components of the National Education Policy, 2020.

About PM SHRI scheme

- 14,500 schools across states and Union Territories will be redeveloped to reflect the key features of the NEP, 2020 under the centrally sponsored scheme known as PM SHRI Schools (PM Schools for Rising India).
- The plan was first discussed with the education ministers of states and UTs during a conference organized by the Ministry of Education in June at Gandhinagar in Gujarat.
- While there are exemplary schools like Navodaya Vidyalayas, Kendriya Vidyalayas, the PM SHRI will act as “NEP labs”.

Features of NEP in school education

- The NEP envisages a curricular structure and teaching style divided into various stages – foundational, preparatory, middle and secondary.
- The foundational years (pre-school and grades I, II) will involve play-based learning.
- At the preparatory level (III-V), light textbooks are to be introduced along with some formal classroom teaching. Subject teachers are to be introduced at the middle level (VI-VIII).

- The secondary stage (IX-XII) will be multidisciplinary in nature with no hard separation between arts and sciences or other disciplines.

How will PM SHRI schools be different from Kendriya Vidyalayas or Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas?

- Kendriya Vidyalayas or Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas come entirely under the Centre’s Ministry of Education and are fully funded by the Union government under Central Sector Schemes.
- While KVs largely cater to children of Union government employees posted in states and UTs, JNVs were set up to nurture talented students in rural parts of the country.
- In contrast, PM SHRI schools will be an upgrade of existing schools run by the Centre, states, UTs and local bodies.
- This essentially means that PM SHRI schools can either be KVs, JNVs, state government schools or even those run by municipal corporations.

Where will the PM SHRI schools come up?

- The Centre has not yet released the list of schools that have been chosen for this purpose though it has been announced that the PM SHRI schools will also “offer mentorship” to other schools in their vicinity.
- These schools will be equipped with modern infrastructure including labs, smart classrooms, libraries, sports equipment, art room etc.
- It shall also be developed as green schools with water conservation, waste recycling, energy-efficient infrastructure and integration of organic lifestyle in curriculum.

What is a centrally sponsored scheme?

- A centrally sponsored scheme is one where the cost of implementation is likely to split in the 60:40 ratios among the Union government and the states/Union Territories.
- For instance, the mid-day meal scheme (PM Poshan) or the PM Awas Yojana are examples of centrally sponsored schemes.
- In the case of the Northeastern states, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir and UTs without legislatures, the Centre’s contribution can go up to 90 per cent.

PM TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan

Recently, the President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu virtually launched the Pradhan Mantri TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan.

- President also launched the Ni-kshay Mitra initiative

About PM TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan

- **Background:** Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi gave the clarion call to end TB in the country five years ahead of SDG target of 2030 at the Delhi End TB Summit in March 2018.
- **About:** The Pradhan Mantri TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan has been envisioned to bring together all community stakeholders to support those on TB treatment and accelerate the country's progress towards TB elimination.
- **Objective:** Pradhan Mantri TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan aims to reinvigorate the mission of TB elimination from the country by 2025.
- **Participation:** Under PM TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan initiative, individuals, organisations, corporates, cooperative organisations, elected leaders and NGOs can provide support by adopting persons with TB.
- **Significance:** The launch event aims to highlight the need for a societal approach that brings together people from all backgrounds into a Jan Andolan to achieve the ambitious target of eliminating TB from the country by 2025.
 - Pradhan Mantri TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan is a step towards garnering community support towards a patient-centric health system.

Ni-kshay Mitra Initiative

- **About:** Ni-kshay Mitra initiative forms a vital component of the PM TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan.
- **Ni-kshay Mitra Portal:** It provides a platform for donors to provide various forms of support to those undergoing TB treatment.
- **Functioning:** The Ni-kshay Mitra initiative provides three pronged support which includes-
 - Nutritional Support,
 - Additional Diagnostic Support, and
 - Vocational Support.

- **Ni-kshay Mitras:** The donors, called Ni-kshay Mitras, could be a wide range of stakeholders from elected representatives, political parties, to corporates, NGOs, and individuals.

National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP)

- **About:** Government has implemented the National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP) under the aegis of the National Health Mission (NHM).
- **Objectives:** With the goal of achieving Sustainable Development Goals related to TB by 2025, five years ahead of the global targets, the programme has implemented a National Strategic Plan with the following objectives:
 - Early diagnosis of TB patients, prompt treatment with quality assured drugs and treatment regimens.
 - To engage with the patients seeking care in the private sector.
 - Prevention strategies including active case finding and contact tracing in high risk /vulnerable population.
 - Airborne infection control.
 - Multi-sectoral response for addressing social determinants.
- **Performance:** Under National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP) scheme, over 62 lakh TB patients have received financial support amounting to Rs 1,651 crore since 2018.
 - This includes a transfer of Rs 500 directly into the bank account of the patient.

Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) Conference 2022

- Recently, the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi participated in the Self Help Group Sammelan organised at Karahal, Sheopur, Madhya Pradesh.
- On the occasion, the Prime Minister also inaugurated four Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) skilling centres under PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana.
- The Prime Minister also handed over Bank Loan Sanction letters to SHG members and Kits under the Jal Jeevan Mission were also handed over by him.

Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) Sammelan

- **About:** Women SHGs Sammelan is witness to the attendance of thousands of women Self Help Group (SHG) members/community resource persons that are being promoted under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).
- **Venue:** Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) Sammelan 2022 was organised at Karahal, Sheopur, Madhya Pradesh.
- **Participation:** About one lakh women who are members of SHGs were present on the occasion and about 43 lakh women were connected from various centres.

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY NRLM)

DAY NRLM aims to mobilise rural poor households into SHGs in a phased manner and provide them long term support to diversify their livelihoods and improve their incomes and quality of life.

The Mission is also working towards empowering the women SHG members through awareness generation and behaviour change communication on issues like domestic violence, women's education and other gender related concerns, nutrition, sanitation, health etc.

What are Self Help Groups (SHGs)?

- **About:** Self Help Groups are informal associations of people who come together to find ways to improve their living conditions. They help to build social capital among the poor, especially women.
- **Members:** The SHG members generally have similar socio-economic background.
- **Key Objectives:** Self Help Groups are formed with following key objectives-
 - To encourage and motivate its members to save,
 - To persuade them to make a collective plan for generation of additional income,
 - To act as a conduit for formal banking services to reach them.
- **Significance:** Such groups work as a collective guarantee system for members who propose to borrow from organised sources.

- Consequently, Self-Help Groups have emerged as the most effective mechanism for delivery of micro-finance services to the poor.
- **SHG examples:** SEWA in Gujarat, MYRADA in Karnataka, TANWA in Tamil Nadu, Ramkrishna mission in Jharkhand, ADITHI in Bihar.

Kashmiri Pandits

Recent events of targeted killings of Kashmiri pandits and other Hindus by the militants in the valley lead to the protests which once again brought forward the question of their right to return and the safety of minorities living in the valley.

About the Kashmiri Pandits

- The Kashmiri Pandits are one of the highest ranked Brahman castes who are the natives of the valley, locally known as pundits.
- They were the minority in the valley comprising only 5% of the total population.
- Traditionally dependent on agriculture and small-scale business and one of the favored sections in the administration.

The Conflict

- Radical Islamists and militants started targeting the Kashmiri pandits.
- The Growth of militancy in the 1990s forced Kashmiri pandits to leave the valley in greater numbers and thus they started migrating to the other states, leaving every belonging behind and seeking refuge in other parts.
- While many of them started migrating some decided to stay back in their homeland.
- Conflict arose between radical Islamists organization and the Hindus leading to the mass killings of the Kashmiri Hindus in waves.
- After the Pandit exodus from the Valley in the 1990s, the first few years of this century saw government efforts to send Pandits back to the Valley.
- Under the Prime Minister's return and rehabilitation of Kashmir migrants scheme,

government postings in the Valley for Kashmiri Pandit “migrant” youth began.

- Mostly, teachers and these government employees have lived in protected high security enclaves, but their work requires them to leave these enclaves and mingle with the rest of the population.
- Another segment, known as “non-migrant” Pandits because they never left the Valley, has lived in their own homes, without state-provided protection.

What is CDR?

- Centre for dialogue and reconciliation (CDR) is a Delhi-based think-tank incorporated in March 2001, aims to be a catalyst for peace in South Asia.
- CDR working for the peace-building process in Jammu Kashmir, supported the initiative of dialogue between the two communities as a part of self-assessment, acknowledging the mistakes.

What did CDR do in Kashmir?

- CDR supported the initiative for a dialogue proposed by two prominent young Kashmiris one a Muslim and the other a Pandit both who have witnessed the violence of 1990 and the subsequent years.
- They believe in the principle of talking could lead to healing.
- It led to CDR’s ‘Shared Witness’, a Pandit-Muslim dialogue series, in December 2010.
- Public intellectuals and other influential persons from both communities were participants.

Observations of the dialogue

- The dialogue series coincided with the launching of the Prime Minister’s job scheme.
- Dialogues created a social environment that enabled Kashmiri Pandits to take up government postings in the Valley.

- They focused on the events in and around 1990, and the incidents that triggered the displacement of the Pandit community.
- By the third dialogue, participants were sharing individual experiences that did not fit into the narrative that each community had built about the other.
- The process of the conversation led them to think on the actual reason behind the conflict, was it communal differences, or was it only religion?

Pandit’s Plight

- Pandits were aggrieved that the Muslims did not protest the Pandit killings, not even when the killers claimed them. That greater responsibility lay with the Muslims as they were the majority.
- If some social organizations had acted quickly, the exodus could have been stopped.
- They observed that the Pandit community too had suffered from a lack of leadership.
- They demand an apology and to set up of possible “Truth commission”
-

What do the Muslims say?

- The Muslim participants felt the Pandits were in denial of the struggle of the Muslims in the Valley, who were facing violence from the system.
- The Kashmiri Muslim was always portrayed as being misguided, aided, and abetted by Pakistan.
- The protest in Kashmir was not against religion but against structures of power and oppression.
-

Current situation

The fresh spate of targeted killings of Kashmir pandits created an environment of fear and provided a major setback to their rehabilitation in the Kashmir valley.

Way ahead

- We need urgent civil society engagement between communities in Kashmir once again.
- The government can enable it, but individuals and civil society will need to create conditions on the ground. They will have to encourage people to give up the blame game.

Environment & Biodiversity

ANGAN 2022 Conference

Recently, Shri Alok Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Power inaugurated the **ANGAN 2022 Conference**.

- ANGAN 2022 (ANGAN 2.0) Conference is the second edition of the event that has been organized under the Indo-Swiss Building Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP).
- The winners of the BEE's 1st National Energy Efficiency Roadmap for Movement towards Affordable and Natural habitat (NEERMAN) Awards were felicitated at ANGAN 2.0.

ANGAN 2022 Conference: Key Details

- **About:** ANGAN 2.0 is a three-day international conference that deliberates upon creating a sustainable, affordable and eco-friendly habitat in the world.
 - **ANGAN 2022** conference also hosts an exhibition of various low carbon products, technologies and innovations applicable in the building sector.
 - **ANGAN Full form:** ANGAN full form is Augmenting Nature by Green Affordable New-habitat.
 - **ANGAN 2.0 Title:** ANGAN 2022 is titled "Making the Zero-Carbon Transition in Buildings".
- **Objective:** The objective of ANGAN 2.0 conference is to promote a healthy ecosystem which was mentioned at COP 26 in Glasgow by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on LiFE (Lifestyle and Environment) and Panchamrit, aiming to make India Net Zero by 2070.
- **Organizing Body:** ANGAN 2022 is being organised by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Ministry of Power, in collaboration with Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation (SDC) under the Indo-Swiss Building Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP).

- **Participation:** More than 500 delegates consisting of Architects, Engineers, Builders, building material industries, Teachers, Students, Researchers, central and state government officials are attending the ANGAN conference.
- **Key Events:** ANGAN 2022 conference witnessed deliberation on critical issues like "Unlocking Finance for Low-Carbon Buildings, "Thermal Comfort and Climate Resilience in Residential buildings".
 - The Conference had special sessions on "Women in the Resource Efficiency Conversation".
- **Significance:** ANGAN 2022 conference cum exhibition is expected to foster national and international strategic collaboration, partnership, network and information exchange to promote low carbon, energy efficient habitat.

NEERMAN Awards

- The NEERMAN awards are institutionalised with the objective to acknowledge and encourage exemplary building designs complying with BEE's Eco-Niwas Samhita (ENS) and Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC).
- The NEERMAN award has seen participation of building projects across the country from Jammu & Kashmir to Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Indo Swiss Building Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP)

Indo Swiss Building Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP) is a collaborative project between the Government of India and the Government of Switzerland.

BEEP has provided technical support to BEE in the formulation of Eco Niwas Samhita (energy conservation building code for residential buildings), design of around 50 buildings and trained more than 5000 building sector professionals.

Fly Ash

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) noted that there was an urgent need to augment the utilization and disposal of fly ash in Chhattisgarh.

What is Fly Ash?

- Fly ash is a by-product of coal combustion and contains Aluminium Silicate, SiO₂, CaO, oxides of iron, magnesium and toxic metals like lead, arsenic, cobalt, and copper.
- India is set to double its power generation in the next decade and with coal being the biggest source of fuel for power generation, the problem of fly ash is going to increase too.

Fly Ash: Environmental Problems

- All the heavy metals found in fly ash—nickel, cadmium, arsenic, chromium, lead, etc.—are toxic in nature and potentially can leech into the surrounding soil and enter food-chain as well.
- Fly ash gets easily ingested through respiration, which causes many diseases such as asthma, neurological disorders.
- Suspended fly ash in the air acts as a global warming agent and heats the earth's surface.
- Fly ash settles on leaves and crops and reduces crop productivity.
- It pollutes the groundwater.
- Reduces visibility by creating dense fog in the winter season.

Fly Ash: Issues with management

- The government mandates that all coal power plants (CPPs) reach 100% utilization of fly ash and CPPs should give a certain amount of fly ash free of cost for MSMEs to manufacture bricks, tiles and rest of the fly ash should be sold to other industries.
- CPPs will have to maintain fly ash ponds to reduce its suspension in air but all these steps do little to mitigate the risks.

- The pricing of fly ash is increasingly becoming a contentious issue that is hampering its gainful utilization.
- The current approach of evaluating risks with fly ash disposal are very limited, and they may underestimate the true risks
- In spite of initiatives taken by the government, several non-governmental and research and development organizations for fly ash utilization, the level of fly ash utilization in the country is quite low at only 38% which is less than the global standards.
- Hence, rather than being utilized, fly ash is being stored despite warnings from regulators.
- Deposition in storage places has negative influences on water and soil because of their mineral composition as well as morphology and filtration properties.
- Ash-handling units are the biggest consumers of water in CPPs. The government advocates the designed ash-to-water ratios as approximately 1:5 for fly ash, but the observed ratios have been around 1:20.
- Certain states have discouraged the use of blended cement and fly ash bricks in public works.

Fly Ash: Way Forward

Issues can be addressed by

- Greater regulatory oversight and price control.
- Revision of cement blending standards.
- Research in improving fly ash quality.
- Reducing the cost of transportation.
- Provisions for overcoming information asymmetries.
- Incentivizing use in brick kilns for producing fly ash bricks.
- Overall sensitization of key decision-makers on the matter.
- Instead of dumping it on ash ponds, can be used for construction due to its reuse as pozzolan, and replacement of Portland cement by hydraulic cement.
- Due to its grain size distribution, enhanced strength permeability, it can be used to construct embankments at road construction, concrete dams like GHATGHAR DAM.
- Strong penalties for those production units who do not use proper filtration devices.

- Moving to renewable energy production away from coal-based thermal production.

Conclusion

- Utilization of Fly Ash is not only possible but also essential.
- "Fly Ash Mission of Government of India" is a slow but steady start, the pace of which needs to be ramped up.
- An honest effort is required by the concerned stakeholders to improve the perceptions of fly ash-based cement or concrete; increase its use, particularly for government works; and impart scientific knowledge about fly ash, its uses, and possible impacts.

India's growing water crisis

United Nations World Water Development Report of 2022 has expressed global concern over the sharp rise in freshwater withdrawal from streams, lakes, aquifers and human made reservoirs, significant water stress and also water scarcity being experienced in different parts of the world.

Who publishes the UNs world water development report?

The United Nations World Water Development Report (WWDR) is published by UNESCO, on behalf of UN-Water and its production is coordinated by the UNESCO World Water Assessment Program (WWAP).

What is the level of water stress in India?

- The Global Drought Risk and Water Stress map (2019): It shows that major parts of India, particularly west, central and parts of peninsular India are highly water stressed and experience water scarcity.
- Composite Water Management Index (2018): Released by Niti Aayog indicates that more than 600 million people are facing acute water stress.
- India is the world's largest extractor of groundwater: Accounting for 25 per cent of the total. 70 percent of our water sources are contaminated and our major rivers are dying because of pollution.

Why is Rural to Urban transfer of water becoming an issue in India?

- Rising urban population: According to Census 2011, the urban population in India accounted for 34% of total population. It is estimated that the urban population component in India will cross the 40% mark by 2030 and the 50% mark by 2050 according to World Urbanization Prospects, 2018.
- Water use in the urban areas: Water use in the urban sector has increased as more and more people shift to urban areas. Per capita use of water in these centers rises, which will continue to grow with improved standards of living.
- Shifting of water source in Urban areas: As the city grows and water management infrastructures develop, dependence shifts to surface water from groundwater. For example: In Ahmedabad, more than 80% of water supply used to be met from groundwater sources till the mid-1980s. Due to such overexploitation of groundwater the depth to groundwater level reached 67 meters in confined aquifers. The city now depends on the Narmada canal for the bulk of its water supply.
- Dependence of urban areas on rural areas for water source and rural-urban disputes over water: Cities largely depend on rural areas for raw water supply, which has the potential to ignite the rural-urban dispute. For example: Nagpur and Chennai face the problem of rural-urban water disputes.

Reasons for disputes

- Diversion of resource: Water is transported to urban areas at the expense of rural areas. Due to the high population in urban areas the water requirement for daily use is very high.
- High demand of water for industrial purposes: In urban areas the water is heavily used in industries creating water stress.
- High Agriculture dependence: In the rural areas water is used mainly for irrigation purposes and due to heavy dependence on agriculture the water is very essential in rural areas.
- Water pollution: In cities, most of this water is in the form of grey water with little recovery or reuse, eventually contributing to water pollution.

- Bad governance: Politicization of water for vote bank and skewed distribution of water particular regions for example: Andhra and Telangana.



Climate change exacerbate the rural-urban disputes

- Affecting rainfall pattern: Climate change affects the amount of rainfall in the region which is the prime source of both surface water and groundwater.
- Increase rate of evaporation over surface water: because of high temperature the surface waters of lakes, rivers, canals etc. face high evaporation water loss.
- Melting of glaciers: glaciers are the sources for perennial rivers of India. Due to global warming, glaciers are melting and hence affecting the perennial nature of rivers.
- Frequent droughts: It affects the groundwater recharge process and drying of surface waters which creates shortage of water. It exacerbates the rural-urban conflict.

Way forward

- A system perspective and catchment scale based approach are necessary to link reallocation of water with wider discussions on development, infrastructure investment, fostering a rural-urban partnership and adopting an integrated approach in water management.
- The government cannot manage the water crisis alone. It will take the combined efforts of civil society, the private sector including the public at large to meet the challenge.

Conclusion

- Rural and urban areas use water from the same stock, i.e., the water resources of the country. Therefore, it is important to strive for a win-win

situation by securing the interests of both urban and rural areas. Good Governance is the key to achieve such a win-win situation.

IWA World Water Congress

Minister for Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, his Denmark counterpart along with the Indian Delegation launched a Whitepaper on 'Urban Wastewater Scenario in India' at International Water Association (IWA) World Water Congress & Exhibition 2022.

Whitepaper on 'Urban Wastewater Scenario in India'

- The Whitepaper is a result of the Indo-Danish Bilateral Green Strategic Partnership, which focuses on green hydrogen, renewable energy, and wastewater management.
- Whitepaper on 'Urban Wastewater Scenario in India' aims to holistically capture of the current status of wastewater treatment in India.
- **Whitepaper on 'Urban Wastewater Scenario in India'** aims to create potential pathways for future treatment structures, co-creation, and collaborations.

IWA World Water Congress 2022

- **About:** The IWA World Water Congress & Exhibition is the global event for water professionals covering the full water cycle. The Congress is by nature a global forum for discussion.
- **Venue:** IWA World Water Congress & Exhibition 2022 was held in Copenhagen, Denmark on September 12, 2022.
- **Organizing Authority:** IWA World Water Congress & Exhibition is convened by the International Water Association.
- **Mandate:** IWA World Water Congress 2022 will report on the water sector progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
 - With an emphasis on SDG6, dedicated to water and sanitation, the Congress will also highlight and access the interwoven relation of water with all 17 Global Goals.

- **Participations:** The World Water Congress & Exhibition is designed to bring together water professionals and also engage the water-consuming industry, agriculture, architects and urban planners, hydrologists and soil and groundwater experts, social sciences, etc.
 - Over 10,000 leading water professionals and companies participated in the IWA World Water Congress & Exhibition 2022.
 - During 6 days, thought-leaders, decision makers, leading researchers and business representatives from within and outside the water sector will focus on water solutions to shape our water future.

International Water Association (IWA)

- **Background:** In 1999, the International Water Services Association and the International Association of Water Quality joined forces to form the International Water Association (IWA), bringing the science and practice of water management closer together.
- **About:** The International Water Association (IWA) is a non-profit organization and knowledge hub for the water sector that works with an interdisciplinary network of water professionals and partners to create a water wise world.
- **Mandate:** IWA experts collaborate and combine their knowledge to spread practical know-how throughout the entire water cycle to help us reduce, reuse, and replenish water resources.

National Conference of Environment Ministers

Recently, a two-day National Conference of Ministers of Environment, Forest and Climate Change was held in Ekta Nagar, Gujarat on 23-24th September, 2022.

