



**VAJIRAM & RAVI**  
Institute for IAS Examination

# THE RECITALS

Current Affairs (SEPTEMBER 2022)

## THE RECITALS AS A GAME CHANGER IN PRELIMS 2022

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- India Ranks 132 In UNDP's HDI
- Ban On Export Of Broken Rice
- Civil Servants Right To Free Speech
- Kartavya Path
- CSR Funding to NGOs
- Listing Of Constitution Bench
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- King Charles III Proclaimed Britain's Monarch
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- India Stays Out Of Indo-Pacific Trade Pillar
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- Cheetahs Reintroduced To Indian Wildlife After 70 Years

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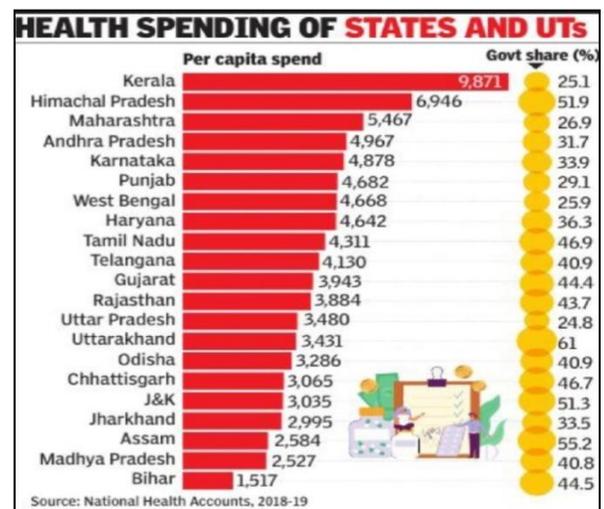
# Govt. Health Spend Falls As Percentage Of GDP

- The latest National Health Accounts (2018-19) reveal that public health expenditure as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), after rising steadily from 2004-05 to 2017-18, fell to 1.28% in 2018-19 from 1.35% in 2017-18.
- The **Total Health Expenditure (THE)** in 2018-19 was Rs 5.96 lakh crore in which government spending was **Rs 2.42 lakh crore**, which is **Rs 1,815 per capita**.
  - Government's share in THE was highest in Uttarakhand at 61% and Assam at over 55%, while lowest in UP and Kerala at about 25%.
  - Per capita spending is highest in Kerala, while lowest in Bihar.
- Meanwhile, out-of-pocket spending on health stood at **Rs 2,155 per capita**.
  - So, the government expenditure as a share of THE in 2018-19 stood at **40.6%**, the corresponding share of out-of-pocket expenditure was higher at **48.2%** — nearly half of all health spending.

TRENDS IN GOVT SPENDING AS % OF GDP	
2018-19	1.28
2017-18	1.35
2016-17	1.20
2015-16	1.18
2014-15	1.13
2013-14	1.15

## Other Key Highlights

- Decline In Out-Of-Pocket Expenditure**
  - The NHA 2018-19 estimates show a continuous decline in out-of-pocket expenditure as a share of **Total Health Expenditure (THE)** from 64.2% to 48.2% between 2013-14 to 2018-19.
  - The report highlights that the **Social Security Expenditure** on health has also increased as a share of THE from 6% to 9.6% during this period.
  - Government Health Expenditure as a share of THE has also increased from 28.6% to 40.6% between this period.
- Health Outcomes Are Not Directly Correlated To Per Capita Spending By State**
  - The report showed that J&K had indicators nearly as good as those of Kerala, Himachal or Maharashtra with less than half the spending.
  - Tamil Nadu too achieved similar outcomes with much lower expenditure.
  - It shows that often where total health expenditure is high, the bulk is borne by people out of their own pockets, as in Kerala and Maharashtra.
  - However, in Himachal and J&K, the government accounts for more than half the total spending on health and 47% in Tamil Nadu too.
- Spending Is Necessary, But Spending Alone Is Not Sufficient**
  - States with the least per capita spend — Bihar, MP and Assam in that order — have very poor health indices, which underlines that spending is necessary.
  - However, Bihar does better on most indices than many states with higher levels of spending, showing that spending alone is not sufficient.
- Increased Public Spending On Health**
  - Almost all states have increased public spending on health from abysmal levels in 2004-05.
  - Assam had the highest jump in share of public spending in the total health expenditure between 2004-05 and 2018.
  - J&K saw the lowest increase in this period.



- **Private Health Insurance –**

- ✓ Private health insurance expenditure forms only Rs 39,201 crore — 6.57% of the total health spending and has been stagnating for years.
- ✓ Experts say that private insurance firms must relax the rigid conditions and reduce inequities to penetrate the market.

#### **National Health Accounts (NHA)**

- It is a process through which countries monitor the flow of money in their health sector.
- WHO has been coordinating efforts at the global level to produce those estimates for every country.
- It is published by **National Health Systems Resource Centre** under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- NHA 2018-19 is the **6<sup>th</sup> round** in the series of annual Health Accounts for India for 20 large states.

#### **Comparing India's Government Health Expenditure With Other Countries'**

- The average for OECD countries in 2018 was 8.8% of GDP while the healthcare expenditure in the developed countries like the US was 16.9%.
- China – 5%, Germany - 11.25%, France - 11.2% and Japan - 10.9%.

#### **Way Ahead**

- **Increasing Public Spending On Health:** An efficient and equitable health system can't be developed without adequate public financing.
  - ✓ The *National Health Policy (2017)* recommended that the **government expenditure on health should be increased to 2.5% of GDP by 2025.**
- **Improve Doctor-to-Patient Ratio:** As of February 2021, India's doctor-to-population ratio stood at **1:1404**, while the WHO recommends the doctor-to-population ratio to be **1:1000**.
  - ✓ For people in the rural India who are completely dependent on government healthcare facilities, the doctor to patient ratio is abysmally low with **1:10,926** doctors.
- **Optimizing the use of technology:** Technology-enabled community health workers, nurses and other frontline care providers can perform many functions in primary care.

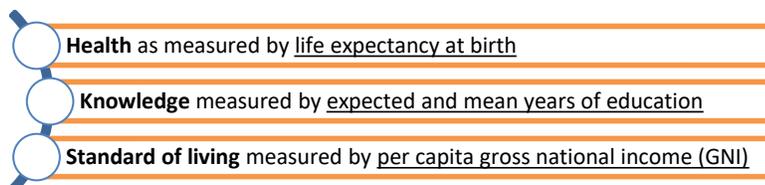


## **India Ranks 132 In UNDP's HDI**

- According to the Human Development Index (HDI) 2021, India ranks 132 out of 191 countries, following a decline in its score. The decline is consistent with the global trend since the outbreak of COVID-19.
- The Index is part of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) recently issued Human Development Report (HDR) 2021-2022.

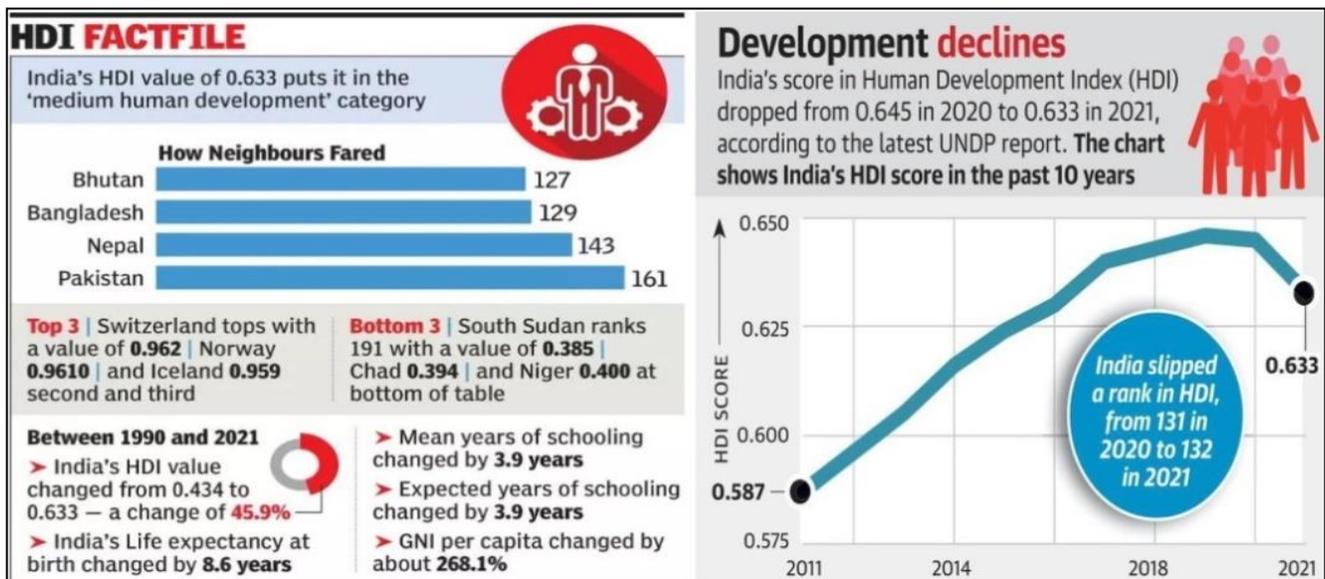
#### **Human Development Index (HDI)**

- It is a statistical composite index (first published in 1990 by UNDP), which measures average achievement of a country in 3 basic dimensions -



- It was developed by Pakistani economist **Mahbub ul Haq** and is now used to assess a country's development as part of the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report (UNDP-HDR).
  - **HDR presents:**
    - ✓ Human Development Index (HDI)
    - ✓ Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI),
    - ✓ Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI),
    - ✓ Gender Inequality Index (GII) since 2010 and
    - ✓ **Gender Development Index (GDI)** since 2014.
- These were launched to track **poverty, inequality and gender empowerment** across different dimensions of human development.
- HDI also embodies **Amartya Sen's "capabilities" approach** to understand human well-being, which emphasizes the importance of ends (like a decent standard of living) over means (like income per capita).

### Human Development Report 2021-2022



- According to the recent report, global progress is reversing, as the 'Human Development' has fallen for two years in a row (2020 and 2021).
- Globally, nine out of ten countries' human development performance has slipped due to multiple crises such as COVID-19, war in Ukraine and environmental challenges.
  - ✓ This indicates that global human development has stalled for the first time in **32 years**.
- A significant contributor to the HDI's recent decline is a global decline in life expectancy, which has fallen from 72.8 years in 2019 to 71.4 years in 2021.
- The latest HDR highlights that stress, sadness, anger and worry have been increasing over the last decade and are now at record levels as the new normal takes shape.
- The world is still not transitioning to a post-Covid-19 build-back-better scenario.
- On the contrary, **developing countries across the globe are entering a period of sharp social, political and economic divergence**, adversely affecting the most vulnerable and increasing gender inequality (which increased 6.7% globally).
- **Asian Region:** At 73 and with an index value of 0.782, **Sri Lanka emerged** as the best performer in the Indian sub-continent. It was followed by China (79 and 0.768), Bhutan (127 and 0.666), Bangladesh (129 and 0.661), **India (132 and 0.633)**, Nepal (143 and 0.602) and Pakistan (161 and 0.544)

## India's Performance In 2021

- India is **ranked 132 out of 191 countries** in the 2021 HDR's HDI. In the 2020 HDI, India was ranked 130th out of 189 countries.
  - India's HDI value fell owing to a **drop in life expectancy** from 69.7 to 67.2 years.
  - In 2020, too, India recorded a decline in its HDI value (0.642) in comparison to the pre-Covid level of 2019 (0.645).

	India	World Average
<b>HDI value</b>	<b>0.633</b> (0.642 in 2020)	0.732
<b>Life expectancy at birth</b>	67.2 years	71.4 years
<b>Expected years of schooling</b>	11.9 years	12.8 years
<b>Mean years of schooling</b>	6.7 years	8.6 years
<b>Gross national income per capita (2017 PPP)</b>	\$6,590	\$16,752.

- According to the GII, India ranks **122** out of 170 countries, with a value of **0.490**.
  - This indicates that India's GII value **improved slightly** in the latest report compared to the 2020 index (0.490 vs 0.493), despite gender inequality worsening between 2019 and 2020.
  - The GII measures inequality in achievement between women and men in three dimensions - **Reproductive health, Empowerment and the Labour market**.

Country (HDI rank)	India (#132)	World
Maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births)	122	225
Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19)	17	43
Share of seats in parliament (% held by women)	13	26
Female population with at least some secondary education (% ages 25 and older)	42	64
Labour force participation rate (% ages 15 and older)	19	46
<b>GI</b>	<b>0.490</b>	<b>0.495</b>

Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)	Gender Development Index			Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index			
Country (HDI rank)	India	Country (HDI rank)	India (#132)	World	Country (HDI rank)	India (#132)	World
Population in severe MPI (in %)	8.8	GDI	0.849	0.958	What happens to HDI when adjusted for inequality	Falls by 25%	Falls by 19%
Population vulnerable to MPI (in %)	19.3	GNI per capita for women (in 2017 PPP \$)	2,277	12,241	Income share held by poorest 40% of	20%	18%
Population living below income poverty line (%) (PPP \$1.90 a day)	22.5	GNI per capita for men (in 2017 PPP \$)	10,633	21,210	Income share held by the richest 1%	22%	17%

## Inference

- According to UNDP, comparing rankings across countries is inaccurate because the HDI was calculated for 189 countries in 2020 and 191 countries this year.
- Despite the decline in India's HDI value, it continues to outperform the average human development in South Asia.
- Since 1990, India's HDI value has been steadily catching up to the global average, indicating a faster rate of progress in human development than the global average.



# Ban On Export Of Broken Rice

The government recently imposed a **complete ban on export of broken rice**. Initially, it imposed a 20% export duty on all **non-basmati rice except parboiled rice (ie raw (white) and broken rice)**. Later, in another notification, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry imposed a blanket ban on broken rice exports as well.

## Parboiled and Broken Rice

- Rice is derived from milling of paddy grain produced by farmers. Paddy typically has 20-21% **husk** (the inedible covering of the grain) and 10-11% **bran** (the brown outer layer of the edible kernel).
- What remains after removal of the husk and bran is the white raw rice that constitutes 68-69% of paddy. The milled rice, in turn, has both whole and broken grains.
- **Parboiling** is a process where the paddy is soaked in water, steamed and dried while retaining its outer husk. It results in the rice becoming harder with less breakage on milling.
- The parboiled rice exported from India contains 5-15% broken grains. In raw rice, the broken grains are normally up to 25%. It is the rice having 100% broken grains whose exports have been prohibited.

## India's Rice Exports

- India accounts for a 40% share in the global rice trade of around 50 million tonnes.
- There are **4 categories** of rice exports.

*basmati rice*

*parboiled non-basmati*

*broken non-basmati*

*raw (white) non-basmati*

- Out of these, exports in the case of two – **basmati rice and parboiled non-basmati rice** – are still freely allowed. The curbs are only for the other two: **raw (white) and broken non-basmati rice**.
- Together, basmati (4 million tonnes) and parboiled rice (7.4 million tonnes) accounted for 54% of **India's total rice exports of 21.2 million tonnes in 2021-22**.
- The restrictions apply only in respect of the balance 9.83 mt (3.89 mt of broken non-basmati + 5.94 mt of raw non-basmati rice).
  - ✓ Shipments of non-parboiled non-basmati rice will henceforth attract 20% duty.

## Reasons For The Restrictions

- **High Increase In Exports**
  - ✓ In 2021-22, India exported about 3.9 million tonnes of broken rice. Total broken rice exports grew over three-fold in 2021-22, compared to 2018-19 (1.2 million tonnes).
  - ✓ This was primarily driven by robust demand from China, which uses it as animal feed. Other than China, some poorer African countries like Senegal and Djibouti also import broken rice from India, but for human consumption.
  - ✓ Between April and August 2022, India has already exported 2.1 million tonnes of broken rice, which is again higher than previous years.
- **Shortage in India**
  - ✓ The high exports have created a shortage in India, where broken rice is used for **manufacturing ethanol** and as **cattle feed**.
  - ✓ The **poultry and animal husbandry** sectors have been hit hard due to the hike in feed prices. So, to contain the impact on milk, egg and poultry prices, it was imperative to ban broken rice exports.

- **Drop In Production**
  - ✓ During the current kharif cropping season (from June 1 to September 9), farmers have **planted 2.1 million hectares (mh) less area** under rice compared to the same period last year.
  - ✓ This is due to deficient rainfall in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Gangetic West Bengal.
  - ✓ The Centre is expecting a **drop of 10-12 million tonnes in rice production**, compared to the target Kharif production of **112 million tonnes**.
- **Fear Of Depletion In Public Rice Stocks**
  - ✓ Public **wheat stocks** on August 1, at 26.65 mt, were the lowest in 14 years for this date.
  - ✓ While the same for rice, at 40.99 mt, was quite comfortable, the government is worried about their depletion in the event of a sub-par kharif harvest.
  - ✓ This is more so, given the political pressure to continue the free-foodgrains scheme (Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana) beyond September.
  - ✓ With very little wheat in government godowns, it is rice that is sustaining the public distribution system.

### **Paddy Dwarfing in Punjab, Haryana**

- Many farmers in Punjab and Haryana have been complaining about stunted rice plants over the past month.
- In the beginning, it was related to mineral deficiency, weather conditions and/or may be caused by typical rice viruses.
- However, Indian Agriculture Research Institute (IARI) has stated that the disease-causing 'dwarfing' in rice plants is due to the **Southern Rice Black-Streaked Dwarf Virus (SRBSDV)**, named after Southern China where it was first reported in 2001.

### **Paddy Dwarfing**

- The main **symptoms** of a plant suffering from the rice dwarf disease are stunting and the appearance of white chlorotic specks on its foliage.
  - ✓ **Chlorosis** is the loss of green colour of the plants, due to lack of chlorophyll.
- The height of the stunted plants showed a reduction from 1/2 to 1/3rd of the normal plants.
- Dwarfing of plants was reported at 10% to 25% in general and in some cases, it exceeded 40%.
- These plants have **shallow roots** and can be **uprooted easily**. It is observed across almost all rice varieties, basmati and non-basmati.
- The incidence of stunting was more pronounced in early sown paddy crops, irrespective of the variety.

### **Southern Rice Black-Streaked Dwarf Virus (SRBSDV)**

- SRBSDV is a virus with 10 double-stranded RNA segments. It is transmitted by a **white-backed plant hopper (WBPH)**.
- Apart from rice, it can also be found in several weed species.
- Long-distance transmission of this virus may occur through WBPH migrating with the typhoons and strong convection winds.

### **Measures For Prevention**

- There is no exclusive corrective measure for viral diseases. But IARI has suggested the farmers to monitor their fields continuously for the presence of WBPH.
- The plants must be tilted and tapped twice or thrice at the base in a week.
- If WBPH is seen floating in the water, insecticides can be sprayed towards the base of the plants.
- Farmers are advised to follow the transplanting dates advised, since stunting was observed to be more in the early transplanted crops. It will not only help in managing the viral disease but also save water.

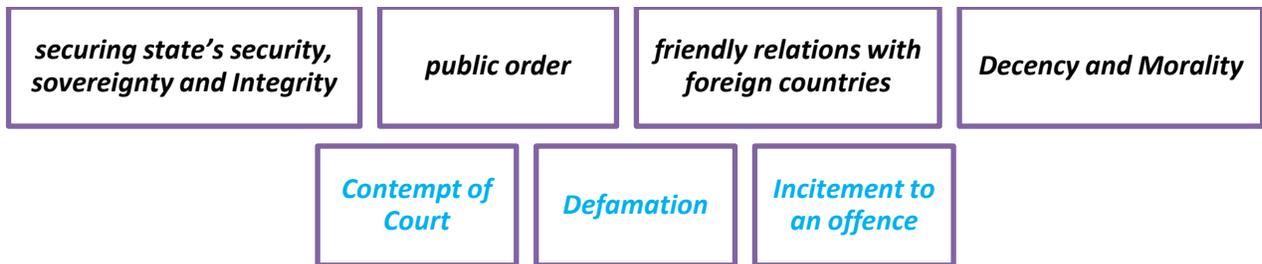


# Civil Servants Right To Free Speech On Matters Of Law And Governance

The Gujarat government released 11 men convicted on charges of gang-raping Bilkis Bano. Soon thereafter, a senior IAS officer from Telangana, Smita Sabharwal tweeted from her personal account questioning the Gujarat government's decision sparking off a row whether she was in breach of the **Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules of 1964** and reviving the debate on freedom of civil servants to express their personal views on matters of law and governance.

## Provisions And Rules Governing Civil Servants Right Of Free Speech

- Article 19(1)(a) of the constitution guarantees fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression to citizens (which include civil servants) subjected to reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2) in the interest of:



- Rule 9 of the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules of 1964
  - ✓ It states that "No government servant shall make any statement of fact or opinion which has the effect of an adverse criticism of any current or recent policy or action of the Central government or a state government.
  - ✓ It is imposed on them:
    - To prevent chaos in governance and ensure administrative stability
    - To establish discipline in the organization
- Rule 5 of the All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968 deals with the involvement of a government employee in politics and elections. It places reasonable restrictions on the expression of opinions which extend to political issues.
  - ✓ Sub Rule 1 of Rule 5 prohibits "government servants from being members of or being associated with any political party or political activity."
  - ✓ Sub Rule 4 of Rule 5 states that "no member of the Service shall canvass or otherwise interfere with, or use his influence in connection with, or take part in, an election to any legislature or local authority.

## Arguments Against Freedom Of Speech To Civil Servants On Matters Of Law And Governance

- Laws, policies and decisions of government are products of collective wisdom. Open criticism by civil servants on questions of law and governance would:
  - ✓ Weaken public trust on government
  - ✓ Bring anti-government feeling in Public
- While undertaking government service, they subjected themselves to certain disciplinary rules and restrictions on fundamental rights which include restrictions on their freedom of speech.
- Existence of established processes in place to express their opinions:
  - ✓ Every policy goes through a process from bottom to the top of the bureaucratic hierarchy.

