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National and International News

India-Mauritius Relations

Why in news?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be awarded Mauritius' highest honor, the Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean, by Mauritian Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam.

Key Points:

- Mauritius is a former British and French colony that gained independence from British rule in 1968.
- Both countries share a historical connection dating back to the 19th century when Indian indentured laborers were brought to the island under British rule.
- Political and Diplomatic Engagement: Diplomatic relation was established in 1948.
- Mauritius has consistently supported India's position in international forums, including at the United Nations (UN) and the Commonwealth.
- **Economic and Trade Relations:**
 - Trade: It has grown in the last 18 years, from USD 206.76 million in 2005-06 to USD 851.13 million in 2023-24.
 - Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA): The first such agreement between India and an African nation, granting preferential market access.
 - Foreign Direct Investment (FDI): Mauritius was the second largest source of FDI into India for FY 2023-24, after Singapore.
 - Since the signing of the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC), FDI inflows from Mauritius have dropped from USD 15.72 bn in 2016-17 to USD 6.13 bn in 2022-23.
- Vision SAGAR and Regional Growth: India's Vision SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) emphasizes regional cooperation and maritime security.

Key facts about Mauritius:

- Mauritius is an **island country in the Indian Ocean, located off the eastern coast of Africa.**
- It is volcanic in origin and is almost entirely surrounded by coral reefs.
- **Capital: Port Louis**
- **Languages:** English, French, Mauritian Creole, Bhojpuri,



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	<p>Hindi, Chinese, Marathi.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its outlying territories are Rodrigues Island, situated about 340 miles (550 km) eastward, the Cargados Carajos Shoals, 250 miles (400 km) northeastward, and the Agalega Islands, 580 miles (930 km) northward from the main island.
Election Commission of India	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amid controversy over duplicate voter ID card numbers, the Election Commission invited political party leaders for a discussion to "strengthen electoral processes." <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Election Commission of India is a permanent and independent constitutional authority, established under Article 324 of the Indian Constitution. • Primary role: ECI is responsible for conducting elections to the Parliament, state legislatures, and the offices of the President and Vice President of India. • It does not oversee elections for urban local bodies like municipalities and panchayats, which the State Election Commissions manage. • Functions and jurisdiction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advisory role: ECI advises the President or Governor on matters related to the disqualification of members of Parliament and state legislatures, especially in cases involving corrupt electoral practices. ○ Quasi-Judicial role: ECI can disqualify candidates for failing to submit election expense accounts and resolve disputes regarding the recognition of political parties and the allocation of election symbols. ○ Administrative role: ECI handles the delimitation of electoral constituencies, voter registration, updating of electoral rolls, and scheduling of election dates. ○ It also ensures adherence to the Model Code of Conduct during elections and monitors political campaign expenditures. • Composition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Structure: Initially, ECI had only one member, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC). In 1989, due to the reduction of the voting age from 21 to 18, two additional Election Commissioners were appointed, making it a three-member body.
The Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Immigration and Foreigners Bill, introduced in the Lok Sabha, seeks to consolidate four existing interlinked laws, strengthen the current regulations for foreign visitors, and increase penalties for violations.



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	<p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The proposed legislation aims to streamline immigration laws, bringing them in line with modern security needs and regulatory requirements. It will replace outdated laws such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 ○ The Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 ○ The Foreigners Act, 1946 ○ The Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, 2000 ● The Bill introduces stricter penalties, clearer regulations for educational and medical institutions, and a more defined framework for foreigner registration, visa issuance, and deportation procedures. ● Key Features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It obligates the mandatory registration of foreigners upon their arrival and places restrictions on movement, name changes, and stays in protected/restricted areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The burden of proof is on individuals to establish that they are not foreigners. ■ Entering India without valid passport/visa: Up to 5 years in prison and a fine of up to Rs 5 lakh. ■ Entry, stay, or exit with forged documents: 2-7 years in prison and a fine of Rs 1-10 lakh. ■ Overstaying, violating visa conditions, or accessing restricted areas: Up to 3 years in prison, a fine up to Rs 3 lakh, or both. ○ Reporting requirements: Educational institutions, universities, hospitals, and nursing homes must report foreigners to the registration officer. ○ Carrier accountability: Carriers transporting foreigners without valid documents will have to pay a fine up to Rs 5 lakh and failure to pay penalty may lead to the potential seizure of transport. ○ If any foreigner's entry has been refused, he shall be handed over to the transport carrier by the Immigration Officer, who is responsible for the individual's removal from India without delay. ○ It empowers immigration officers to arrest such individuals without a warrant. ○ Government authority: The bill also grants the central government increased authority to regulate the movement of foreigners, including the power to restrict entry, prevent departure, and prohibit access to specific areas.
Accredited Social Health	Why in news?