The National **Environment Ministers** conference was inaugurated by the Prime Minister virtually.

About National Conference of Environment Ministers

- **Themes:** National Conference of Environment Ministers was organized under six themes with topics focusing on-

- LiFE and Combating Climate Change (Updating State Action Plans on Climate Change for Mitigation of Emissions and Adaptation to Climate Impacts);
- PARIVESH (Single Window System for Integrated Green Clearances);
- Forestry Management;
- Prevention and Control of Pollution;
- Wildlife Management;
- Plastics and Waste Management.

- **Participation:** The Ministers of Environment, Forest and Climate Change from across the country participated in the National Conference of Environment Ministers.

- State Forest and Environment Ministers, the concerned State Secretaries as well as Chairmen of State PCBs / PCCs along with PCCFs also participated in the two-day National Conference of Ministers' of EF&CC.

Key Outcomes of National Conference of Environment Ministers

Three pledges were taken at the concluding session of the two days Conference at Ekta Nagar, Gujarat:

- In order to tackle the global challenge of the climate change, under the able leadership of the Prime Minister, we take a pledge to promote the environment friendly lifestyle LiFE.
- We take a pledge to enhance the Forest life, forest protection and green zones.
- To make our country self-reliant We take a pledge-
 - To preserve wood and related products,
 - To identify the opportunities for agri-commerce,
 - To enable the policy framework related to scientific infrastructure and
 - To increase the employment and income opportunities of the farmers, tribal groups and local communities.

What is PARIVESH?

- **PARIVESH Full form:** The full form of PARIVESH is Pro-Active and Responsive facilitation by Interactive and Virtuous Environment Single-window Hub.

- **Background:** PARIVESH was launched in August 2018 in order to achieve Hon'ble PM's Vision of reducing time taken for granting clearances.
- **About:** PARIVESH is a technology driven, professionally managed institutional mechanism, which will operate as a "single window" platform for administration of all Green Clearances, and subsequent compliance management.
- **Mandate:** PARIVESH aims to have single source of truth, effectiveness through process & data synchronization, transparent & informed decision making and strengthen "Minimum Government Maximum Governance".
 - Currently the envisaged PARIVESH development work is in progress and is planned to be launched by the end of 2022.
- **Key Modules:** Some of the key modules envisaged in PARIVESH are Configurable Admin Module, Decision Support System (DSS), Know Your Approvals (KYA), CAMPA Mgmt., Helpdesk Mgmt., Legal Repository, Auditor Mgmt., Entity Ledger, Payment Gateway.

Cheetahs Released in Kuno National Park

Recently, PM Modi released three of the eight cheetahs that arrived in India, in an ambitious project to reintroduce the big cats starting from Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park.

- PM Modi also appealed for patience from the public before visiting cheetahs.
- PM Modi added that though India declared cheetahs extinct in 1952, it is unfortunate that no constructive efforts were made to reintroduce them for decades.

Tracing the Re-introduction of Cheetahs in India

- **Beginning:** The State Wildlife Board of Andhra Pradesh was the first to suggest the policy in 1955, on an experimental basis in two districts of the state.
- **Government on Re-introduction:** In the 1970s, the Department of Environment formally requested Iran, which had 300 Asiatic cheetahs at the time, for some cheetahs.

- However, the Shah of Iran was deposed before any deal could be reached.
- **Revival of Demand:** Attempts to bring cheetahs to India were revived once more in 2009, and the Wildlife Trust of India conducted a meeting to discuss the feasibility of cheetah reintroduction.
 - Several sites were chosen, of which Kuno-Palpur National Park was seen as the most suitable.
 - This was because the area had a large habitat area available and significant investments had already been made to displace the villagers inhabiting the site.
- **Supreme Court on Reintroduction of Cheetah:** The Supreme Court in 2010 stayed the order to reintroduce cheetah to Kuno- Palpur because the National Board for Wildlife had not been privy to the matter.
 - The court said that priority should be given to the reintroduction of the Asiatic lion, which is only found in Gir National Park, Gujarat.
 - In 2020, while responding to a plea by the government, the Supreme Court announced that African cheetahs could be introduced in a "carefully chosen location" on an experimental basis.
- **Re-introduction of Cheetah: recently PM Modi released three of eight cheetahs in the Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park.**
 - These cheetahs were flown from Namibia's capital Windhoek.
 - Among eight wild Cheetahs that were brought to India, five are females and three are males.

Cheetah in India- Tracing the Extinction Journey of Cheetah in India

- **Hunting with the cheetahs:** The cheetah, which was relatively easy to tame and less dangerous than tigers, was frequently used by Indian nobility for sport-hunting.
 - The earliest available record for cheetahs being used for hunts in India, comes from the 12th century Sanskrit text Manasollasa, which was produced by the Kalyani Chalukya ruler, Someshvara III (reigned from 1127-1138 CE).
 - Emperor Akbar, who reigned from 1556-1605, was particularly fond of the activity and is

recorded to have collected 9,000 cheetahs in total.

- Emperor Jahangir (ruled from 1605-1627) took after his father and is said to have caught more than 400 antelopes by cheetah coursing in the pargana of Palam.
- The capture of wild cheetahs for hunting and the difficulty to breed them in captivity was leading to a decline in the cheetah population, even before the entry of the British.
- **Near extinction under the British Raj:** they preferred to hunt big game, such as tigers, bison and elephants.
 - Under the British Raj, forests were extensively cleared, so as to develop settlements and to set up indigo, tea and coffee plantations.
 - This further resulted in the loss of habitat for big cats, contributing to their decline.
 - British officials considered the animal as “vermin” and also distributed monetary rewards for the killing of cheetahs from at least 1871 onwards.
 - The rewards for bounty hunting likely caused the decline of cheetahs, as even the removal of a small number would have negatively affected the ability of wild cheetahs to reproduce even at the lowest level required for survival.
 - As a result, wild cheetahs became very rare in India by the 20th century.
- **Extinction of Cheetah from India:** In 1952, the Indian government officially declared the Cheetah extinct in the country.
 - Maharaja Ramanuj Pratap Singh Deo of Korea, Madhya Pradesh, is widely believed to have killed the last three recorded cheetahs in India in 1947.

with Ministry of Ayush, close to 4.37 lakh Anganwadi Centres have set up Poshan Vatikas.

- Additionally, so far, 1.10 lakh medicinal saplings have also been planted across some of the selected districts of 6 States.
- So far, more than 1.5 lakh events on retrofitting Poshan Vatikas with backyard poultry and fishery units have been reported.
- Also, more than 75 thousand sensitization camps have been conducted to promote millets and backyard kitchen gardens.
- Interestingly, to replicate the model of Poshan Vatikas at/around new AWCs, close to 40 thousand land identification drives for nutri-gardens/Poshan Vatikas have also been reported under Poshan Maah so far.

What are Nutri Gardens?

- A nutri-garden project is a cost-effective model to grow nutrient-rich crops for personal or community consumption to promote good health and well-being.
- It helps tackle both under-nutrition and over-nutrition by adopting a sustainable life cycle approach.
 - Nutri Garden Odisha is one such successful model.
- Nutri-gardens that are being set up across the country to provide easy and affordable access to fruits, vegetables, medicinal plants and herbs.
- The idea is simple; to provide a fresh and regular supply of locally produced fruits, vegetables and medicinal plants to women and children straight from a nutri-garden at or near an Anganwadi Centre.

Poshan Vatikas

Under Poshan Maah 2022, activities for setting-up nutri-gardens or retro-fitting Poshan Vatikas with backyard poultry / fishery units were carried out in a big way across the country.

Nutri-gardens- Key Achievements

- Under various interventions taken up by the Ministry of Women and Child Development jointly

Importance of Nutri- gardens/ Poshan Vatikas

- Poshan Vatikas can play an important role in enhancing dietary diversity by providing key micronutrients through local fruits and vegetables.
- Poshan Vatikas are a good example of convergent action on-ground.
- Beyond the reward of locally available wholesome produce, it will reduce external dependency and make communities atmanirbhar for their nutritional security.

Poshan Vatikas- Key Benefits

- It provides nutritious food that can address **micro & macro nutrient deficiencies and hidden hunger** in children.
- It provides better **use of vacant land lying idle** at the schools and AWCs (Aangan Waadi Centres).
- It also ensures an **inexpensive, regular and handy supply** of fresh vegetables, which are basic to nutrition.
- It brings **diversification in the menu** of mid-day meals at government schools and AWCs.
- It turns **children into catalysts** who promote awareness and behavioural changes in society.

Rotterdam Convention

International trade of two new hazardous pesticides – Iprodione and Terbufos – has been recommended for “prior informed consent” (PIC) procedure under the Rotterdam convention.

- In India, the use of these chemicals was permitted by the 2015 Anupam Verma committee report. The country is among the largest exporters of Terbufos.
- The chemicals are dangerous for humans and aquatic animals.

Rotterdam Convention

- The Rotterdam Convention is formally known as the Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.
- It is a multilateral treaty to promote shared responsibilities in relation to importation of hazardous chemicals.
- The convention promotes open exchange of information and calls on exporters of hazardous chemicals to use proper labelling, include directions on safe handling, and inform purchasers of any known restrictions or bans.
- Signatory nations can decide whether to allow or ban the importation of chemicals listed in the treaty, and exporting countries are obliged

to make sure that producers within their jurisdiction comply.

- India is a party to the convention, with 161 other parties.

Rotterdam Convention: Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure

- The PIC procedure is a mechanism for formally obtaining and disseminating the decisions of importing parties on their willingness to receive future shipments of hazardous chemicals.
- The PIC procedure is a mechanism for formally obtaining and disseminating the decisions of importing Parties as to whether they wish to receive future shipments of those chemicals listed in the Convention.
- For each of the chemicals listed in Annex III and subject to the PIC procedure a decision guidance document (DGD) is prepared and sent to all Parties.
- All Parties are required to take a decision as to whether or not they will allow future import of each of the chemicals in Annex III of the Convention.
- These decisions are known as import responses.

Rotterdam Convention: The new chemicals

- Iprodione, a fungicide used on vines, fruits, trees and vegetables, has been classified as carcinogenic and toxic for reproduction.
- Terbufos is a soil insecticide used commonly on sorghum, maize, beet and potatoes. It has also been found to pose risk to aquatic organisms due to its toxicity.
- Both pesticides, which are used in agriculture, are known for their harmful impacts on human health and the environment.

Shoonya Campaign

- Recently, NITI Aayog held a day-long forum to commemorate the one-year anniversary of Shoonya, India’s zero pollution e-mobility campaign.
- The National Programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Energy Storage (Part III) report was also launched during the event.

- The report highlights that India's \$2.5-billion Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) energy storage is critical for meeting the projected cumulative battery demand of 106–260 GWh by 2030.
- This is to successfully realize the country's vision for EV adoption and grid decarbonisation.

Need for Shoonya Campaign

- Rapid global urbanization and e-commerce sales are driving significant growth in urban freight and mobility demand. In India, these sectors are expected to grow at a CAGR of 8% through 2030. If this demand is met by internal combustion vehicles (ICE), it would significantly increase local air pollution, carbon emissions, and lead to adverse public health effects. EVs offer an opportunity to address these challenges. Compared to ICE vehicles, EVs do not emit PM or NOx emissions at the tailpipe; they release 60% less CO2 and have 75% lower operating costs. Shoonya supplements existing national and sub-national EV policies as well as corporate efforts in India by creating consumer awareness and demand for zero pollution rides and deliveries in Indian cities.

Shoonya Campaign

- **About:** Shoonya is a consumer awareness campaign to reduce air pollution by promoting the use of electric vehicles (EVs) for ride-hailing and deliveries.
- **Participation:** The Shoonya Campaign has 130 industry partners, including ride-hailing, delivery and EV companies.

Single-use Plastics Ban

The Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, prohibited the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale, and use of plastic carry bags whose thickness is less than 75 microns.

What is Single use Plastic?

- **About:** Single use Plastic refers to plastic items that are used once and discarded. Single use plastic has among the highest shares of plastic manufactured.
 - A 2021 report by the Minderoo Foundation said single use plastics account for a third of all plastic produced globally, with 98% manufactured from fossil fuels.
- **Application:** Single use Plastics are used from packaging of items, to bottles (shampoo, detergents, cosmetics), polythene bags, face masks, coffee cups, cling film, trash bags, food packaging etc.

Harmful Effects of Single-use Plastics

- **Environmental Impact:** Plastic waste has drastic impacts on the environment and human health.
 - Littered single-use plastic items have an adverse effect on both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.
 - There is a greater likelihood of single-use plastic products ending up in the sea than reusable ones, badly affecting the ocean ecosystem.
- **Green House Gas (GHC):** On the current trajectory of production, it has been projected that single-use plastic could account for 5-10% of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Indian Initiative at UN Environment Assembly

- India piloted a resolution on single-use plastics pollution at the 4th United Nations Environment Assembly in 2019, recognising the urgent need for the global community to address this issue.
 - This resolution was adopted at the UN Environment Assembly as an important step forward.
- In the recently concluded 5th session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in March 2022, India engaged constructively with all member states to develop a consensus on a resolution to drive global action against plastic pollution.

Single-use Plastic Ban by Other Countries

- India is not the first country to ban single-use plastics. As of July 2019, 68 countries have plastic bag bans with varying degrees of enforcement.

- **Examples:**
 - Bangladesh became the first country to ban thin plastic bags in 2002; New Zealand banned plastic bags in July 2019.
 - China had issued a ban on plastic bags in 2020 with a phased implementation.

Plastic Waste Management Amendment rules 2021- Key Features

- **Prohibition on manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale, and use of following single-use plastic:**
 - Earbuds with plastic sticks, plastic sticks for balloons, plastic flags, candy sticks, ice-cream sticks, polystyrene [Thermocol] for decoration;
 - Plates, cups, glasses, cutlery such as forks, spoons, knives, straw, trays, wrapping or packing films around sweet boxes, invitation cards, and cigarette packets, plastic or PVC banners less than 100 microns, stirrers.
- **Increasing the thickness of lightweight plastic carry bags:** to 75 microns by September 2021 and 120 microns with effect from the 31st December 2022.
 - This will also allow the reuse of plastic carry due to increased thickness.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility of the Producer, importer, and Brand owner (PIBO):** They will be responsible for collecting and managing plastic packaging waste in an environmentally sustainable way.
 - The 2021 rules give legal force to guidelines for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for ensuring its Effective Implementation.

Way Forward

- **Awareness Generation:** The consumer needs to be informed about the ban through advertisements, newspaper or TV commercials, or on social media.
- **Investment in R&D:** In order to find sustainable alternatives, companies need to invest in research and development.
- **Collaborative Approach:** The solution to the plastic pollution problem is not the responsibility of the government alone, but of industries, brands, manufacturers and most importantly consumers.
- **Development and Promotion of Greener Alternatives:** Finding alternatives to plastic seems

a little difficult, however, greener alternatives to plastic may be considered a sustainable option.

- For example, compostable and bio-degradable plastic, etc., may be considered as an option.

Conclusion

While the total ban on the use of plastic sounds a great idea, its feasibility seems difficult at this hour, especially in the absence of workable alternatives.

Sustainable and Green Tourism

Ministry of Tourism identified Tourism Industry's potential as a Sunrise Industry.

- There is a need for tourism analysts to hold tourism planners accountable.

What is tourism?

Tourism is travel for pleasure or business; also the theory and practice of touring, the business of attracting, accommodating, and entertaining tourists, and the business of operating tours.

Types of tourism

- **Domestic tourism:** Refers to activities of a visitor within their country of residence and outside of their home (e.g. a Indian visiting other parts of India)
- **Inbound tourism:** Refers to the activities of a visitor from outside of country of residence (e.g. a Spaniard visiting Britain).
- **Outbound tourism:** Refers to the activities of a resident visitor outside of their country of residence (e.g. an Indian visiting an overseas country).

Sustainable tourism meaning

Sustainable tourism is defined by the UN Environment Program and UN World Tourism Organization as "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities."

What is the main importance of tourism?

Tourism boosts the revenue of the economy, creates thousands of jobs, develops the infrastructures of a

country, and plants a sense of cultural exchange between foreigners and citizens.

Why tourism is needed?

Tourism is not a fad. It is a compulsion driven by the urge to discover new places. Because we have this compulsion to venture into the unknown, we need each other. When humans travel, meet and exchange ideas, civilisation flourishes.

What should be done to promote tourism?

- National Tourism Authority: A separate National Tourism Authority (NTA) should be established for executing and operationalizing various tourism related initiatives. Simple, flexible and elegant processes will be laid down to allow for nimbleness.
- National Tourism Advisory Board: A National Tourism Advisory Board (NTAB) should be set up to provide overall vision, guidance and direction to the Development of Tourism Sector in the country.
- Creating Synergy in Tourism Eco System: In order to ensure synergy at various levels of Government and with the Private Sector, it is important to have a well-defined framework in place.
- Quality Tourism Framework: A robust framework for quality certification of products and services across all segments like accommodation providers, tour operators, adventure tour operators, service providers like spa and wellness, guides, restaurants etc. should be laid down.
- Enhancing the existing luxury tourism products: The existing tourism products such as Nilgiri Mountain Railway, Palace on Wheels etc. should be enhanced and their numbers will also be increased. Haulage charges will be rationalised to make luxury trains viable.
- Railways can be a game changer: For tourism Railways have presence in most parts of the country. Most of the tourist destinations in the country are connected by rail. Railways is also in the process of connecting more places especially the strategic locations that also are tourist places with limited connectivity at present. Indian Railways is working towards promoting tourism in the country by operating more trains connecting tourists' destinations and also by providing an

array of products starting from luxury tourist trains to budget catering tourist trains

MICE tourism of Gujarat

- The acronym "MICE" stands for "Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions", and is essentially a version of business tourism that draws domestic and international tourists to a destination.
- The policy aims to make Gujarat one of the top five MICE tourism destinations in the country.

Way forward

- Enhance the contribution of tourism in Indian economy by increasing the visitation, stay and spend
- Create jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities in tourism sector and ensure supply of skilled work force
- Enhance the competitiveness of tourism sector and attract private sector investment
- Preserve and enhance the cultural and natural resources of the country
- To ensure sustainable, responsible and inclusive development of tourism in the country

Conclusion

We know that India has the highest tourism potential of any country. That is because we have every terrain and climate zone, and a range of customs, traditions, cuisines, crafts, art forms and festivals unmatched by any other nation. We should monetize our potential through putting comprehensive National tourism policy in place.

Swachh Vayu Diwas

Recently, Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change organized 3rd International Day of Clean Air for blue skies as 'Swachh Vayu Diwas ("Swachh Vayu Neel Gagan").

Swachh Vayu Diwas: Key Details

- **About:** 'Swachh Vayu Diwas ("Swachh Vayu Neel Gagan") aims to raise awareness and facilitate actions to improve air quality under National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).

- **Key Guidelines:** During the event on Swachh Vayu Diwas, MoEFCC has released the following:
 - Guidelines on Capacity Building and Outreach programmes to be conducted at National, State and City level, help in mobilising stakeholders at all levels to promote actions to improve air quality.
 - Guidelines for release and utilization of funds under NCAP;
 - XV Finance Commission Operational guidelines for implementation of recommendations for air quality component
 - Best Practices and success stories of 8 cities under NCAP. These best practices help in adopting sustainable approaches by other cities for improvement of air quality.

International Day of Clean Air for blue skies 2022

- **About:** United Nations General Assembly has designated 7th September as the "International Day of Clean Air for blue skies" with an aim to raise awareness and to promote actions to improve air quality.
- **Theme:** International Day of Clean Air for blue skies 2022 theme is "The Air We Share".
- **Mandate:** International Day of Clean Air for blue skies 2022 aims to raises awareness on the urgency of strengthening national action and regional collaboration to improve air quality.

Previous International Day of Clean Air for blue skies

- **First 'International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies':** The first event, with the theme "Clean Air for All," was held on September 7, 2020.
- **Second 'International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies':** The 2021 theme for the International Day of Clean Air for blue skies is "Healthy Air, Healthy Planet" which emphasizes the health aspects of air pollution, especially considering the COVID-19 pandemic.

National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)

- **About:** National Clean Air Mission program (NCAP) was launched in 2019 to ensure Clean Air for All, healthy and productive life for citizens, and

improve air quality in more than 100 cities through holistic approach.

- **Key Features:** National Clean Air Programme aims at improving air quality by reducing Particulate Matter concentrations by 20-30% in 131 cities in the country. It includes-
 - 123 Non-Attainment Cities (NAC) which exceed the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for 5 consecutive years and
 - 42 Million Plus Population Cities/Urban Agglomerations.
 - 34 cities are common in both categories.
- **Monitoring:** Reporting and monitoring of physical and financial progress of action plans is done through PRANA portal (Portal for Regulation of Air Pollution in Non-Attainment Cities).
- **Key Achievements:** 131 cities of the country have developed City Action Plans and Micro Action Plans to address various sources contributing to poor air quality such as vehicles, road dust, construction, industries, thermal power plants, burning of waste, Construction and Demolition Waste, etc.
 - There has been an overall improvement in Particulate Matter concentration in 95 cities including 20 cities conforming to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards in the year 2021-22 compared to 2017.

Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan

Recently, guidelines on 'Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan- Ranking of Cities' were released under National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) at National Conference of Ministers of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan: Key Details

- **About:** Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan promotes ranking of 131 cities in the country for implementing City Action Plans prepared as part of National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) for reducing air pollution upto 40% by 2025-26.
- **Associated Ministry:** Minister for Environment, Forest and climate Change (MoEFCC) will launch and see overall implementation of Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan Ranking of Cities.

- **Categories:** 131 cities are categorized into three groups based on population in the Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan Ranking.
 - 47 cities are in the first group having population more than 10 lakhs.
 - 44 cities are in the second group having population between 3 to 10 lakh.
 - Third group consists of 40 cities having population less than 3 lakhs.

Ranking Method for Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan

- Under Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan, Cities are required to do the self-assessment as per the framework provided on PRANA online portal. This assessment is carried out annually.
- Cities have to report implementation of activities and measures taken in respect of solid waste management, road dust management, management of construction and demolition waste, control of vehicular emissions and industrial pollution.