- ✓ Bureaucrats will be given opportunity to give their notes of objection.
- ✓ But once the policy is decided by the political executive it has to be obeyed and complied by the bureaucracy.
- Indian bureaucracy has been conceived to be an anonymous entity. Expressing particular views on matters of law and governance by civil servants would prevent Public from fearlessly approaching them for any grievance redressal.
- Civil Services associations can be approached if they feel very strongly about something that is being done or acted upon instead of speaking up about them in Public.
- Constitution does provide for reasonable restrictions on free speech
- Threat of Political victimization of civil servants

### Arguments In Favour Of Freedom Of Speech To Civil Servants

- Laws by the legislature: A fundamental right cannot be curtailed except by a valid law made by a legislature.
- The Dharma of civil servants is to uphold the constitutional principles in letter and spirit and the rule of law. They can express and speak up if they are subverted.
- The All-India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968 expects them to maintain “*High ethical standards, integrity and honesty*”.
- Speaking upon injustices by them would have a deterrent effect on the **arbitrary abuse** of executive/ Legislative power.
- Restrictions on their free speech is a legacy of British era.

### Judicial Verdicts On Civil Servants Freedom Of Speech

#### Lipika Paul v/s The State of Tripura (2020) judgment

- Tripura High Court held that “A government servant is entitled to hold his/her own beliefs and express them in the manner one desired, subject to not crossing the borders laid down in the conduct rules which were applicable in Tripura.

#### Kerala High Court Judgment (2018)

- One can't be prevented from expressing his views merely he is a government employee. In a democratic society every institution is governed by democratic reforms. Healthy criticism is a better way to govern public institution.

### Conclusion

Clearly public platforms and social media should be utilized by civil servants to connect people to government benefits and schemes as well as to communicate government policies to the public, but while expressing their views on matters of law and governance, they should subject themselves to established conduct rules in the larger interest of the country.



## Kartavya Path

- PM Modi inaugurated **newly refurbished Kartavya Path (renamed Rajpath)**, and unveiled Subhas Chandra Bose statue at India Gate. These were undertaken as part of Central Vista Redevelopment Project that began in **February 2021**.
  - ✓ The revamped road now has: new pedestrian underpasses, improved parking spaces, new exhibition panels and upgraded night lighting, refurbished canals, added green spaces etc.
- Kingsway or Rajpath is the 3 km long stretch of road running from the Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate.

- It was built by British architects Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker as ceremonial boulevard representing the spirit of 'Might and power of Imperial rule in India'
- It was named 'Kingsway' to honour the erstwhile British Emperor of India, King George V.
  - ✓ In 1911, British government in India decided to move their capital from Calcutta (now Kolkata) to Delhi.
- Post-independence 'Kingsway' was renamed as Rajpath (Hindi translation of 'Kingsway') but it essentially remained one of the markers of our slavery and colonial subjugation.
  - ✓ Queensway running perpendicular to it was rechristened as Janpath.

### **Kartavya Path: Erasing The Symbol Of Slavery**

- Revamping of the Rajpath ('Avenue Of State') and changing its name to 'Kartavya Path' ('Avenue Of Duty') had turned Rajpath, the symbol of slavery into a matter of history.
- This name change is in tune with values and principles of democracy and a contemporary, new confident self-assured India.
- Unlike the Rajpath which signified the spirit of 'Might and power of ruler' the name 'Kartavya' signifies the spirit of "Duty, Public ownership and empowerment".
- The new name would essentially remind our parliamentarians, ministers and officers who now go on the path to perform their respective duties with sincerity rather than looking upon themselves as 'power centres' thereby removing another trace of colonial mindset.
- It will also inspire everyone who visits or crosses the road to perform their duties towards the country, the society, and their families.
- In Short, **Kartavya Path** is an avenue that reminds us of our Kartavya /duty (an Indian Value) rather than the might of colonial rule in India

**Acting on similar lines, Central Government over the last few years has been making efforts to free administration of the colonial practices and erase the remnants of colonial era. These include:**

- Self-attestation of certificates disallowing the need to attest certificates by a gazette officer.
- New naval ensign(flag) with Tricolor and the seal of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Naval forces.
- Installation of iconic Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose statue in the Grand Canopy at the India Gate, which once had the statue of George V. The canopy reminded us of our colonial subjugation for decades.
- Merger of **Amar Jawan Jyoti** with the flame of National war Memorial on January 2022
- Repeal of more than 1500 redundant colonial-era laws since 2014.
- Merger of Railway Budget with Union Budget in 2017
- Advancing of Budget to the first of February from the last day of February
- Renaming three islands of the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago in 2018
  - ✓ Rose Island was renamed as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep.
  - ✓ Neil Island as Shaheed Dweep.
  - ✓ Havelock island as Swaraj Dweep.
- India's national song 'Vande Mataram' replaced the popular Christian hymn 'Abide With Me' to conclude the Beating Retreat ceremony.
  - ✓ Beating Retreat ceremony in 2015 saw some major changes with Indian classical instruments such as sitar, tabla and santoor make their debut, thus infusing indian flavour.

All the changes bound to have decolonizing impact on generations.

## About Central Vista Redevelopment Project

- The whole project is estimated to cost **Rs 20,000 crores**.
  - ✓ Around Rs 1,000 crores will be used for the construction of a new Parliament.
- The project is estimated to be completed by 2024.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

Central Vista	Central Vista Redevelopment Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the India's central administrative area located in New Delhi</li> <li>• During the colonial era, British architects 'Edwin Lutyens' and 'Herbert Baker' has designed the central vista complex.</li> <li>• It was inaugurated in 1931 and comprised of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Rashtrapati Bhavan</li> <li>✓ Parliament House</li> <li>✓ North and South Blocks</li> <li>✓ Record office which was later named as the National Archives.</li> <li>✓ India Gate monument</li> <li>✓ Civic gardens on the either side of the Rajpath</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was conceived in September 2019 involving multiple projects spread over six years and estimated to cost 20,000 crore rupees</li> <li>• The planned redevelopment works include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The new triangular parliament building with increased seating capacity for future expansion</li> <li>✓ Chambers for Members of Parliament.</li> <li>✓ Central Vista Avenue</li> <li>✓ 10 buildings of the <b>Common Central Secretariat</b></li> <li>✓ Central Conference Centre</li> <li>✓ Additional Buildings for National Archives</li> <li>✓ Facilities for security officials</li> <li>✓ <b>Official residences for the Vice President, PM</b></li> <li>✓ Executive Enclave with <b>Prime Minister's Office</b></li> <li>✓ New Indira Gandhi National Center For Arts</li> <li>✓ Conversion of <b>North &amp; South blocks into Museum</b></li> <li>✓ Cabinet Secretariat, National Security Council Secretariat and the relocation of National Museum in North and South Block etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Why Is Central Vista Redevelopment Project Launched?

- Present Parliament building dates back to **1920s** and showing signs of distress and overuse.
- To Consolidate all Ministry offices at one place
  - ✓ At present, 39 Ministries are housed on the central vista, whereas around 12 Ministries have offices outside the vista at different places creating obstacles in smooth coordination and cooperation among different Ministries.
  - ✓ As part of the redevelopment, all the 51 Ministries are proposed to be located at one location within the central vista.
- Improving productivity and efficiency of administration
  - ✓ Presently there is poor construction quality of office buildings, inefficient use of land in government buildings, inadequate facilities and outdated infrastructure inside the office buildings.
- Strengthening cultural and **recreational facilities** in the central vista:
  - ✓ Central vista currently has Haphazard Parking facilities, tired landscape and no amenities. The idea is to address all these issues and get a livelier landscape with more facilities for civic users

### Concerns Expressed Over This Project

- Negative effects on environment particularly on green cover as well as on air quality with demolition and reconstruction of structures.
- Multi-crore Tax funded project will cause huge financial burden on the exchequer.
- Pumping funds into it during two years of lockdown is unjustifiable.
- Demolition of history.

### Grand Statue Of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose At The India Gate Canopy

- This 28-feet tall statue is carved out of single piece of black granite sourced from a quarry in Khammam in Telangana.
- It has been readied by a team of sculptors led by Arjun Yogiraj.
- Till 1968, the canopy of the India Gate was occupied by the statue of King George V.



## CSR Funding To NGOs

- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders.
- It is the way through which the company achieves "Triple-Bottom-Line Approach" that is balance of economic, environmental and social imperatives while at the same time addressing the expectations of shareholders and stakeholders.
- In 2014, India became the **first country to legally mandate CSR**. Section 135 of India's Companies Act made it mandatory for companies to spend 2% of their average net profit for the past three years on CSR activities if it meets any of the following thresholds:
  - ✓ net worth of INR 500 crores (Cr)
  - ✓ turnover of INR 1000 Cr. or more
  - ✓ or a net profit of INR 5 Cr. or more in a given financial year.

### Means Available To Companies Under Companies Act To Spend On CSR Activities

- Directly
- Through captive agencies (their own trusts, societies or foundations)
- Through government agencies
- Through public agencies (NGO's)

A study by KPMG on the top 100 companies in India in 2019 shown that 75% of the companies carried out CSR through partnerships (NGOs), which itself show important role being played by NGOs in channeling CSR funds for social sector.

Financial Costs Involved In Running An NGO	CSR Funder Archetypes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Programme expenses:</b> Costs incurred on programmes run by them</li> <li>• <b>Administrative and support expenses</b> that are not specifically tied to programmes such as rent, electricity, technology and Human resources costs.</li> </ul> <p>So, NGO's true expenses = Programme expenses+ administrative and support expenses.</p>	<p>There are three distinct funder archetypes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Programme proponents:</b> Companies which Provide grants to NGO's only for actual programmes undertaken by them but don't support indirect costs and organizational development.</li> <li>• <b>Adaptive funders:</b> Companies who are not rigid on just supporting programmes but also support indirect costs and organizational development if the NGO makes a case.</li> <li>• <b>Organizational builders:</b> See value in investing in building stronger organizations in addition to programmes</li> </ul>

### Issues In CSR Funding To NGOs

- Large number of CSR funders principally fall under category of 'programme proponents' and they contribute little or no money for organizational development and indirect costs of NGOs.

- ✓ This reduces the efficacy and impact the implementation of very programmes that funders support
- Several large companies instead of 'hiring professional leads, experienced in the social sector' to carry out their CSR activities, have added such responsibilities to their existing HR or administration or communications head affecting CSR activities overall effectiveness
- Lack of awareness about CSR rules:
  - ✓ Not every company is aware of all the aspects of the CSR rules that they are complying with.
  - ✓ For example, not many are aware that 5% cap on administrative costs is applicable only to a business' internal CSR operation cost and not to the **NGO's** administrative costs.
- 90% of the CSR funders are relatively small, unlisted companies. These Small CSR funders tend to focus more on compliance to CSR laws and cost minimization rather than the impact they are making on social sector.
- Presence of animosity between NGOs and corporate in terms of ideology and execution of programmes
- Companies wants NGOs to be more process driven (appropriate reporting with photos and videos, maintaining proper books of accounts) which requires resources and skills which NGO's lack
- Lack of appreciation of each other's views, interests and risks by NGO's and corporate as well as labeling and negative stereotyping about each other preventing collaborative and cooperative approach
- Lack of transparency and allegations of malpractices in NGO's functioning

### **Suggestions To Strengthen CSR Funders And NGO Partnership**

- **Learning from Peer Organizations** who view organizational development and indirect costs differently from programme costs.
- **Pooling:** Companies can pool their resources with other mission-aligned CSR stakeholders to increase the overall impact of their activities
- Larger Companies can hire professional leads experienced in social sector in carrying out of their CSR responsibilities
- **Strengthening capabilities of NGOs:** Companies, in addition to funding, can offer their financial accounting and analysis capabilities to the NGOs to build financial resilience.
  - ✓ For example, Edelweiss company came up with a programme where in its senior and mid-level officials are offering financial management, MIS, digitization and other forms of support to NGOs without any charge
- NGOs on their part should adopt high standards of **probity and professionalism** in their functioning to inspire the trust and confidence of corporates.
- CSR funders are to shift their focus beyond mere compliance with CSR laws and giving funds to the social impact they are making through their initiatives. This changing role is due to recognition of the fact that "what is good for Indian society is also good for business".
- Defining and publishing their impact metrics to hold themselves accountable.
- The SDG 17 maintains "Partnerships for the Goals". Business-NGO partnership is one of them in addition to business-government, government-nonprofit, and Business-NGO –Government partnerships.

So, the need of the hour is to strengthen and CSR funders and NGO's partnership in order for India to achieve its sustainable development goals.



# Listing Of Constitution Bench Matters For Hearing

- Several cases involving the interpretation of the Constitution by **5 or 7** judges have been pending for years.
- According to an RTI data received from the Supreme Court (SC) in July 2022, there are more than 40 main constitution bench matters pending before five, seven and nine judge benches of the Supreme Court.
- It is in this context recently Chief Justice of India (CJI) **UU Lalit** had listed 25 **five-judge bench** matters for hearing, which is a welcome step that can go a long way in re-establishing the role of the apex court as a constitutional court.

## Situations Under Which Constitution Benches Are Formed Under Article 145(3)

- When the case involves a **substantial question of law** pertaining to the interpretation of the Constitution.
- The President of India has sought the Supreme Court's opinion on a question of fact or law under **Article 143** of the Constitution.
- When a two-judge bench and later a three-judge bench delivered **conflicting Judgments** on the same issue.
- When a three-judge bench delivers a judgment that is different from the judgment delivered by a previous three-judge bench on an issue.

## Decline In Number Of Cases Decided By The Constitution Benches

- In the early decades after independence, the Supreme Court of India functioned largely as a constitutional court but however the number of matters decided by the Constitution benches has been falling steadily over the decades.
- Data show that in the first half of 1960s, the Supreme Court had given on an average 134 constitutional Judgments per year and this had fallen to an average 6.4 constitutional Judgments per year in the last half of 2000s. **Further, this number had fallen to barely 2 in 2021.**
- Such a trend had resulted in decline in the SC's constitutional role of protecting 'key constitutional norms and the unresolved constitutional issues continue to affect the public.
- **Reasons for such decline:**
  - ✓ **Massive workload:** Increase in number of cases (appeals and writs) reaching the SC over the years.
  - ✓ **Increase in backlog of non-constitutional cases.** As on 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug' 2022, around 71,411 cases were pending before Supreme Court.
  - ✓ **Very little time to engage with constitutional questions:** Constitutional cases generally take significant amount of court's time but the pressure of *clearing backlog cases* and *increasing workload* as stated above has been leaving very little time at the disposal of SC to hear constitutional cases
  - ✓ **Limited Judicial resources**

## What are Constitution benches?

- They are the benches of Supreme Court comprising of five or more judges that are set up to decide a case involving a "substantial question of law" involving the interpretation of the constitution.
- Article 145(3) of constitution permits the establishment of such benches.
- It is the CJI who is constitutionally authorized to constitute a Constitution bench and refer cases to it. However, there is no specific provision in the constitution that states that the CJI should compulsorily be part of a constitution bench.
- They are temporary in nature, constituted as when the need arises and are dissolved once a legal question or issue is resolved.
- The very first constitution bench matter, *AK Gopalan vs State of Madras, 1950*, upheld the preventive detention law.

## Significance Of Constitution Bench Verdicts

- They are unlikely to be *disturbed or overruled* for a long time to come and a **degree of finality** is attached to them.
- Only way to get a Constitution Bench verdict overruled is to first convince a subsequent **five-judge bench** of the Supreme Court that the view previously taken was wrong, have the matter referred to a **larger bench**, and then convince that bench to overrule the previous judgment of the Constitution Bench.
  - ✓ In such a situation, the only option available is to refer the matter to the CJI, requesting that a larger Bench to hear the same
- Thus, the Constitution Benches wield great power and responsibility to fix the path that the law is to take for a long time to come.

## Suggestions To Overcome Pendency Of Constitutional Matters

- Having a Permanent constitution bench which will hear cases requiring constitutional interpretation all year round.
- Splitting the Supreme court into two divisions as recommended by Law commission:
  - ✓ The 10<sup>th</sup> Law commission of India in 1984 recommended that “the Supreme Court of India should consist of two Divisions: ‘Constitutional Division’ and ‘Legal Division’ “and that “only matters of Constitutional law may be assigned to the proposed Constitutional Division”
  - ✓ The same recommendation has been reiterated by 11<sup>th</sup> Law commission.
- 18<sup>th</sup> Law Commission has also recommended that “a Constitution Bench be set up at Delhi to deal with constitutional and other allied issues” and “four Cassation Benches (that only interpret the relevant law) be set up in the Northern region, Southern region, Eastern region, Western region to deal with appeals from the high courts of particular region

## Cases Involving Interpretation Of Constitutional Law Heard By Two And Three Judge Benches

There is frightening pendency in the apex court. In this case, constituting a 5-judge bench becomes challenging. To satisfy this constitutional mandate, CJIs had no option but to delegate work to two judge benches.

- Off late, two and three-judge benches have frequently heard cases involving interpretation of constitutional law.
- Many experts believe this as a wrong precedent.
- The “**auction-only rule**” for natural resources of the two-judge bench that cancelled 122 2G licences was overruled by a five-judge constitution bench on a presidential reference.
- A two-judge bench struck down Section 66A of IT Act. Another two-judge bench re-criminalised homosexuality in 2013.
- It was a five-judge bench that in 2018, finally defanged **Section 377 of IPC (homosexuality)**, after a nine-judge bench in 2017, hearing the issue of the right to privacy, legitimized sexual autonomy.

CASES THAT SHAPED INDIA		
<b>1950s</b> ▶ State of W Bengal v. Anwar Ali Sarkar, <b>1952</b> (Right to Equality) ▶ Shirur Mutt case, <b>1954</b> (Essential Religious Practices)	▶ Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India, <b>1978</b> (Due Process)	<b>2000s</b> ▶ TMA Pai Foundation v. State of Karnataka, <b>2002</b> (Minority Educational Institutions) ▶ IR Coelho v. State of Tamil Nadu, <b>2007</b> (Ninth Schedule)
<b>1960s</b> ▶ Kedar Nath Singh v. State of Bihar, <b>1962</b> (Sedition) ▶ Golaknath v. State of Punjab, <b>1967</b> (Shielding Fundamental Rights)	<b>1980s</b> ▶ SP Gupta v. Union of India, <b>1981</b> (Judges' Transfer) ▶ Mohd. Ahmed Khan v. Shah Bano Begum, <b>1985</b> (Muslim Personal Law)	<b>2010s</b> ▶ Justice KS Puttuswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India, <b>2017</b> (Privacy) ▶ Indian Young Lawyers Assoc v. State of Kerala, <b>2018</b> (Women's entry at Sabarimala)
<b>1970s</b> ▶ Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala, <b>1973</b> (Basic Structure)	<b>1990s</b> ▶ Indra Sawhney v. Union of India, <b>1992</b> (Reservation) ▶ Second & Third Judges Cases, <b>1993 &amp; 1998</b> (SC Collegium)	

### CJI's New Listing System

In a rare instance, a Supreme Court bench criticised the new case listing system, claiming that it gives judges insufficient time to hear cases. The new Chief Justice of India (49th CJI U U Lalit) introduced the SC's new case

listing method.

### Steps Involved In Listing System In SC

#### ● Registering The Case

- ✓ First, a party files a petition either physically at the SC's filing counter or through the court's website.
- ✓ After this, the SC registry - the court's administrative side that receives and processes documents - examines the petition for any defects in following the court rules and practices.
  - When defects are communicated to the parties, they usually have 28 days to correct them.
- ✓ Once defects are corrected, the matter is registered before the court and the party gets a petition number.
- ✓ After that, the case is sent to the registry for verification, where the registry examines it and looks at things like whether similar cases are pending.

#### ● Listing Section

- ✓ Following verification, the matter is forwarded to the listing section, which assigns a hearing date.
- ✓ Different types of cases are assigned to different benches. A petition is assigned to a bench based on this.
- ✓ On the date of the first hearing, the bench hearing the case may admit the petition or issue a notice to the opposing party to respond.
- ✓ According to lawyers, the entire process **can take 7 - 10 days in routine cases**, assuming parties cure defects within a day and the registry finds no issues in the petition.
- ✓ If a case is admitted and regular hearings begin, it is listed in chronological order unless the court sets a specific date for it.

### Criticism Of The Listing System

- **Listing process is arbitrary:** SC has no objective process that determines when a case is listed.
  - ✓ While certain guidelines have been laid down for listing cases, many lawyers and even judges have complained that the process is arbitrary.
- **Some cases listed faster over others:** In cases where parties require immediate relief, a procedure known as "mentioning" is used to expedite the process.
  - ✓ Lawyers can apply to a designated SC registrar for early listing under this provision. If the registrar refuses, they may take the matter to the CJI.
  - ✓ While the SC put in place an automated listing system in 2019, the CJI, as the master of the court's roster, has full discretion over how cases are listed and may prioritise certain cases.
- **Opaque process:** Various steps of the listing process, such as verification (which are not trackable on the website, it is hard to identify what causes delay) and mentioning (process is not consistent and is constantly being updated), are opaque.

### The New Listing System

- After taking oath as the 49th CJI, Justice Lalit pledged to streamline case listing
- The introduction of the listing system by CJI Lalit meant **two distinct shifts** for the 30 judges.
  - ✓ They gathered in 15 different benches on Mondays and Fridays to hear newly filed cases, which numbered more than 60 each day.
  - ✓ On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, the judges heard **old cases involving important legal issues** in the *morning session* (from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.) in a combination of three-judge benches.
  - ✓ In the *afternoon*, the two-judge benches were assigned 30-odd **after-notice cases** (reduced to 20 later) to be dealt with in 120 minutes, averaging 4 minutes of judicial attention per case.