Activists (ASHAs)

- Union Health Minister J. P. Nadda announced that Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) will receive increased remuneration.

Key Points:

- ASHA is a trained female community health activist.
- The ASHA program was conceived and funded by the Indian National Rural Health Mission (NHRM) in an effort to promote public health awareness amongst local, rural populations, and increase the utilization and accountability of existing health services.
- Selected from the community itself and accountable to it, the ASHA will be trained to work as an interface between the community and the public health system.
- The ASHA scheme is presently in place in all States/UTs (except Goa).
- The states are mandated to employ at least one ASHA worker per every 1000 people.
- They receive basic public health training and are equipped with a standard drug kit, which allows them to deliver first-contact healthcare.
- They are chosen through a rigorous process of selection involving various community groups, self-help groups, Anganwadi Institutions, Block Nodal officer, District Nodal officer, the village Health Committee, and the Gram Sabha.

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)

Why in news?

- Government has approved the continuation of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS) till 2025-26 with total outlay of Rs. 69,515.71 crore for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26.

Key Points:

- A scheme of the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, PMFBY is an insurance service for farmers for their yields, launched in 2016.**
- The new Crop Insurance Scheme is in line with the **One Nation One Scheme theme.**
- The PMFBY replaced the previous two schemes: **the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and the Modified NAIS.**
- **Objectives:**
 - To provide insurance coverage and financial support to the farmers in the event of failure of any of the notified crops as a result of natural calamities, pests and diseases.
 - To stabilise the income of farmers to ensure their continuance in farming.
 - To encourage farmers to adopt innovative and



	<p>modern agricultural practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To ensure flow of credit to the agriculture sector.
<p>Soil Fertility Mapping</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Soil & Land Use Survey of India (SLUSI), under Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, is generating district/village-wise digital soil fertility maps through geo-spatial techniques using Soil Health Card (SHC) data. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Soil Health Cards (SHC) are generated under the Government of India's Soil Health & Fertility Scheme. ● Soil Health & Fertility Scheme promotes Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) through the balanced use of chemical fertilizers (including secondary and micronutrients), organic manures, and bio-fertilizers. ● Soil Samples are processed and analyzed for parameters such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ pH ○ Electrical conductivity (EC) ○ Organic carbon ○ Available nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and sulphur ○ Micronutrients like zinc, copper, iron, manganese, and boron. ● SHC Provides Farmers with information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Soil nutrient status (low, medium, high) ○ Recommendations for appropriate nutrient dosages to improve soil health. ○ Soil Fertility Maps have been generated for 351 villages across 34 districts in Maharashtra. ○ Soil Fertility Maps provide detailed spatial data on soil nutrient composition, helping farmers apply fertilizers and soil amendments more effectively. ● Benefits of Fertility Maps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prevent overuse or underuse of fertilizers. ○ Optimize economic outcomes for farmers by maximizing returns with fewer inputs, increasing profitability. ○ Geospatial Techniques such as remote sensing and AI-based tools are used in soil fertility mapping. ○ Soil Sampling Points are geo-coded using GPS, and each sample is assigned a unique QR Code, which is retained during the analysis in soil testing labs.



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