Importance of Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan City Ranking

- **Swachh Vayu Survekshan 2022 Ranking** provides a tool to cities to plan their actions in order to improve the air quality.
- **Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan City Ranking** is not based on the measurement of the air quality parameters to rank the cities.
 - It is based on the actions taken by the cities to improve the air quality in different domains.
 - The actions taken by the cities would result in the improvement of air quality.
- It thus, provides a planning implementation tool to improve the air quality and the assessment of the cities regarding how better they have aligned their actions to improve the air quality.

National Conference of Environment Ministers

- **Themes:** National Conference of Environment Ministers was organized under six themes with topics focusing on-
 - LiFE and Combating Climate Change (Updating State Action Plans on Climate Change for Mitigation of Emissions and Adaptation to Climate Impacts);

- PARIVESH (Single Window System for Integrated Green Clearances);
- Forestry Management;
- Prevention and Control of Pollution;
- Wildlife Management;
- Plastics and Waste Management.
- **Participation:** The Ministers of Environment, Forest and Climate Change from across the country participated in the National Conference of Environment Ministers.
 - State Forest and Environment Ministers, the concerned State Secretaries as well as Chairmen of State PCBs / PCCs along with PCCFs also participated in the two-day National Conference of Ministers' of EF&CC.

Plant Treaty

The ninth session of the governing body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) has recently begun in New Delhi.

Plant Treaty: Theme

The theme of the meeting is 'Celebrating the Guardians of Crop Diversity: Towards an Inclusive Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework'.

What is the Plant Treaty?

- The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) was adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations November 3, 2001.
- It was signed in 2001 in Madrid, and entered into force on 29 June 2004.
- It is the first legally-binding international instrument to formally acknowledge the enormous contribution of indigenous people and small-holder farmers as traditional custodians of the world's food crops.
- It also calls on nations to protect and promote their rights to save and use the seeds they have taken care of for millennia.
- The parties to this treaty have come together after nearly three years to discuss governance of agricultural biodiversity and global food security.

Plant Treaty: Objectives

The treaty aims at:

1. Guaranteeing food security through the conservation
2. Exchange and sustainable use of the world's plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA)
3. Fair and equitable benefit sharing arising from its use, as well as
4. Recognition of farmers' rights.

Plant Treaty: Key feature: Annex 1 Crops

- The treaty has implemented a Multilateral System (MLS) of access and benefit sharing, among those

countries that ratify the treaty, for a list of 64 of some of the most important food and forage crops essential for food security and interdependence.

- The genera and species are listed in Annex 1 to the treaty. The treaty facilitates the continued open exchange of food crops and their genetic materials.
- The list of plant genetic material included in the Multilateral System of the Treaty is made of major food crops and forages.
- The Forages are also divided in legume forages and grass forages.
- They were selected taking into account the criteria of food security and country interdependence



Science and Technology

CAP based Integrated Alert System (SACHET)

C-DOT (Centre for Development of Telematics) and (NDMA) National Disaster Management Authority, Government of India are jointly conducting an All India Workshop centered on Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) based Integrated Alert System -सचेत.

- C-DOT is the premier R&D centre of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications, Government of India.

Aim of SACHET System

- SACHET System aims to provide a platform to the concerned departments and various disaster management agencies across India to discuss their underlying issues and challenges.
- It will help evolve the technology-based solutions to address issues and challenges in an effective manner.

CAP based Integrated Alert System (SACHET): Key Details

- **About:** Integrated Public Alert System-सचेत, is an early warning platform based on ITU's Common Alerting Protocol (CAP).
- **Development:** CAP based Integrated Alert System (SACHET) has been developed by C-DOT for effective disaster management.
- **Mandate:** The SACHET platform has been widely used by National and State Disaster Management authorities for dissemination of alerts, advisories and other useful information to the masses on all available media during emergencies like floods, cyclones and Covid pandemic.
- **Implementation:** The SACHET system is already operational in 34 States and UTs.
 - More than 75 Crores SMSes have already been sent by the SACHET system during various disasters like Cyclones (Asani, Yass, Nivar,

Amphan), Floods (Assam, Gujarat), Lightning (Bihar), etc.

- The SACHET system has also been used to facilitate the pilgrims during Amarnath Ji Yatra.

Importance of SACHET Platform

- CAP based Integrated Alert System (SACHET) provides a converged platform for dissemination of targeted alerts to people in vernacular languages through SMS.
- As a one-stop solution and a concrete step towards realizing Hon'ble Prime Minister's 10-point Agenda for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Soon messages will be disseminated over all available communication media including, Cell Broadcast, Radio, TV, Siren, Social Media, Web Portal and Mobile Application.

CoE – SURVEI

The Centre of Excellence on Satellite and Unmanned Remote Vehicle Initiative (CoE-SURVEI) has developed an Artificial Intelligence-based software which can automatically detect change on the ground, including unauthorized constructions and encroachments in a time series using satellite imagery.

CoE-SURVEI: Key Details

- The CoE-SURVEI, established by Directorate General Defence Estates at National Institute of Defense Estates Management, leverages the latest technologies in survey viz. satellite imagery, drone imagery and geo-spatial tools for effective land management and urban planning.
- This change detection software has been developed by CoE-SURVEI in collaboration with knowledge partner Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Visakhapatnam.
- Presently, the tool uses National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) Cartosat-3 imagery with trained software.

- The changes are detected by analyzing satellite imagery of different time periods.

Where is it used?

- The application has been used by CoE in 62 Cantonments and a comparison has been done with the ground position in a recent period.
- The software facilitates better control of unauthorized activities, ensures accountability of field staff and helps in reducing corrupt practices.
- The CoE-SURVEI has also developed tools for vacant land analysis and 3D image analysis of hill cantonments.

Centre of Excellence in Land Survey in National Institute

- The prime objective of the Centre of Excellence in Land Survey in the National Institute of Defense Estates Management (NIDEM) is to train Government officers in emerging survey technologies like drone (/topic/drone) surveys and satellite imagery (/topic/satellite imagery) based surveys.
- Nowadays real-time monitoring systems based on digital photogrammetric techniques, high-resolution satellite imagery, airborne and terrestrial laser scanner devices can give a set of powerful tools for geometric surveying and modelling. The Centre of Excellence is focused on such new techniques of the survey.
- All steps will be taken to bring the Centre of Excellence into the national arena to become a premier Training Centre for Survey in latest techniques.

CSIR- Jigyasa Program

Recently, a four-day "Jigyasa for Renewable Fuel" program under Jigyasa 2.0 program was successfully organized for the students of XIth class of Scindia Kanya Vidyalaya, Gwalior.

- The main objective of the "Jigyasa for Renewable Fuel" program is to give an exposure to different technologies developed for the utilization of non-edible vegetable oils, used cooking oil and waste plastic to different types of fuels.

CSIR- Jigyasa Program: Key Details

- **About: Jigyasa Program** is an initiative taken during the Platinum Jubilee year which came as an inspiration by Honorable Prime Minister Modi's vision of new India and 'Scientific Social Responsibility (SSR) for CSIR.
 - Jigyasa Program is also known as the CSIR-Jigyasa Program.
- **Objective:** The objective of Jigyasa is to extend the classroom learning by focusing on well-planned research laboratory based learning for school students.
- **Implementation:** CSIR implemented the Jigyasa Program in collaboration with Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) during the first phase (2017-20).
 - **In the Second Phase,** Jigyasa 2.0 (FY 2021 onwards) is extended to all state government schools along with virtual lab integration.
- **Performance:** Since 2017, nearly 981 Jigyasa programs were conducted by CSIR labs.
 - About 300,000 school students, 15,000 teachers participated in different engagement modules by visiting CSIR Laboratories in close proximity till 2019 the beginning of the pandemic.
 - Recently, CSIR adopted 249 ATL's (Atal Tinkering Lab's) by joining hands with AIM-Niti Ayaog.
- **Significance:** Jigyasa Program envisages opening up the national scientific facilities to school children, enabling CSIR scientific knowledgebase and facility to be utilized by schoolchildren.
 - Jigyasa programme would explain the culture of curiousness and scientific nature.
 - CSIR at national level is further widening and deepening its Scientific Social Responsibility (SSR) through Jigyasa programme.
- **Models of Engagement under CSIR- Jigyasa Program**
 - Student Residential Programmes
 - Scientists as Teachers and Teachers as Scientists
 - Lab specific activities / Onsite Experiments
 - Visits of Scientists to Schools/Outreach Programmes
 - Science and Maths Clubs
 - Popular Lecture Series/ demonstration programme at Schools

- Student Apprenticeship Programmes
- Science Exhibitions
- Projects of National Children's Science Congress
- Teacher Workshops
- Tinkering Laboratories

Highlights of the JIGYASA Programme

- 'JIGYASA' would inculcate the culture of inquisitiveness on one hand and scientific temper on the other, amongst the school students and their teachers.
- The program will also enable the students and teachers to practically live the theoretical concepts taught in science by visiting CSIR laboratories and by participating in projects.
- The Programme is expected to connect 1151 Kendriya Vidyalayas with 38 National Laboratories of CSIR targeting 100,000 students and nearly 1000 teachers annually.
- The focus is on connecting school students and scientists to extend student's classroom learning with a well-planned research laboratory based learning.
- It will also enable the students and teachers to practically live the theoretical concepts taught in science by visiting CSIR laboratories and by participating in mini-science projects.

Entangled Atomic Clocks

For the first time, scientists at the University of Oxford have been able to demonstrate a network of two entangled optical atomic clocks.

- The high-precision atomic clocks and quantum entanglement have been achieved altogether.
- This means the inherent uncertainty in measuring their frequencies simultaneously is highly reduced.

About Atomic Clocks

- An atomic clock is a clock that uses the resonance frequencies of atoms as its resonator.

- Cesium is incredibly accurate at timekeeping and is used in atomic clocks.

Entanglement

- Entanglement is a quantum phenomenon in which two or more particles become linked together so that they can no longer be described independently, even at vast distances.
- This is the key to reaching the fundamental limit of precision that's determined by quantum theory.
- Previous experiments have demonstrated that entanglement between two atomic clocks in the same system can be used to improve the quality of measurements.
- This is the first-time researchers have been able to achieve this between clocks in two separate remotely entangled systems.

Use clocks to navigate in space

- To determine a spacecraft's distance from Earth, navigators send a signal to the spacecraft, which then returns it to Earth.
- The time the signal requires to make that two-way journey reveals the spacecraft's distance from Earth, because the signal travels at a known speed (the speed of light).
- While it may sound complicated, most of us use this concept every day. The grocery store might be a 30-minute walk from your house.
- If you know you can walk about a mile in 20 minutes, then you can calculate the distance to the store.
- By sending multiple signals and taking many measurements over time, navigators can calculate a spacecraft's trajectory: where it is and where it's headed.

Need of atomic clocks

- To know the spacecraft's position within a meter, navigators' need clocks with precision time resolution – clocks that can measure billionths of a second.
- Navigators also need clocks that are extremely stable.
- Stability refers to how consistently a clock measures a unit of time; its measurement of the length of a second, for example, needs to be the same (to better than a billionth of a second) over days and weeks.

What is an oscillator in a clock?

- Most modern clocks, from wristwatches to those used on satellites, keep time using a quartz crystal oscillator.
- These devices take advantage of the fact that quartz crystals vibrate at a precise frequency when voltage is applied to them.
- The vibrations of the crystal act like the pendulum of a grandfather clock, ticking off how much time has passed.

Role of atoms in the clocks

- By space navigation standards, quartz crystal clocks aren't very stable.
- After only an hour, even the best-performing quartz oscillators can be off by a nanosecond (one billionth of a second).
- After six weeks, they may be off by a full millisecond (one thousandth of a second), or a distance error of 185 miles (300 kilometers).
- That would have a huge impact on measuring the position of a fast-moving spacecraft.
- Atomic clocks combine a quartz crystal oscillator with an ensemble of atoms to achieve greater stability.

Exercise "Synergy"

Recently, CERT-In under Ministry of Electronics & IT in collaboration with Cyber Security Agency of Singapore (CSA) successfully designed & conducted the Cyber Security Exercise "Synergy".

Exercise "Synergy": Key Details

- **About:** Exercise "Synergy" is a cyber-security exercise that is being conducted as part of the International Counter Ransomware Initiative-Resilience Working Group.
 - Synergy" cyber security exercise is being led by India under the leadership of National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS).
- **Participants:** Cyber Security Exercise "Synergy" is being held for 13 Countries as part of the International Counter Ransomware Initiative-Resilience Working Group.

- Each State participated as a National Crisis Management Team having composition from different government agencies including National CERTs/CSIRTs, Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA), Communication & IT/ICT Ministry and Security agencies.
- **Theme:** The theme of the exercise "Synergy" was "Building Network Resiliency to counter Ransomware Attacks".
- **Organizing Body:** Exercise "Synergy" was hosted by CERT-In on its exercise simulation platform.
- **Key Objective:** The specific objective of the Synergy exercise was to Assess, Share and Improve strategies and practices among Member-States to build network resiliency against ransomware & cyber extortion attacks.
- **Achievements:** Exercise "Synergy" was successful in meeting its objectives and provided insights for better coordination & cooperation among CRI Member States to build network resiliency and counter ransomware attacks.

Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In)

- **About:** Established in 2004, CERT-In is the national nodal agency for responding to computer security incidents as and when they occur.
 - The constituency of CERT-In is the Indian Cyber Community.
 - **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Parent Ministry:** works as a functional organization of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- **Key functions:** as provided by Information Technology (Amendment) Act 2008. It designated CERT-In to serve as the national agency to perform the following functions in the area of cybersecurity:
 - Collection, analysis, and dissemination of information on cyber incidents.
 - Forecast and alerts of cybersecurity incidents
 - Emergency measures for handling cybersecurity incidents
 - Coordination of cyber incident response activities.
 - Issue guidelines, advisories, vulnerability notes, and whitepapers relating to information security practices, procedures, prevention, response, and reporting of cyber incidents.
 - Such other functions relating to cybersecurity as may be prescribed.

India's first Dark Sky Reserve

In a first-of-its-kind initiative, the Department of Science & Technology (DST) has announced the setting up of India's first dark sky reserve at Hanle in Ladakh in the next three months.

About Dark Sky Reserve

- A dark-sky reserve is an area, usually surrounding a park or observatory that is kept free of artificial light pollution.
- The purpose of a dark sky preserve is generally to promote astronomy.
- Because different national organizations have worked independently to create their programs, different terms have been used to describe the areas.

How is it designated?

- A dark sky reserve is a designation given to a place that has policies in place to ensure that a tract of land or region has minimal artificial light interference.
- The International Dark Sky Association is a US-based non-profit that designates sites as international dark sky places, parks, sanctuaries and reserves, depending on the criteria they meet.
- Several such reserves exist around the world but none so far in India.

Dark Sky Reserve at Hanle

- Hanle, which is about 4,500 metres above sea level, hosts telescopes and is regarded as one of the world's most optimal sites for astronomical observations.
- However, ensuring that the site remains well-suited for astronomy implies keeping the night sky pristine, or ensuring minimal interference to the telescopes from artificial light sources such as electric lights and vehicular lights from the ground.
- The site will have activities to help in boosting local tourism and economy through interventions of science and technology.

Government Steps to Promote development of Ladakh

- Ladakh has a very rich and wide variety of animals for leather research and industry and to promote the bio-economy of animal skin-derived products.

- Recently, CSIR also organized 4 training workshops, two each at Leh and Kargil for the treatment of diseases of famous Pashmina Goats.
 - Charthang in Ladakh has over 4 lakh animals mainly pashmina goats, besides Sheep and Yak.
- Next year, Department of Science and Technology will establish a distinct and huge pavilion for Ladakh Education Fair, which will be an annual feature.
 - DST will actively participate in correct subject choice, scholarships, career guidance, skills development and apprenticeship with prime focus of employability of youth.
- CSIR is also promoting "Leh Berry" which is an exclusive food product of the cold desert and also a means of wide-ranging entrepreneurship as well as self-livelihood.
 - Recently, Ladakh Administration took a decision to start the commercial plantation of "Leh Berry", which is gaining popularity in the entire region.

Conditions in India

- The Indian Astronomical Observatory, the high-altitude station of the IIA, is situated to the north of Western Himalayas, at an altitude of 4,500 metres above mean sea level.
- Located atop Mt. Saraswati in the Nilamkhul Plain in the Hanle Valley of Changthang, it is a dry, cold desert with sparse human population.
- The cloudless skies and low atmospheric water vapour make it one of the best sites in the world for optical, infrared, sub-millimetre, and millimetre wavelengths.

Inflatable Aerodynamic Decelerator (IAD)

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has successfully tested a technology that could aid the cost-effective recovery of spent rocket stages and safely land payloads on other planets.

What is IAD?

- IAD is a technique used for an atmospheric entry payload.

- An inflatable envelope and an inflatant (anything that inflates the envelope, like air or helium) make up the inflatable aerodynamic decelerator.
- While entering the atmosphere, it inflates like a balloon and decelerates the lander.
- The inflatant is designed to fill the inflatable envelope to a condition such that it surrounds the payload meant to enter the atmosphere of a planet or satellite and causes aerodynamic forces to slow it down.
- In simpler words, IAD is designed to increase drag upon entering the atmosphere of any planetary body, like Earth, Mars, or even Moon.
- Its shape is maintained by a closed, gas-pressured body and the inflatant gas is also generated internally. Some versions also use ram air or both.

How significant is this IAD?

- Some space agencies, including NASA, have already successfully tested advanced versions of the technology, including the supersonic and hypersonic variants.
- However, for near future missions of ISRO, the current version that it tested is perfect.
- Its use was first proposed by NASA more than 50 years ago for planetary entries.

Minuscule of ISRO's IAD

- The IAD tested by ISRO was inflated at an altitude of around 84 km and the sounding rocket's cargo dropped through the atmosphere on it.
- It is fitted with a booster motor. It also has a spin rocket that is ejectable.
- The inflatable structure is made out of Kevlar fabric, which is a very strong synthetic fiber and also heat resistant to withstand atmospheric pressure and temperature changes.
- On top of it, it's coated with polychloroprene, an oil and wax resistant rubber, to withstand extreme temperatures.
- In the inflation system, it uses compressed nitrogen stored in a bottle.
- It has consistently decreased the payload's velocity through aerodynamic drag while

maintaining the expected trajectory during the test flight.

Where does ISRO intend to use it?

- The IAD will help ISRO in performing many space tasks effectively including recovery of spent stages of rockets, for landing payloads on missions to other planetary bodies.
- This is the first instance where an IAD has been specially created for spent stage recovery.
- So inter-planetary missions are certainly one aspect that ISRO wishes to explore.

KRITAGYA Hackathon

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) with its National Agricultural Higher Education Project and Crop Science Division is organizing Hackathon 3.0 "KRITAGYA" on promoting 'speed breeding for crop improvement'.

KRITAGYA 3.0 Hackathon 2022: Key Details

- **About:** KRITAGYA 3.0 Hackathon is an initiative to promote use of technology in development and promotion of agriculture.
 - KRI-TA-GYA explains, KRI for Krishi (Agriculture), TA for Taknik (Technology) and GYA for Gyan (Knowledge).
- **Objective:** KRITAGYA Hackathon will provide an opportunity to students / faculties / entrepreneurs / innovators and others to showcase innovative approaches and technology solutions to promote innovation for crop improvement.
 - KRITAGYA Hackathon also takes forward the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi through National Education Policy-2020.
- **Organizing Body:** KRITAGYA Hackathon is organized by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
- **Importance:** KRITAGYA Hackathon will give impetus to the desired rapid results in the crop sector with the ability to learn, innovation and solutions, employability and entrepreneurship.
 - It will also encourage greater adoption of technology enabled solutions in the country.

- This event is also extending the support to winners for further development in their concept propositions, its scalability and future plan in collaboration with Agri Business Incubators, MSMEs and other investors through support of ICAR.
- **Participation:** In the KRITAGYA 3.0 Hackathon, students, faculty and innovators/entrepreneurs from any university/technical institute across the country can apply and participate in the program as a group.
 - The participating group shall consist of maximum 4 participants, with not more than one faculty and / or more than one innovator or entrepreneur.
 - Participating students can collaborate with local start-ups, students from technology institutes and can win up-to INR 5 Lakhs.

Previous KRITAGYA Hackathons

- During 2020-21 and 2021-22 NAHEP in association with Agricultural Engineering and Animal Science Divisions of ICAR organized Hackathon 1.0 and 2.0 to promote the innovation in Farm Mechanization and in Animal Science, respectively.
- The events witnessed immense participation across the country where more than 784 teams i.e., 3,000 participants actively participated in hackathon 1.0 and more than 269 teams participated in hackathon 2.0.
- At national level, 4 teams were awarded by Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shri Tomar with a cash prize of Rs. 9 lakhs.

About National Education Policy
● It is the third education policy of our country. The earlier two was launched in 1968 and 1986 .
○ This national policy came after a gap of 34 years.
● It is based on the recommendations of Kasturirangan committee .
● It renames the Ministry of Human Resource Development to Ministry of Education .
● It proposes a 5+3+3+4 curricular and pedagogical structure.

Stages	Years	Class	Features
Foundational	3-8	3 years of pre-primary and 1-2	Flexible, multi-level, activity-based learning
Preparatory	9-11	3-5	Light textbooks, more formal but interactive classroom learning
Middle	12-14	6-8	Introduction of subject teachers for learning of more abstract concepts, experimental learning
Secondary	15-18	9-12	Reading in-depth, critical thinking, greater attention to life aspirations

National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM)

The latest National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) released by the Union health ministry added 34 new medicines and dropped 26 old ones from the previous list.

National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM): Definition

- As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), Essential Medicines are those that satisfy the priority health care needs of the population.
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare hence prepared and released the first National List of Essential Medicines of India in 1996 consisting of 279 medicines.
- The list is made with consideration to disease prevalence, efficacy, safety and comparative cost-effectiveness of the medicines.
- Such medicines are intended to be available in adequate amounts, in appropriate dosage forms and strengths with assured quality.