# National List of Essential Medicines 2022

- Union Health Ministry has released revised National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM), 2022 comprising of **384 drugs across 27 therapeutic categories**. This latest list added as many as **34** new drugs and dropped 26 old ones from the previous list.
- For the first time, **four patented drugs** have been added to the list:
  - ✓ Bedaquiline and Delamanid- used in the treatment of multiple drug-resistant tuberculosis
  - ✓ Dolutegravir- Used to treat human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection
  - ✓ Daclatasvir- Used in treating viral infections such as Hepatitis C
- No drug used specifically for the treatment of Covid -19 is included in the new list.

## About NLEM

- It is a list of medicines that satisfy the priority healthcare needs of the population. They will be commonly used medicines at primary, secondary and territory healthcare levels.
- It was framed on the lines of Essential Medicine List (EML) released by the WHO
- It is a dynamic document and is revised on a regular basis considering the changing public health priorities as well as advancement in pharmaceutical knowledge. The ministry of health and family welfare released the first NLEM IN 1996. The subsequent revisions to the list came in 2003, 2011 and 2015. The latest revision came after 7 years in 2022.

Significance Of NLEM	Criteria For Inclusion Of A Medicine In The NLEM List
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listing of drugs in NLEM ensures that the drug is <b>accessible</b> in sufficient <b>quantity</b>, at affordable <b>cost</b>, and with assured <b>quality and safety</b>.</li> <li>• Promote <u>rational drug use</u> and improves the overall quality of health care.</li> <li>• Helps hospitals create their <b>drug policies</b> such as which medicines to be used.</li> <li>• Helps in optimum utilization of healthcare resources and better management of medicines</li> <li>• It can also be a guiding document for:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ State governments to prepare their list of essential medicines</li> <li>✓ Procurement and supply of medicines in the public sector.</li> <li>✓ Reimbursement of the cost of medicines by organizations to its employees.</li> <li>✓ Reimbursement by insurance companies.</li> <li>✓ Identifying the 'MUST KNOW' domain for the teaching and training of health care professionals.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essentiality:</b> The drug must be <u>critical and essential</u> for curing a disease.</li> <li>• <b>Changing Disease Burden With Time:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ At one point, TB might be more important to tackle, at the next moment another disease like covid-19 may become more important</li> <li>✓ So, the prevalent disease is considered while preparing the list</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Efficacy and Safety:</b> The medicine shall have <u>proven efficacy and safety profile</u> based on scientific evidence.</li> <li>• <b>Cost-Effectiveness:</b> The NLEM guidelines state that the <u>total price of the treatment</u> must be considered while including the drug in NLEM. Only <u>unit price may not be the best Benchmark for this</u>.</li> <li>• <b>Fixed Dose Combinations (FDCs):</b> The <u>single dose medicines are considered for inclusion</u> in NLEM. FDCs are only included if they have a proven advantage concerning the therapeutic effect</li> <li>• <b>Turnover:</b> High sales turnover alone is not considered a good benchmark to include it under NLEM</li> <li>• Drug should be <b>licensed</b> in India by Drugs Controller General India (DCGI).</li> </ul>

### How Medicines Are Eliminated From NLEM List?

- If it is banned in India.

- If Reports of concerns about Drug safety emerge.
- If a medicine with better efficacy and cost effectiveness is available in the market.
- If the Disease, for which the drug is used, is no longer a public health concern in India.
- In case of antimicrobial drugs, the drug has been rendered ineffective due to resistance.

#### How NLEM Brings Prices Under Control?

- When the NLEM is released, the Department of Pharmaceuticals under the *Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers* adds them in the **Drug Price Control Order (DPCO)**.
- Once it is added, the list attracts the attention of **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)** as it is legally required to regulate the prices of drugs added to the NLEM under the DPCO.
  - ✓ **NPPA will cap prices** for the medicines in the list and the companies are not allowed to sell above the price ceiling.
  - ✓ Every year the prices of medicines in the NLEM are increased or decreased only on the **Whole Sale price index-based inflation**.

#### National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)

- It is a regulatory body, established in **1997** by the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995, under the provisions of **section 3** of the **Essential Commodities Act, 1955** to regulate or control the prices of medicines in India.
- The authority consists of a **Chairperson** of the status of the **Secretary** to the Government of India, members having expertise in the field of pharmaceuticals, economics and cost accountancy and member secretary of the status of joint secretary/ additional secretary to the Government of India.
- Functions of NPPA:
  - ✓ Implement and enforce the provisions of **DPCO** in accordance with the powers delegated to it;
  - ✓ To fix/revise prices of **controlled bulk drugs and formulations** and enforce price and availability of medicines in the country;
  - ✓ Monitor the prices of **decontrolled drugs** in order to keep them at reasonable levels;
  - ✓ Recovering amounts overcharged by the manufacturers;
  - ✓ To identify shortages, if any, and to take remedial steps;
  - ✓ to collect/maintain data on production, exports and imports, market share of individual companies, profitability of companies etc. for bulk drugs and formulations;
  - ✓ to undertake and/ or sponsor relevant studies in respect of pricing of drugs/ pharmaceuticals;
  - ✓ to render advice to the central government on changes/ revisions in the drug policy and in the parliamentary matters relating to the drug pricing.



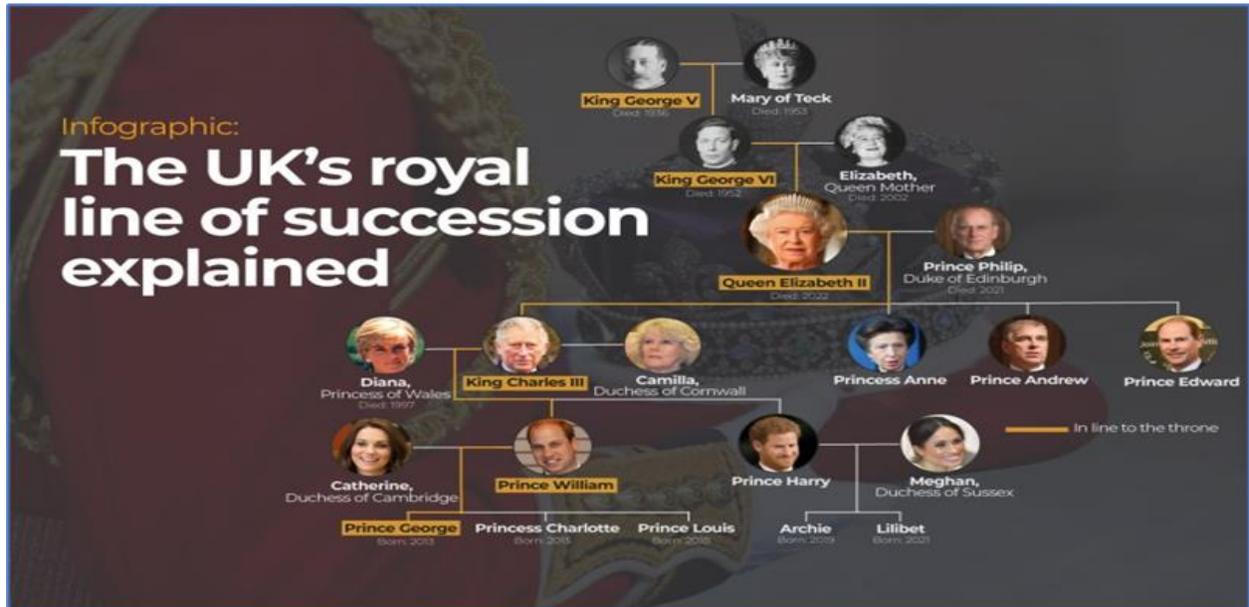
## King Charles III Proclaimed Britain's Monarch

- Two days after the death of Queen Elizabeth II, King Charles III was officially announced as Britain's monarch, in a ceremony steeped in ancient tradition and political symbolism.
- This is the first time the accession ceremony has been held since 1952, when Queen Elizabeth II took the throne.

#### About Britain's Monarchy

- Monarchy is the oldest form of government in the United Kingdom.
- In a monarchy, a king or queen is Head of State.

- The British Monarchy is known as a **constitutional monarchy**.
  - ✓ This means that, while The Sovereign is Head of State, the ability to make and pass legislation resides with an elected Parliament.
- Although The Sovereign **no longer has a political or executive role**, he or she continues to play an important part in the life of the nation.



## Historical Perspective



- The British monarchy traces its origins from the smaller kingdoms of **Anglo-Saxon England** and early medieval **Scotland**, which consolidated into the kingdoms of England and Scotland by the 10th century.
- England was conquered by the **Normans** in 1066, after which Wales also gradually came under the control of Anglo-Normans.
- The process was completed in the 13th century when the Principality of Wales became a client state of the English kingdom.
- Meanwhile, **Magna Carta** began the process of reducing the English monarch's political powers.
- Magna Carta is a royal charter of rights agreed to by **King John of England in 1215**.
- It was the first document to put into writing the principle that the king and his government was not above the law.
- From 1603, the English and Scottish kingdoms are ruled by a single sovereign.

### Duties of the Monarch

- As Head of State, The Monarch undertakes constitutional and representational duties which have developed over one thousand years of history.
- In addition to these State duties, The Monarch has a less formal role as '**Head of Nation**'.
  - ✓ President of India enjoys the similar title of 'Head of the State' in India.
- The Sovereign acts as a focus for national identity, unity and pride; gives a sense of stability and continuity; officially recognises success and excellence; and supports the ideal of voluntary service.

### Powers of the Monarchy

- British monarch is mainly a **ceremonial figurehead** & is generally expected not to intervene in political matters. But as head of state, they have retained some constitutional powers.
- **Appointing a Government** –
  - ✓ The day after a general election, the monarch invites the leader of the party that won the most seats in the House of Commons to become Prime Minister and form a government.

- **Opening & Dissolving Parliament –**
  - ✓ The monarch opens parliament every year and reads out the govt's plans for the next 12 months.
  - ✓ The Crown also formally dissolves parliament before a general election.
- **Royal Assent –**
  - ✓ After a bill has been approved by the House of Commons and the House of Lords, it is sent to the monarch to approve and turn into a law.
  - ✓ The monarch has the power to refuse a Bill.
  - ✓ However, the most recent monarch to refuse assent was **Queen Anne (in 1708)**.

#### **Difference Between United Kingdom & Britain**

- **United Kingdom –**
  - ✓ The UK is short for The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
  - ✓ It is a sovereign state (in the same way as India or the USA) but is made up of four countries; **England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland**.
- **Great Britain –**
  - ✓ Great Britain is not a country; it's a landmass.
  - ✓ It is known as 'Great' because it is the largest island in the British Isles, and houses the countries of **England, Scotland and Wales** within its shores.



## **Bangladesh PM Visit To India**

Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina paid an official visit to India. She held bilateral meeting with Indian PM during which the two sides signed **7 agreements** covering railways, science and technology, space cooperation, media, and water sharing.

#### **List of Agreements/ MoUs Exchanged**

1. MoU on withdrawal of Water by India and Bangladesh from common border river Kushiyara
  - ✓ This is the first such pact between them in over 25 years — the Ganga water treaty was signed in 1996.
  - ✓ This pact will benefit people in southern Assam and Sylhet in Bangladesh.
2. MoU on training of **Bangladesh Railway personnel** in India
3. MoU on Collaboration in IT systems such as FOIS (Freight Operations Information System) etc.
4. MoU on Training and Capacity Building Programme for **Bangladesh Judicial Officers** in India
5. MoU on Cooperation in the Areas of Space Technology
6. MoU on Scientific and Technological Cooperation
7. MoU on Cooperation in Broadcasting

#### **List of Projects Inaugurated/Announced**

- **Unveiling of Unit I of Maitree Power Plant**
  - ✓ The 1320 (660x2) MW super critical coal-fired thermal power plant at Rampal, Khulna is being set up with Indian Development Assistance.
  - ✓ For this project, India's contribution amounts to USD 1.6 billion.
- **Inauguration of Rupsha Bridge**
  - ✓ The 5.13 km Rupsha rail bridge will connect for the first time Mongla Port with Khulna by rail, and thereafter to Central and North Bangladesh.

- ✓ It will also ensure connectivity to the Indian border at **Petrapole and Gede** in West Bengal.
- **Supply Of Road Maintenance & Construction Equipment And Machinery** To Bangladesh
- **Khulna Darshana Railway Line Link Project**
  - ✓ The project is upgradation of existing (doubling of Broad Gauge) infrastructure linking the current cross border rail link at Gede-Darshana to Khulna.
  - ✓ It will further augment the rail connections between the two countries.
- **Parbatipur - Kaunia railway line:** The project will connect to the existing cross border rail at Birol (Bangladesh)-Radhikapur (West Bengal) and will enhance bilateral rail connectivity.

### Other Highlights Of The Meeting

- **Negotiations On A Comprehensive Trade Pact:** The two sides also decided to start negotiations on a Bilateral Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).
- **Scholarship for '71 war soldiers' descendants:** Bangladesh PM announced the Mujib scholarship for the direct descendants of Indian soldiers killed or grievously injured in the 1971 Bangladesh war. As many as 1,984 Indian Army personnel were killed in the war.

### India-Bangladesh Bilateral Relation

#### 2021: A Golden Chapter

- 2021 marks the triveni of events that have epochal significance:
  - **The golden jubilee of liberation of Bangladesh**
  - **The birth centenary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**
  - **50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic ties**
- Bangladesh's decision to establish a memorial in remembrance of the sacrifices made by members of Indian armed forces in 1971 was a key step towards preserving this history of shared sacrifice.

#### Trade

- Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia and India is the second biggest trade partner of Bangladesh.
- Bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh has grown steadily over the last decade and in the **FY 2020-21, bilateral trade reached \$10.17 bn**. During this period, Bangladesh Export to India stood at \$1.28 billion while import from India stood at \$8.6 billion.
- Bangladesh's exports to India primarily ride on ready-made garments.
- India offered duty-free and quota free entry to Bangladesh goods under the (South Asian Free Trade Area) **SAFTA** agreement in 2011.
  - ✓ However, after Bangladesh graduates from the Least Developed Country (LDC) status, it will no longer be able to avail this facility.
  - ✓ Hence, India and Bangladesh is considering signing a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

#### Connectivity

- India-Bangladesh **Friendship Bridge 1** (also known as **Feni Bridge**) has been constructed which will connect Tripura with Chittagong port of Bangladesh.
- A ship carrying cargo from Bhutan To Bangladesh was flagged off from Assam in July 2019. It sailed over river Brahmaputra and the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route. This was the first time an Indian waterway is being used as a channel for transport of cargo between two countries, using India for transit.

- To boost sub-regional connectivity, Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (**BBIN**) Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) was signed in June 2015. In January 2018, Bangladesh, India and Nepal had agreed on the text of the operating procedures for passenger vehicle movement in the sub-region under BBIN MVA.

### Energy Cooperation

- Energy cooperation between the two sides has also shown a lot of positivity. Indian state Tripura supplying a total of 160 MW of power to Bangladesh in addition to the 500 MW the country is receiving from West Bengal since 2013.
- In September 2018, Indian PM and his Bangladeshi counterpart jointly inaugurated the construction of a friendship pipeline project through video conferencing. The 130-kilometre India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline Project will connect Siliguri in West Bengal in India and Parbatipur in Dinajpur district of Bangladesh.

### Indian Assistance During COVID-19 Pandemic

- India gifted one lakh anti-malarial tablets of hydroxychloroquine and 50,000 surgical gloves to Bangladesh. It also donated 30,000 COVID-19 test kits to Bangladesh.
- India assisted the neighbouring countries including Bangladesh under SAARC framework. It provided training to the medical staffs of member countries and took lead role in creating the SAARC COVID-19 emergency fund.
- In January 2021, India supplied 2 million doses of Made-in-India Covid-19 vaccines to Bangladesh under **Vaccine Maitri initiative**.

### Conclusion

The two countries have several irritants in their bilateral relationship which includes - National Register of Citizens (NRC) issue in Assam; Citizenship Amendment Act, Rohingya crisis and border management (Illegal immigration, cattle smuggling, drug Trafficking etc.). Despite these issues, the two countries have made remarkable progress in all areas, fully justifying this era, being referred to as a **Shonali Adhyay or a golden era** in our relationship.

#### Extra Mile

##### Interim Agreement On Kushiyara Water Sharing

- There were **54 rivers that pass through the Indo-Bangladesh border**
- Bangladesh has sought the early conclusion of the **Teesta water sharing agreement**, which has been hanging since 2011 due to opposition from West Bengal.

##### Kushiyara River

- Kushiyara River is a distributary river in Bangladesh and Assam.
- The waters of Kushiyara originate in the state of Nagaland and pick up tributaries from Manipur, Mizoram and Assam.
- It forms on the India-Bangladesh border as a **branch of the Barak River** when the Barak separates into the **Kushiyara and Surma**.
- From its origin at the **mouth of the Barak**, Kushiyara river flows westward forming the boundary between Assam, and the Sylhet District of Bangladesh.
- After that the river forms several braided streams, **it is joined the Khowai River and heads southwest where it is rejoined by the Surma and becomes the Meghna River**.
- Altogether, it runs about 160 kilometers.



## Water Dispute Between India And Bangladesh

The Teesta River dispute and the Ganges River dispute are the two main long-standing water conflicts between India and Bangladesh.

Ganges River Dispute	Teesta River Dispute
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The <b>Ganga water sharing arrangement</b> was signed in 1996.</li><li>• The treaty established a 30-year water-sharing arrangement. This deal is about to expire.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ According to the treaty India can withdraw up to 40,000 cusecs and Bangladesh can withdraw 35,000 cusecs of flow at the Farakka Barrage.</li><li>✓ If availability at Farakka falls below 70,000 cusecs, flow will be divided equally between two countries.</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The <b>Teesta water-sharing agreement</b> has not yet been resolved by any treaty.</li><li>• In 1983, there was an agreement on Teesta water. According to agreement, sharing was valid until 1985 end.</li><li>• The agreement gave India 39% and Bangladesh 36% of Teesta water and 25% water remain unallocated.</li><li>• In 2011 an Interim deal that was supposed to last for 15 years gave India 42.5% and Bangladesh 37.5% of Teesta water.</li><li>• West Bengal and Sikkim opposed this interim deal. Since then, the deal was shelved and remains unsigned.</li></ul>



## India Stays Out Of Indo-Pacific Trade Pillar

- First in-person ministerial meeting of **Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)** was held in **Los Angeles**. India was represented by the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry.
- At the summit, India opted to stay out of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework's (IPEF) **trade pillar**.
  - ✓ The IPEF has four pillars with the **member nations given flexibility to choose which pillars they want to be part of**.

### Key Highlights Of The Summit

- 1<sup>st</sup> Pillar -Trade:** The meeting outlined an ambitious agenda which entails more robust efforts to promote a rules-based, transparent and clean trading system.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar -Supply Chain**
  - Member countries committed to improving transparency, diversity, security and sustainability in supply chains to make them more resilient, robust and well-integrated.
  - Greater **information sharing and investment in supply chains**, including **identification** of critical sectors and critical goods within critical sectors to minimise disruptions.
    - ✓ IPEF countries have agreed to **establish criteria** for critical sectors and goods.
  - Partner countries have agreed to increase resilience and crisis response mechanism in these critical sectors.
    - ✓ This will involve identifying **choke points** within supply chains.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Pillar — Clean Economy**
  - Member countries agreed to accelerate efforts in pursuit of greenhouse gas emissions mitigation and elimination, enhanced energy security and climate resilience and adaptation.

- They have also agreed on the goal to reduce emissions across priority sectors, recognised the importance of sustainable land use and water solutions.
- The new economic framework has committed to create incentives to facilitate the clean energy transition.

#### D. 4<sup>th</sup> Pillar — Fair Economy

- They have agreed to work on anti-corruption by effectively **implementing and accelerating progress** on the UN Convention against Corruption, standards of the Financial Action Task Force.
- On **taxation**, IPEF members have agreed to pursue exchange of information between tax authorities in line with international standards.

#### India's Stand At The Summit

- **India decided to join three pillars of IPEF** - India has joined the supply chain, decarbonisation and infrastructure, and anti-tax and corruption pillars of the IPEF. However, it has decided to remain out of the trade pillar.
- **Reasons for India not joining the trade pillar** - So far, official reason has not been given. However, trade experts say India may have some genuine concerns regarding certain aspects of the trade pillar that perhaps go beyond WTO obligations.
- **India's decision of not joining the trade pillar is reflective of a new approach.**
  - ✓ India's decision to stay away from the trade pillar of IPEF highlights an evolving consensus in New Delhi's approach to global partnerships.
  - ✓ This new consensus has some deepening gridlines:
    - staying off multilateral trade pacts, **sticking to bilateral deals** that progressively build on an early harvest scheme;
    - **actively integrating into specialised global supply chain arrangements** such as for rare earths or pharmaceutical ingredients; and
    - restricting multilateral exposure to focused agreements such as tackling black money or cryptocurrency rules.

#### Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)

- According to an insight paper on IPEF, put out by the US Congressional Research Service, the IPEF is not a traditional trade agreement. Rather, it would include different modules (**4 pillars**) covering:

Fair and Resilient Trade

Supply chain resilience

Infrastructure and Decarbonization

Tax and Anticorruption

- Countries would have to **sign up to all of the components within a module**, but do not have to participate in all modules.
- **The 14 members of IPEF are** -- Australia, Brunei, Fiji, **India**, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the US.

#### Aim of IPEF

Connected Economy

- higher standards and rules for digital trade, such as cross-border data flows

Resilient Economy

- resilient supply chains that will withstand unexpected disruptions like the pandemic

Clean Economy

- targeting green energy commitments and projects

Fair Economy

- implementing fair trade, including rules targeting corruption and effective taxation

## Key Features

- The **fair and resilient trade module** will be led by the US Trade Representative and include digital, labour, and environment issues, with some binding commitments.
- **IPEF is not a free trade agreement. Neither is it a security pact.** The agreement is more of an administrative arrangement.
- The IPEF will not include market access commitments such as lowering tariff barriers, as the agreement is more of an administrative arrangement.