- They should be available in such a way that an individual or community can afford.

National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) in India

- Drugs listed under NLEM – also known as scheduled drugs – will be cheaper because the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) caps medicine prices and changes only based on wholesale price index-based inflation.
- The list includes anti-infective medicines to treat diabetes such as insulin – HIV, tuberculosis, cancer, contraceptives, hormonal medicines and anaesthetics.
- They account for 17-18 per cent of the estimated Rs 1.6-trillion domestic pharmaceutical market.
- Companies selling non-scheduled drugs can hike prices by up to 10 per cent every year.
- Typically, once NLEM is released, the department of pharmaceuticals under the ministry of chemicals and fertilisers adds them in the Drug Price Control Order, after which NPPA fixes the price.

National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM): Significance

- Drawing an Essential Medicines List (EML) is expected to result in better quality of medical care, better management of medicines and cost-effective use of health care resources.
- This is especially important for a resource limited country like India.
- The list of essential medicines is intended to have a positive impact on the availability and rational use of medicines.

NavIC

The Union government is pushing tech giants to make smartphones compatible with its home-grown navigation system 'NavIC'.

What is NavIC?

- NavIC, or Navigation with Indian Constellation, is an independent stand-alone navigation

satellite system developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

- NavIC was originally approved in 2006 at a cost of \$174 million.
- It was expected to be completed by late 2011, but only became operational in 2018.
- NavIC consists of eight satellites and covers the whole of India's landmass and up to 1,500 km (930 miles) from its boundaries.

Fact: The numbers of satellites in this constellation is disputed. It is given as 7 and 8 on different sources. Total Nine satellites were launched out of which the very first (IRNSS-1A) is partially failed because of some issue in its Atomic Clock. Another and the last satellite had a launch failure. Hence the number 7/8.

Why is the Centre pushing for NavIC?

- Currently, NavIC's use is limited.
- It is being used in public vehicle tracking in India.
- It helps providing emergency warning alerts to fishermen venturing into the deep sea where there is no terrestrial network connectivity, and for tracking and providing information related to natural disasters.
- Enabling it in smartphones is the next step India is pushing for.
- India's 2021 satellite navigation draft policy stated the government will work towards expanding the coverage from regional to global to ensure availability of NavIC signal in any part of the world.

NavIC: Comparison

- The main difference is the serviceable area covered by these systems.
- GPS caters to users across the globe and its satellites circle the earth twice a day, while NavIC is currently for use in India and adjacent areas.
- Like GPS, there are three more navigation systems that have global coverage – Galileo from the European Union, Russia-owned GLONASS and China's Beidou.
- QZSS, operated by Japan, is another regional navigation system covering Asia-Oceania region, with a focus on Japan.

Strategic significance of NavIC

- India says NavIC is conceived with the aim of removing dependence on foreign satellite systems

for navigation service requirements, particularly for “strategic sectors.”

- Relying on systems like GPS and GLONASS may not always be reliable, India says, as those are operated by the defence agencies of respective nations.
- It is possible that civilian services can be degraded or denied.
- NavIC is an indigenous positioning system that is under Indian control.
- There is no risk of the service being withdrawn or denied in a given situation.

One Herb, One Standard

- Recently, Ministry of Ayush has taken a significant step for Inter-Ministerial cooperation for promotion and facilitation of “One Herb, One Standard”.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy (Ministry of Ayush) and Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare).

One Herb, One Standard- MoU between PCIM&H and IPC

- **Key Objectives:** The primary objective of this MoU is the development of cooperative efforts between PCIM&H and IPC to promote public health by facilitating the development of harmonized Herbal drug standards.
 - Since both PCIM&H and IPC are working with the common cause, it is logical and meaningful to harmonize the standards to achieve “One Herb – One Standard”.
- **Significance:** This MoU will further facilitate collaboration for promoting exchange of information in the area of standardization of Traditional medicine by sharing of scientific information and drug raw materials/extracts, seminars, workshops, training and brainstorming programs.
 - The harmonization of standards will fulfill the objective of “One Herb, One Standard and One

Nation” and improve ease of doing business in India and also improve overall trade of Indian botanicals.

- It will prove a significant step towards Atmanirbhar Bharat as promoted by Prime Minister of India.
- MoU will enable publication of monographs, which will be beneficial to everyone.
- A joint committee will be constituted for the selection of medicinal plants and their constituent marker/s for carrying out other related technical work.
- MoU is going to provide an opportunity to all stakeholders like manufacturers, researchers and regulators in herbal medicine to get world class monographs to be used in their respective areas.

Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H)

- **About:** The Commission was initially established as Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine (PCIM) in 2010 and was registered under Societies Registration Act, 1860 later in the same year.

- **Parent Ministry:** Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H) functions as a sub-ordinate office under Ministry of AYUSH.

- **Formation of PCIM&H:** It is created by merging Pharmacopoeia Commission of Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H) and the two central laboratories namely-

- Pharmacopoeia Laboratory for Indian Medicine (PLIM), Ghaziabad and

- Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia Laboratory (HPL)

- **Key Functions:**

- The Commission is engaged in development of Pharmacopoeial Standards for Ayurvedic, Unani, Siddha & Homoeopathic drugs.

- PCIM&H is also acting as Central Drug Testing cum Appellate Laboratory for Indian systems of Medicine & Homoeopathy.

Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine- Key Objectives

- **Quality standards**

- To develop Pharmacopoeias for drugs/formulations of 'Indian Medicine' and 'Homoeopathy'
- To develop Formularies of 'Indian Medicine'
- To revise/update/amend the published Pharmacopoeias and Formularies as may be deemed necessary
- To publish compendia supplementary to Pharmacopoeias/Formularies of 'Indian Medicine' and 'Homoeopathy' and other related scientific/regulatory information pertaining to functional area of PCIM&H

- **Apex Laboratory**

- To act as Central Drug Testing cum Appellate Laboratory for 'Indian Medicine' and 'Homoeopathy'
- To impart Capacity Building Training to Drug Regulatory Authorities and personnel engaged

in Quality Control pertaining to 'Indian Medicine' and 'Homoeopathy'

- To nurture and promote awareness on Quality assurance of drugs/formulations of 'Indian Medicine' and 'Homoeopathy' and drug research

- **Repositories of authentic reference materials**

- To maintain an authentic Reference Raw Materials (RRM) Repository of raw materials used in 'Indian Medicine' and 'Homoeopathy'
- To maintain an authentic Reference Chemical Markers (RCM) Repository of chemical moieties with established therapeutic significance for drugs/formulations of 'Indian Medicine' and 'Homoeopathy'

- **Miscellaneous**

- To exercise any activity so as to propagate/promote/improve implementation/ enforcement of provisions of Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules thereunder as well as other laws/schemes/programmes of 'Government', relevant to functional area of PCIM&H.

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Defence & Security

Armed Forces Special Power Act

While AFSPA is repealed in 28 districts in Assam, 7 districts in Nagaland and 6 in Manipur, NSF president Kegwayhun Tep said that it should be repealed in all Northeastern states.

About Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958

- Armed Forces Special Powers Act, to put it simply, gives armed forces the power to maintain public order in “disturbed areas.”
- AFSPA gives armed forces the authority uses force or even open fire after giving due warning if they feel a person is in contravention of the law.
- The Act further provides that if “reasonable suspicion exists,” the armed forces can also arrest a person without warrant; enter or search premises without a warrant; and ban the possession of firearms.

AFSPA's Background

- The AFSPA, 1958 came into force in the context of insurgency in the North-eastern States decades ago.
- It provides “special power” to the Armed Forces applies to the Army, the Air Force and the Central Paramilitary forces etc.
- It has been long contested debate whether the “special powers” granted under AFSPA gives total immunity to the armed forces for any action taken by them.

What are the Special Powers?

- Power to use force: including opening fire, even to the extent of causing death if prohibitory orders banning assembly of five or more persons or carrying arms and weapons, etc. are in force in the disturbed area;
- Power to destroy structures: used as hide-outs, training camps, or as a place from which attacks are or likely to be launched, etc.
- Power to arrest: without warrant and to use force for the purpose;
- Power to enter and search premises: without a warrant to make arrest or recovery of hostages, arms and ammunition and stolen property etc.

Who can declare/notify such areas?

The Central Government or the Governor of the State or administrator of the Union Territory can declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area.

Issues with AFSPA

- Power to kill: Section 4 of the Act granted officers the authority to “take any action” even to the extent to cause the death.
- Sexual Misconduct by Armed Forces: The issue of violation of human rights by actions of armed forces came under the consideration of the Committee on Amendments to Criminal Law (popularly known as Justice Verma Committee) set up in 2012. It observed that- in conflict zones, legal protection for women was neglected.
- Autocracy: The reality is that there is no evidence of any action being taken against any officer of the armed forces or paramilitary forces for their excesses.

Recommendations to repeal AFSPA

- Justice B.P. Jeevan Reddy Commission: The 2004 Committee headed by Justice B.P. Jeevan Reddy, the content of which has never officially been revealed by the Government, recommended that AFSPA be repealed.
- ARC II: The Administrative Reforms Commission in its 5th Report on ‘Public Order’ had also recommended that AFSPA be repealed.

Why AFSPA should be repealed?

- Human right violations: The repeal of AFSPA is necessary not just for restoring constitutional sanity, but also as a way of acknowledging dark history of our conduct in Nagaland.
- Need for ensuring individual dignity: The political incorporation of Nagaland (and all other areas where this law applies) will be set back if the guarantees of individual dignity of the Indian Constitution are not extended.
- Not state of exception: We often describe AFSPA in terms of a “state of exception”. But this theoretical term is misleading. How can a law that has been in virtually continuous existence since 1958 be described as an “exception”.

- Lack of human empathy: At the heart of AFSPA is a profound mutilation of human empathy.

Conclusion

- To bring in lasting peace in the North East, the government needs to avoid the trap of watered-down peace accords. While the move to withdraw AFSPA is welcome, it needs to be gradually erased. For that, changes in the ground situation would be crucial. Mere smoke signals or drum-beating can never do the job.

DefExpo 2022

Recently, Defence Secretary comprehensively reviewed the preparations of the forthcoming DefExpo 2022 during the Apex Committee meeting at New Delhi.

DefExpo 2022: Key Details

- **About:** 12th edition of DefExpo 2022 is being held in a first ever four-venue format which promises to engage the public and inspire them to join the Aerospace and Defence manufacturing sector; for 'Aatmanirbharta' in Defence.
- **Venue:** DefExpo 2022 is scheduled to be held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat between October 18-22, 2022.
 - The DefExpo 2022 was earlier scheduled from March 10-14, 2022 and was postponed due to logistical challenges being faced by participants at that stage.
- **Key Objective:** The aim of 12th DefExpo is to showcase the might of the domestic defence industry which is now powering 'Make in India, Make for the World' resolve of the Government and the nation at large.
- **Theme:** The theme of DefExpo 2022 is 'Path to Pride'.
 - It is in semblance with PM's vision to transform India into a strong and self-reliant nation by supporting, showcasing and forging partnerships for the Indian Aerospace and Defence manufacturing sectors with Indian as well as global customers.
- **Unique Features:** 12th edition of DefExpo 2022 is the first-ever edition exclusively for Indian companies.

- For DefExpo 2022, Indian companies, Indian subsidiaries of Foreign OEMs, Division of company registered in India, Exhibitor having Joint Venture with an Indian company will be considered as Indian participants.

Key Events Planned at DefExpo 2022

- **India Pavilion:** It will showcase the maturity of indigenous defence products, start-ups, latest technology, including Artificial Intelligence in defence, and will present India's vision for 2047. It has been named 'Path to Pride'.
 - **Indian Pavilion** is a marquee pavilion of Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence.
- DefExpo 2022 will also mark the celebration of one year of the formation of the seven new defence companies, carved out of the erstwhile Ordnance Factories.
 - All these companies will be participating for the first time at DefExpo.
- **India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD):** The DefExpo 2022 exhibition will also host the 2nd edition of the India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD), with invites extended to 53 African countries.
- A separate Indian Ocean Region plus (IOR+) conclave with participation of approximately 40 countries is also on the anvil.
- Intensive interactions and ideation at seminars, planned at the DefExpo 2022 with eminent panellists from Government, Industry, Industry associations, States, Academia, Think-tanks etc.
 - This will also provide important learnings/take-aways/action points for further growth of this sector.

Kakadu Exercise

INS Satpura and a P8 I Maritime Patrol Aircraft of the Indian Navy reached Darwin in Australia on for participation in the multinational Exercise Kakadu – 2022, hosted by the Royal Australian Navy.

Exercise KAKADU: Key Details

- Exercise KAKADU, which started in 1993, is the premier multilateral regional maritime engagement exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and supported by the Australian Air Force.
- The exercise is held biennially in Darwin and the Northern Australian Exercise Areas (NAXA).
- It derives its name from Kakadu National Park, which is a protected area in the northern territory of Australia, 171 km south-east of Darwin
- During the exercise, professional exchanges in harbour and diverse range of activities at sea, including complex surface, sub-surface and air

operations would enable sharing of best practices and honing of operational skills.

Kakadu Exercise: India's presence at the exercise

- Indian Navy's participation in KAKADU provides an excellent opportunity to engage with regional partners and undertake multinational maritime activities ranging from constabulary operations to high-end maritime warfare in a combined environment
- It is aimed at enhancing interoperability and developing of common understanding of procedures for maritime operations gaining importance with the Indo-Pacific narrative.



History and Culture

Arattupuzha Velayudha Panicker

A recently-released Malayalam film Pathonpatham Noottandu ('Nineteenth Century') is based on the life of Arattupuzha Velayudha Panicker, a social reformer from the Ezhava community in Kerala who lived in the 19th century.

About Arattupuzha Velayudha Panicker

- Born into a well-off family of merchants in Kerala's Alappuzha district, Panicker was one of the most influential figures in the reformation movement in the state.
- He challenged the domination of upper castes or 'Savarnas' and brought about changes in the lives of both men and women.
- The social reform movement in Kerala in the 19th century led to the large-scale subversion of the existing caste hierarchy and social order in the state.
- Panicker was murdered by a group of upper-caste men in 1874 at the age of 49. This makes him the 'first martyr' of the Kerala renaissance.

Panicker's role in initiating social reforms

- Panicker is credited with building two temples dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva, in which members of all castes and religions were allowed entry.
- One was built in his own village Arattupuzha in 1852, and one in Thanneermukkom in 1854, another village in the Alappuzha district.
- Some of his most significant contributions were in protesting for the rights of women belonging to Kerala's backward communities.
- In 1858, he led the Achippudava Samaram strike at Kayamkulam in Alappuzha.
- This strike aimed to earn women belonging to oppressed groups the right to wear a lower garment that extended beyond the knees.
- In 1859, this was extended into the Ethappu Samaram, the struggle for the right to wear an upper body cloth by women belonging to backward castes.

- In 1860, he led the Mukkuthi Samaram at Pandalam in the Pathanamthitta district, for the rights of lower-caste women to wear 'mukkuthi' or nose-ring, and other gold ornaments.
- These struggles played an important role in challenging the social order and in raising the dignity of women belonging to the lower strata of society in public life.

Other social work

- Apart from issues related to women, Panicker also led the first-ever strike by agricultural labourers in Kerala, the Karshaka Thozhilali Samaram, which was successful.
- He also established the first Kathakali Yogam for the Ezhava community in 1861, which led to a Kathakali performance by Ezhavas and other backward communities, another first for them.

Dara Shikoh

The Vice President has released the Arabic Version of "Majma Ul-Bahrain" of Mughal Prince Dara Shikoh.

Who was Dara Shikoh?

- Dara Shikoh, who was Mughal emperor Shah Jahan's son and expected heir, was killed on the orders of his brother Aurangzeb in 1659 after losing the war of succession.
- He was the eldest son and heir-apparent of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan.
- Dara was designated with the title Padshahzada-i-Buzurg Martaba (Prince of High Rank) and was favored as a successor by his father and his older sister, Princess Jahanara Begum.
- In the war of succession which ensued after Shah Jahan's illness in 1657, Dara was defeated by his younger brother Prince Muhiuddin (Aurangzeb).
- He was executed in 1659 on Aurangzeb's orders in a bitter struggle for the imperial throne.

Legacy of Dara Shikoh

- Dara was a liberal-minded unorthodox Muslim as opposed to the orthodox Aurangzeb.
- He authored the work Majma Ul-Bahrain (The Confluence of the Two Seas), which argues for the harmony of Sufi philosophy in Islam and Vedanta philosophy in Hinduism.
- It was Dara Shikoh who was responsible for making the Upanishads available to the West as he had them translated.
- He had commissioned a translation of Yoga Vasistha.
- A great patron of the arts, he was also more inclined towards philosophy and mysticism rather than military pursuits.
- He translated the Upanishads and other important works from Sanskrit to Persian. He was convinced that the Upanishads are what the Qur'an calls 'Al-Kitab Al-Maknoun' (The Hidden book).

Erode Venkatappa Ramasamy

Periyar E.V. Ramasamy's birth anniversary (September 17) is celebrated as Social Justice Day.

Who is Periyar?

- Erode Venkatappa Ramasamy, revered as Periyar or Thanthai Periyar, was an Indian social activist and politician who started the Self-Respect Movement and Dravidar Kazhagam.
- He is known as the 'Father of the Dravidian movement'.
- He rebelled against Brahminical dominance and gender and caste inequality in Tamil Nadu.

Self-respect movement

- The self-respect movement was founded by V.Ramaswamy Naicker, commonly known as Periyar.
- It was a dynamic social movement aimed at destroying the contemporary Hindu social order in its totality and creating a new, rational society without caste, religion and God.

Periyar: The Vaikom Hero

- V. Ramasamy Periyar led the famous Vaikom Satyagraha in 1924, where the people of down trodden community were prohibited to enter into the temple.
- Finally, the Travancore government relaxed such segregation and allowed the people to enter into the temple.
- Periyar was given the title of 'Vaikom Hero'.
- The Satyagraha began with the active support of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee.
- Within a week all its leaders were behind bars. George Joseph sought directions from Gandhi and C. Rajagopalachari. He also wrote to Periyar pleading with him to lead the satyagraha.
- Periyar was in the midst of political work as he was then the president of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, Periyar handed over temporary charge to Rajaji before reaching Vaikom in 1924.
- From that date to the day of the victory celebrations in 1925, he was in the struggle giving it leadership at a critical juncture.

Periyar's role

- Periyar presided over the satyagraha in the face of violence and indignity inflicted by the orthodox and the repression of the police.
- To mobilise support, he visited villages in and around Vaikom and delivered public speeches in several towns.
- When the Kerala leaders asked for Gandhi's permission to make the satyagraha an all-India affair, Gandhi refused saying that volunteers from Tamil Nadu would keep it alive.
- The British Resident said in his report to the government of Madras: "In fact, the movement would have collapsed long ago but for the support it has received from outside Travancore..."
- Historian T.K. Ravindran observes that Periyar's arrival gave "a new life to the movement".

His Vision for the future

- When he presented his thoughts, there was nuance, honesty, and an explicitness, which prompted even people practising different faiths

to discuss and debate his ideas on rationality and religion.

- Periyar himself said, "Everyone has the right to refute any opinion. But no one has the right to prevent its expression."
- Periyar is often referred to as an iconoclast, for the rebellious nature of his ideas and the vigour with which he acted.
- His vision for the future was a part of all his actions and did not merely aim at the eradication of social evils; he also wanted to put an end to activities that do not collectively raise standards of society.

Foundation of rationalism

- Periyar's vision was about inclusive growth and freedom of individuals. He was an important ideologue of his day because of the clarity in his political stand. More importantly, he understood the evolution of political thought and was able to glide through time with this.
- He said, "Wisdom lies in thinking. The spearhead of thinking is rationalism." Periyar was way ahead of his time. He further said "Whomsoever I love and hate, my principle is the same. That is, the educated, the rich and the administrators should not suck the blood of the poor."
- There have been several social reformers in Tamil Nadu who shared their revolutionary thoughts with the people in the past century. In that spectrum, Periyar occupies a unique place because he made interactions of multiple worlds possible.

Periyar said, "Any opposition not based on rationalism or science or experience, will one day or other, reveal the fraud, selfishness, lies, and conspiracies."

Conclusion

- His works against the Brahminical dominance, oppression of women in Tamil Nadu, caste prevalence is exemplary.
- Periyar promoted the principles of rationalism, self-respect, women's rights and eradication of caste.
- He opposed the exploitation and marginalization of the people of South India and the imposition of what he considered Indo-Aryan India.

Mohenjo Daro

Heavy floods in Pakistan have pushed the archeological site of Mohenjo Daro – near the bank of the Indus River – to the "brink of extinction".

- Mohenjo Daro might be removed from the world heritage list, if urgent attention towards its conservation and restoration is not given.

About Mohenjo Daro

- Mohenjo Daro is a 5000-year-old archaeological site located about 80-km off the city of Sukkur.
- It comprises the remnants of one of two main centers of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization, the other one being Harappa, located 640 km to the northwest, in Punjab province.
- Mohenjo Daro, which means 'mound of the dead', was one of the oldest cities of the world and is better known for planned city of the ancient civilization.
- The sheer size of the city, and its provision of public buildings and facilities, suggests a high level of social organization.
- Though in ruins, the walls and brick pavements in the streets are still in a preserved condition.

Discovery

- The ruins of the city remained undocumented for around 3,700 years, until 1920, when archaeologist RD Banerji visited the site.
- Its excavation started in 1921 and continued in phases till 1964-65.
- The site went to Pakistan during Partition.

Other Indus Valley sites

- The Indus Valley Civilisation spanned much of what is now Pakistan and the northern states of India (Gujarat, Haryana and Rajasthan), even extending towards the Iranian border.
- Its major urban centres included Harappa and Mohenjo Daro in Pakistan, and Lothal, Kalibangan, Dholavira and Rakhigarhi in India.

- Mohenjo Daro is considered the most advanced city of its time, with sophisticated civil engineering and urban planning.
- When the Indus Valley Civilisation went into sudden decline around 19th century BC, Mohenjo Daro was abandoned.

Present Situation

- According to media reports, many streets and sewerage drains of the historical ruins have been badly damaged due to the floods.
- However, the work of removing the sediments deposited due the flooding is still underway.
- But if this kind of flooding happens again, the heritage site may once again get buried under the ground, archaeologists say.
- It is expected that UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres will visit the site during his visit to Pakistan on September 11.
- The visit might provide some clarity on if the site has lost some of its attributes that are necessary for it to retain its prestigious world heritage tag.

Losing world heritage tag

- There are around 1,100 UNESCO listed sites across its 167 member countries.
- Last year, the World Heritage Committee decided to delete the property 'Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City' (UK) from the World Heritage List.
- This was due to the irreversible loss of attributes conveying the outstanding universal value of the property.
- Liverpool was added to the World Heritage List in 2004 in recognition of its role as one of the world's major trading centres in the 18th and 19th centuries – and its pioneering dock technology, transport systems and port management.
- Before that, the first venue to be delisted by the UNESCO panel was the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary in Oman, in 2007, after concerns over poaching and habitat degradation.
- Another site to be removed from the World Heritage list in 2009 was Elbe Valley in Dresden, Germany, after the construction of the

Waldschloesschen road bridge across the Elbe River.

Ramakrishna Mission's 'Awakening' Program

Recently, Union Minister for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Shri Dharmendra Pradhan launched Ramakrishna Mission's 'Awakening' Programme for students of classes I to V.

- He said that the NEP 2020 is deeply inspired by the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and we must lay emphasis on creating such value-based educational programmes for 9th to 12th in addition to creating programmes for classes I to VIII.
- The Minister called upon CBSE to institute an advisory framework for encouraging value-based education in all schools from Balvatika to Class XII for creating a talent pool ready for the challenges of life and committed to national progress and global welfare.

Background of Ramakrishna Mission's Awakening Program

- Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi branch, from 2014 onwards, has been successfully conducting the Awakened Citizen Program (ACP) for middle school students.
- About 6,000 Schools (KVs, JNVs, Government and private schools) involving 55,000 teachers and 12lacs students have benefitted under ACP.
- A program called 'Awakening' which is closely aligned to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has been designed and piloted across 126 schools.
- During the covid pandemic, this pilot program gave great solace to struggling teachers, parents and students, as indicated in the encouraging feedback received from participants.
 - After successfully piloting, the program "Awakening" was launched nationwide by the government.

Ramakrishna Mission's 'Awakening' Program

- **About:** This 'Awakening' programme is an initiative towards ensuring overall personality development of a child in line with the philosophy of National Education Policy (NEP), 2020.
- **Mandate:** Ramakrishna Mission's 'Awakening' Program aims to enable children to build "ATMASHRADDHA" (Self-esteem) and make responsible choices.
 - Ramakrishna Mission's 'Awakening' Program helps them to find solutions for all problems of life.
- **Significance:** Ramakrishna Mission's 'Awakening' initiative is a step towards ensuring holistic personality development of a child aligned with the philosophy of NEP 2020.

Ramakrishna Mission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning: Swami Vivekananda established the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Through Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Vivekanand aimed to bring the noblest ideas to the doorstep of even the poorest and the meanest.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Role: Ramakrishna Mission works in the area of value-based education, culture, health, women's empowerment, youth and tribal welfare and relief and rehabilitation.

Rang Swadheenta

Recently, Sangeet Natak Akademi celebrated Rang Swadheenta to mark the celebration of 75 years of India's Independence.

Rang Swadheenta: Key Details

- **About:** Rang Swadheenta is a festival to cherish the memories of freedom fighters who laid down their lives to free India from the shackles of imperialism.

- **Venue:** Rang Swadheenta festival was held at Meghdoot Auditorium from 27th to 29th August, 2022.
- **Organizing Body:** Rang Swadheenta festival was organized by Sangeet Natak Akademi.
- **Participation:** A total of twelve teams and around hundred artists from nine States of India participated in the Rang Swadheenta festival.
- **Focus Area:** Rang Swadheenta Festival 2022 was unique in that it focused on folk singing styles.
 - Rang Swadheenta showcases folk musical traditions from across the country.

Sangeet Natak Akademi

- **About:** Sangeet Natak Akademi was set up in 1953 for the preservation and promotion of the vast intangible heritage of India's diverse culture expressed in forms of music, dance and drama.
 - Sangeet Natak Akademi is the apex body in the field of performing arts in the country.
- **Location:** The registered office of the Akademi is at Rabindra Bhavan, 35 Feroze Shah Road, New Delhi.
- **Parent Ministry:** Sangeet Natak Akademi is an autonomous body of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.
- **Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards:** They are the highest national recognition conferred on practising artists.

Sangeet Natak Akademi- Constituent Units

Sangeet Natak Akademi now has three constituent units, two of these being dance-teaching institutions-

- **Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy (JNMDA) at Imphal:** JNMDA has its origin in the Manipur Dance College established by the Government of India in April 1954.
 - Funded by the Akademi since its inception, JNMDA became a constituent unit of the Akademi in 1957.
- **Kathak Kendra in Delhi:** Kathak Kendra is one of the leading teaching institutions in Kathak dance.
 - Located in Delhi, it offers courses at various levels in Kathak dance and in vocal music and Pakhawaj.

Miscellaneous

Activist-author Annabhau Sathe

Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister and other leaders are in Moscow to unveil the statue of Lok Shahir (balladeer) Annabhau Sathe at the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature.

- Sathe's work was immensely inspired by the Russian revolution and the Communist ideology. He was a member of the Communist Party of India (CPI), and featured among the selected authors from India whose work was translated in Russian.

Who was Annabhau Sathe?

- Tukaram Bhaurao Sathe, who later came to be known as Annabhau Sathe, was born in a Dalit family on August 1, 1920 in Maharashtra's Wategaon village in Satara district.
- In 1930, his family left the village and came to Mumbai. Here, he worked as a porter, a hawker and even a cotton mill helper.
- In 1934, Mumbai witnessed a workers' strike under the leadership of Lal Bawta Mill Workers Union in which he participated.
- During his days at the Matunga Labour Camp, he got to know R B More, an associate of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar in the famous 'Chavdar Lake' satyagraha at Mahad, and joined the labour study circle.
- Being a Dalit, he was denied schooling in his village. It was during these study circles that he learned to read and write.

Anna's work

- Sathe wrote his first poem on the menace of mosquitoes in the labour camp.
- He formed Dalit Yuvak Sangh, a cultural group and started writing poems on workers' protests, agitations.

- The group used to perform in front of the mill gates.
- Progressive Writers Association was formed at the national level at the same time with the likes of Premchand, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Manto, Ismat Chughtai, Rahul Sankrutyayan, Mulkraj Anand as its members.
- The group would translate the Russian work of Maxim Gorky, Anton Chekhov, Leo Tolstoy, Ivan Turgenev into Marathi, which Sathe got hooked on.
- It not only had an ideological impact on him, but inspired him to write street plays, stories, novels etc. In 1939, he wrote his first ballad 'Spanish Povada'.

Rise of Annabhau

- Sathe and his group travelled across Mumbai campaigning for workers' rights.
- Out of the 49 years that he lived, Sathe, who began writing only after the age of 20, churned out 32 novels, 13 collections of short stories, four plays, a travelogue and 11 povadas (ballads).
- Several of his works like 'Aklechi Goshta,' 'Stalingradacha Povada,' 'Mazi Maina Gavavar Rahili,' 'Jag Badal Ghaluni Ghav' were popular across the state.
- Almost six of his novels were turned into films and many translated into other languages, including Russian.
- His 'Bangalchi Hak' (Bengal's Call) on the Bengal famine was translated into Bengali and later presented at London's Royal Theatre.
- His literature depicted the caste and class reality of Indian society of that time.

Left leanings

- Sathe's work was influenced by Marxism, but at the same time he brought out the harsh realities of the caste system.
- In 1943, he formed the Lal Bawta Kala Pathak.

- The group toured across Maharashtra presenting programmes on caste atrocities, class conflict, and workers' rights.
- He dedicated his most famous novel Fakira to Dr Ambedkar.

Russian connection

- He was once called the Maxim Gorky of Maharashtra.
- He was immensely inspired by Gorky's 'The Mother' and the Russian revolution, which was reflected in his writings.
- He travelled to Russia in 1961 along with a group of other Indians.

The deserved recognition

- Sathe belonged to the Matang community among Dalits.
- With the Left failing to claim his artistic legacy, Sathe is now restricted as a symbol of a particular community.
- The right wing is angling to claim the credit for making Sathe a global icon.
- Installing Sathe's oil painting at the Indian consulate at Moscow also shows that the central government is using this occasion to increase cultural dialogue between two countries.

Asia Cup Winner List

The Asia Cup is the only continental championship in cricket and the winning team becomes the champions of Asia.

Asia Cup- Historical Background

- The Asian Cricket Council Asia Cup is a men's One Day International and Twenty20 International cricket tournament. The Asia Cricket Council after being established in 1983 started hosting the Asia Cup from 1984 onwards as a measure to promote goodwill between Asian countries. It was originally scheduled to be held every two years.
- 2009 onwards the Asia Cup was bound to be held biennially under the purview of Asian Cricket Council and all the matches were to be considered as One Day Internationals.
- Though the Asian Cricket Council was downsized in 2015 and it was announced by the ICC that Asia

Cup events from 2016 would be played on a rotation basis between One Day International and Twenty20 International format, on the basis of the format of upcoming world events. As a result, the 2016 was the first edition played in the T20I format and functioned as a preparatory tournament ahead of the 2016 ICC World Twenty20.

- Though Pakistan was the original host of Asia Cup in 2020 which was postponed till 2022 due to Covid outbreak, Sri Lanka was given the hosting responsibility due to tense situation between India and Pakistan on geo-political front which might have forced India to opt out of the tournament.
- To avert this situation Asia Cricket Council decided to handover the hosting rights to Sri Lanka but as Sri Lanka was facing deep crises in the country, the tournament was held in UAE under the banner of Sri Lanka being the official host.
- 15th Edition of Asia Cup was won by Sri Lanka after they defeated Pakistan in the final showing a stunning comeback after being hammered by Afghanistan in the opening match of the tournament. Sri Lanka saw a fairy tale rise in the tournament and won 5 consecutive T20s to make it to the top after being denied a direct entry to the T20 World Cup scheduled to be held in Australia from October onwards.

Asia Cup Winner List (1984-2022)

India is the most successful team in the tournament with seven titles (six ODI and one T20I). Sri Lanka is the second most successful team, with six latest being the Asia Cup 2022. Sri Lanka has played the most Asia Cups (14) followed by India, Pakistan and Bangladesh who have played 13 each. Bangladesh have never won any Asia Cup till date but they have played final 3 times.

Year	Winner	Runner-up	Host
1984	India	Sri Lanka	UAE
1986	Sri Lanka	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
1988	India	Sri Lanka	Bangladesh

1991	India	Sri Lanka	Bangladesh
1995	India	Sri Lanka	UAE
1997	Sri Lanka	India	Sri Lanka
2000	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	Bangladesh
2004	Sri Lanka	India	Sri Lanka
2008	Sri Lanka	India	Pakistan
2010	India	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka
2012	Pakistan	Bangladesh	Bangladesh
2014	Sri Lanka	Pakistan	Bangladesh
2016	India	Bangladesh	Bangladesh
2018	India	Bangladesh	UAE
2022	Sri Lanka	Pakistan	UAE

- The area grew as poor rural Indians migrated to urban Mumbai.
- Today, an estimated 600,000 to 1 million people live crammed in Dharavi.
- While the land (area of 535 acres) is owned by the government, the houses are maintained by individuals.

Dharavi Redevelopment Project: Economic significance

- Dharavi is situated near the India’s richest business district, the Bandra-Kurla Complex, where commercial office premiums are among the highest in the country.
- The slum sprawl, spread over 2.8 sq.km. is home to an informal leather and pottery industry which employs over a lakh people.

What is the Dharavi Redevelopment Project all about?

- The state had envisaged this sprawl be transformed into a cluster of high-rises with improved urban infrastructure.
- It entailed resettling 68,000 people, including slum dwellers and those with commercial establishments.
- The state was to provide 300-sqft houses for free to residents with proof that their slum structure was in existence before January 1, 2000.
- The project was initially mooted in 2004, but never got off the ground due to various reasons.

Dharavi Redevelopment Project: Historical Background

- In 1999, the government first proposed to redevelop Dharavi.
- Thereafter, the government of Maharashtra in the year 2003-04 decided to redevelop Dharavi as an integrated planned township.
- An action plan for redevelopment was approved by issuing a government resolution.
- It was decided to develop Dharavi by using land as a resource to cross-subsidize the cost of development through a sale component on the basis of the Slum Rehabilitation Scheme.
- The government also decided to notify the whole of Dharavi as an undeveloped area and to appoint a Special Planning Authority for its development.
- In 2011, the government cancelled all tenders and drew up a master plan.

Dharavi Redevelopment Project

The Maharashtra government gave the go-ahead for fresh tenders in the Dharavi redevelopment project, almost two decades after it was first proposed.

About Dharavi

- Dharavi, famous as one of the world’s largest slums is located in the heart of India’s financial capital – Mumbai.
- The Dharavi slum came into being in 1884. It was originally inhabited by fisherfolk when the area was still creeks, swamps.
- A city within a city, it is one unending stretch of narrow dirty lanes, open sewers and cramped huts.
- It became attractive to migrant workers from South Mumbai and others when the swamp began to fill in due to natural and artificial causes.

FIFA Under 17 Women's World Cup

Recently, the Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the Signing of Guarantees for hosting Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) Under 17 Women's World Cup 2022 in India.

About FIFA Under 17 Women's World Cup 2022

- **Background:** India successfully hosted the FIFA Under-17 Men's World Cup India-2017 at 6 different venues namely New Delhi, Guwahati, Mumbai, Goa, Kochi and Kolkata in the country from 6th to 28th October, 2017.
- **About:** FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup 2022 is scheduled to be held in India between 11th and 30th October 2022.
- **Participation:** FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2022 will be the 7th edition of the tournament in which 16 teams, including India, will participate.
- **Key Objectives:** The FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2022 has potential to strengthen women's football in the country. Following objectives have been contemplated in order to leave behind a positive legacy:
 - increase representation of women in football leadership and decision-making bodies
 - inspire more girls to play football in India
 - advocate for gender-inclusive participation by normalising the concept of equal game from a young age
 - opportunity to improve football standards for women in India
 - improve the commercial value of the women's game.
- **FIFA Under 17 World Cup Venue:** The AIFF has proposed holding of the **FIFA Under 17 Women's World Cup** competition matches in 3 venues namely;
 - Bhubaneshwar;
 - Navi Mumbai and
 - Goa.

Importance of FIFA Under 17 Women's World Cup for India

- India is preparing for a seminal moment for women's football when the best young female footballers from across the world will be showcasing their skills to lift the coveted trophy.
- **FIFA Under 17 Women's World Cup 2022 will** Carry forward the positive legacy from the FIFA Under-17 Men's World Cup 2017.
- The FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup is a prestigious event and would be held for the first time in India.
- It would encourage more youngsters to participate in sports and help develop the sport of football in India.
- The event will not only promote football as sport of choice among Indian girls, but is also poised to leave a lasting legacy that will facilitate girls and women in the country to embrace football and sports in general.

India and the adoption of its Military Flags and Badges

The new Naval Ensign (flag), which will be unveiled by PM in Kochi, has brought into focus the flags and ranks adopted by the Indian military after Independence.

- Documents accessed from National Archives of India show that Lord Mountbatten, former Viceroy and Governor General of India, played a major role in suggesting new flags and rank badges.
- This was when India was about to become a Republic on January 26, 1950.

Fact

The octagonal shape with twin golden borders draws inspiration from the seal of the great Indian emperor, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, whose visionary maritime outlook established a credible naval fleet

When did India switch from British-era flags and ranks?

- Prior to 26th Jan, 1950, the day when India became a Republic the flags and badges of ranks of the military were of the British pattern.

- The new, Indian pattern of flags of Army, Navy and Air Force, and also the Regimental Flags of the Army and badges of ranks of all three services were adopted on January 26, 1950.
- The 'Kings Commission' granted to Indian military officers was also changed to 'Indian Commission' on the same date.
- And at a subsequent date the King's colours of the various Regiments were laid to rest in Indian Military Academy (IMA), Dehradun.

Lord Mountbatten and the National Archives

- The national archives have files, dated 1949, that include a detailed note from Lord Mountbatten regarding names, flags and ranks of the armed forces, and then PM Nehru's letter to the then Defense Minister Baldev Singh regarding Mountbatten's suggestions.
- The note, archives reveal, was given to Nehru by Lord Mountbatten when the two met in London.
- The note was forwarded from the PM's office to the office of then Governor General C Rajagopalachari on May 24, 1949, stating that it is on the issue of 'Names and Insignia of Indian Armed Forces' after India becomes a Republic.
- The letter also stated that the note should be placed before the Governor General.
- The note begins by saying that consequent to becoming a Republic the word 'Royal' shall be dropped from India's Army, Navy and Air Force.
- Mountbatten strongly recommended that no other word like 'State' or 'Republican' should replace the word 'Royal'.
- This was because it would have the effect of separating the forces of India psychologically from the other services in the Commonwealth.
- He further suggested in the letter that the Crown should be replaced from the insignias and replaced by the "three lions of Ashoka".
- Regarding the Naval Ensign, he said that all Commonwealth navies fly the same flag which consists of a large white flag with a red-cross and Union Jack in the upper corner nearer the staff and is known as the 'White Ensign'.
- The new Ensign, the note suggested, should continue to have the red-cross but the Indian

national flag should replace the Union Jack so that a commonality with the Commonwealth flags can

Changes for uniforms

- He strongly urged that existing uniforms should be changed as little as possible.
- He added that the Crown worn on badges of ranks of Majors and above should be replaced by the "three lions of Ashoka".
- The Star of the Order of the Bath should be replaced by Star of India or another form of star.
- He also suggested that the crossed sword and baton on the badges of ranks of Generals should be retained.
- The former Viceroy advocated retaining the stripes of rank in Navy and Air Force saying these were internationally almost the same.

Indian government reaction to Mountbatten's suggestions

- Nehru wrote to the then defence minister in September 1949 saying that he agreed with the suggestions made by the former Governor General that there should be as little change as possible.
- The then PM particularly mentioned the changes suggested by Mountbatten for the Navy.
- Then Governor General C Rajagopalachari also wrote back to Nehru in May 1949 itself agreeing to Mountbatten's suggestions.
- In the end, Mountbatten's suggestions were virtually all accepted and implemented with effect from January 26, 1950.

International Driving Permit (IDP)

Recently, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued a notification for greater facilitation of citizens in the issue of International Driving Permit (IDP) across the country.

International Driving Permit (IDP) in India

- India, being a signatory to Convention on International Road Traffic of 1949 (Geneva Convention), is required to issue IDP as provided under this Convention, for the

acceptance of the same on reciprocal basis with other countries.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns with Existing Norms: Currently, the format, size, pattern, colour etc. of the IDP being issued was differing across States in India.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Due to this, many citizens were facing difficulties with their respective IDP in foreign countries.

Recent Amendment to IDP in India

- Through the recent amendment, the format, size, colour etc. for IDP has been standardized for issuance across India, and in adherence to the Geneva Convention.
- Provision for QR code to link the IDP with the Driving License has also been made.
- A comparison of vehicle categories across various Conventions and Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989 has also been added for facilitation of regulatory authorities.
- Helpline numbers and email have also been provided for timely grievance redressal and facilitation of citizens in the issue of International Driving Permit (IDP) across the country.

International Driving Permit (IDP) Issuance and Requirements in India

- **Issuance:** International Driving Permit will be issued to an applicant who holds a valid Indian Licence and who is a resident of India.
 - The application shall be made in Form 2 or in writing to the RTO within whose jurisdiction the applicant resides, specifying the countries to be visited and the duration of stay etc.
- **Requirements:** Following documents and fee is required for the issuance of International Driving Permit (IDP)-
 - Valid driving Licence held by the applicant and copies thereon.
 - Copies of Passport, Visa (where applicable) and Air ticket for verification.
 - Fees as prescribed along with user charges.

What is International Driving Permit (IDP)?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About: An International Driving Permit (IDP) is a version of a domestic driving licence that allows the holder to drive a private motor vehicle in any country or jurisdiction that recognises the document.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDP Governance: International Driving Permits are governed by three international conventions- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The 1926 Paris International Convention relative to Motor Traffic, ◦ The 1949 Geneva Convention on Road Traffic, and ◦ The 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Traffic.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation by States: Countries, signatory to any of the above three International conventions, are required to issue IDP as per the rules of these conventions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ When a state is contracted to more than one convention, the newest one terminates and replaces previous ones.

Kartavya Path

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the 'Kartavya Path' on 8th September, 2022.
- Prime Minister also unveiled the statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at India Gate on the occasion.

Kartavya Path: Key Details

- **About:** Kartavya Path will exhibit beautified landscapes, lawns with walkways, added green spaces, refurbished canals, new amenity blocks, improved signages and vending kiosks.
- **Key Features:**
 - On Kartavya Path, new pedestrian underpasses, improved parking spaces, new exhibition panels and upgraded night lighting are some other features that will enhance the public experience.
 - 'Kartavya Path' also includes a number of sustainability features like solid waste management, stormwater management,

recycling of used water, rainwater harvesting, water conservation and energy efficient lighting systems, among others.

- **Significance:** These steps are in line with Prime Minister's second 'Panch Pran' for New India in Amrit Kaal: 'remove any trace of colonial mindset'.
 - It will symbolise a shift from erstwhile Rajpath being an icon of power to Kartavya Path being an example of public ownership and empowerment.