## Origin of IPEF

- US President Biden first spoke about the IPEF at the October 2021 East Asia Summit.
- At this summit, he said that the United States will explore with partners the development of an Indo-Pacific economic framework.
- This framework will define our shared objectives around: trade facilitation, standards for the digital economy and technology, supply chain resiliency, decarbonization and clean energy, infrastructure, worker standards, and other areas of shared interest.
- The forum was launched in May 2022 on the sidelines of Quad summit at Tokyo.



## SCO Summit 2022

- PM Modi participated in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO at Samarkand (Uzbekistan). **Samarkand Declaration** of the Council of Heads of State of SCO was released after the summit.
- After the summit, Uzbekistan handed over the rotating presidency of the SCO to India. **India will host the next SCO summit** as a chairman of organisation in 2023.

## List Of Decisions Adopted At The Summit

- Decision on *Comprehensive Action Plan for 2023-2027* for implementation of provisions of the **Treaty on Long-Term Good Neighbourliness, Friendship and Cooperation** among the Member States.
  - ✓ This was the 15th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on Long-term Neighbourliness, Friendship and Cooperation of the SCO Member States.
- Decision to Develop Interconnectivity and Create Efficient Transport Corridors among members states.
- **Decision on Inclusion Of New Members:**
  - ✓ Iran to become a member State of the SCO. Iran was admitted in SCO in 2021 and will become full member in 2023. SCO had accepted Iran's application for membership last year and it will take a year to complete all the formalities.
  - ✓ Launched the procedure of admitting **Belarus** as a member of the SCO.
  - ✓ Granting Myanmar, Maldives, Bahrain, UAE, Kuwait, the status of SCO dialogue partner.
- **Tourist and Cultural Capital of SCO in 2022-2023**
  - ✓ Member countries decided to declare Varanasi as the Tourist and Cultural Capital of SCO in 2022-2023.
  - ✓ In 2021 summit, it was decided to nominate SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital with an objective of promoting cooperation in the field of culture and tourism.
  - ✓ Hence, Varanasi became the first Cultural capital of SCO.
- In Order to increase the cooperation with UNESCO, member countries of SCO decided to sign an MoU between the Secretariat of the SCO and the UNESCO (2023-2027).

## Other Areas Of Cooperation

- Member countries signed agreement on cooperation in various fields including: Tourism, Museum affairs, Digital Literacy Development, Artificial Intelligence and Telemedicine.
- **Programme of Cooperation in Use of Renewable Energy Sources** was signed the between Member States.
- Action Plan for SCO Member States Scientific and Technical Cooperation in Priority Areas (2022-2025) was also finalised.
- The leaders also finalised the concept of interaction between member states in the field of smart agriculture and agro- innovation.

## Other Highlights Of The Summit

- In order to share India's experience in **Start-ups** with SCO member countries, PM Modi proposed establishing a new Special Working Group on Start-ups and Innovation.  
✓ Today, there are more than 70,000 Start-ups in India, of which more than 100 are unicorns.
- The year **2023** will be celebrated as the UN International Year of Millets. In this context, PM Modi proposed organizing a '**Millet Food Festival**' under the SCO.
- India proposed to increase cooperation on **traditional medicine** among SCO countries. For this, India will take the initiative for a new SCO Working Group on Traditional Medicine.

## Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- It is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation, created in June 2001 in Shanghai (China).
- Founding members included Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- This organization represents approximately 42% of the world's population, 22% of its land area and 20% of its GDP.
- SCO comprised **8 member states**, namely India, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.  
✓ In 2021 summit held in Dushanbe, members **decided** to include Iran as a full member.

## Observers

- Before 2021, SCO had 4 observer states. This included -Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia.
- In 2021, Iran became a full member and Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Qatar were added as new observer states. Hence, currently, SCO has **6 observer states**.

**What is SCO?**  
Shanghai Cooperation Organization

**It aims to...**

- Resolve border issues
- Fight terrorism
- Bolster regional security
- Counter American influence in Central Asia

**SCO Members**

- China
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Russia
- Tajikistan
- Uzbekistan
- India
- Pakistan

**Why SCO is important**

- ▶ Is seen as an Eastern counter-balance to NATO
- ▶ Enhances security cooperation among members
- ▶ Helps deal with terrorism, particularly IS terrorists
- ▶ Increases economic cooperation in the region
- ▶ China's One Belt and One Road (OBOR) initiative
- ▶ India's push for connectivity with Chabahar port in Iran
- ▶ International North-South Transport Corridor connecting the sub-continent with Central Asian countries

**Iran has now become the full member of SCO (in 21st Summit)**

Significance of SCO for India	Challenges Faced by India at SCO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India's security, geopolitical, strategic and economic interests are closely intertwined with developments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCO, as a platform, is seen by the West as an</li> </ul>

<p>in the region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS)</b> of SCO specifically deals with issues relating to security and defence.</li> <li>• The Central Asian region is <b>richly endowed with natural resources</b> and vital minerals.</li> <li>• SCO provides a platform for <b>India's efforts to connect with Central Asia</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Stable Afghanistan</b> is in India's interest. SCO is a platform which can play an important role in Afghanistan.</li> </ul>	<p><b>organization to forward Chinese interests.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Growing convergence of China and Russia</b> will be another challenge for India.</li> <li>• <b>Differences between India and Pakistan</b> might hamper the functioning of the SCO.</li> <li>• All members of SCO have supported One-Belt-One-Road (OBOR) initiative except India. It might lead to <b>isolation of India on this platform</b>.</li> <li>• It would be difficult for India to <b>overcome the burden of geography</b> and make tangible gains in terms of trans-regional connectivity.</li> </ul>
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## Cheetahs Have Been Reintroduced To Indian Wildlife After 70 Years

Eight Namibian cheetahs, **five females and three males**, were released into Madhya Pradesh's **Kuno National Park (KNP)** by the Prime Minister of India.

- The cheetah is believed to have disappeared from the Indian landscape in 1947 when Maharaja Ramanuj Pratap Singh Deo of Koriya princely state hunted down and shot the last three recorded Asiatic cheetahs in India.
- The Asiatic Cheetah was officially declared extinct in India in **1952**.

### About Reintroduction

- Releasing a species in a habitat that enables it to survive is referred to as reintroduction.
- It is recognised as a strategy to conserve threatened species and restore ecosystem functions.

### Why Reintroduce Cheetah Now?

- It is the **flagship species of the grassland**, therefore, with the reintroduction, these dryland ecosystems of India will have a chance to return to their natural state.
- It is a **part of our heritage** and it is the only large carnivore that has been extirpated, mainly by over-hunting in India in historical time.
- The Supreme Court of India had also given its approval in January 2020 to introduce cheetahs in a suitable habitat.

### Reasons For Extinction

- **Ruthless bounty-hunting** by the British and the pomp of the royal shikar (hunting) by the kings led to its extinction.
- **Human-wildlife conflict, loss of habitat and loss of prey**, and **illegal trafficking**.
- The **advent of climate change and growing human populations** have made these problems worse.

Why Has Kuno National Park Been Chosen For Relocation?	Why Did India Select Namibian Cheetah?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is <b>located in the Chambal region</b>; spread over an area of over 750 sq km and has a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the <b>early 1970s, India had approached Iran for Asiatic cheetahs, but had been refused</b>.</li> </ul>

<p>conducive environment for the cheetahs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is assessed to be capable of supporting <b>21 Cheetahs</b> .</li> <li>• The protected area, <b>comprising a considerable population of prey</b> like four-horned antelopes, chinkara, nilgai, wild boar, spotted deer and sambar.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Namibian cheetahs have been selected based on an assessment of their health, disposition and ability to contribute genetics that will result in a strong founder population.</li> <li>• <b>Namibia</b> has the largest population of Cheetahs in the world, earning it the title "<b>Cheetah Capital of the World.</b>"</li> </ul>
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### Challenges Of The Project

- Critics of the project have pointed out that the gene flow in such a small group of cheetahs is a matter of concern.
  - ✓ Gene flow between populations can help maintain genetic diversity and prevent **inbreeding** (parent and offspring, full brother and sister or half brother and sister).

However, experts point out that South Africa has already undertaken similar projects within the continent, in which measures are taken to ensure gene flow. India is expected to follow the same.

- Over the next 5 to 10 years, 5-10 cheetahs will be relocated to India annually.
- From time to time, some of these cheetahs from India will be brought back, and taking some others there. This will ensure the proper gene flow.
- Ministry officials, meanwhile, pointed out that even if this movement does not take place, gene flow is unlikely to be a problem in India because of the country's animal corridors that allow animals to move around.

- Kuno national park could soon be the only location in the world to host wild populations of four major big cat species – tiger, lion, leopard and cheetah. There is no science available currently to suggest that all four can coexist comfortably in the same habitat.
- Because of this plan, **169 villages would need to be displaced**.
- The success of this project depends on the survival of cheetahs in the Indian environment which is different from Namibia.

### Cheetah Mitras

- It has been established as part of the reintroduction campaign.
- They are a group of about 400 young people, who have been educated to increase cheetah awareness among residents of nearby villages.
- They will protect the cheetah and also ensure that human-animal conflict is avoided.

### Cheetah

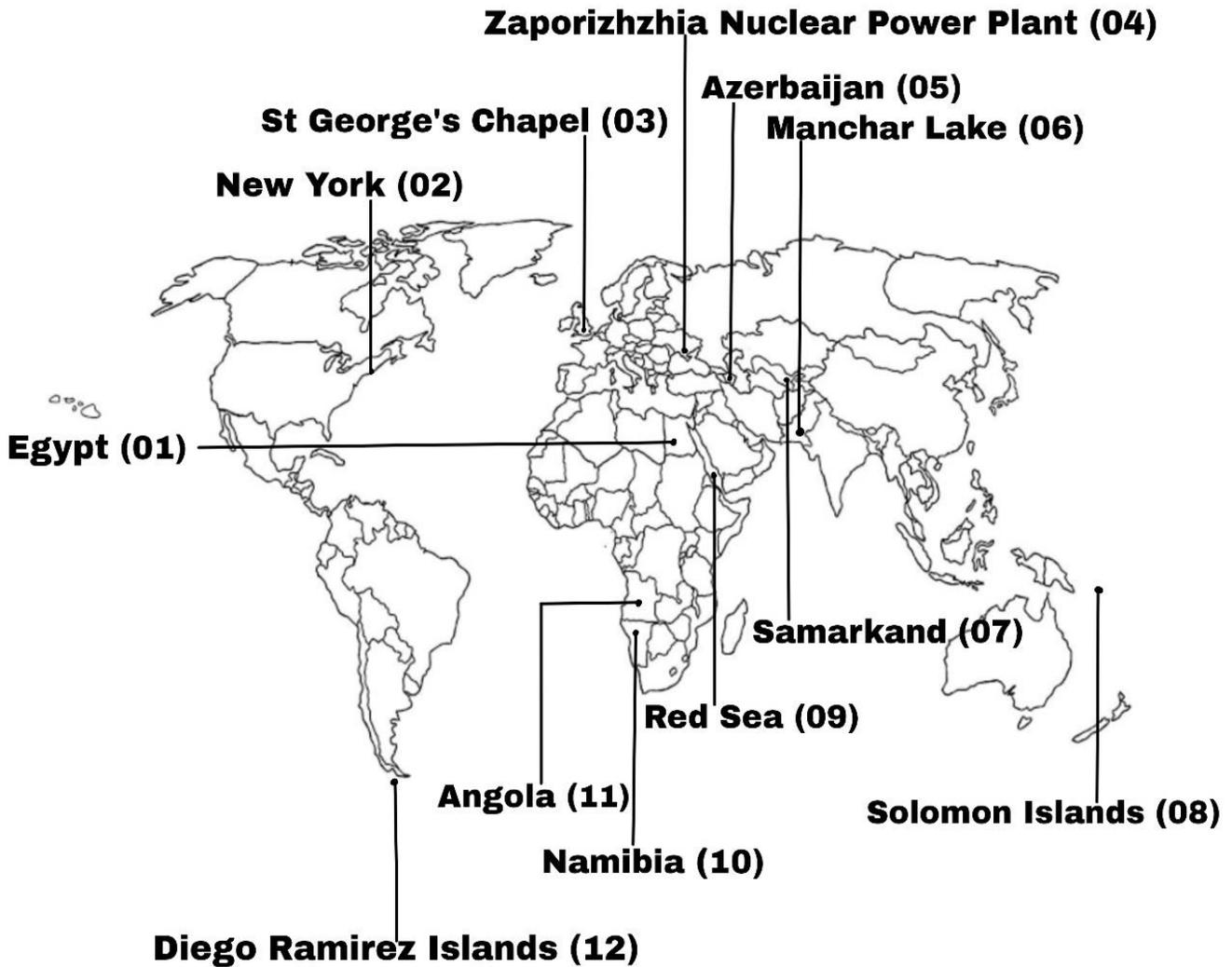
- It is one of the oldest of the **big cat species** and also the **world's fastest land mammal**.
- It is **native to Africa and central Iran**.
- The **Asiatic cheetah, which is now found only in Iran**, is classified as a **critically endangered species** in the IUCN Red List.
- The **African cheetahs** are classified as a **vulnerable species** in the IUCN red list.
- African cheetahs are bigger in size as compared to Asiatic cheetahs.

### Kuno National Park (Madhya Pradesh)

- It was **established in 1981 as a wildlife sanctuary but in 2018**, it was given the status of a **national park**.
- **Kuno River**, one of the major tributaries of **Chambal River** flows through the entire length bisecting the National Park division.

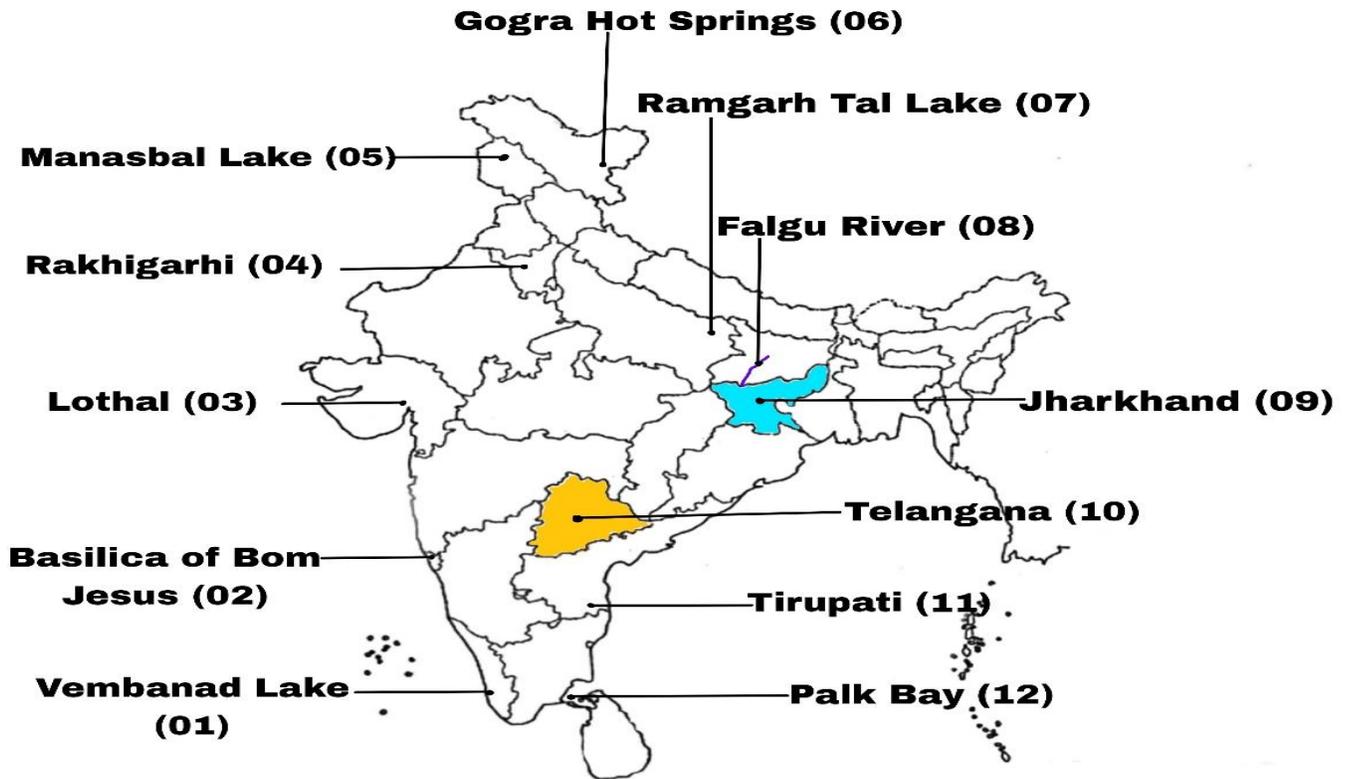
## MAPS: PLACES IN NEWS

### International Places In News



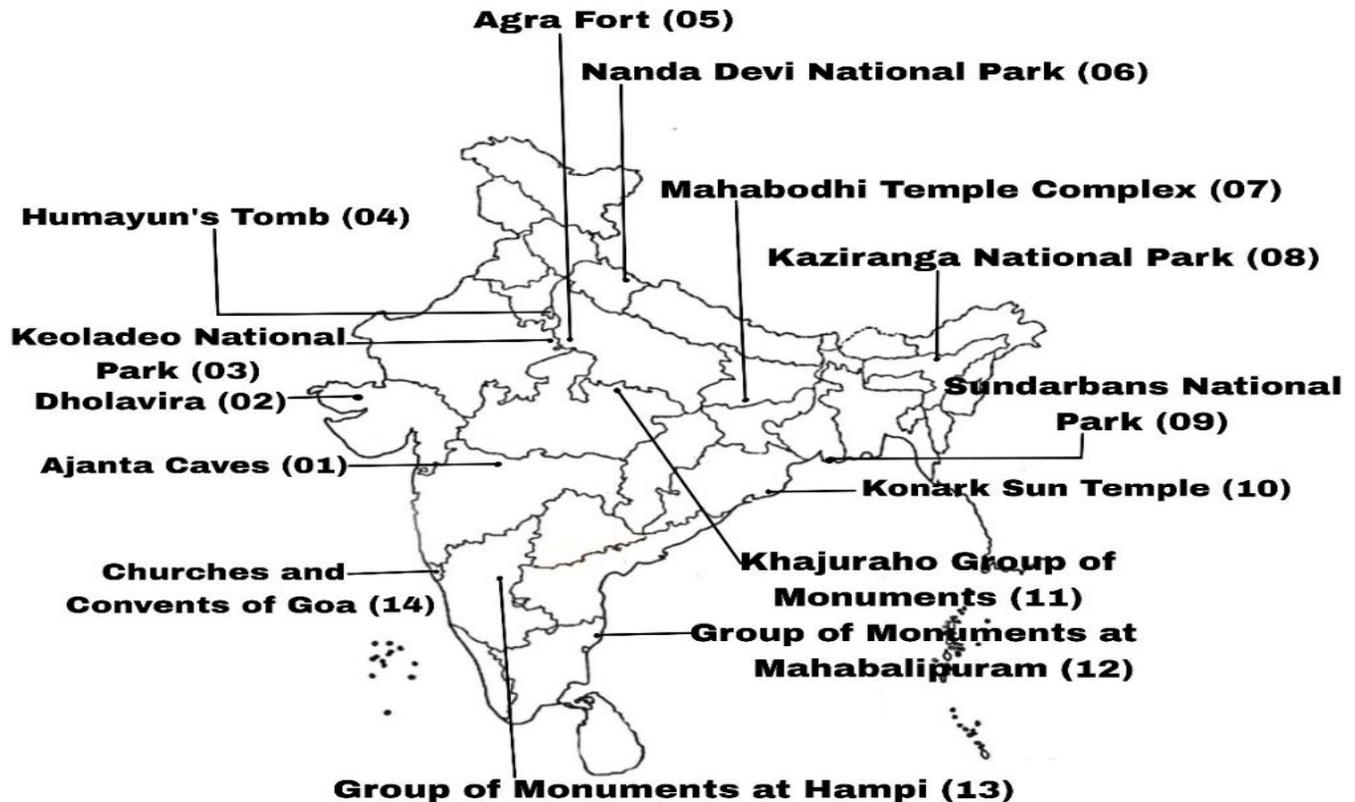
<b>01</b>	<b>Egypt</b>	India and Egypt have signed an MoU to further enhance <b>bilateral defence cooperation</b> . Egypt is a <b>transcontinental</b> country spanning the northeast corner of Africa and southwest corner of Asia via a land bridge formed by the Sinai Peninsula. It is bordered by the <b>Mediterranean Sea</b> , the Gaza Strip of Palestine and Israel, the <b>Red Sea</b> , Sudan and Libya. Cairo is the capital and largest city of Egypt.
<b>02</b>	<b>New York</b>	In New York, the 10th Trilateral Ministerial Commission meeting of the India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum ( <b>IBSA</b> ) was conducted. New York is the most populous city in the US. New York City is composed of five boroughs, each of which is <u>co-extensive</u> with a respective county of the state of New York. The five boroughs are—Brooklyn (Kings County), Queens (Queens County), Manhattan (New York County), the Bronx (Bronx County), and Staten Island (Richmond County).
<b>03</b>	<b>St George's Chapel</b>	<b>Queen Elizabeth II</b> was buried at <b>Windsor Castle's St. George's Chapel</b> . It is in England built in the late-medieval <u>Perpendicular Gothic style</u> . It was founded in the 14th century by King Edward III. The castle has belonged to the monarchy for almost 1,000 years and was a principal residence of Elizabeth II before her death.