Need for Development of 'Kartavya Path'

- Over the years, Rajpath and adjoining areas of the Central Vista Avenue had been witnessing pressure of increasing traffic of visitors, putting stress on its infrastructure.
- It lacked basic amenities like public toilets, drinking water, street furniture and adequate parking space.
- Further, there was inadequate signage, poor maintenance of water features and haphazard parking.
- Also, a need was felt to organise the Republic Day parade and other National events in a less disruptive manner with minimal restrictions on public movement.
- The redevelopment has been done bearing these concerns in mind while also ensuring the integrity and continuity of architectural character.

About the statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at India Gate

- **About:** The statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose is being installed in the same place where a hologram statue of Netaji was unveiled earlier this year on Parakram Diwas.
- **Key Features:** The Statue of **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose**, made of granite, is a fitting tribute to the immense contribution of Netaji to our freedom struggle, and would be a symbol of the country's indebtedness to him.
 - Crafted by Shri Arun Yogiraj, who was the main sculptor, the 28 feet tall statue has been carved from a monolithic granite stone and weighs 65 MT.

Teachers Day 2022

On the occasion of Teachers' Day 2022, the President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu, conferred National Awards on 45 teachers from across the country at a function held at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi (September 5, 2022).

Teachers Day 2022: Key Details

- September 5 is annually celebrated as Teachers' Day. Teachers' Day is dedicated to teachers and the role they play in shaping their students' lives.
- India annually celebrates the birth anniversary of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan as National Teachers' Day as a tribute to his contributions and achievements.
 - Teachers' Day is celebrated to honour the memory of India's first Vice President and to commemorate the importance of teachers in our lives.
- Once, Dr. Radhakrishnan implored, "Instead of celebrating my birthday, it would be my proud privilege if September 5 is observed as Teachers' Day."
 - Since then, from 1962, his birthday has been observed as 'Teacher's Day' in the country.
- India traditionally has another similar day to honour teachers, called the Guru Purnima, which usually falls in July and is based on the lunar calendar.

Teachers Day 2022- Importance

- Teachers' Day is celebrated as the most important day in schools and colleges.
- On **Teachers Day**, schools usually hold special celebratory activities for teachers and students alike.
- Students usually present a kind of remembrance and tribute for all the hard work their teachers put in all through the year for them, as a gesture of appreciation.

Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

- **Birth:** Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was born on September 5, 1888 a poor Telugu Brahmin family.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About: Dr Radhakrishnan was the first vice president and second president of independent India. He was also a scholar, philosopher, and Bharat Ratna awardee.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: Radhakrishnan completed his entire education through scholarships.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literary Work: He possessed a master's degree in Philosophy and authored the book 'The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore' in 1917.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Achievements:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ He also served as the Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University from 1931 to 1936 and the Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in 1939, succeeding Madan Mohan Malviya.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ He went on to teach at Chennai's Presidency College and Calcutta University.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr Radhakrishnan was awarded the Bharat Ratna – the highest civilian award in India in 1954.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr Radhakrishnan was also admitted as an honorary member of the British Royal Order of Merit in 1963.

National Awards to Teachers 2022

- **About:** The National Awards to Teachers 2022 seek to celebrate the unique and major contributions of the teachers in the nation-building of India.
 - The National Awards to Teachers accords public recognition to meritorious teachers working in elementary and secondary schools.
- **Objective:** The purpose of National Awards to Teachers is to celebrate and honour the unique contribution of some of the finest teachers in the country who through their commitment and hard work have not only improved the quality of school education but also enriched the lives of their students.
- **Associated Ministry:** Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, annually on Teachers Day, organizes the national level function to confer the National Awards to Teachers to the best teachers in the country.

National Awards to Teachers 2022 Winners

- On the occasion of Teachers' Day 2022, President of India Draupadi Murmu conferred the National Awards to Teachers 2022 to 45 teachers at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi.
- Among the 45 teachers who have been selected for the National Awards to Teachers, two teachers, one from Andaman and Nicobar Islands and another one from Uttarakhand will be awarded under the Special Category for differently-abled teachers.

Triple-Dip La Nina

Parts of the world are expected to experience severe weather for the rest of the year and into 2023, as part of a rare "triple dip La Nina" event, according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

El Nino and La Nina

- While El Nino, the more common expression, is the abnormal surface warming observed along the eastern and central regions of the Pacific Ocean (the region between Peru and Papua New Guinea).
- The La Nina is an abnormal cooling of these surface waters.
- Together, the El Nino (Warm Phase) and La Nina (Cool Phase) phenomena are termed as El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO).
- These are large-scale ocean phenomena which influence the global weather – winds, temperature and rainfall. They have the ability to trigger extreme weather events like droughts, floods, hot and cold conditions, globally.
- Each cycle can last anywhere between 9 to 12 months, at times extendable to 18 months – and re-occur after every three to five years.
- Meteorologists record the sea surface temperatures for four different regions, known as Nino regions, along this equatorial belt.
- Depending on the temperatures, they forecast either as an El Nino, an ENSO neutral phase, or a La Nina.

What is the “Triple-Dip” La Nina?

- A “triple-dip” La Nina is a multiyear cooling of the surface temperature of the equatorial Pacific Ocean, which can cause droughts, fierce winds and heavy rainfall.
- According to WMO, the current La Nina is projected to span three consecutive northern hemisphere winters. It began in September 2020.
- If it continues for the next six months, it will be the first “triple-dip” La Nina event of the 21st century, WMO says.

How rare is this triple-dip?

- It is exceptional to have three consecutive years with a La Nina event.
- Its cooling influence is temporarily slowing the rise in global temperatures – but it will not halt or reverse the long-term warming trend.
- La Nina’s are usually preceded by El Nino, a weather pattern that warms the surface of the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean.
- However, an El Nino event did not occur before the current La Nina.

Triple-Dip La Nina: Earlier Instances

- La Nina’s occurred several times between 1903 to 2010 and 2010 to 2012.
- This would be the first “triple-dip” La Nina this century.
- However, it is not unprecedented for the weather pattern to last more than nine months to a year, which is typical for a La Nina.

Triple-Dip La Nina: Impact

- In the Indian context, La Nina is associated with good rainfall during the monsoon season.
- This is the opposite of El Nino which is known to suppress monsoon rainfall.
- Thus, a continued spell of La Nina could lead to expectation of another year of good, or normal, rainfall during the monsoon.
- Until now, the monsoon season this year has produced 7% more rain compared to normal. Last year, the seasonal rainfall was almost 100%.
- But, even though powerful, ENSO condition is only one of the several factors affecting monsoon rainfall in India.

Triple-Dip La Nina: Impact on rainfall

- There is no one-on-one correlation between the ENSO condition and the amount of rainfall.
- Also, the influence of ENSO is at a macro level.
- There are wide variations in rainfall at the local level, which are getting exacerbated by climate change.

Differential impacts of this triple-dip event

- The continuance of La Nina further into 2023 is not bad news from the Indian standpoint. But it is not the same for many other regions where La Nina has very different impacts.
- In most parts of the United States, for example, La Nina is associated with very dry winters.
- In Australia and Indonesia, and generally in the tropical region, La Nina is expected to bring more rainfall.
- The excessive rainfall in Pakistan, which is experiencing its worst flooding disaster, can also be blamed in part on La Nina.
- It said that the persistence of La Nina was most likely to result in a worsening of the drought in Africa.

Triple-Dip La Nina: Climate change link

- Every unusual weather event these days is attributed to climate change, but science is not conclusive right now.
- The occurrences of El Nino or La Nina are not very regular.
- Sometimes they emerge every two years, at other times there has been a gap of even seven years.
- Historical records do not go very far in the past.
- As a result, the natural variability of ENSO is not understood very clearly.
- And when the natural variability itself is not clear, the influence of global warming is difficult to quantify.
- But there is clearer evidence of another kind of linkage with global warming.
- During La Nina years, the colder surfaces allow the oceans to absorb more heat from the atmosphere.
- Consequently, the air temperatures tend to go down, producing a cooling effect.

The Editorials Corner

Engage with Caution

Recently, India and China confirmed the disengagement of their troops from a fifth friction point in Eastern Ladakh along the LAC.

India-China Conflict- Recent Agreement

- With the latest withdrawal of troops from Patrolling Point (PP) 15 in the Gogra-Hot Springs area, buffer zones have now been established by the two sides in five locations.
 - These locations include Galwan Valley, north and south of Pangong Lake, and at PP17A in Gogra.
- The arrangements in the four earlier established buffer zones have so far helped keep the peace over the past two years.
- No patrolling is to be undertaken by either side in the buffer zones, which have been established on territory claimed by both India and China.
- The latest disengagement came just three days before Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping are to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Uzbekistan.

Significance of the Move

- The agreement on creating the buffer zones may serve as a temporary measure to prevent a recurrence of clashes.
 - However, the reality is that this is an arrangement that has been forced on India.
- The Indian military, by holding the line and showing its capacity to match China's deployments, has been able to reverse China's multiple territorial incursions of April 2020 in the five areas.
 - This may have come at the cost of India's ability to access patrolling points that it was reaching previously.
 - This might have been China's game-plan all along, given the favourable logistics and terrain on the Chinese side that enable faster deployments.

Associated Concerns

- China has neither agreed to resolve stand-offs in Demchok and Depsang, suggesting they pre-dated the current tensions, nor shown any intent to de-escalate.
 - China is instead continuing to build forward infrastructure aimed at permanently housing a large number of troops closer to the LAC.
- Signs are that both sides are in for a prolonged period of uncertainty on the borders thanks to China's decision to mobilise tens of thousands of troops in April 2020, in contravention of past border agreements.
- Unless Beijing reverses its recent, and still unexplained, moves to militarise the LAC and in the process undo the carefully constructed arrangements that helped keep the peace for 40 years, India will have little incentive to consider a return to relations as they were prior to 2020.

India-China Conflict- Conclusion

- The latest disengagement, while certainly a welcome step, by no means implies an end to the crisis on the border.
- Whether they meet at the SCO Summit – as of September 14, neither side had confirmed or ruled out a meeting – or at the G20 in Indonesia later this year, India will need to proceed with caution as it inevitably resumes high-level engagement with China.

Floods and Foes

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message, in a recent tweet, expressing condolences to the victims of the flooding in Pakistan, is a welcome gesture.
- Pakistan has been facing one of the worst natural disasters in recent times in the form of Floods.

Flood in Pakistan- Loss of Life and Property

- More than 1,100 people have died, and over 33 million people have been affected, as officials say one-third of the country is under water, and

estimate about \$10 billion in damage to homes, roads and infrastructure.

- The floods have also affected standing crops, and as the waters recede, fears of disease as well as food shortages are expected to rise.
- In addition, the worry that the devastating floods have been caused due to climate change is a worry for all of South Asia, one of the world's regions most vulnerable to global warming.

Flood in Pakistan- Support from Other Countries

- UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres launched a global appeal for aid to Pakistan, that he said had been hit by a "monsoon on steroids", indicating unnatural climate patterns.
- Countries such as the U.K., the U.S., China, the UAE, Qatar and Turkey have already dispatched aid to Pakistan, and many others have promised help.
- The IMF announced a \$1.1 billion bailout tranche, as part of ongoing negotiations with the Pakistan that is already steeped in an economic crisis.

Flood in Pakistan- India's Support

- Pakistan Finance Minister Miftah Ismail said that he may propose lifting the trade ban imposed on India after the Jammu-Kashmir reorganisation in 2019, so as to import Indian vegetables and essential commodities.
- Thus far, Islamabad has only made exceptions for pharmaceutical imports from India during the COVID-19 pandemic, and India's humanitarian aid to Afghanistan

Flood in Pakistan- Way Forward

- Despite the poor state of India-Pakistan ties, both New Delhi and Islamabad must put aside their domestic considerations, and seize the moment to help those stranded in the flooding as best they can.
- It would be churlish and short-sighted of Pakistan to reject an opportunity to lift the trade ban with India that has only hurt its own interests, and to give up a source of affordable supplies at a time of such calamity.

Conclusion

- it would be both tragic and ridiculous if the enmity between the two countries would not allow them to work together at a time such as this, even as

their governments allow their cricket teams to play each other for financial considerations.

- While a more lasting dialogue, that has been suspended between the two countries for nearly a decade over the terrorism issue, is unlikely, the leaders must find the time to discuss ways to mitigate the catastrophe at hand.

Internal Democracy

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has rejected the idea of a 'permanent president' for a party, while taking issue with the Yuvajana Shramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP), which rules Andhra Pradesh.

- The party reportedly elected Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy as its president for life in July 2022.

ECI's View on Internal Democracy

- The ECI says the idea of a 'permanent president' for a party is inherently anti-democratic.
- There is merit in the ECI's view and its insistence on internal democracy, as no individual should be elected leader for life.
- Any party that participates in a democratic process, and wants to govern and legislate, should include formal and periodic election of office-bearers as part of the way it functions as an association.
- The ECI has periodically used guidelines issued for registration of parties under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 to remind parties to conduct elections and to ensure that their leadership is renewed, changed or re-elected every five years.

Main Type of Political Parties in India

Indian political parties are of myriad kinds – some, such as-

- **Ideologically Driven Parties:** Bharatiya Janata Party or the Communist parties, are structured, cadre-based organisations that function towards an ideological goal or a principle;
- **Liberal Parties:** The Congress, are more loosely structured collections of individuals with even

different strands of opinion but functioning within an association that has core ideals;

- **Regional Parties:** They reflect social or regional cleavages of Indian society.

Reasons for Emergence of One Man Dominated Party

- **Fragmentation of Indian Polity:** the fragmentation of India's polity into a federalised, multi-party system has also given way to domination by "charismatic" individuals or their families.
 - This has happened mainly because of the nature of support that these parties enjoy or due to their financing structures which necessitates centralised control by a single coterie or a family.
- **Absence of Meaningful Internal Democracy:** several political parties today do not insist on thoroughgoing internal elections to secure their leadership.
 - Even if they do conduct polls, they lack sufficient contestation and are done to reaffirm the dominance of the high command.
 - In some cases, with electoral politics being a zero-sum game, political parties are loath to allow internal contest, fearing that this could foster disunity, as opposed to nomination and consensus-building on leadership.
- **Lack of Substantive Power of ECI:** the election commission does not have any statutory power to enforce internal democracy in parties or to mandate elections.
 - The lack of such substantive power only leads to parties carrying out the ECI's edicts in a mechanical manner.

Conclusion

- With dynasticism and a lack of internal democracy becoming a matter of public debate, perhaps public pressure would finally bear upon parties to do the right thing.

Over the Top

Recently Draft Telecommunication Bill 2022 was put in public domain for comments from various stakeholders.

Associated Concerns with Draft Indian Telecommunication Bill

- **Increased Government Control:** The bill hints at a disturbing governmental pursuit, for more control over a range of digital applications and over-the-top streaming services that millions of Indians use daily.
- **License Raj:** The Telecom Bill seeks to increase government control over digital applications and over-the-top streaming services by bringing them under the ambit of telecommunication services.
 - The operation of telecommunication services would require a licence- that is if the draft provisions do go through.
 - This means the likes of WhatsApp, Zoom, and Netflix will be considered telecommunication services.
 - And so would a whole range of digital services that are anyway regulated by the IT Act.
- **Overarching Definition of Telecom Services:** The Draft bill broadens the definition of Telecom Services which includes everything-
 - From broadcasting services to electronic mail,
 - From voice mail to voice, video and data communication services,
 - From Internet and broadband services to over-the-top communication services, including those that the Government may notify separately.
- **Privacy Concerns:** Government has the powers to prevent a message from being transmitted "on the occurrence of any public emergency or in the interest of the public safety".
 - Another clause in the draft Bill requires an entity that has been granted a licence to "unequivocally identify the person to whom it provides services".
 - A similar clause under the IT rules brought in last year- requiring messaging apps to "enable the identification of the first originator of the information on its computer resource"- has been challenged in the Court.

Government's Justification for New Draft Telecommunication Bill

- **Shredding the Colonial Legacy:** the country requires a new legal framework, and not the

existing one that is based on the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, to deal with the realities of the 21st century.

Draft Telecommunication Bill- Conclusion

- While not underplaying the mounting challenges for ensuring security, the repeated attempts by the Government to be able to tap into all kinds of communication, without making sure the common man has a legal armour in the form of a data protection law, is extremely problematic.
- The Government needs to upgrade its thinking on users and privacy. This draft needs to go back to the drawing board.

Reforms and the Task of Getting Teachers on Board

Recently, the Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy government in Andhra Pradesh has taken many reforms in the education sector.

Reforms in Education Sector

- **Mission:** Educational Reforms are aimed to ensure that all children have access to quality education within an equitable and inclusive classroom environment.
 - These reforms will take into account diverse backgrounds and different academic abilities of each students, thereby making them active participants in the learning process.
- **Objective:** The objective is to shift the focus from content retention to building critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, making the learning process more experiential, holistic, integrated, enquiry-driven, and enjoyable.
 - To this, the government is redefining the tasks, the training patterns and the professional development mode of teachers.
- **School Restructuring Programme:** it calls for a merger of classes three to five in primary schools with high schools.
- **App Based Attendance System:** The new app-based attendance system is a pilot project that was rolled out by the government in August in State-run schools.

- Teachers presence is needed during their attendance, as the Unified District Information System for Education (U-DISE)-linked system records metrics such as the longitude and latitude of the place where they are present.
- Attendance is sent to officials by SMS.
- Parents will also receive SMS updates on their child's arrival and departure from school.

Reforms in Education Sector- Concerns of Teacher Unions

- Teacher unions are sceptical about the results of these reforms, which are being aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- **School Restructuring Programme:** They believe it will further contribute to the school drop-out rate as it will deprive a large population of students who live in remote rural and tribal pockets of education.
- **Increased Workload:** They also say that the government order 117 on reapportionment of teaching staff in the State will only increase their workload in addition to shrinking existing teacher posts.
- **Concerns with Facial Recognition App:** The introduction of a face recognition app by the School Education Department, asking teachers to download it in on their personal mobile phones and record their daily attendance, has further angered teachers.
 - Citing virtual security reasons, teacher unions are refusing to follow the instructions and have urged teachers across the State to boycott use of the app.
 - They have demanded that the government provide them devices, as in the past, when they recorded their attendance using an Aadhar-enabled biometric attendance system.

Way forward

- **Rectifying the Errors:** The Minister has promised to address other issues such as poor or no Internet connectivity in villages and tribal habitations.
- **Technology-driven approach:** Education Department officials say that such technology-driven effective mechanisms are needed to check teacher absenteeism.

- We need a fool-proof system in place to ensure transparency and accountability.

Conclusion

- While the State has embarked on radical changes in the curriculum, school-restructuring and the mode of teaching, teacher unions remain nonchalant.
- It is expected that they should now step out of their traditional role of teaching academic content in a classroom and, instead, focus on acquiring new abilities, skills and showing greater commitment.

Slow Improvement

Recently, the National Statistical Office (NSO) released the latest official GDP estimates for the Indian Economy.

NSO's Official GDP Estimates 2022- Key Findings

- **Quarterly Growth:** The NSO estimates an 13.5% growth in gross domestic product (GDP) from the year-earlier April- June period.
- **Performance of Various Sectors of Economy:**
 - Only two services sectors – electricity, gas, water and other utility services, and financial and professional services – logged expansions from the January-March quarter, growing by 12.6% and 23.7%, respectively.
 - The major employment-providing sectors of agriculture, manufacturing, construction and the contact-intensive trade, hotels and transport services sector suffered quarter-on-quarter contractions of 13.3%, 10.5%, 22.3% and 24.6%, respectively.
- **Private final consumption expenditure**, the essential bulwark of the economy, appeared to have revived with a year-on-year expansion of 25.9% lifting its share in the GDP to just shy of 60%.
- **Both government spending and gross fixed capital formation**, which is viewed as a proxy for private investment, shrank quarter-on-quarter by 10.4% and 6.8%, respectively, undermining overall output.

Associated Concerns with NSO's Official GDP Estimates 2022

- **Slower than RBI's Estimates:** It is disconcertingly slower than the 16.2% pace that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had projected just last month.
 - It points to an economy that is still in search of a firmer footing.
- **May Lead to Slower Growth:** Faced with headwinds- signs of a global recession and the Ukraine war- the first-quarter's underwhelming momentum may pitch the economy into a far shallower growth trajectory.
 - This is even more concerning when faster-than-acceptable inflation erodes consumer confidence.
- **Uneven Growth:** Output in the eight broad sectors shows that while year-on-year all sectors expanded, with public administration, defence and other services growing 26.3%, six of these sectors posted sequential contractions.
 - Output in these eight broad sectors combine to provide the Gross Value Added (GVA).
- **Poor Performance on sequential Basis:** GDP contracted 9.6% sequentially should be a cause for concern among policymakers.

Expected Headwinds to India's Growth

- Given that this year's monsoon has distributed rains in an erratic scattershot pattern that has caused disruptive flooding in some parts while leaving key paddy and pulses growing areas in northern and eastern India moisture deficient, both farm output and consumer spending in the rural hinterland are likely to take a hit.
- And with global trade also becalmed amid the sharp slowdown in advanced economies, India's merchandise exports are sure to weaken in momentum, any benefits from the rupee's depreciation against the dollar notwithstanding.

Conclusion

- With the RBI needing to stay laser focused on taming inflation, the onus is on fiscal authorities to spur consumption and investment.

The Gender Pay Gap, Hard Truths and Actions Needed

Recently, people around the world celebrated the third International Equal Pay Day 2022.

- International Equal Pay Day 2022 falls on September 18, each year.
- In a country the size and diversity of India, asymmetries still abound in the country's labour market.

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Gender Pay Gap

- Covid-19 pandemic had a very disproportionate impact on women workers in terms of job and income losses.
- While the full impact of the pandemic is yet to be known, it is clear that its impact has been uneven, with women being among the worst affected in terms of their income security.
 - This is partly due to their representation in sectors hard hit by COVID-19, combined with the gendered division of family responsibilities.
- Many women reverted to full-time care of children and the elderly during the pandemic, foregoing their livelihoods to do so.
- **ILO's "Global Wage Report 2020–21"**: It suggests the crisis inflicted massive downward pressure on wages and disproportionately affected women's total wages compared to men.
 - This greater wage reduction for women means that the pre-existing gender pay gap has widened.