04	<b>Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant</b>	<p>A team of officials from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) arrived to assess the situation at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant. This nuclear plant is located in <b>south-eastern Ukraine</b>. It is the largest nuclear power plant in Europe and among the 10 largest in the world. It is built on the southern shore of <b>Kakhovka Reservoir</b> on the <b>Dnieper River</b>.</p> <p>In March 2022, Russian forces, after invading Ukraine, seized this nuclear plant. Since then, the plant is operated by Ukrainian staff, under Russian control.</p>
05	<b>Azerbaijan</b>	<p>Azerbaijan and Armenia accused each other for breaking a ceasefire agreement, which was signed in November 2020 that ended the 2020 <b>Nagorno-Karabakh war</b>. Azerbaijan is a transcontinental country located at the boundary of Eastern Europe and Western Asia. It is a part of the <b>South Caucasus region</b>, and is bounded by the <u>Caspian Sea, Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Turkey, and Iran</u>. Its capital is <b>Baku</b>, which is <b>famed for its medieval walled Inner City</b>.</p>
06	<b>Manchar Lake</b>	<p>It swelled to dangerous levels due to unprecedented monsoon rains. It is the largest <b>natural freshwater lake</b> in <b>Pakistan</b>. It is located west of the Indus River. It collects water from numerous small streams in <b>Kirthar Mountains</b>, and then empties into Indus River.</p>
07	<b>Samarkand</b>	<p>The 22nd Annual Summit of the Heads of State of SCO was held in Samarkand. It is a city in south-eastern <b>Uzbekistan</b>. It is among the oldest continuously inhabited cities in Central Asia. In 2001, UNESCO added the city to its <b>World Heritage List</b> as <u>Samarkand – Crossroads of Cultures</u>. The city has carefully preserved the traditions of ancient crafts.</p>
08	<b>Solomon Islands</b>	<p>Solomon Islands has suspended visits from all foreign Navies. It is a nation in Melanesia, east of Papua New Guinea. Its capital is Honiara, located on the island of Guadalcanal.</p> <p>It is an island country consisting of <b>six major islands</b> and over 900 smaller islands in Oceania. They occupy a strategic location on sea routes between the South Pacific Ocean, the Solomon Sea, and the Coral Sea.</p>
09	<b>Red Sea</b>	<p>Iran's Navy seized two US Navy Sea drones in the Red Sea. Red sea is a semi-enclosed, inlet of Indian Ocean between the continents of Africa from Asia. It is connected to the <b>Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean</b> to the south through the <b>Gulf of Aden</b> and the narrow strait of <b>Bab el Mandeb</b>.</p>
10	<b>Namibia</b>	<p>Eight wild cheetahs have been brought to India from Namibia. It is a country in Southern Africa. It is bordered by Angola, Zambia, Botswana, South Africa and the Atlantic Ocean. It gained independence from South Africa in 1990. Its capital and largest city is <b>Windhoek</b>.</p>
11	<b>Angola</b>	<p>Joao Manuel Goncalves Lourenco is re-elected as the President of Angola. It is a country located on the west coast of Southern Africa and is the 7<sup>th</sup> largest country in Africa. It is bordered by Namibia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia, and the Atlantic Ocean. The capital city is <b>Luanda</b>.</p>
12	<b>Diego Ramirez Islands</b>	<p>Here scientists have identified brown bird species of Subantarctic rayadito. These islands are a small group of sub-antarctic islands located in the southernmost extreme of Chile. The islands have been designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by BirdLife International for their significant seabird breeding populations.</p>



01	Vembanad lake	<p>It continues to undergo <b>ecological degradation</b> due to pollution and unauthorized constructions on its banks. It is the <u>longest lake in India, as well as the largest lake in the state of Kerala</u>. It is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Ramsar site in India only after the Sunderbans in West Bengal.</p> <p><b>Vallam Kali</b> (i.e Nehru Trophy Boat Race) is a Snake Boat Race held every year in August in Vembanad Lake. In 2002, it was included in the list of <u>wetlands of international importance</u>, as defined by the Ramsar Convention.</p> <p>The lake has its source in 4 rivers - Meenachil, Achankovil, Pampa &amp; Manimala</p>
02	Basilica of Bom Jesus	<p>It is part of the Churches and Convents of Goa listed under <b>UNESCOs World Heritage List</b>. This Jesuit church is India's 1<sup>st</sup> minor basilica, and is considered to be one of the best examples of baroque architecture and Portuguese Colonial architecture in India.</p> <p>It is one of the Seven Wonders of <b>Portuguese Origin</b> in the World.</p>
03	Lothal	<p>Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways is building the <b>National Maritime Heritage Complex</b> at Lothal. Lothal was one of the southernmost cities of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) located in <b>Gujarat</b>. Located between the Bhogavo and Sabarmati rivers, it was a vital trade Centre in ancient times.</p> <p>Lothal (<b>Manchester of Indus Valley Civilisation</b>) is famous for worlds earliest known dockyard, <u>double burial</u>, risk husk, <u>fire altars</u>, painted jar, modern day chess, terracotta figure of ship, <u>instruments for measuring 45, 90 and 180-degree angles</u>.</p>
04	Rakhigarhi	<p>The <b>world's largest museum of Harappan culture</b> is coming up in Rakhigarhi. It is the largest Harappan site in Hisar, Haryana. It was part of the mature phase of IVC, dating to 2600-1900 BCE. The site is located in Ghaggar-Hakra River plain.</p>

		The site was first excavated by the ASI in 1998-2001. The ancient mounds 6 and 7 at Rakhigarhi are among the 19 sites identified by the ASI that are going to be notified as ' <b>sites of national importance</b> '. In May 2012, the Global Heritage Fund declared Rakhigarhi one of the 10 <b>most endangered heritage sites in Asia</b> .
05	<b>Manasbal Lake</b>	After a gap of 33 years, Manasbal Lake is once again open for training drills after raging militancy forced the Navy to abandon it. It is a freshwater lake located in <b>Jammu and Kashmir</b> . The name Manasbal is said to be a derivative of Manasarovar. The large growth of lotus at the periphery of the lake adds to the beauty of the clear waters of the lake.  The Mughal Garden, called the Jaroka Bagh, built by Nur Jahan overlooks the lake.
06	<b>Gogra-Hot Springs</b>	India and China's troops begin <b>disengagement from Patrolling Point (PP) 15</b> in Gogra-Hot Springs. It is a pasture and camp site in the Ladakh, near its disputed border with China. It is located in the <b>Kugrang River valley</b> . During the times of the British Raj, Gogra was a halting spot for travellers to Central Asia via the <b>Chang Chenmo route</b> .
07	<b>Ramgarh Tal Lake</b>	The Centre and Uttar Pradesh governments claim to have spent more than Rs 305 crore to clean Ramgarh tal lake. It located in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh. <b>Rapti River</b> was passed through the site of the present-day Ramgarh Tal. However, the direction of Rapti River was later changed, and Ramgarh Tal came into existence from its remains.
08	<b>Falgu river</b>	Bihar inaugurated the country's <b>largest rubber dam (Gayaji Dam) and a steel bridge</b> over the Falgu River. It is also called <b>Niranjana River</b> that flows past Gaya, Bihar. It is a sacred river for Hindus and Buddhists. Lord Vishnu's Temple Vishnupad Mandir is situated on the bank of Phalgu.
09	<b>Jharkhand</b>	Jharkhand has become the <b>3<sup>rd</sup> state after Bihar and Odisha</b> in eastern India to have <u>Food Security Atlas</u> for its rural areas. This Atlas is an effort toward mapping the <u>food security situation in the state</u> . It shares its border with the West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Odisha. It accounts for more than 40% of the mineral resources of India.
10	<b>Telangana</b>	India's <b>1<sup>st</sup> Forest University</b> is to be established in Telangana. Globally, it will be the 3 <sup>rd</sup> University of Forestry after Russia and China. Telangana shares its border with Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. <b>Hyderabad cuisine</b> and <b>Kakatiya architecture</b> both are on the list of UNESCO creative city of gastronomy and UNESCO World Heritage Site.
11	<b>Tirupati</b>	India's <b>1st lithium-ion cell factory</b> is inaugurated in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh. The city is home to the important Hindu shrine of Tirumala Venkateswara Temple. It has been selected as one of the hundred Indian cities to be developed as a smart city under Smart Cities Mission by Government of India.
12	<b>Palk Bay</b>	Tamil Nadu has notified the country's <b>1<sup>st</sup> 'Dugong Conservation Reserve'</b> in Palk Bay. It is a semi-enclosed shallow water body between the southeast coast of India and Sri Lanka. It is considered to be one amongst the major sinks for sediments along with Gulf of Mannar.  To the south of Palk Bay, <u>Adam's Bridge</u> separates Palk Bay from the <u>Gulf of Mannar</u> . Dugongs are the largest herbivorous marine mammals in the world. It is protected under Schedule 1 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.



- Currently, there are **40 World Heritage Sites located in India**. These include 32 cultural sites, 7 natural sites, and 1 mixed-criteria site (Khangchendzonga National Park).
- India has the sixth largest number of sites in the world. The first sites to be listed were the Ajanta Caves, Ellora Caves, Agra Fort, and Taj Mahal, all of which were inscribed in the 1983 session of the World Heritage Committee.
- The most recent site listed was Dholavira, in 2021.

S.No	Place	Location	Year of Designation	Details
01	Ajanta Caves	Maharashtra	1983	These are 29 rock-cut Buddhist cave monuments dating from the 2nd century BCE to 650 AD. Of these, 4 were used as Chaitya or prayer halls while 25 were used as Viharas or residential caves. It includes <u>paintings and rock-cut sculptures</u> described as among the finest surviving examples of ancient Indian art.
02	Dholavira	Gujrat	2021	It is also known as Kotada timba. The site contains ruins of a city of the ancient Indus Valley civilization. It is located on the Tropic of Cancer. It comprises two parts: a <u>walled city and a cemetery</u> to the west of the city. It has two seasonal streams - Mansar and Manhar.
03	Keoladeo	Rajasthan	1985	It is a man-made wetland, formerly known as the <b>Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary</b> . It was also designated as

	<b>National Park</b>			<p>Ramsar site in October 1981. Some 364 species of birds, including the rare Siberian crane, have been recorded in the park.</p> <p>As it is not a natural wetland, the main source of water to the national park is a <b>temporary reservoir i.e., the Ajan dam</b>. The dam gets water from the river <b>Gambhir</b>.</p>
<b>04</b>	<b>Humayun's Tomb</b>	Delhi	1993	<p>After the death of Humayun in 1556, his wife Hamida Banu Begum started the construction of Humayun's Tomb. It is called the dormitory of the Mughals' as in the cells are buried over 150 Mughal family members. It is an example of the <b>Charbagh</b> (a four-quadrant garden with the four rivers of Quranic paradise represented) with pools joined by channels.</p> <p>It is the <b>first garden style tomb</b> built in India during the Mughal period. It is Humayun's Tomb where <b>Bahadur shah Zafar</b> took shelter in 1857 during the first war of Independence with his three sons.</p>
<b>05</b>	<b>Agra Fort/ Red fort of Agra</b>	Uttar Pradesh	1983	<p>Located on Yamuna river, it was built during 1565-1573 for Akbar. It was the main residence of the rulers of <b>Sikarwar clan</b> of Rajputs until Mughals occupied it.</p> <p>Shah Jahan converted it to a palace and in 1658 Aurangzeb used it to prison his father Shah Jahan for 8 years. Before being captured by the British, the last Indian rulers to have occupied it were the Marathas.</p>
<b>06</b>	<b>Nanda Devi National Park</b>	Uttarakhand	1988	<p>The entire park lies at an elevation of more than 3,500 m above mean sea level. There are two core zones in <b>Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve</b>, namely <u>Nanda Devi National Park</u> and <u>Valley of Flower National Park</u>. Both these National Parks are also designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.</p>
<b>07</b>	<b>Mahabodhi Temple Complex</b>	Bodh Gaya, Bihar	2002	<p>It marks the location where the Buddha is said to have attained <b>enlightenment</b>. The site contains a descendant of the Bodhi Tree.</p> <p>In approximately 250 BCE, about 200 years after the Buddha attained enlightenment, Emperor Ashoka, who converted to Buddhism, visited Bodh Gaya in order to establish a monastery.</p>
<b>08</b>	<b>Kaziranga National Park</b>	Assam	1985	<p>It is the single largest undisturbed and representative area in the Brahmaputra Valley floodplain. It hosts two-thirds of the world's great <b>one-horned rhinoceroses</b>. It was declared as a National Park in 1974. It was declared a Tiger Reserve in 2006.</p> <p><b>NH 37 &amp; Diphlu River</b> are running through it.</p>
<b>09</b>	<b>Sundarbans National Park</b>	West Bengal	1987	<p>It is also <b>tiger reserve and biosphere reserve</b>. It is part of the Sundarbans on the Ganges Delta and adjacent to the Sundarban Reserve Forest in Bangladesh. It was</p>

				designated as a Ramsar site since 2019.  Sundari trees can be found in abundance. It is the world's largest delta and mangrove forest. It is bound on the west by river Muriganga and on the east by rivers Harinbhahga and Raimangal
10	Konark Sun Temple	Odisha	1984	It is dedicated to the Hindu sun god Surya, and, conceived as a giant stone chariot with 12 wheels. It was built by king <b>Narasimhadeva I</b> of the <b>Eastern Ganga dynasty</b> in about 1250 CE. This temple is called the <b>Black Pagoda</b> . (The Jagannath Temple in Puri is called the White Pagoda).
11	Khajuraho Group of Monuments	Madhya Pradesh	1986	These are a group of <b>Hindu and Jain temple</b> . These temples are famous for their <b>Nagara-style</b> architectural symbolism. Most temples were built between 885 AD and 1000 AD by the <b>Chandela dynasty</b> .  Kandariya Mahadev is the most visited temple.
12	Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram	Tamil Nadu	1984	The site has 40 ancient monuments and Hindu temples, which includes the <b>Pancha Rathas</b> , also including one of the largest open-air rock reliefs in the world: the <b>Descent of the Ganges or Arjuna's Penance</b> . The monuments were built during the Pallava dynasty.  The town's Five Rathas, or monolithic temples, are the remnants of seven temples, for which the town was known as Seven Pagodas
13	Group of Monuments at Hampi	Karnataka	1986	It is situated on the southern bank of the river <b>Tungabhadra</b> . It is located within the ruins of the city of <b>Vijayanagara</b> . The remains include religious and secular buildings and defensive structures which include Virupaksha Temple or a carved stone chariot stands in front of the huge Vittala Temple.  A large number of royal buildings were raised by <b>Krishnadeva Raya (A.D. 1509-30)</b> and Vittal Temple Complex is one of them.
14	Churches and Convents of Goa	Goa	1986	The site comprises seven churches and convents that were built in the 16th and 17th centuries in <b>Gothic, Manueline, Mannerist, and Baroque</b> styles, but were also adapted to suit the local techniques and resources.  It comprises of the following: <b>Basilica of Bom Jesus</b> , Se' Cathedral, Church and Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Church of Lady of Rosary, Church of St. Augustine and Chapel of St. Catherine.

# SOCIAL ISSUES

## NCERT Study

- According to a study, 11% of Indian children in Class III lack basic mathematics skills when compared to the global benchmark proficiency level.
- This was revealed in the national report on 'Benchmarking for oral reading fluency with reading comprehension and numeracy 2022' of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

## Study Undertaken by NCERT

- A large-scale **foundational learning study (FLS)** was recently undertaken jointly by the Ministry of Education and the NCERT.
  - ✓ Foundational learning, which is the children's ability to read with meaning and do basic math calculations by Class III, forms the basis of all future learning.
- The survey categorizes learners based on their knowledge and skills into four groups: **those who**

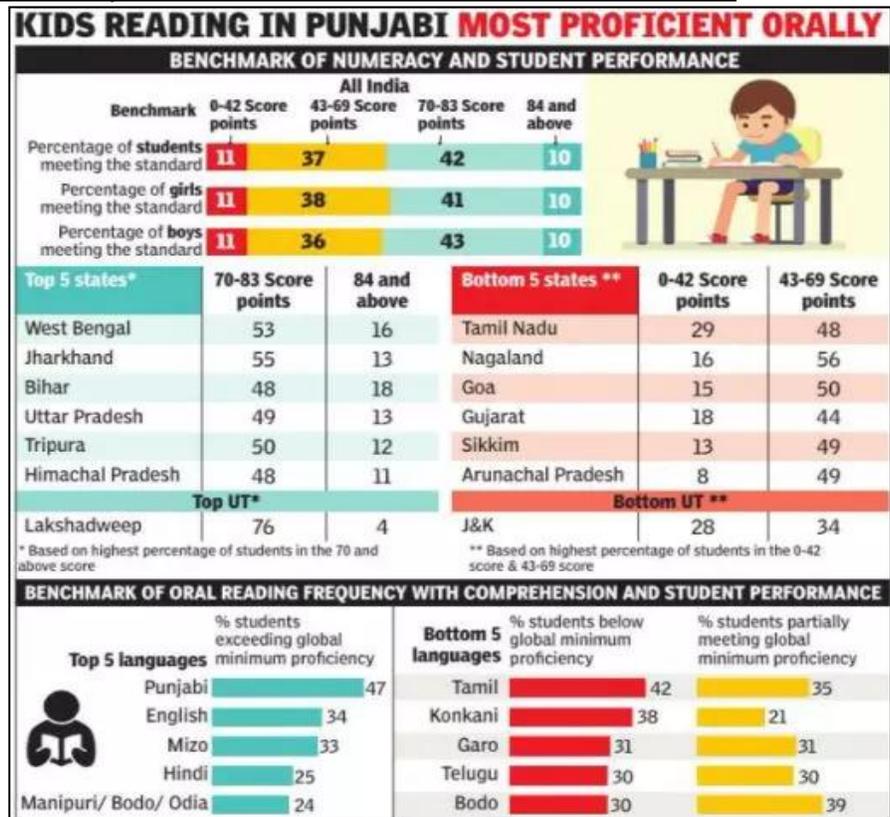


- The survey results will assist the government in establishing benchmarks in 20 languages and numeracy.

## Findings Of The Study

- **In Foundational Numeracy (skills in maths) -**
  - ✓ 48% of Class III students lacked or had limited basic numeracy knowledge and skills. As many as 11% of students were unable to complete the most basic grade-level numeracy tasks, and 37% could only partially complete basic grade-level tasks.
  - ✓ **Tamil Nadu** was the worst performer among the states, with 77% of students lacking or having only limited numeracy skills.
  - ✓ In total, 11 states had more than 50% of students who lacked or had limited numerical skills.

- **In Language Proficiency,**
  - ✓ Students' foundational learning in **Hindi** is poor, but their performance in **regional languages** is even worse in some states.
  - ✓ In 18 states, approximately 53% of Class III students surveyed for Hindi proficiency lacked or had limited knowledge and skills in reading and comprehending the language.
  - ✓ Regional language proficiency was lower in states such as Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala, with 59% of students either lacking or displaying limited skills.



## Related Government Initiatives

- **National Education Policy 2020:**

- ✓ It advocates for a 3-language formula in which two of the languages are indigenous to India.
- ✓ It states that the medium of instruction should be in the mother tongue until at least Class V, and preferably until Class VIII, after which it can be taught as a language.
- ✓ The Policy also emphasizes the significance of foundational learning.

- **National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN) Bharat:**

Union Ministry of Education launched the NIPUN Bharat in 2021 as a national mission to enable all children at the end of Class III to attain foundational skills by the year 2026-2027.

### NCERT Separate Study: Projection and Trends of School Enrolments by 2025

## About the Study/Report

- It is commissioned by the NCERT's Educational Survey Division **to understand how school education is progressing** in the age group of 6 - 16 years in states and UTs (covers 20 states and UTs) and for marginalised groups.
- The NCERT report had **studied trends since 1950**, when the country had 2,171 schools with 2.38 crore students.
- It referred the data from Education Statistics published by the Ministry of Education, All India School Education Survey conducted by the council itself and Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) data collected by the Education Ministry.
- It will be of **great use to policy planners, policy makers and researchers** in the country, as such projections form the basis for investment decisions such as opening of new schools or upgrading existing one, employment and deployment of teachers, etc.

## Key Highlights

- The study, titled "**Projection and Trends of School Enrolments by 2025,**" noted that school enrolment is expected to decline at all levels by 2025 due to a decline in population in the age group of 6 - 16 years.
- While **enrolment in the school system** (classes I - X) increased by more than 900% between 1950 and 2016, the proportion of female students increased sharply by more than 1,000%.
- The growth in enrolment at the **primary stage** continued up to 2011. Since 2011, enrolment has been declining and it will continue till 2025.
- The **upper primary** (classes VI-VIII) and **secondary stages** (IX-X) started witnessing a decline in enrolment in 2016 and 2019, respectively.
- The report stated that **enrolment is a function of population**, consequently, if the population of an age group falls, so would enrolment.
  - ✓ According to Census 2011 data, the proportion of children aged 0-6 years in the overall population declined from 18% to 13.12% between 1991 and 2011.
  - ✓ As a result, the gap between enrolment and population also decreased.
- A look at the **social categorisation of the figures** reveals that the drop in enrollment for students from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe communities began in the 1990s.
  - ✓ During the period 2011-2016, growth in SC and ST children's primary stage enrollment was negative: - 5.27% and -12.20%, respectively.
  - ✓ The reduction in enrollment of SC, ST children is remarkably comparable to the overall enrolment pattern in India.

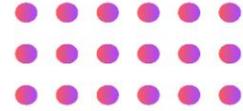
- A year-long surveillance of hospital-acquired infections (HAIs) across the country reveals a grim picture of superbugs (or drug-resistant microorganisms) victory over medicines.
- The survey was conducted by the newly formed **Healthcare Associated Infection Surveillance-India**.

# Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

- **Antimicrobials** - including antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals and antiparasitics - are medicines used to prevent and treat infections in humans, animals and plants.
- AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change over time and no longer respond to medicines (drug resistance) making infections increasingly difficult or impossible to treat
- **WHO** recently identified AMR as a major **public health threat**.
- AMR organisms are found in people, animals, food, plants and the environment (in water, soil and air).
- They can spread from person to person or between people and animals, including from food of animal origin.
- The rapid global spread of multi and pan-drug resistant bacteria, also known as "**superbugs**," is particularly concerning

**The main drivers of AMR:**

- The misuse and overuse of antimicrobials;
- Lack of access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) for both humans and animals;
- Poor infection and disease prevention and control in health-care facilities and farms;
- Poor access to quality, affordable medicines, vaccines and diagnostics;
- Lack of awareness and knowledge;
- Lack of enforcement of legislation.



**Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI) Surveillance-India Project**

Under this cooperative agreement, AIIMS-New Delhi collaborated with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to

- **Strengthen** the national capacity for surveillance of HAIs to serve the need for reliable AMR data.
- **Leverage** the existing capacities for microbiology and robust academic capabilities of the ICMR-AMR network.
- **Support** successful patient care and to measure, track and report the magnitude and types of AMR and HAI threats affecting India.

**Findings of Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI) Surveillance-India**

- According to the **first-ever** year-long surveillance, superbugs were widely present

<p><b>WHAT IS AMR</b></p> <p>&gt; Antimicrobial Resistance occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites evolve to an extent that regular medicines have no effect</p>		<p><b>WHO says AMR is among top 10 global public health threats</b></p>			
<p><b>IN INDIA WIDER RESISTANCE TO EVEN LATEST ANTIBIOTICS</b></p> <p>&gt; Latest ICMR AMR surveillance report shows rising resistance to all known antibiotics; report looked at 95,728 culture positive isolates between Jan 1-Dec 31, 2021</p> <p>&gt; Samples: Blood, urine, respiratory tract, infections etc</p>					
<p><b>FINDINGS The most common drug-resistant bacteria were:</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td> <p><b>Escherichia coli (E-coli)</b></p> <p>24.7%</p> </td> <td> <p><b>Klebsiella pneumoniae</b></p> <p>18%</p> </td> <td> <p><b>Acinetobacter baumannii</b></p> <p>12.9%</p> </td> </tr> </table>			<p><b>Escherichia coli (E-coli)</b></p> <p>24.7%</p>	<p><b>Klebsiella pneumoniae</b></p> <p>18%</p>	<p><b>Acinetobacter baumannii</b></p> <p>12.9%</p>
<p><b>Escherichia coli (E-coli)</b></p> <p>24.7%</p>	<p><b>Klebsiella pneumoniae</b></p> <p>18%</p>	<p><b>Acinetobacter baumannii</b></p> <p>12.9%</p>			
<p><b>HEALTHCARE-ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS</b></p> <p>&gt; Modern healthcare uses many invasive devices and procedures to treat patients</p> <p>&gt; Use of devices (catheters, ventilators etc) can give rise to healthcare-associated infections (HAIs); worldwide, over 1.4m patients suffer from HAIs at any time</p> <p>&gt; All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and ICMR, has come up with a surveillance report</p>		<p><b>FINDINGS</b></p> <p>&gt; Samples from 120 ICUs in 39 centres</p> <p><b>3,080</b> cases of blood stream infections, 792 of urinary tract reported</p> <p>&gt; Fatal (14-day) outcome in 38.1% of blood infections and 27.9% in UTI</p> <p>&gt; Gram Negative bacteria accounted for 73.3% of blood infections, 53% UTI</p>			

in Indian hospitals.

- ✓ The presence of superbugs indicates resistance to older antibiotics and the need for costly last-resort antibiotics (such as carbapenem and colistin).
- **Intensive Care Units (ICUs) are hotbeds for HAIs.**
  - ✓ Most doctors are aware that ICU patients in India who stay for long periods become infected with **gram-negative microorganisms**, which are more difficult to treat than gram-positive organisms found in ICUs of western countries.
  - ✓ The findings confirm the magnitude of these gram-negative infections
    - Gram-negative bacteria are surrounded by a thin peptidoglycan cell wall, which itself is surrounded by an outer membrane containing lipopolysaccharide. Gram-positive bacteria lack an outer membrane but are surrounded by layers of peptidoglycan many times thicker than is found in the Gram-negatives
- It was discovered that **38.1%** of patients with bloodstream infections and another 27.9% with UTIs died within 14 days, and the HAIs in these cases were possibly only associated complications that did not directly contribute to death.

### Significance

- HAI surveillance serves as a benchmark for hospitals. For example, if a hospital has a HAI rate of 4 per 1,000, one can compare it to other hospitals.
- The findings highlight the importance of improving hospital infection control practices and implementing practices to reduce irrational antibiotic use.
- To prevent the emergence of newer superbugs, an audit of hospital antibiotic use could be conducted, revealing how many hospitals follow the rules.

### Cabinet Approves Addition Of Tribes To ST List

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by PM Modi, approved the inclusion of 4 new tribes of **five states** in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) category.
- Among the states whose tribes have been included in the list are **Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh**.

### List of Scheduled Tribes

- **Art 342(1)** states that “the **President** may with respect to any State/ UT and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by a public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within tribes or tribal communities to be treated as Scheduled Tribe in relation to that State/ UT as the case may be”.
- **Art 342(2)** - once the notification is issued by the President under Art. 342(1), any modifications therein, by way either of including or excluding from the list any caste, tribe or a part or a group thereof, can be made by **Parliament by law and not by a Presidential notification**.
- In pursuance of these provisions, the list of Scheduled Tribes is notified **for each State/ UT**.
- These lists are valid only within the jurisdiction of that State/ UT and not outside.
  - ✓ A community declared as a Scheduled Tribe in a State need not be so in another State.
- The inclusion of a community as a Scheduled Tribe is an ongoing process.

Criteria for Inclusion in ST List	Process of Inclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <u>Indications of primitive traits;</u> <u>distinctive culture;</u> <u>geographical isolation;</u></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ It begins with the recommendation from the respective State governments.</li><li>○ These recommendations are then sent to the Tribal Affairs Ministry,</li></ul>

<p><u>shyness of contact with the community at large; and backwardness.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ However, these criteria are not spelt out in the Constitution.</li> </ul>	<p>which reviews and sends them to the Registrar General of India for approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This is followed by the approval of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes before the list is sent to the Cabinet for a final decision.</li> <li>○ Once Union cabinet gives its approval, a bill to amend the presidential order is placed before the Parliament.</li> </ul>
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### Tribes To Be Included In ST Category List

- **Hattee community of the Trans-Giri region of Himachal Pradesh's Sirmaur district:** The Cabinet approval to the proposal for grant of ST status to the Hattee community after rejecting earlier proposals in 1995, 2006 and 2017.
- **Narikoravan and Kurivikkaran community from Tamil Nadu**
- **Binjhia in Chhattisgarh:** Binjhia were listed as ST in Jharkhand and Odisha but not in Chhattisgarh.
- **Gond community residing in 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh**
  - ✓ The Cabinet approved a proposal to bring the Gond community residing in 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh, under the ST list from the Scheduled Caste list.
  - ✓ This includes the five subcategories of the Gond community (Dhuria, Nayak, Ojha, Pathari, and Rajgond).
- **Synonyms for 11 tribes in Chhattisgarh and one tribe in Karnataka included in the list**
  - ✓ So that variations in their spellings and pronunciations do not result in people being left out of beneficiary schemes.
  - ✓ The Cabinet approved 'Betta-Kuruba' as a synonym for the Kadu Kuruba tribe In Karnataka.
  - ✓ In Chhattisgarh, the Cabinet approved synonyms for tribes like:
    - Bharia (variations added include Bhumia and Bhuyian), Gadhwa (Gadwa), Dhanwar (Dhanawar, Dhanuwar), Nagesia (Nagasia, Kisan), and Pondh (Pond), among others.

In **Pankaj Kumar Saha v. Sub-Divisional Officer 1996**, the Supreme Court observed that:

- The Court is devoid of power to include or exclude from or substitute or declare synonyms to be a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe.
- *It is for Parliament to amend the list and include therein, or exclude there from, any caste, race or tribe.*

**{For more about Hattee community, refer The Recitals - July 2022}**

### New Rules For Child Welfare Panel Members

- Following the enactment of Juvenile Justice Amendment Act, 2021, the Government of India recently notified the **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection Amendment) Model Amendment Rules 2022.**
- The recently amended rules for implementing the **Juvenile Justice Act** prohibit anyone associated with an organisation receiving foreign funds from serving on Child Welfare Committees (CWC).

Juvenile Justice (Care or Protection of Children) Act/JJ Act, 2015	JJ (Care or Protection of Children) Amendment Act, 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Act was introduced (by the Ministry of Women and Child Development) and passed in <b>2015</b> to replace the Juvenile Delinquency Law and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000.</li> <li>● One of the main provisions of the Act is allowing the trial of juveniles in conflict with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The amendment has been based on a <b>National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)</b> report (2018-19) in which over 7,000 Child Care Institutions (CCIs or children's homes) were surveyed.</li> <li>● The report found that 1.5% of CCIs do not conform to rules and regulations of the JJ Act and 29% of</li> </ul>

<p>law in the age group of <b>16-18 years as adults.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Under the Act, offences committed by juveniles are <b>categorised</b> as heinous (with minimum or maximum sentence of 7 years), serious (with 3-7 years of imprisonment) and petty offences.</li> <li>✓ It provides that an offence which is punishable with imprisonment between 3-7 years to be cognizable (where arrest is allowed without warrant) and non-bailable.</li> <li>✓ According to the Act, juveniles charged with heinous crimes and between the ages of 16-18 years would be tried as <b>adults</b> and processed through the <b>adult justice system.</b></li> <li>✓ The nature of the crime and whether the juvenile should be tried as a minor or a child, was to be determined by a <b>Juvenile Justice Board.</b></li> <li>● The second major provision is with regards to <b>adoption.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The Act streamlined adoption procedures for orphans, abandoned and surrendered children and the existing <b>Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)</b> has been made a <b>statutory body</b> to enable it to perform its function more effectively.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The State Government may, by notification, establish one or more <b>Child Welfare Committees (CWC)</b> for each district or group of districts to exercise the powers conferred under this Act. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The Committee shall be composed of a <b>Chairperson and four other members</b>, at least one of whom shall be a woman and another a child expert.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>them had major shortcomings in their management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It also found that not a single CCI in the country was found to be 100% compliant to the provisions of the JJ Act.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Amendments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● According to the Act, <b>serious offences</b> will also include offences for which the maximum punishment is more than 7 years in prison and the minimum punishment is not prescribed or is less than 7 years.</li> <li>● It provides that offence which is punishable with imprisonment between 3-7 years will be <b>non-cognizable.</b></li> <li>● Both heinous and serious crimes have also been clarified for the first time, <b>removing ambiguity.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ This provision has been made to ensure that children, as much as possible, are protected and kept out of the adult justice system.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Instead of the court, <b>District Magistrates (DMs)</b>, including Additional District Magistrates (ADMs), <u>can now issue adoption orders</u> under the JJ Act. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ This is to ensure faster case resolution and increased accountability.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The new amendment prohibits the opening of any new CCI without the sanction of the DM. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Now, DMs are also responsible for ensuring that CCIs falling in their district are following all norms and procedures.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The DM will also carry out background checks (including educational qualifications) of CWC members, who are usually social welfare activists, as there was no such provision then.</li> <li>● The CWCs are also to report regularly to the DMs on their activities in the districts.</li> </ul>
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### **About The New Rules**

- The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection Amendment) Model Amendment Rules 2022 **modify several aspects of the JJ Act**, including those governing adoption, foster care, sponsorship, as well as the eligibility criteria for CWCs.
- The Model Rules state that a person associated with **an organisation receiving foreign contribution** shall not be eligible to be a Chairperson or member of the Committee.
  - ✓ As per the Chairperson of NCPCR (Priyank Kanoongo), those on CWC have the power of a magistrate and are equivalent to government officials, who are barred under Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010, from receiving foreign funds.

- It also states that anyone involved in the implementation of the JJ Act in any NGO or organisation that creates a **conflict of interest** will be ineligible to serve on a CWC.
  - ✓ It goes on to say that anyone with "any family member" or "close relation" working for an NGO is ineligible to be on a CWC.
- Anyone involved in rescue and rehabilitation in the district, as well as anyone representing someone running a CCI or a member of the Board or Trust of any NGO, is not eligible to serve on a CWC.
- Retired judicial officers have also been omitted from the category of persons who can be considered for appointment to a CWC.

### Criticism Of The New Rules

- The rules are broadly worded, with no definition of who is a family member or close relative.
- This reduces the pool of human resources available for CWC appointments. Many CWCs have yet to be appointed because they cannot find members to fill those positions.

*{For more about Child adoption & CARA, refer The Recitals - July 2022}*

### PM-SHRI Schools To Be Developed As 'Green' Hubs: Modi

PM Modi, on the occasion of Teacher's Day, announced a new scheme — PM-SHRI Yojana to develop **14,500 schools as model schools**. The schools will be equipped with modern infrastructure, including labs, smart classrooms, libraries, and sports facility.

#### PM SHRI Yojana

- PM SHRI Yojana stands for **PM ScHools for Rising India**.
- It will be a **centrally-sponsored scheme**. Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) are those schemes which are implemented by the state government but sponsored by the central government with a defined shareholding.
- **Features –**
  - ✓ Upgradation & development of more than 14,500 schools across the country by strengthening the selected existing schools from amongst schools managed by Central Government/ State/ UT Government/ local bodies.
  - ✓ The schools will showcase all components of the **National Education Policy 2020** and act as exemplar schools and also offer mentorship to other schools in their vicinity.
  - ✓ Pedagogy adopted in these schools will be more experiential, holistic, integrated, play/toy-based (particularly, in the foundational years), inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centered, discussion-based, flexible and enjoyable.
  - ✓ Focus will be on achieving proficiency in learning outcomes of every child in every grade.
  - ✓ Assessment at all levels will be based on conceptual understanding and application of knowledge to real life situations and will be competency-based.
  - ✓ These schools shall also be developed as green schools with water conservation, waste recycling, energy-efficient infrastructure and integration of organic lifestyle in curriculum.
- The aim of these schools will *not only* be qualitative teaching, learning and cognitive development, but also creating holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with key 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

#### National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

- Approved by Union Cabinet in July 2020, it outlines the vision of India's new education system.
- The committee that drafted the NEP 2020 was headed by **Shri K Kasturirangan**.
- NEP 2020 focuses on five pillars: **Affordability, Accessibility, Quality, Equity, and Accountability** – to ensure continual learning.

- The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986 and forms a comprehensive framework to transform both elementary and higher education in India by 2040.
  - ✓ This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> such education policy since India's independence. The earlier two were launched in **1968 & 1986**.

### Major Features of the Policy

- **Schooling To Begin From The Age Of 3 Years:**
  - ✓ The revised policy expands the age group of mandatory schooling from 6-14 years to 3-18 years.
  - ✓ This new system will include 12 years of schooling with three years of Anganwadi/ pre-schooling.
  - ✓ The existing 10+2 structure of school curriculum will be replaced by a **5+3+3+4 curricular** structure corresponding to ages 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, & 14-18 years respectively.
- **Mother Tongue To Be Instated As Medium Of Instruction:**
  - ✓ The NEP has directed focus on students' mother tongue as the medium of instruction even as it sticks to the 'three language formula' but also mandates that **no language would be imposed on anyone**.
  - ✓ It also says that the freedom to choose the languages should be left to the states, regions or students.
    - **1st language:** It will be the mother tongue or regional language.
    - **2nd language:** In Hindi speaking states, it will be other modern Indian languages or English. In non-Hindi speaking states, it will be Hindi or English.
    - **3rd Language:** In Hindi speaking states, it will be English or a modern Indian language. In the non-Hindi speaking state, it will be English or a modern Indian language.
  - ✓ The policy indicates that wherever it is possible, the medium of instruction till at least Grade 5, but preferably up till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the mother tongue/local language/ regional language, both public and private schools, have to follow this norm.
- **Higher Education Commission of India (HECI):**
  - ✓ The HECI will now be set up as a single overarching umbrella body for entire higher education, excluding medical and legal education.
  - ✓ The same set of norms for regulation, accreditation, and academic standards, to be applied to both public and private higher education institutions.
  - ✓ The Government aims to phase out the affiliation of colleges in 15 years and a stage-wise mechanism is to be established for granting graded autonomy to colleges.
- **Separation Between Subject Streams To Be Blurred:**
  - ✓ As per NEP 2020, rigid separations between subjects' stream will be done away with.
  - ✓ Students will have the liberty to choose subjects they would like to study across streams.
  - ✓ Vocational education to be introduced in schools from Class 6 and will include internships as well.
- **Return of the FYUP Programme and No More Dropouts:**
  - ✓ The duration of the undergraduate degree will be either 3 or 4 years.
  - ✓ Students will also be given multiple exit options within this period.
  - ✓ Colleges will have to grant a certificate to a student if they would like to leave after completing 1 year in a discipline or field including vocational and professional areas, a diploma after 2 years of study, or a Bachelor's degree after completing a three-year programme.
  - ✓ An Academic Bank of Credit will be established by the Government for digitally storing academic credits earned from different Higher Educational Institutions so that these can be transferred and counted towards the final degree earned.

### Ban On Conversion Therapy For LGBTQIA+ Community

- The National Medical Commission (NMC) issued a letter to all State Medical Councils banning conversion therapy for the LGBTQIA+ community and calling it professional misconduct.

- ✓ NMC is India's apex regulatory body of medical professionals.
- While also empowering state bodies to take disciplinary action against medical professionals who violate the guideline, the NMC stated that it was following a Madras High Court (HC) directive.
- In 2022, the Madras HC directed NMC to issue an official notice under the *Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquettes, and Ethics) Regulations, 2002*, listing **conversion therapy as a wrong**.
- ✓ The judgement **barred any attempt to change the sexual orientation** of LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, or of any other orientation) people through medical means.

#### Other Guidelines Issued By The Court

- The court asked the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment to draw up a list of NGOs and other groups which could handle the issues faced by the community.
- The court said the community should be provided with legal assistance by the District Legal Services Authority in coordination with law enforcement agencies.
- The court ordered agencies to follow the *Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020*, and the *Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019*, in letter and spirit.
- The court stated that it was critical to hold sensitization programs in order to fully understand the community and its needs.

#### Conversion Therapy

- Conversion or reparative therapy is an intervention aimed at **changing the sexual orientation or gender identity** of an individual.
- This occurs through the use of psychiatric/mental treatment, medicines, exorcism and even violence, **with the goal of transforming the individual into a heterosexual** (attracted to people of opposite sex)
- Conversion therapy also includes efforts to transform the basic identity of young people whose gender identity contradicts their sex anatomy.

#### Risk Associated

- According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP), conversion therapies are based on the incorrect notion that homosexuality and various gender identities are unhealthy.
- Often, the therapy is provided by quacks (an unqualified person who claims medical knowledge or skills) with no experience dealing with the issue.
- It runs the danger of developing or exacerbating mental health issues such as anxiety, stress and drug usage, which can lead to suicide.

#### Way Ahead - How To Change The Mindset?

- According to experts, schools and colleges must affect changes in curricula for a better understanding of the community.
- Gender-neutral restrooms should be compulsory in educational institutes and other places.
- Parents must be sensitised as well, because the initial point of misunderstanding and abuse frequently occurs at home, with teenagers being forced to choose conversion therapies.
- Health specialists point out that even individuals who choose **sex reassignment surgery** need proper counselling, such as treatment before and after the procedure, etc.



# LGBT rights in India



- There are approximately 480,000 transgender people in India as per Census 2011.
- Though LGBT rights in India have been evolving rapidly in recent years, they still face social and legal difficulties not experienced by non-LGBT persons.
- The country has repealed or modified or read down its colonial-era laws (for example, Section 377 of the IPC) that directly discriminated against homosexual and transgender identities.
- In 2018, in the landmark decision of Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India, the SC decriminalised consensual homosexual intercourse by reading down Section 377 of the IPC.
- In this line, the Constitution of India under Article 15 (prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth) guarantees fundamental right and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

## Mandatory Requirements For Packaged Commodities

- The Department of Consumer Affairs' Legal Metrology Division recently notified a draft amendment to the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules 2011.
- All stakeholders have been asked to provide public comments on the draft notification.

## Proposed Amendments

- The key constituents need to be mentioned on the product packaging, as many blended food and cosmetic products are sold in the market.
  - ✓ Currently, manufacturers list the ingredients and nutritional information only on the back of the packaging.
  - ✓ As noted in the draft notification, **at least two prime components** should be declared on the package's front side along with the brand name.
- Packages displaying key constituents must display a percentage of the content used to make the product, known as the **unique selling proposition (USP)**. However, mechanical or electrical commodities are excluded from this.
  - ✓ As the name suggests, a USP is a marketing strategy designed to **inform customers about the superiority of one's own brand or product**.
  - ✓ Listing the USP of a product on the front of the package without disclosing its composition percentage violates consumer rights.
  - ✓ **For example**, if a brand sells aloe-vera moisturiser, then maximum percentage of the product should be aloe-vera, otherwise, the product name is misleading.

*{For more about Legal Metrology Act/ Rules and recent amendments, refer The Recitals - July 2022}*

## UGC Proposes Clustering Of Colleges

- Recently, the University Grants Commission (UGC) issued new guidelines for transforming colleges and universities into **multi-disciplinary institutions**.
- The aim is to help State governments and universities frame appropriate rules and policies.

## Key Highlights

### • Clustering to Institutions

- ✓ The UGC has suggested **academic collaboration** between institutions through “clusters” of higher education institutions (HEIs).
- ✓ This is to promote multi-disciplinary education and research in online and offline modes.
- ✓ Colleges with poor enrolment and fewer resources may benefit. This will enable students of these colleges to access better facilities as well as avail innovative courses.
- ✓ This will also help such centres improve their grades in **National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)** accreditation.