Gender Pay Gap in India

- Despite notable progress in closing the gender pay gap over time in India, the gap remains high by international standards.
 - Indian women earned, on an average, 48% less compared to their male counterparts in 1993-94.
 - Since then, the gap declined to 28% in 2018-19 as in the labour force survey data of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO).
- The pandemic reversed decades of progress as preliminary estimates from the Periodic Labour

Force Survey (PLFS) 2020-21 show an increase in the gap by 7% between 2018-19 and 2020-21.

- The data further suggests that faster decline in female wages during the pandemic contributed to this decline, compared to a faster growth in male wages, which requires urgent policy attention.

Causes for Gender Pay Gap

- **Common Causes:** While individual characteristics such as education, skills or experience explain part of the gender pay gap, a large part of the gender pay gap can still be attributed purely to discrimination based on one's gender or sex.
- **Gender-based discriminatory practices include:**
 - Lower wages paid to women for work of equal value;
 - Undervaluation of women's work in highly feminised occupations and enterprises, and
 - Motherhood pay gap – lower wages for mothers compared to non-mothers.

International Efforts to Close Gender Pay Gap

- At the international level, the United Nations has put the challenge of closing various forms of gender inequality at the heart of its actions.
- The ILO has enshrined 'equal pay for work of equal value' in its Constitution and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
 - CEDAW provides an international legal framework for realising gender equality and addressing the intersecting forms of discrimination and vulnerabilities among women and girls.
- UN Sustainable Development Goal 8 is "achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities and equal pay for work of equal value" by 2030.
 - In support of SDG 8, the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC), was launched in 2017 as a multi-stakeholder initiative led by the ILO, UN Women and the OECD that seeks to achieve equal pay for women and men everywhere.

Steps Taken by India to Close Gender Pay Gap

- **Legal Measures:** India was one of the pioneering countries to enact the Minimum Wages Act in 1948 and followed by the adoption of the Equal Remuneration Act in 1976.
- In 2019, India carried out comprehensive reforms in both the legislation and enacted the Code on Wages.
- **Role MGNREGA Scheme:** Evidence shows that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in 2005 benefited rural women workers and helped reduce the gender pay gap, both directly and indirectly.
 - Directly, by raising the pay levels of women workers who participated in the programme, and
 - Indirectly, benefits accrued to women involved in agricultural occupations through higher earnings, as MGNREGA contributed to the rapid rise in overall rural and agricultural wages in the country.
- **Maternity Benefit (amendment) Act of 2017:** It increased the 'maternity leave with pay protection' from 12 weeks to 26 weeks for all women working in establishments employing 10 or more workers.
 - This is expected to reduce the motherhood pay gap among mothers in the median and high-end wage earners working in the formal economy.
- **Skill India Mission:** efforts are being made through the Skill India Mission to equip women with market-relevant skills to bridge the learning-to-livelihood gap and the gender pay gap.

Conclusion:

Equal pay for work of equal value is necessary to close the gender pay gap. Closing the gender pay gap is key to achieving social justice for working women, as well as economic growth for the nation as a whole.

The Outline of an Essential Global Pandemic Treaty

World Health Organization (WHO) having declared the monkey-pox outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) with over 32,000 cases from over 80 countries (August 2022). With this, the world faces

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Globe

- COVID-19 would count as being among some of the most severe pandemics the world has seen in the last 100 years.
- **Death:** An estimated 18 million people may have died from COVID-19, according to various credible estimates, a scale of loss not seen since the Second World War.
- **Economy:** with over 120 million people pushed into extreme poverty, and a massive global recession, no single government or institution has been able to address this emergency single-handedly.

Widespread Global Health Inequity

- **Widespread Inequality:** Health-care systems have been stretched beyond their capacity and gross health inequity has been observed in the distribution of vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics across the world.
 - While high-income economies are still recovering from the after-effects, the socioeconomic consequences of the novel coronavirus pandemic are irreversible in low and low middle-income countries.
- **Profiteering despite Inequality:** Companies such as Pfizer, BioNTech, and Moderna created billionaires since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and made over \$1,000 a second in profits, even as fewer of their vaccines reached people in low-income countries.
 - As of March 2022, only 3% of people in low-income countries had been vaccinated with at least one dose, compared to 60.18% in high-income countries.
 - The international target to vaccinate 70% of the world's population against COVID-19 by mid-2022 was missed because poorer countries were at the "back of the queue" when vaccines were rolled out.
- **Poor Funding:** When world leaders pledged €7.4 billion (\$8.07 billion) in a digital fundraiser for developing a coronavirus vaccine and treatments, the United States did not send any representative. Thus, inequality has also been prolonging the course of the pandemic.

India's Lead Role Countering COVID-19 Pandemic

- India's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and reinstating global equity by leveraging its own potential has set an example to legislators worldwide.
 - India produces nearly 60% of the world's vaccines.
 - India is said to account for 60%-80% of the United Nations' annual vaccine procurement – "vaccine diplomacy" or "vaccine maitri" with a commitment against health inequity.
- India was unfettered in its resolve to continue the shipment of vaccines and other diagnostics even when it was experiencing a vaccine shortage for domestic use.
 - There was only a brief period of weeks during the peak of the second wave in India when the vaccine mission was halted.
 - As of 2021, India shipped 594.35 lakh doses of 'Made-in-India' COVID-19 vaccines to 72 countries – a classic example of global cooperation.
 - Among these, 81.25 lakh doses were gifts, 339.67 lakh doses were commercially distributed and 173.43 lakh doses were delivered via the Covax programme under the aegis of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.
- India along with South Africa, moved a proposal to ask WTO 'to allow all countries to choose to neither grant nor enforce patents and other intellectual property related to COVID-19 drugs, vaccines, diagnostics and other technologies for the duration of the pandemic, until global herd immunity is achieved'.
 - Even though this proposal was stonewalled by some of the leading countries, it was only in June 2022, that the WTO finally decided to water down intellectual property restrictions in manufacturing COVID-19 vaccines after rigorous efforts.

Need for an Essential Global Pandemic Treaty

- Finalizing a Global Pandemic Treaty: a treaty under the umbrella of WHO would, as highlighted by the journal BMJ, build coherence and avoid fragmentation.

- such a treaty should cover crucial aspects such as data sharing and genome sequencing of emerging viruses.
- It should formally commit governments and parliaments to implement an early warning system and a properly funded rapid response mechanism.
- Further, it should mobilise nation states to agree on a set of common metrics that are related to health investments and a return on those investments.
 - These investments should aim to reduce the public-private sector gap.

Conclusion

- A global pandemic treaty will not only reduce socioeconomic inequalities across nation states but also enhance a global pandemic preparedness for future health emergencies. India must take the lead in this.

The Spirit of 1971

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's ongoing state visit to India and meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi have resulted in many positive outcomes.

Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina state visit to India - Key Outcomes

- **Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina's ongoing state visit to India have** resulted in positive outcomes and seven agreements.
- **These seven agreements** include-
 - Conclusion of the first water sharing agreement in 26 years,
 - Launch of free trade agreement talks, and infrastructure projects particularly in the railways sector.
 - Agreement on the withdrawal of 1.82 cusecs from the Feni in the interim period

Importance of Kushiyara agreement on Water Sharing

- The water sharing agreement on the Kushiyara is a particularly hopeful sign on resolving water management, and a very

contentious issue, of 54 trans-boundary rivers.

- Kushiyara agreement is the first time the Centre has been able to bring on board Assam and other north-eastern States, for the agreement since the 1996 Ganga water treaty.

Background of India- Bangladesh Relations

- Ms. Hasina's visit, which follows her previous state visit in 2017, and Mr. Modi's visit to Bangladesh in 2021, have set India-Bangladesh ties on a firmer footing, and on course for closer engagement in trade, connectivity and people-to-people ties.
- However, the positive trend in ties goes further back, to Ms. Hasina's advent to power in 2009, her unilateral moves to shut down terror training camps, and to hand over more than 20 wanted criminals and terror suspects to India.

Associated Concerns in India- Bangladesh Relations

- **Issue of Teesta Agreement:** The Teesta agreement, of 2011, held up by West Bengal, remains elusive, a point Ms. Hasina made several times.

- Teesta river agreement will require more efforts by the Modi government, and flexibility from the Mamata Banerjee-led State government, if the deal is to be sealed soon.
- This is especially important when Bangladesh PM is due to hold elections at the end of next year, after three terms in office.
- **Low Indian Investment:** Investment by Indian industry constitutes a small fraction of Bangladesh's FDI inflows.
- **Rohingya Issue: Many insincere** comments were made by ruling party leaders on-
 - deporting Rohingya refugees,
 - comparing undocumented migrants to "termites", and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, and
 - More recent references to annexing Bangladesh for "Akhand Bharat".

Conclusion

- While cross-border sensitivities in South Asia often run high over such political rhetoric, it is necessary that New Delhi and Dhaka remain focused on their future cooperation, built on their past partnership, and what is referred to as the "Spirit of 1971".

Adda247

Practice Questions

SET - 01

1. Consider the following statements
 1. During a La Niña event, the sea surface temperatures over the central and eastern Pacific oceans become cooler than normal.
 2. During a triple dip event, la Nino lasts across three winterseasons in the Southern hemisphere
 3. During A triple dip in La Niña there is an extended southwest monsoon season for India

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3
2. Consider the following statements regarding Special maternity leave
 1. It is 2 months of maternity leave for women employees in case of stillbirth or death of an infant within a few days of birth
 2. A baby born with no signs of life at or after 28 weeks of gestation may be defined as a stillbirth
 3. The benefit of special maternity leave is admissible to a woman in organized or unorganized sector employees with less than two surviving children.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3
3. Consider the following statements regarding the recently launched SPARK program
 1. SPARK aims to support the research ideas of young undergraduate students enrolled in Ayurveda Colleges across India
 2. It was launched by National Medical Commission

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. Nuakhai is an annual harvest festival celebrated in-
 - (a) Manipur (b) Odisha
 - (c) Utrkhand (d) Jharkhand
5. Consider the following statements regarding Grievance Redressal Index 2022
 1. The unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has topped the index for the Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS).
 2. This ranking report was published by the NITI AYOJ.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. Consider the following statements regarding Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules 2022
 1. It bans the manufacture and sale of all plastic bags.
 2. PET bottles, counted among the most recyclable types of plastic, have been left out of the scope of the ban.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. Hinnamnor was recently seen in the news. The term is related to which of the following?
 - (a) New Species of Gecko found in western Ghats
 - (b) strongest tropical storm of 2022
 - (c) Tribal Communities of Andhra Pradesh
 - (d) Traditional water harvesting Technique
8. Consider the following statements regarding Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)
 1. It is Led by the USA with initial partners being all ASEAN countries besides India.
 2. Trade and Tax & decarbonization are among the four pillars of the framework.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

9. Consider the following statements regarding CERVAVAC Vaccine
- (1) It nation's first mRNA Vaccine and intranasal vaccine candidate against COVID-19
 - (2) The vaccine is based on VLP (virus-like particles), similar to the hepatitis B vaccine.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
10. One District One Product (ODOP) Scheme is to identify one product per district based on the potential and strength of a district and national priorities. This scheme was launched by-
- (a) Director-General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)
 - (b) Ministry of Food Industries
 - (c) Ministry of the rural department
 - (d) Ministry of Micro Small and medium enterprises

Solutions

1. (c): A triple dip La Niña that scientists had predicted for quite some time is underway, according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). During a triple dip event, La Niña lasts across three winter seasons in the northern hemisphere. La Niña is the cooler than the normal phase of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomenon in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. During a La Niña event, the sea surface temperatures over the central and eastern Pacific oceans become cooler than normal. This makes the trade winds and associated storms blowing above them stronger than usual. These strong trade winds and storms cause more rainfall in some regions such as Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia and many parts of Australia. However, it drastically reduces rainfall in other areas such as the Horn of Africa and the western United States. The protracted La Niña, the first triple-dip of the 21st century and only the third since 1950 may also lead to an overactive Atlantic Hurricane season in 2022.
2. (a): **Special Maternity Leave**
- The Centre has decided to grant a 60-day special maternity leave for women Central government employees in case of stillbirth or death of an infant within a few days of birth.
 - The order said that in case an employee has already availed maternity leave till the death of the child, it may be converted into any other kind of leave available in her leave account.
 - A medical certificate would not be insisted in such a case and a special maternity leave of 60 days may be granted.
 - The condition for death of a child soon after birth may be defined as up to 28 days after birth.
 - A baby born with no signs of life at or after 28 weeks of gestation may be defined as stillbirth.
 - The benefit of special maternity leave shall be admissible only to a woman Central government servant with less than two surviving children.
3. (a): **Studentship Program for Ayurveda Research Ken (SPARK) Program** It is the first national-level fellowship for Ayurveda undergraduates. It is an initiative of the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), the Ministry of AYUSH. It aims to support the research ideas of young undergraduate students enrolled in Ayurveda Colleges across India.
4. (b): **Nuakhai** is an annual harvest festival celebrated in Odisha. In Nuakhai, Nua means new and Khai means food. The festival of Nuakhai is celebrated by the farmers after the harvesting of grain. On this festival, Odia

- people, even those living in far-off lands return to their native places to be a part of the celebration.
5. (a): Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has topped amongst all Ministries/Departments for resolving Public Grievances in the ranking report published by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) for the month of August 2022.
UIDAI has been a top performer in the resolution of cases received through the Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS).
6. (b): It prohibits the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale, and use of plastic carry bags whose thickness is less than 75 microns. From December 31, 2022, plastic carry bags whose thickness is less than 120 microns will be banned.
The notification clearly mentioned that plastic or PVC banners/ hoardings should have more than 100 microns in thickness, and non-woven plastic (polypropylene) must be more than 60 GSM (grams per square meter). Non-woven plastic bags have a cloth-like texture but are counted among plastics. Still, plastic or PET bottles, counted among the most recyclable types of plastic, have been left out of the scope of the ban.
7. (b): The strongest tropical storm of 2022, dubbed Super Typhoon 'Hinnamnor', has been barreling across the western Pacific Ocean and is presently hurtling back towards the islands of Japan and South Korea, packing wind speeds of up to 241 kilometers per hour.
8. (b): The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) was launched by United States (US) President Biden in Tokyo on May 23, 2022.
Except for Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar, other Southeast Asian nations are a part of the IPEF. The IPEF has four pillars: Trade; supply chains; clean energy, decarbonization and infrastructure; tax, and anti-corruption.
9. (b): India's first indigenously developed vaccine, "CERVAVAC" for the prevention of cervical cancer was recently launched
The vaccine is based on VLP (virus-like particles), similar to the hepatitis B vaccine
10. (b): The 'One District, One Product (ODOP) was launched by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries Aiming to identify one product per district based on the potential and strength of a district and national priorities. A cluster for that product will be developed in the district and market linkage will be provided for that.
The one district one product launch date is January 24, 2018, by the Uttar Pradesh Government, and due to its success, was later adopted by the Central Government.

SET 02

1. In the which of the following case the supreme court struck down section 66a of the information technology act, 2000 in its entirety, which allowed the government power to arrest and imprison an individual for allegedly "offensive and menacing" online posts, as it was said to be violative of article 19(1)(a)?
(a) Lily Thomas case
(b) Indra Sawhney judgment
(c) M. Nagaraj vs. Union of India
(d) Shreya Singhal v. Union of India
2. Consider the following statements regarding Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)
1. Russian and Chinese are the only two official languages of SCO
2. Varanasi has been selected as the SCO region's first "Tourism and Cultural Capital for 2022-23."
3. SCO Summit of Heads of State will be held in Samarkand, Tajikistan
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3

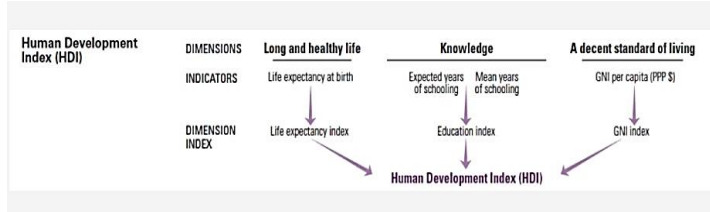
- (c) 1 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3
3. Consider the following statements regarding red-eared slider
1. The red-eared slider is native to the south-eastern USA and Mexico
 2. It is the most invasive and the most commonly traded turtle in the world
 3. It is listed endangered on IUCN List
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3
4. Which of the following are the components of the Human Development Index?
1. Life Expectancy Index
 2. Expected and mean years of schooling
 3. Gross national income per capita
- Select correct code
- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3
5. Consider the following statements regarding Human Development Index
1. It is released by UNDP
 2. this index was topped by Switzerland.
 3. India declined to rank 132 due to a significant decline in gross national income (GNI) per capita
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3
6. Consider the following statements regarding Moxie experiment
1. It aims to produce oxygen from the Martian Carbon dioxide atmosphere.
 2. The Moxie rover is a part of the EXOMARS mission of the European space agency
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. Consider the following statements regarding National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Ltd
1. It is a private limited company set up under the Companies Act, 1956.
 2. It is a wholly-owned company of the Government of India.
 3. It provides a 100% guarantee to Member Lending Institutions under Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3
8. Consider the following statements regarding Inouye Solar Telescope
1. It is the most powerful solar telescope in the world built by NASA which has recently taken the images of the Sun's chromosphere.
 2. It is installed in Kuril Islands
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
9. Consider the following statements regarding QRSAM system
1. It is a long-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) system.
 2. It is primarily designed to provide a protective shield to moving armoured columns of the Army from enemy aerial attacks
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
10. The 103rd Constitutional Amendment Act is related to which one of the following issues?
- (a) Reservation quota for Economically Weaker Section
 - (b) Reforms of Collegium system for appointments of judges
 - (c) Abrogation of Article 370
 - (d) Genesis of GST taxation

Solutions

1. (d): Introduced by the UPA government in 2008, the amendment to the IT Act, 2000, gave the government power to arrest and imprison an individual for allegedly "offensive and

menacing” online posts, and was passed without discussion in Parliament. In the case of *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court struck down Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 in its entirety, and ruled that it was violative of Article 19(1)(a).

2. (a): SCO Summit of **Heads of State** is scheduled to be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on 15-16 September 2022. The Indian city of Varanasi will be the first city to be granted the rotating title of “Cultural and Tourism Capital” of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) region. The title aims to promote people-to-people contacts and tourism among the member states. India will chair SCO from September 2022 to September 2023. Official languages of SCO are- Chinese and Russian.
3. (a): The red-eared slider is native to south-eastern USA and Mexico, but have found their way across the globe including India through trade of exotic animals. The populations are observed in every continent except Antarctica. It is the most popular pet turtle in the United States, is also popular as a pet across the rest of the world, and is the most invasive turtle. It is the most commonly traded turtle in the world. The red-eared slider is included in the list of the world's 100 most invasive species. It is not mentioned in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.
4. (d): The Human Development Index (HDI) is measured by the UNDP. It has 3 parameters –
 - The Life Expectancy Index: Measured by the life expectancy at birth.
 - The Education Index: Measured by the expected years of schooling and the mean years of schooling.
 - The Standard of Living: Measured by the Gross national income per capita income.



5. (a): India’s rank on the Human Development Index has slipped from 130 in 2020 to 132 in 2021, in line with a global fall in HDI scores in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, shows the Human Development Report 2021-22 released recently. **Switzerland remained at the top spot, followed by Norway and Iceland.** HDI is a composite index that measures average achievement in human development taking into account four indicators: life expectancy at birth (Sustainable Development Goal 3); expected years of schooling (SDG 4.3); mean years of schooling (SDG 4.4), and gross national income (GNI) per capita (2017 PPP\$) (SDG 8.5).
6. (a): Mars Oxygen In-Situ Resource Utilization Experiment (MOXIE) NASA is preparing for human exploration of Mars, and MOXIE will demonstrate a way that future explorers might produce oxygen from the Martian atmosphere for propellant and for breathing. The experiment aims to produce oxygen from the Martian carbon dioxide atmosphere. It was launched as part of NASA’s Perseverance rover mission and has been successfully making oxygen from the planet’s carbon-dioxide-rich atmosphere since it landed there in 2021.
7. (d): NCGTC is a private limited company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956 in 2014, established by the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, as a wholly owned company of the Government of India, to act as a common trustee company for multiple credit guarantee funds. ECLGS was rolled out in 2020 as part of the Centre’s Aatmanirbhar package in response to the Covid-19 crisis. The objective was to support small businesses struggling to meet their

operational liabilities due to the imposition of a nationwide lockdown.

A 100% guarantee is provided by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC) to Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) – banks, financial institutions and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs).

8. (a): The Inouye Solar Telescope is the most powerful solar telescope in the world. The image of the Sun's chromosphere taken by the telescope has a resolution of 18 kilometers and captures a region that is 82,500 kilometers across. The chromosphere is the second of the three main layers in the Sun's atmosphere. It is located above the photosphere and below the solar transition region and corona.

The DKIST is funded by National Science Foundation and managed by the National Solar Observatory.

9. (b): Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile system (QRSAM)

It is a short-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) system. The QRSAM weapon ensemble which functions on the move consists of a fully automated command and control system.

It is primarily designed and developed by DRDO to provide a protective shield to moving armored columns of the Army from enemy aerial attacks.

The entire weapon system has been configured on a mobile and maneuverable platform and is capable of providing air defense on the move.

It has been designed for induction into the Army and has a range of 25 to 30 km.

10. (a): 10% Economically Weaker Section (EWS) reservation quota. The Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, 2019 has empowered the state to provide up to 10 percent reservation in education and public employment for economically weaker sections (EWS) of citizens other than the Scheduled Castes (SC), the Scheduled Tribes (ST), and the non-creamy layer of the Other Backward Classes (OBC-NCL). The reservation for the new category is over and above the existing scheme of 15 percent, 7.50 percent, and 27 percent reservations respectively for the SC, ST, and OBC-NCL thus bringing the total reservations to 59.50 percent.