### • Merger of Single-Stream Institutions With Other Multidisciplinary Institutions

- ✓ The guidelines prescribed merger of single-stream institutions with other multidisciplinary institutions under the same management or different managements.
- ✓ Students opting for courses offered as a result of collaborations and mergers can also avail credit mobility between partnering institutions.
  - This has been made possible by **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) platform**, developed by National e-Governance Division of the Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology (MeitY).
  - The platform allows students to open an academic account and add HEIs of interest and store credits earned from them for receiving degrees and diplomas.

### • Strengthening of Existing Establishments By Setting Up Of New Departments

It has also prescribed expanding the number of departments in a college or university by adding new subjects such as languages, literature, music, Indology, sports, etc.

### • Capacity Building Of Faculties

- ✓ The UGC also suggests capacity-building for faculty so that they can teach, train and research in multi-disciplinary academic programmes.
- ✓ This can be done through initiatives like Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching (ARPIT) as well as investment in learning assessment tools.

## Multi-disciplinary Institutions and National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

- More multi-disciplinary institutions in the country is one of the recommendations for higher education in the National Education Policy 2020.
- The policy document has set a target of 2030 for all higher education institutions (HEIs) to become multi-disciplinary, and thereafter, increase student enrolments preferably in the thousands by 2040.
- The goal is to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education

## The University Grant Commission (UGC)

- The UGC was formally established in November 1956 as a statutory body by the UGC Act 1956.
- It was set up by the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education.
- It was established for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of university education in India.
- It is essentially an autonomous government agency that channels public funds (grants) to higher education institutions.
- This is done in exchange for their compliance with set quality criteria.
- It is headquartered in New Delhi and it has six regional centres in Pune, Bhopal, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Guwahati and Bangalore



including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035.

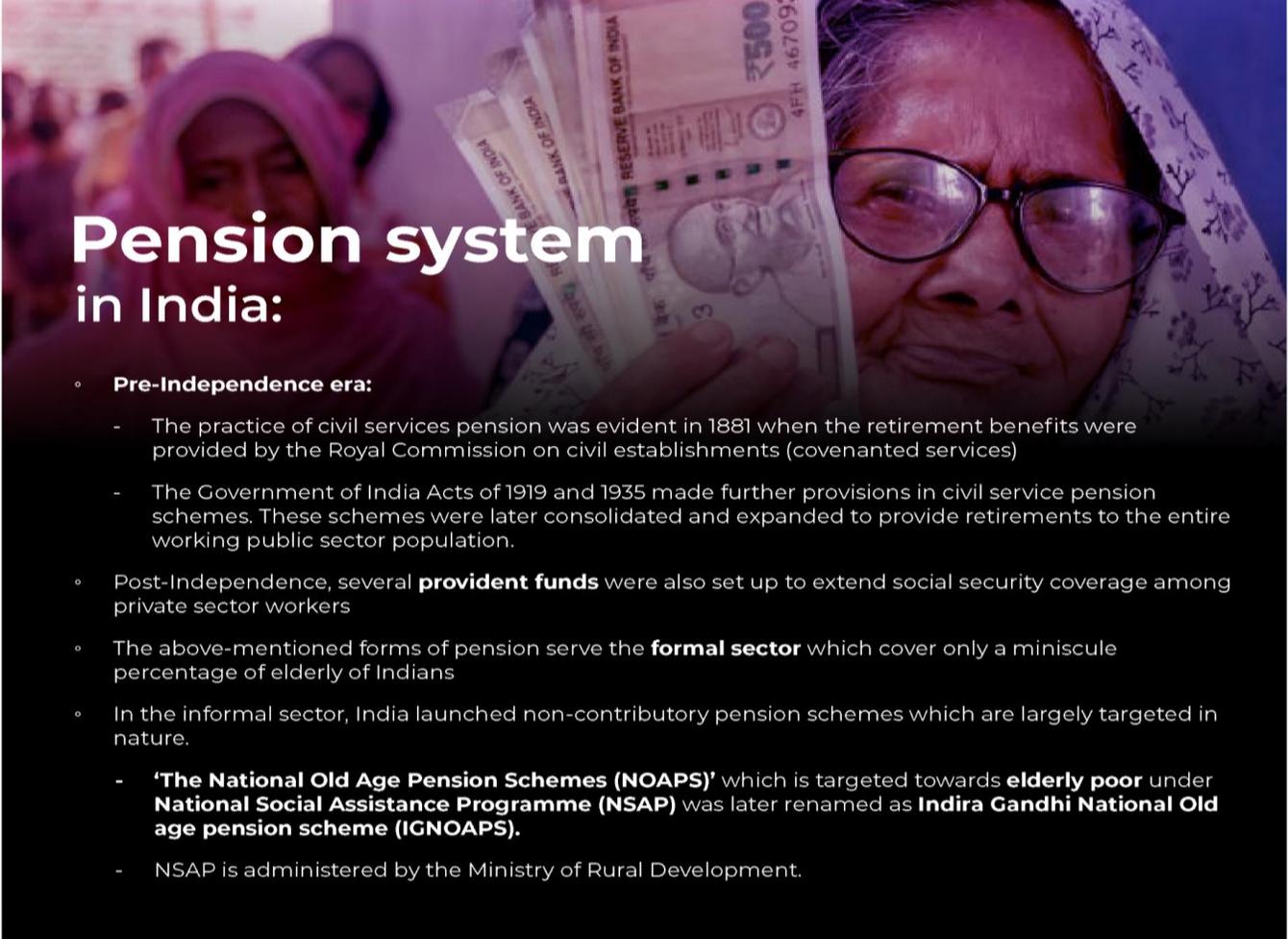
- The NEP proposes that though a number of new institutions may be developed to attain these goals, a large part of the capacity creation will be achieved by expanding and improving existing HEIs.

### Social Security Pensions For Elderly

- Indian population has been ageing. Elderly (persons aged 60 years and above) constituted close to 9% of India's total population in 2011 and may reach 18% by 2036 according to the National Commission on Population.
- If India is to ensure a decent quality of life for the elderly, then it needs to fix among many other things its social security pension system for the elderly.

### Constitutional Arrangements For Old Age Pensions

- Article 41 of the Indian Constitution directs the state to provide public assistance to its citizens in case of "unemployment, 'old age', sickness and disablement within the limit of its economic capacity and development."
- Entry 24 of List III (Concurrent list) under 7<sup>th</sup> schedule has a mention about 'old age pension' which implies that both Centre and states have the responsibility of providing social security to the elderly.
- Pensions are needed for elderly to provide them financial security and help them to live a quality and dignified life.



## Pension system in India:

- **Pre-Independence era:**
  - The practice of civil services pension was evident in 1881 when the retirement benefits were provided by the Royal Commission on civil establishments (covenanted services)
  - The Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935 made further provisions in civil service pension schemes. These schemes were later consolidated and expanded to provide retirements to the entire working public sector population.
- Post-Independence, several **provident funds** were also set up to extend social security coverage among private sector workers
- The above-mentioned forms of pension serve the **formal sector** which cover only a miniscule percentage of elderly of Indians
- In the informal sector, India launched non-contributory pension schemes which are largely targeted in nature.
  - '**The National Old Age Pension Schemes (NOAPS)**' which is targeted towards **elderly poor** under **National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)** was later renamed as **Indira Gandhi National Old age pension scheme (IGNOAPS)**.
  - NSAP is administered by the Ministry of Rural Development.

# National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP):

- Launched by GOI in 1995, NSAP is a **targeted non-contributory pension** scheme for the **elderly, widowed women and disabled persons** from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families.
- One of the important components of NSAP has been Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)
- Under the IGNOAPS, central government pays Rs 200 per month to every Indian over the age of 60 and living under the poverty line and the states are encouraged to match it or exceed it. Accordingly, many states have enhanced beyond NSAP norms using their own funds and schemes.
- Currently, states pay anything between Rs 200 and Rs 2,500 per month as public pensions to their elderly population.
- Issues with NSAP:
  - NSAP is restricted to BPL families, based on outdated and unreliable BPL lists
  - Central contribution to old-age pensions under NSAP has stagnated at tiny 200 per month since 2006 (roughly Rs 7 per day)



## Should Social Security Pensions For Elderly Persons Be Targeted?

- Targeting of pensions to elderly persons from BPL families has not worked well and has been facing following issues:
  - ✓ Huge exclusionary errors in the BPL list leading to exclusion of many deserving beneficiaries
  - ✓ It involved complicated formalities such as submission of BPL certificates and other documents which are unfriendly for elderly with low incomes and little education.
  - ✓ Complex administrative machinery force elderly to visit government offices for multiple times.
  - ✓ Political patronage: Local politicians tend to be supportive of those who they consider favourable to party. Such a political behaviour deprives most of the needy people from getting benefits.
- Targeting is also not a good idea for old age pensions as it is based on considering **household as a unit** rather than individual. Even in a relatively well-off household, the elderly person may experience neglect and deprivations
- **Alternatives to targeting can be:**
  - ✓ Moving altogether from targeted to **near-universal social security pensions** covering all those aged 60 and above and **excluding** those entitled to pensions from any other source or tax payers.
  - ✓ The burden of time-bound verification being placed on local administration.

## Case For Near Universal Pension Scheme To Elderly

- Currently the coverage of elderly under the present system of pensions is **limited** -
  - ✓ Only about 10% of senior citizens in India have a regular and adequate post-retirement age income.
  - ✓ Further, 25 to 30% of others get inadequate benefits.
  - ✓ And, about 60 to 65% of people get no retirement benefits at all, leaving them economically vulnerable.
- The presumption that the economic position of elderly people in relative well-off families will be better is **false** as they do face neglect and deprivation.
- **Feasibility of near-Universal social security pensions:**
  - ✓ Universal pension has its own advantage as it is easier to monitor and has very low administrative costs.
  - ✓ One of the major issues that has been raised is the financial burden it places on the state exchequer, but many countries as well some states within India have implemented such schemes.
    - Southern States with the exception of Tamilnadu and some of India's poorer States such as Odisha and Rajasthan have already put in place a near-universal social security pensions using their own funds. It would be much easier for all other States to do the same if the central government were to

revamp the NSAP by increasing financial allocations to the programme. The NSAP budget for the last 10 years is not even 0.05% of GDP.

- Internationally various developing countries with lesser per capita incomes than India have been offering tax-financed universal or near-universal pension schemes to their elderly population:
  - South Africa, Brazil, Lesotho and Chile have pension schemes that exclude only a few
  - A basic universal pension based on the criteria of citizenship, age is provided by New Zealand, Mauritius, Bostwana, Namibia, Bolivia, Nepal, Samoa, Kosovo etc

A 2013 report of the Task Force on Comprehensive Social Assistance Programme submitted to the Government of India also recommended raising monthly pension and expanding the coverage. A properly crafted universal pension scheme can increase the coverage of pension without putting greater stress on the fiscal front. If the transition cannot be made in one go, there is a strong case for starting with the elderly women, who often face special disadvantages.

#### Programmes Implemented By The Government For The Welfare Of Elderly

- **Integrated Programme for older persons (IPOP):** To improve quality of life of senior citizens by providing basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care and entertainment opportunities.
- **Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY):** It is a government subsidized pension-cum-insurance scheme for senior citizens aged 60 years and above which provides monthly/quarterly/half-yearly/yearly pension to senior citizens upon buying the plan by paying lump sum amount between Rs 1,50,000 to Rs 15,000,000.
- **Atal Pension Yojana Scheme:** It is pension scheme focused on unorganized sector workers
- **Annapurna scheme:** To provide 10 kgs of food grains free of cost to all such senior citizens who though eligible have remained uncovered under NOAPS
- **National Programme for the Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE):** To provide promotional, preventive, curative and rehabilitative services to elderly persons at various levels of healthcare delivery system.
- **Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY):** Scheme for providing Physical Aids and Assisted-living Devices for Senior citizens belonging to BPL category.
- **Vayoshreshtha Samman:** It is the National award conferred on eminent citizens and institutions involved in rendering services for the cause of elderly persons, especially indigent (poor) senior citizens.
- **SAGE and SACRED portals:**
  - ✓ SAGE (Senior-care Aging Growth Engine)- to encourage entrepreneurs in the area of elderly care
  - ✓ SACRED (Senior Able Citizens for Re-Employment in Dignity)- to connect the senior citizens with job providers in the private sector

#### Single Women Get Equal Abortion Rights

In a landmark decision, which coincided with the International Safe Abortion Day, the Supreme Court of India (SC) granted unmarried and single women with pregnancies ranging from 20 to 24 weeks access to safe and legal abortion care on par with married women.

- The SC loosened the stranglehold of a 51-year-old abortion law - Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act of 1971 and its Rules of 2003, which prohibit unmarried women between 20 and 24 weeks pregnant from aborting with the assistance of registered medical practitioners.

{For details on Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act and the Rules thereunder, Refer The Recitals-August 2022}

## Sex Ratio At Birth

Registrar General of India's (RGI) released the Sample Registration System (SRS) Statistical Report 2020. **Uttarakhand** has the worst (844) sex ratio (number of females per 1,000 males) at birth in the country and **Kerala** has the best (974).

### About SRS Statistical Report 2020:

- The present Report contains data on **fertility and mortality indicators** for the year 2020 for India and bigger States or UTs (**separately for rural and urban areas**)
- The estimates are segregated by residence and also by gender, wherever required.

### Key Highlights Of The Report

#### • **Sex Ratio At Birth:**

- ✓ The overall sex ratio at birth in the country increased to **907** in 2018-20 (907 in the rural and 910 in the urban areas) from 904 in 2017-19.
- ✓ The ratio **may reflect the number of pre-natal sex determinations and female foeticide cases**.
- ✓ Kerala (973) and Uttarakhand (853), respectively, had the highest and lowest sex ratios at birth in **rural areas**.
- ✓ **In urban areas**, the sex ratio at birth ranged from 975 in Kerala to 821 in Uttarakhand.

#### • **Child Mortality Rates:**

- ✓ In a significant milestone, India has achieved **landmark achievement in further reduction of child mortality rates**.

INDICATOR	SRS 2014	SRS 2019	SRS 2020
Crude Birth Rate (CBR)	21.0	19.7	19.5
Total Fertility Rate	2.3	2.1	2.0
Early Neonatal Mortality Rate (ENMR) – 0- 7 days	20	16	15
Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR)	26	22	20
Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)	39	30	28
Under 5 Mortality Rate (U5MR)	45	35	32

- ✓ As per the report, the country has been witnessing a progressive reduction in IMR, U5MR and NMR since 2014 towards achieving the **SDG targets by 2030**.

- ✓ **Six States/UT have already attained SDG target of NMR (<=12 by 2030):** Kerala (4), Delhi (9), Tamil Nadu (9), Maharashtra (11), Jammu & Kashmir (12) and Punjab (12).
- ✓ **Eleven States/UT have already attained SDGs target of U5MR (<=25 by 2030):** Kerala (8), Tamil Nadu (13), Delhi (14), Maharashtra (18), J&K (17), Karnataka (21), Punjab (22), West Bengal (22), Telangana (23), Gujarat (24), and Himachal Pradesh (24).

### About Sample Registration System (SRS)

- SRS in India is **one of the largest demographic surveys** in the world covering about **8.2 million** sample population.
- It is carried out by the **Office of Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India**.
  - ✓ Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India is a **permanent department** under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
  - ✓ The office was founded in **1961** for arranging, conducting and analysing the results of the demographic surveys of India including **Census of India** and **Linguistic Survey of India**.
- It is conducted with an **objective of providing reliable annual estimates of birth rate, death rate, infant mortality rate and various other fertility and mortality indicators** through an **SRS Statistical Report**.

## Multi Modal Logistics Parks (MMLP)

- A tripartite agreement was signed for swift development of modern Multi Modal Logistics Parks (MMLP) under **Bharatmala Pariyojna** across the country.
- The tripartite agreement was signed by National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML), Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) and Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL).

**NHLML is a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) of National Highway Authority (NHA) of Ministry of Road Transport & Highways**

**IWAI is a statutory authority under Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways**

**RVNL is a wholly owned Public Sector Enterprise under Ministry of Railways**

- The objective of the agreement is to **centralize freight consolidation** and reduce logistics costs from 14% to less than 10% of GDP at par with international standards.

## MMLPs

- MMLP will be a freight handling facility with rail and road accessibility, comprising container terminals, cargo terminals (bulk, break-bulk), warehouses, cold storage, facilities for mechanised material handling.
- It will also have value-added services such as customs clearance with bonded storage yards, quarantine zones, testing facilities and warehousing management services, packaging, repackaging and labelling etc.
- The MMLPs will focus on a technology driven implementation for a state-of-the-art freight management system.
- Developed under a hub & spoke model, the MMLP will integrate multiple modes of freight transport through highways, railways & inland waterways.
- MMLPs will ensure that cargo is swapped or shifted from and to Waterways, Dedicated Freight Corridors, and Road Transport.



## Bharatmala Pariyojna

- It is a centrally-sponsored and funded umbrella program for the highways sector. The duration of the **1<sup>st</sup> phase** of the project is from 2017 to 2022 (Development of about 34,800 km including 10,000 Km residual NHDP stretches).
- **Phase 2:** Envisaged around 48,000 km of road network across India by 2024. Under it, states will be given requisite funds for acquiring the land and constructing the roads.
- It focuses on optimizing efficiency of freight and passenger movement across the country by bridging critical infrastructure gaps.
- It includes effective interventions like development of Economic Corridors, Inter Corridors and Feeder Routes, National Corridor Efficiency Improvement, Border and International connectivity roads, Coastal and Port connectivity roads and Green-field expressways.
- It is both an enabler and beneficiary of other key schemes, such as Sagarmala, Dedicated Freight Corridors, Industrial corridors, UDAN-RCS (Regional Connectivity Scheme), BharatNet, Digital India, Make in India and Gati Shakti.
- **Satellite mapping** of corridors to identify upgradation requirements.

## Significance

- It is expected to have a positive impact on the **Logistic Performance Index (LPI)** of the country.
- It will boost the associated industries like cement and steel sectors.
- It will also help to generate a large number of direct and indirect employment in the construction activity.

## Scheme For Promotion Of Bulk Drug Parks

- The Department of Pharmaceuticals has granted in-principle approval for setting up **three bulk drug parks**, one each in **Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh**.
- The parks will be set up under the Scheme for Promotion of Bulk Drug Parks.
- The scheme reflects the spirit of co-operative federalism where the Central Government and State Governments will partner to develop the Bulk Drug parks for better performance of the sector.



### Bulk drugs or APIs

- A bulk drug, also called an active pharmaceutical ingredient (API), is the key ingredient of a drug or medicine, which produces the required therapeutic effects in the body.
- For example, paracetamol is a bulk drug, which acts against pain. It is mixed with binding agents or solvents to prepare the finished pharmaceutical product, i.e. a paracetamol tablet, capsule or syrup.

### Key Starting Material (KSM) and Drug Intermediates

- APIs are prepared from multiple reactions involving chemicals and solvents.
- The primary chemical or the basic raw material which undergoes reactions to form an API is called the key starting material, or KSM.
- Chemical compounds formed during the intermediate stages during these reactions are called drug intermediates or DIs.



## Reasons For Launching Bulk Drug Parks

- India has one of the largest pharmaceutical industries in the world (third largest by volume).
- India exported pharmaceuticals worth Rs 1,75,040 crore in the financial year 2021-22, including Bulk Drugs/ Drug Intermediates worth Rs 33,320 crore.
- Also, India is one of the major producers of **API/bulk drugs** in the world.
- However, the country also imports various Bulk Drugs/ APIs for producing medicines from other countries, particularly China.

## Objective Of The Scheme

- To set up bulk drug parks in the country to **reduce the manufacturing cost** of bulk drugs.
- It intends to **increase the competitiveness** of the domestic bulk drug industry and make India **self-reliant** (reduce import dependence) in bulk drugs, by exploiting the benefits arising due to **optimization of resources and economies of scale**.

- Help industry **meet the standards of environment** at a reduced cost through innovative methods of common waste management system.

### Details Of The Scheme

- Notified in 2020, with the total financial outlay of **Rs 3000 crore**, the scheme will provide financial assistance to support 3 bulk drug parks.
- The parks will provide **common infrastructure facilities** & common waste management system at one place by creating a robust ecosystem for Bulk Drug manufacturing.
- The financial assistance to the proposed park in Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh would be 70% of the project cost of common infrastructure facilities.
- In case of Himachal Pradesh (being a hilly state), financial assistance would be 90% of the project cost.
- Maximum assistance under the scheme for one Bulk Drug Park would be limited to Rs 1,000 crore.

### Other Interventions For Bulk Drugs

- Other interventions to ensure domestic manufacturing of Bulk Drugs include the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for domestic manufacturing of KSMs/ Drug Intermediates (DIs) and APIs.
- Under this scheme, a total of 51 projects have been approved, out of which, 14 projects have already commissioned and started manufacturing of the drugs.

### India's Creative Economy

- Exim Bank of India released a research paper titled 'Reflection & Development of India's Creative Economy'.
- It analysed 7 different creative segments such as art & crafts, audio visuals, design and visual arts, among others, to map their export potential.

## Creative Economy

- It has no single definition. It is an evolving concept which builds on the exchange between human creativity and ideas and intellectual property, knowledge and technology.
- Essentially it is the knowledge-based economic activities upon which the creative industries are based.
- Creative industries – which include advertising, architecture, arts and crafts, design, fashion, film, photography, music, performing arts, publishing, research & development, software, computer games, electronic publishing, and TV/radio – are the lifeblood of the creative economy.
- They are also considered an important source of commercial and cultural value.