SET 03

1. Consider the following statements
- India has 12 major ports and 212 minor ports
 - Major ports come under in the Union List and Minor ports are in the State List of legislative subjects.
 - The Maritime State Development Council (MSDC) Is the apex advisory body for the coordinated development of major ports and non-major ports of India

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3

2. Consider the following statements regarding Kongka Pass

- The Kongka Pass is located In Sikkim and Forms a passage between China and India.

- It lies on a spur of the Karakoram range that intrudes into the Chang Chenmo Valley

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

3. Consider the following statements regarding Charding Nullah or Demchok River

- It does not form Delta.
- It eventually falls at the mouth of the Satluj River

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

4. Consider the following statements regarding G20

1. The term Troika refers to the grouping of the last three Presidencies within the G20
2. Currently, G20 Troika consists of Indonesia, Italy, and Japan.
3. India will assume the G20 Presidency on 1 December 2022 and will convene the G20 Leaders' Summit for the first time in India in 2023.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

5. Consider the following statements regarding Teakwood

1. India is the world's largest exporter of teak in the form of Roundwood (logs)
2. India will host its maiden World Teak conference in 2025

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

6. Consider the following statements regarding Rubber Production in India

1. India is currently the world's largest producer of natural rubber
2. Kerala accounts for nearly 75% of the total of India's production.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

7. Consider the following statements regarding the National List of Essential Medicine (NLEM)

1. The NLEM was first formulated in 1996
2. the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) caps Drugs listed under NLEM

3. NLEMs are priced based on wholesale price index-based inflation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3

8. Consider the following statements regarding the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority,

1. It is a Statutory body set up under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940
2. It is an attached office of the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

9. Consider the following statements regarding COASTAL REGULATION ZONE, 2011

Type of CRZ	Applicable areas
1. CRZ-I	: Ecological sensitive
2. CRZ-II	: Built-up area
3. CRZ-III	: Rural area
4. CRZ-IV	: Territorial water area

Select the correct code from below:

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 2, 3 and 4 (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

10. Sailesh Nayak committee sometimes seen in the news is associated with-

- (a) Reviewing of defense Procurement regulations
(b) Procurement functions of FCI
(c) Microfinance lending among Self-help groups
(d) Examining issues related to the coastal regulation zone (CRZ) regulations

Solutions

1. (c); India has 12 major ports and 212 non-major ports. Most of the non-major ports are small fishing harbors and only a few of them cater to international shipping. Major ports figure in the Union List and come under the jurisdiction of the Central government. Non-major ports are in the Concurrent List and come under the

respective State governments, but the Centre has overriding legislative and executive powers. In 1997, a Maritime State Development Council (MSDC) was created by executive order, with the Union Minister of Shipping as chairperson and the Ministers in charge of ports of the maritime States/Union

Territories (UTs) as members. The MSDC serves as an apex advisory body for the coordinated development of major ports and non-major ports. The Union Ministry of Shipping provides secretarial services for the MSDC's meetings.

2. (b): Context: India-China Boundary dispute

The Kongka Pass or Kongka La is a low mountain pass on the Line of Actual Control between India and China in eastern Ladakh. It lies on a spur of the Karakoram range that intrudes into the Chang Chenmo Valley adjacent to the disputed Aksai Chin region.

3. (d): The **Charding Nullah**, is traditionally known as the **Lhari stream** and called the **Demchok River** by China. The river serves as the *de facto* border between China and India in the southern part of the Demchok sector.

The entire area surrounding the Charding Nullah is referred to as the Changthang plateau. It consists of rocky mountain heights of the Ladakh and Kailas ranges.

At the bottom of the valley, the Charding Nullah branches into a 2 km-wide delta as it joins the Indus River.

4. (c): Troika refers to the top grouping within the G20 that consists of the current, previous, and upcoming presidencies (Indonesia, India, and Brazil). Hence, statement 1 is not correct. During the Presidency, India, Indonesia and Brazil would form the troika. This would be the first time when the troika would consist of three developing countries and emerging economies, providing them a greater voice.

G20 Leaders' Summit on 30-31 October 2022 will be hosted by Indonesia under the overall theme of "Recover Together Recover Stronger" India has today joined the G20 Troika which consists of Indonesia, Italy, and India - the current, previous, and incoming G20 Presidencies, respectively.

India will assume the G20 Presidency on 1 December 2022 from Indonesia and will convene the G20 Leaders' Summit for the first time in India in 2023.

5. (b): India will host its maiden World Teak conference in 2025 with Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI) and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change India is the world's largest importer of teak in the form of Roundwood (logs). The country consumes half of the total harvested teak globally, a 2015-report by Teaknet, an international forum of institutions and individuals working on teak, said.

India's major teak imports are made from Myanmar, countries in Western Africa, Thailand, and Central America.

6. (b): Status: India is currently the world's fifth largest producer of natural rubber while it also remains the second biggest consumer of the material globally. About 40% of India's total natural rubber consumption is currently met through imports. Kerala accounts for nearly 75% of the total of India's production.

Rubber Board India Headquarters: Kottayam Kerla

7. (d): National List of Essential Medicine (NLEM): The NLEM was first formulated in 1996 and was revised in 2003, 2011, and 2015.

The price of medicines on the list is controlled by the Centre and cannot be changed by the companies themselves.

Drugs listed under NLEM – also known as scheduled drugs – will be cheaper because the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) caps medicine prices and changes only based on wholesale price index-based inflation.

Typically, once NLEM is released, the department of pharmaceuticals under the ministry of chemicals and fertilizers adds them to the Drug Price Control Order, after which NPPA fixes the price.

NLEM plays an important role in ensuring the accessibility of affordable quality medicines at all levels of healthcare.

8. (d): NPPA is an independent body set up in 1997 under the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers.

It acts as an independent Regulator for the pricing of drugs and ensures the availability and accessibility of medicines at affordable prices.

The functions of NPPA include fixation and revision of prices of scheduled drugs (those medicines included in Schedule I of the Drug Price Control Order-DPCO which are subject to price control and not all drugs) and formulations, monitoring of prices of decontrolled drugs and formulations, implementation and enforcement of the provisions of DPCO in accordance with the powers delegated, monitoring the availability of drugs, identify shortages, taking remedial steps, etc.

Therefore, the correct answer is (d).

9. (d): The Ministry of Environment and Forests first issued a Coastal Regulation Zone notification in February 1991 to regulate activities in the coastal area under section 3 of India's Environment Protection Act, 1986. (MoEF) with the aim to provide comprehensive measures for the protection and conservation of our coastal environment. It classifies coastal areas into four categories- CRZ I- IV. While the first three zones are similar

to the earlier classification, CRZ IV comprises territorial waters.

In the 1991 Notification, the CRZ area was classified as CRZ-I (ecological sensitive), CRZ-II (built-up area), CRZ-III (Rural area), and CRZ-IV (water area). In the 2011 Notification, the above classification is retained. The only change is the inclusion of CRZ-IV, which includes the water areas up to the territorial waters and the tidally influenced water bodies.

	CRZ I	CRZ II	CRZ III	CRZ IV
AKA	Ecologically sensitive areas	Shore line areas	Undisturbed area	Territorial area
Where?	Areas that lies between low and high tide line (HTL)	Areas that have been developed close to the shoreline.	Rural and urban localities which fall outside I and II	Areas that lies between Low Tide Line and 12 Nautical Miles seaward.
What permitted/prohibited?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No constructions within 500m of HTL. Exploration of natural gas and salt extraction permitted. 	Unauthorized structures prohibited	Only certain activities related to agriculture allowed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fishing and allied activities permitted. Solid waste should not be dumped.

10. (d): The Shailesh Nayak Committee was constituted in 2014 with the mandate of examining the issues of the coastal states and union territories of the country with respect to the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2011

SET 04

1. Consider the following statements regarding Atomic clock
- Atomic clocks combine a quartz crystal oscillator with an ensemble of atoms to achieve greater stability.
 - It uses radioactive decay to capture the time interval and hence they are more accurate than quartz clocks.
 - It measures time by monitoring the resonant frequency of atoms.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3
2. National Logistics Policy 2022 aims to trim the country's logistics costs from as much as 13-14

- percent of its GDP to a single digit over the next few years. Which among the following ministry has recently formulated National Logistics Policy 2022?
- (a) NITI Ayog
(b) 15th finance commission
(c) Ministry of Commerce and Industries
(d) Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
3. Greater Nagalim is often seen in the news in the context of the Nga Peace process. Which among the following areas are included in this:
- Manipur
 - Assam
 - Arunachal Pradesh
 - Tripura
 - Some regions of Myanmar

Select the correct code from below:

- (a) 1,2,4 (b) 2,3,5
(c) 1,3,4,5 (d) 1,2,3,5

4. Consider the following statements regarding Green Fins Hub:

1. It aims to protect coral reefs by promoting sustainable diving and snorkeling.
2. It provides the only internationally recognized environmental standards for marine tourism.
3. It is launched by World Wilf Life Fund and an international maritime organization

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3

5. Consider the following statements regarding East Asia Summit

1. It was Established in 1997 for having a strategic dialogue on political, security, and economic challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region.
2. India is one of the founding members of the East Asia Summit.
3. It is always chaired by the ASEAN member.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3

6. Consider the following pairs

1. Global Wage Report-World Bank

2. Global Gender Gap report -World Economic Forum

Which of the pair/s given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

7. Which of the following pair is incorrect?

Color Revolution Country

- (a) Jasmine Revolution Tunisia
(b) Orange Revolution Iran
(c) Tulip Revolution Kyrgyzstan
(d) Rose Revolution Georgia

8. SOVA virus, Anubis and Roaming Mantis recently seen in the news is-

- (a) Exoplanets
(b) Cryptocurrency
(c) Trojan mobile banking viruses
(d) Mini satellites

9. Which of the following article of the constitution prohibits Forceful religious conversion,

- (a) Article 23 (b) Article 24
(c) Article 25 (d) Article 28

10. Which among the following are part of G4 nations

1. Japan
2. Brazil
3. India
4. South Korea

Select the correct code from below:

- (a) 1,3 and 4 (b) 2,3 and 4
(c) 1,2 and 3 (d) 1,2,3 and 4

Solutions

1. (d): Atomic clocks combine a quartz crystal oscillator with an ensemble of atoms to achieve greater stability.

Atomic clock measures time by monitoring the resonant frequency of atoms. The atom clocks use radioactive decay to capture the time interval and hence they are very accurate.

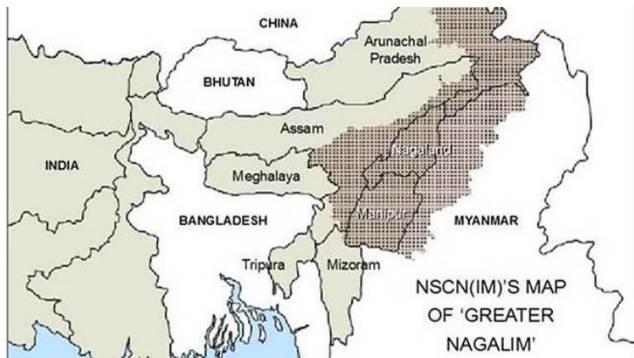
2. (c): National Logistics Policy 2022 aims to ensure seamless movement of goods and services across the country and cut elevated logistics costs, often considered the biggest structural bottleneck for both external and internal trade

in India. National Logistics Policy 2022 aims to trim the country's logistics costs from as much as 13-14 per cent of its GDP to a single digit over the next few years. Parent Ministry: The National Logistics Policy formulated by the Commerce and Industry Ministry.

3. (d): Context: The Nagaland government has decided to institute a committee comprising Opposition leaders to pursue the lingering Naga peace agreement and the Naga political issue with the Centre.

The NSCN-IM has been demanding a separate constitution and flag for the Nagas and the

assimilation of all Naga inhabited areas in **Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and Manipur and Northwest Myanmar**. The talks with the Centre have continued for more than 23 years.



4. (a): Green Fins Hub United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the UK-based charity Reef-World Foundation launched the Green Fins Hub. Green Fins Hub is a global digital platform for diving and snorkeling operators. The Green Fins Hub is the first-ever global marine tourism industry platform. It aims to protect coral reefs by promoting sustainable diving and snorkeling. It provides the only internationally recognized environmental standards for marine tourism.

5. (b): East Asia Summit
Established in 2005, it is a forum of 18 regional leaders for strategic dialogue and cooperation on the key political, security, and economic challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region. India is one of the founding members of the East Asia Summit.

It comprises the ten member states of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) along with 8 other countries namely Australia, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the USA. It is an ASEAN-centred forum so it can only be chaired by an ASEAN member.

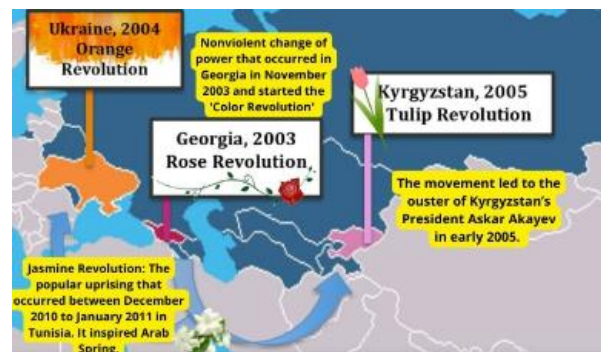
6. (b): The Global Gender Gap report is released by WEF. The index benchmarks the current state and evolution of gender parity across four key dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment. The global Wage Report is published by the International Labour Organization (ILO), which

mainly focuses on the current wage trends worldwide.

7. (b): Colour revolutions refer to a series of uprisings that first began in former communist nations in Eastern Europe in the early 2000s, but are also used in reference to popular movements in the Middle East and Asia.

Most have involved large-scale mobilization on the streets, with demands for free elections or regime change, and calls for the removal of authoritarian leaders

- Orange Revolution: It refers to a series of protests that occurred in Ukraine between November 2004 and January 2005
- Tulip Revolution: Also called the First Kyrgyz Revolution, the movement led to the ouster of Kyrgyzstan's President Askar Akayev in early 2005
- Jasmine Revolution: The popular uprising that occurred between December 2010 to January 2011 in Tunisia was in response to the underlying corruption, unemployment, inflation and lack of political freedoms in the country
- Rose Revolution: The Rose Revolution in Georgia, following the disputed 2003 election, led to the overthrow of Eduard Shevardnadze and replacing him with Mikhail Saakashvili after new elections were held in March 2004. The Kmara civic resistance movement supported the Rose Revolution.



8. (c): The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) has issued a detailed safety advisory against a new mobile banking 'Trojan' virus, SOVA, prowling in Indian cyberspace, which stealthily encrypts an android phone for

while raising awareness about the importance of cleanliness.

2. It is launched by the Indian Coast guard.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

6. Consider the following statements regarding Non Alignment movement

1. The first NAM Summit Conference took place in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1961
2. The 'Ten Principles of Bandung' are the main goals and objectives of the policy of NAM.
3. Yugoslavia, India and South Africa are three founding members of NAM

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3

7. Consider the following statements regarding Rabies

1. Rabies is caused by lyssaviruses,
2. Rabies virus is a double-stranded DNA virus
3. One-third of global rabies deaths are recorded in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3

8. Consider the following statements regarding Maharatna's status

1. Maharatna's status would be issued by the Department of Public Enterprises, under the Ministry of Finance.

2. The status also allows Board to undertake mergers and acquisitions in India and abroad, subject to a ceiling.

3. Recently REC Ltd has become 12th Maharatna in the country.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3

9. The G4 nations are a group of four countries including India which support each other's bids for permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council. Which of the following is not a part of G4 Nations?

- (a) Brazil (b) Germany
(c) Japan (d) South Korea

10. Consider the following statements regarding the erstwhile Mid-Day Meal Scheme or PM POSHAN scheme

1. PM POSHAN Scheme aims to provide one hot cooked meal in Government and Government-aided schools from 2021-22 to 2024-25
2. This is a Centrally-Sponsored Scheme that covers all school children studying in Classes I-VIII of Government and Government-Aided Schools.
3. Nutri-gardens will be developed in schools
4. Supplementary nutrition items will be provided to children in aspirational districts and districts having a high prevalence of Anaemia.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1,2 and 4 (b) 2,3 and 4
(c) 2 and 3 (d) 1,2,3 and 4

Solutions

1. (a): It has been released by the International Energy Agency, the International Renewable Energy Agency, and the UN Climate Change High-Level Champions.

The Breakthrough Agenda, as the commitment is known, aims to align countries' actions and coordinate investment to scale up deployment and drive down costs across five key sectors -

power, road transport, steel, hydrogen, and agriculture.

Together, these sectors account for nearly 60 percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions today and could deliver the bulk of the emission reductions needed by 2030 in a pathway that would make a significant contribution to limiting global warming to a

maximum of 1.5 degrees Celsius, in line with the Paris Agreement goals.

2. **(b): Asian Palm Oil Alliance**

It is formed by five major palm oil importing countries, including- India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal. It was formed based on the idea to gain collective bargaining power and make imports sustainable.

Asia accounts for around 40% of the global palm oil consumption while Europe accounts for 12% of the palm oil trade. Indonesia and Malaysia are the biggest palm oil exporters in the world. India is the largest importer of palm oil in Asia, accounting for 15% of global imports, followed by China (9%), Pakistan (4%), and Bangladesh (2%).

3. **(a): The M.A. Khader committee on school education** was set up by the government against the backdrop of the Right to Education Act to study various aspects of school education from preschool to higher secondary. The first report of the Khader committee mostly pertained to structural changes in school education such as the merger of the three directorates under the department. The second report focuses on academic matters.

4. **(c): ISRO tests hybrid motors successfully: Key Points**
 The ISRO Liquid Propulsion Systems Center (LPSC) provided support for the test. Liquid oxygen (LOX) served as the oxidizer and hydroxyl-terminated polybutadiene (HTPB) served as the fuel for the motor. A hybrid motor employs solid fuel and a liquid oxidizer, as opposed to solid-solid or liquid-liquid combinations. It was explained that using liquids makes throttling easier and that managing the flow rate of LOX makes it possible to restart. Both HTPB and LOX are environmentally friendly, but LOX is safer to handle, according to ISRO.

5. **(a):** It is a nationwide flagship campaign, initially for one month, to clean sea shores of plastic & other waste material, while raising awareness about the importance of cleanliness. It was subsequently extended as a Pan-India round-

the-year campaign to cover rivers and other water bodies as well.

Since the launch of 'Puneet Sagar Abhiyan', over 100 tons of plastic waste have been collected from nearly 1,900 locations by more than 12 lakh NCC cadets.

The National Cadet Corps (NCC) had in 2021, launched 'Puneet Sagar Abhiyan'. Recently National Cadet Corps and United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to tackle the issue of plastic pollution and achieve the universal goal of clean water bodies through 'Puneet Sagar Abhiyan'

6. **(a): About the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**

The basic concept for the group originated in 1955 during discussions that took place at the Asia-Africa Bandung Conference held in Indonesia.

Ten Principles of Bandung' were proclaimed at that Conference which were adopted later as the main goals and objectives of the policy of non-alignment

The first NAM Summit Conference took place in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1961 under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and Sukarno of Indonesia which sought to remain independent or neutral.

NAM does not have a formal constitution or permanent secretariat and its administration is non-hierarchical and rotational.

Additional info:

It is the second-largest international organization after the United Nations with 120 member states. It was founded during the collapse of the colonial system and the independence struggles of the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and other regions of the world and at the height of the Cold War.

7. **(c): Rabies** is a zoonotic viral disease caused by the Rabies virus, of the Lyssavirus genus, within the family Rhabdoviridae. It is a single-stranded Ribonucleic Acid (RNA) virus that is present in the saliva of a rabid animal (dog, cat,

monkey, etc). Rabies is 100% fatal but 100% vaccine-preventable. 33% of global rabies deaths are recorded in India.

8. (d): An order to the effect of the 'Maharatna' status would be issued by the Department of Public Enterprises, under the Ministry of Finance. The Board of a 'Maharatna' CPSE can make equity investments to undertake financial joint ventures and wholly-owned subsidiaries. It can also undertake mergers and acquisitions in India and abroad, subject to a ceiling of 15% of the Net Worth of the concerned CPSE, limited to ₹5,000 crores in one project. Power sector-focussed NBFC REC Ltd has been accorded the status of Maharatna central public sector enterprise (CPSE). It has become the 12th company to attain the Maharatna status
9. (d): The G4 nations, comprising Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan, are four countries that support each other's bids for permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council. the G4's bids are often opposed by the Uniting for Consensus movement which includes South Korea. Uniting for Consensus (UfC), nicknamed the Coffee Club, is a movement that developed in the 1990s in opposition to the possible expansion of permanent seats in the United Nations Security Council. It includes Italy South Korea Argentina, Canada, Spain, Mexico, Turkey, Pakistan, and Malta.
10. (b): CCEA had cleared the PM POSHAN Scheme for providing one hot cooked meal in Government and Government-aided schools from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

This is a Centrally-Sponsored Scheme which covers all school children studying in Classes I-VIII of Government, Government-Aided Schools. The earlier name of the scheme was 'National Scheme for Mid Day Meal in Schools' popularly known as Mid Day Meal Scheme.

Highlights:

1. The concept of TithiBhojan will be encouraged extensively. TithiBhojan is a community participation program in which people provide special food to children on special occasions/festivals. Children coming from affluent families will be urged to bring two lunch boxes so that nutritious food can be provided to needy kids. It will be completely voluntary,"
2. The government is promoting the development of School Nutrition Gardens in schools to give children first-hand experience with nature and gardening. The harvest of these gardens is used in the scheme providing additional micronutrients. School Nutrition Gardens have already been developed in more than 3 lakh schools.
3. Social Audit of the scheme is made mandatory in all the districts.
4. Special provision is made for providing supplementary nutrition items to children in aspirational districts and districts with a high prevalence of Anemia.
5. Cooking competitions will be encouraged at all levels right from the village level to the national level to promote ethnic cuisine and innovative menus based on locally available ingredients and vegetables.

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