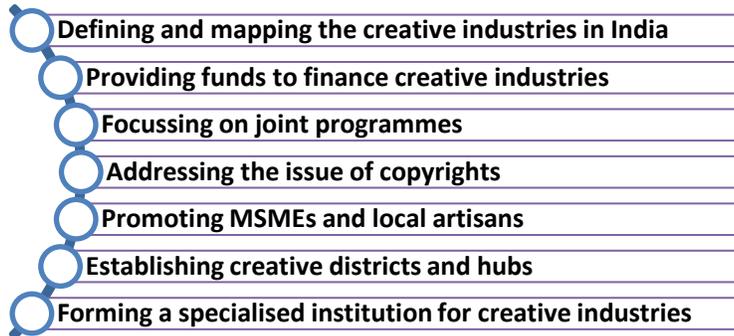


### Key Findings Of The Study

- India's total exports of **creative goods and services** stood close to **\$121 billion in 2019**, of which exports of **creative services** accounted for almost \$100 billion. Besides, the creative goods industry has a **trade surplus of \$16 billion**.
- The contribution of the **design segment was 87.5%** of the total creative goods exports in 2019, and another **9%** is contributed by **art and crafts segment**.
- The creative economy is significantly diversified in the country and industries such as the entertainment sector gives an important push to the creative economy.
- India ranks **6th globally**, outside the U.S., with respect to top international box office markets by revenue.

- Technology is playing a critical role along with human creativity, knowledge, intellectual property in this evolving arena.
- The study also captured the role of artificial intelligence and machine learning, extended reality, and blockchain, which are impacting the functioning of the creative economy.

**Way Ahead:** Creative economy in India should be promoted by:



### SFIO Crackdown On Shell Companies

The Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) has arrested a man who had masterminded the incorporation of a large number of shell companies linked to China and provided dummy directors on their boards to run the fraudulent businesses.

#### Shell Companies

- Shell Company is a **corporate entity without active business operations** or significant assets. In India, shell companies **haven't** been defined in law.
- They are used regularly for tax evasion, tax avoidance, money laundering, promote startups or to achieve a specific goal such as anonymity.
- Anonymity may be sought to shield personal assets from others, such as a spouse when a marriage is breaking down, from creditors, or from government authorities.
- Shell companies can have legitimate business purposes. They may, for example, act as trustee for a trust, and not engage in any other activity on their own account. This structure creates limited liability for the trustee.

## Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO)

- The SFIO is a statutory corporate fraud investigating agency, set up to solve serious, complex frauds under the Companies Act, 2013. It is under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- Section 211 of the Companies Act, 2013, has accorded statutory status to the SFIO.
- It is a multi-disciplinary organization having experts from financial sector, capital market, accountancy, forensic audit, taxation, law, information technology, company law, customs and investigation.
- SFIO is headed by a Director as Head of Department in the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India
- The SFIO also has the powers to arrest people for violations of the company law.

### Financial Stability and Development Council

- A meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) was held, and chaired by the Union Finance Minister.
- The Council, discussed about:

- The **Early Warning Indicators** for the economy and the preparedness to deal with them
- **Improving the efficiency** of the existing financial/credit information systems.
- Issues of governance and management in **Systemically Important Financial Institutions (SIFI)** including financial market infrastructures

- It was noted that there is a need to **monitor *the financial sector risks, the financial conditions and market developments on a continuous basis*** by the Government and the regulators.
- This is important to take appropriate and timely action to mitigate any vulnerability and strengthen financial stability.

## FSDC

- FSDC is a non-statutory apex-level body constituted by the government in 2010.
- Raghuram Rajan committee (2008) on financial sector reforms first proposed the creation of FSDC.
- The council is headed by the finance minister and has the RBI governor and chairpersons of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) and Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) as other members.
- Other members: Finance Secretary, Secretary of Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Secretary of Department of Financial Services (DFS), and Chief Economic Adviser.
- In 2018, the government reconstituted FSDC to include the Minister of State responsible for the DEA, Secretary of Department of Electronics and Information Technology, Chairperson of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) and the Revenue Secretary

## Functions

- It aims to strengthen and institutionalize the mechanism of maintaining financial stability.
- It monitors macro-prudential supervision of the economy, including functioning of large financial conglomerates, and addresses inter-regulatory coordination and financial sector development issues.
- It helps to coordinate India's international interface with financial sector bodies like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and Financial Stability Board.
- It also focuses on financial literacy and financial inclusion.

### US Startup SETU

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has recently launched the **US Startup SETU - Supporting Entrepreneurs in Transformation and Upskilling programme** in the Bay Area of San Francisco.
- The programme has been launched to focus on specific issues related to the startup ecosystem in India.
- 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.
- The initiative would connect startups in India to US-based investors and start-up ecosystem leaders with mentorship and assistance in various areas including funding, market access and commercialization.



## Startups

- The term startup refers to a company in the first stages of operations. These companies generally start with high costs and limited revenue, which is why they look for capital from a variety of sources.
- Rooted in innovation, a startup aims to correct deficiencies of existing products or create entirely new categories of goods and services, disrupting old ways of thinking and doing business for entire industries.
- That's why many startups are known within their respective industries as disruptors.
- There's another key factor that distinguishes startups from other companies: speed and growth.
- Startups aim to build on ideas very quickly. They often do this through a process called iteration in which they continuously improve products through feedback and usage data.

## Need For The Initiative

- 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.
- As India heads towards becoming a supreme start-up destination, the right guidance at the right time is paramount.

## MAARG

- SETU is supported by the *Startup India initiative* **MAARG** (Mentorship, Advisory, Assistance, Resilience, and Growth) **programme**, which is a one-stop solution finder for Indian startups.
- The **portal** was created with the intention of allowing people from all over the country to connect with mentors.
- The core functions of MAARG are to improve ease of access, use Artificial Intelligence for matchmaking, schedule meetings virtually, host masterclasses, analytics etc.
- Over 200 mentors have been successfully on-boarded on MAARG around the world to date.

## Definition of Startup in India

An entity shall be considered as a Startup:

- Upto a period of ten years from the date of incorporation/ registration, if it is incorporated as a private limited company (as defined in the Companies Act, 2013) or registered as a partnership firm (section 59 of the Partnership Act, 1932) or a limited liability partnership (under LLPAct, 2008) in India.
- Turnover of the entity for any of the financial years since incorporation/ registration has not exceeded one hundred crore rupees.
- Entity is working towards innovation, development or improvement of products or processes or services, or if it is a scalable business model with a high potential of employment generation or wealth creation. Provided that an entity formed by splitting up or reconstruction of an existing business shall not be considered a 'Startup'.

India has become the 3rd largest start-up ecosystem in the world after the US and China.

- Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has recognized startups which are spread across 56 diversified sectors.
- There are around 72,993 start ups in India. The number of unicorns in India reached the 100-mark.

## One Nation One Fertiliser

- The Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers announced that it will implement One Nation One Fertiliser (ONOF), under which a **single brand and logo** for fertilisers will have to be used by all manufacturers.
- This will be done under the Centre's fertiliser subsidy scheme newly renamed as **Pradhanmantri Bhartiya Janurvarak Pariyojna (PMBJP)**.
- As a result, from October, all subsidised fertilisers will be sold across the country under a single brand name — 'Bharat'.

## Details of ONOF

- Under the scheme, all fertiliser companies (public & private sector), State Trading Entities (STEs) and Fertiliser Marketing Entities (FMEs) will be required to use a single **Bharat brand** for fertilisers and **logo** under PMBJP.

- The single brand name for urea or di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) or muriate of potash (MOP) or NPK (Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium) will be Bharat Urea, Bharat DAP, Bharat MOP and Bharat NPK, irrespective of the manufacturer.
- The new Bharat brand name and PMBJP logo will cover **two-thirds** of the front of the fertiliser packet.
- The manufacturing brands can only display their name, logo, and other information on the remaining one-third space.

### Reasons For The Move

- The price of the most used fertiliser, **urea**, is controlled by the government, meaning all manufacturing companies sell at an MRP fixed by the government, which is just 10-20% of production costs. The government provides 80-90% of the cost of production to the manufacturers in the form of a subsidy.
- The MRPs of non-urea fertilisers are, *on paper, decontrolled*. But companies cannot get subsidy if they sell at MRPs higher than that **informally** indicated by the government.
- Thus, there are some 26 fertilisers on which government bears subsidy and also effectively decides the MRPs.
- The **fertiliser subsidy bill** of the government is huge each year (expected to be over **Rs. 2 lakh crore** in 2022-23) and only second to the food subsidy in terms of expenditure.
- The government possibly wants the farmers to know the financial burden it incurs in providing fertilisers at a cheaper rate.

### Freight Subsidy

- Moreover, the government also pays manufacturers, **freight subsidies**- or the cost of ferrying their products to the end-user, which is estimated to be **Rs. 6,000 crore** per year.
- While the government decides where manufacturers can sell their products under the **Fertiliser (Movement) Control Order, 1973**, due to the freight subsidy provided, manufacturers tend to sell across longer distances.
- For instance, the indigenous urea produced by a plant in Uttar Pradesh moves to Rajasthan and the urea produced by a plant in Rajasthan moves to Uttar Pradesh.
- ***Brand-wise demand for fertilisers in specific areas is one of the reasons for this movement.***

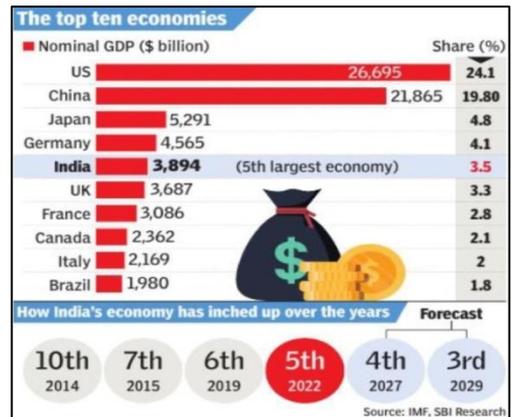
Benefits of ONOF	Issues with ONOF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If manufacturers stop selling urea under individual brands, there would be no need for companies to move fertilisers across states, thus <u>reducing the fertiliser subsidy expenditure</u>.</li> <li>• It will <u>streamline the supply process without bottlenecks, reduce transit time, increase the availability basket and lead to timely availability of fertilisers</u>.</li> <li>• It will also <u>help in checking the diversion</u> of about 10 lakh tonnes (lt) of <u>urea for non-agricultural use</u>,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It will <u>disincentivize fertiliser companies from undertaking marketing and brand promotion activities</u>. Any company's strength ultimately is its brands and farmer trust built over decades.</li> <li>• However, they will now be <u>reduced to contract manufacturers and importers</u> for the government.</li> <li>• This could <u>impact the quality of fertilisers</u> and discourage manufacturers from bringing newer and more efficient products into the market.</li> <li>• Currently, in case of fertilisers not meeting the required standards, the blame is put on the company. But now, that may be passed on fully to the government.</li> <li>• It would also act as a <u>disincentive for fertiliser companies to take up field programmes</u> to introduce efficient methods of nutrient application as part of their market promotion activities.</li> <li>• Further, a government brand will add <u>another layer of regulation</u> to the sector where almost every aspect- from product pricing to cost</li> </ul>

estimated to be a loss of Rs 6,000 crore to the exchequer.

structure to geographical distribution and sale- is controlled by the government.

## India Becomes 5<sup>th</sup> Largest Economy

- Recently India became world's fifth largest economy, after it overtook the United Kingdom. The other economies making the top five are the **US, China, Japan and Germany**.
- The result is based on the calculations by **Bloomberg** using the *IMF database and historic exchange rates*.
- India's GDP in the quarter ending March 2022 was **\$854.7 billion**, while UK's GDP was \$816 billion.
- Furthermore, due to India's fast-growing economy, there is likely to be a huge gap between India and the UK within the next few years.
- While India beating the UK is mathematically correct, other factors need to be taken into account as well.

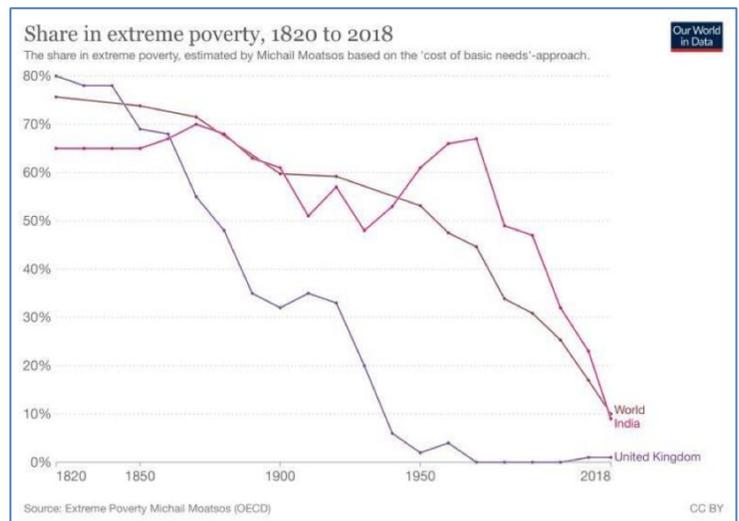
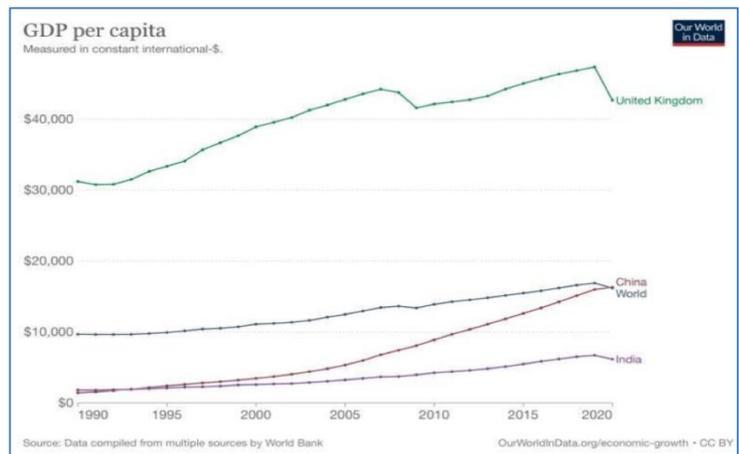


## Population Size

- This is one of the most fundamental differences between the two countries.
- As of 2022, India has a population of 1.41 billion while the UK's population is 68.5 million. In other words, **India's population is 20 times that of the UK's**.

## GDP Per Capita

- Since there is such a stark difference between the population of the two countries, **GDP per capita** provides a more realistic comparison of income levels.
- In 2021, IMF data showed that the per capita or the average income of a Britisher was \$47,203. In comparison, the average income of an Indian was \$2,283 or less than 5% of the average British income.
- In 2021, **India's per capita income was ranked 145th in a list of 193 countries** for which data was available. India was placed above Kenya and below the Solomon Islands. The UK was ranked 22nd.

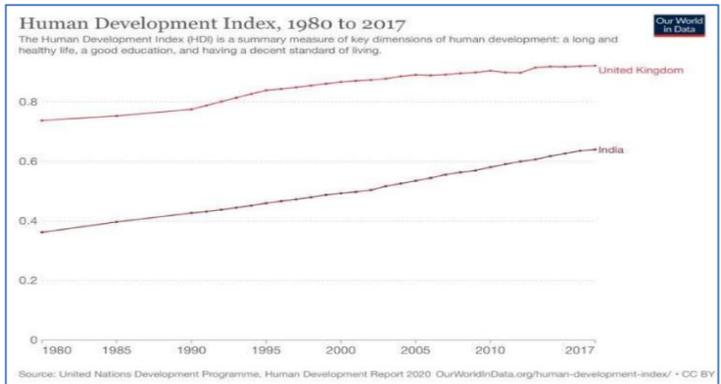


## Poverty Levels

- Low per capita incomes often point to high levels of poverty.
- At the start of 19th century, the UK's share in extreme poverty was considerably higher than India's. However, now the relative positions have reversed even though India has made significant strides in curbing poverty.

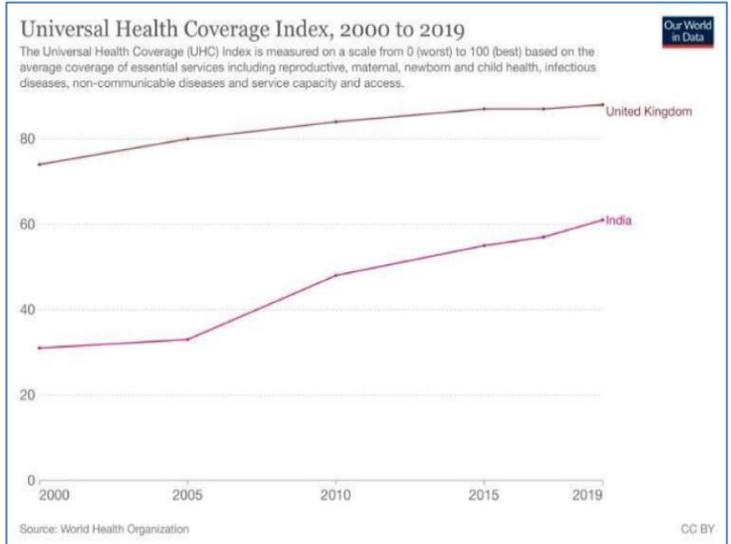
## Human Development Index

- The end goal of higher GDP and faster economic growth is to have better human development parameters.
- The Human Development Index is a composite of health, education and standard of living parameters. The chart below shows that, despite its improvement, **India might still take a decade to be where the UK was in 1980.**
  - ✓ Performance of UK in HDI 2022 – 0.93 (score), very high category (HDI tier)
  - ✓ India's performance in HDI 2022 – 0.633 (score), medium category (HDI tier).



## Universal Healthcare Coverage (UHC)

- The UHC Index is measured on a scale from 0 (worst) to 100 (best).
- It is based on the average coverage of essential services including reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access.
- The chart shows that faster economic growth and the government's policy focus on healthcare schemes since 2005 have made a distinct improvement for India, there is still a long way to go.



## Asian Palm Oil Alliance

- The Asian Palm Oil Alliance (APOA) was **launched** during the **Globoil Summit** at Agra.
  - ✓ Globoil Summit is one of the World's Leading Edible Oils and Agri Trade Conference, Exhibitions & Awards. 2022 marks the 25th year celebration of Globoil India.
- It includes edible oil trade associations from five palm oil importing countries in South Asia – **India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal.**
- The idea is to gain collective bargaining power and make imports sustainable.

## APOA

- Unlike their counterparts in the EU, the industry associations of Asian palm oil importing countries are **not involved** in shaping the global discourse on sustainable palm oil in a collective way.
- Instead, Asian stakeholders, in the last two decades were forced to follow sustainability standards **that do not reflect Asian market realities.**
- The formation of APOA will empower several Asian countries, for whom palm oil is a source of affordable food and nutrition.
- It will safeguard the economic and business interests of the palm-oil consuming countries and will work towards increasing the consumption of sustainable palm oil in member countries.
- Membership of APOA would be further expanded to include companies or industry bodies associated with production or refining of palm oil across the continent.

## Palm Oil

- Palm oil is an edible vegetable oil derived from the fruit of the oil palm.
- It is used in the food manufacturing, cosmetics, biofuels. It provides the foaming agent in soaps, shampoos and detergents.
- **Asian markets** are responsible for about **40% of the demand**. Europe accounts for about 12% and the US for 2%.
- Global palm oil production is dominated by **Indonesia and Malaysia**. These two countries, together, account for around **85% to 90% of total global palm oil production**.
- Indonesia and Malaysia are also the biggest palm oil exporters in the world.
- India is the largest importer of palm oil in Asian region and accounts for 15% of global imports.
  - ✓ **India's annual imports of edible oil** is around **13-14 million tonne (MT)**. Around 8 MT of palm oil is imported from Indonesia and Malaysia, while other oils, such as soya and sunflower, come from Argentina, Brazil, Ukraine and Russia.
- China with 9%, Pakistan with 4%, and Bangladesh with 2% of global imports are the other significant countries with a stake in palm oil production and trade.

## Maharatna Status for REC

- **Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) Ltd.** was recently accorded the status of a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE).
- REC achieved this status due to its adaptability, resilience, and consistent performance even during the global Covid-19 pandemic.
- In FY22, REC made its highest ever net profit of ₹10,046 crores and reached a net worth of ₹50,986 crores, due to its cost-effective resource management and strong financial policies.

## REC

- Incorporated in 1969, REC is a **Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)** focusing on power sector financing and development across India.
- It **provides financial assistance** to state electricity boards, state governments, central/state power utilities, independent power producers, rural electric cooperatives and private sector utilities.
- REC has played a key role in the success of the flagship schemes such as **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana** and **SAUBHAGYA**.
- It has contributed towards achieving village and household electrification in the country.
- It is currently playing the role of nodal agency for **Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS)**, for revamping the distribution sector to reduce the financial & operational issues.

## Criteria For Grant Of Maharatna Status

- CPSEs fulfilling the following criteria are eligible for the grant of Maharatna status:

- Should have **Navratna status** & be listed on Indian stock exchange with minimum prescribed public shareholding
- Average annual **turnover** of more than Rs 25,000 crore during the last 3 years.
- Average annual **net profit after tax** of more than Rs. 5,000 crore, during the last 3 years
- Average annual **net worth** of more than Rs. 15,000 crore, during the last 3 years
- It should also have significant **global presence**/international operations.

## Impact of Maharatna Status

- The status will give more autonomy to REC's Board while taking financial decisions.
- The Board can make equity investments to undertake financial joint ventures and wholly-owned subsidiaries, mergers and acquisitions in India and abroad, subject to a ceiling of 15% of the net worth of the concerned CPSE, limited to Rs.5,000 crore in one project.
- The Board can also structure and implement schemes related to personnel and human resource management and training. They can also enter into technology Joint Ventures or other strategic alliances.

## Deficit In Banking System Liquidity

- Liquidity in the banking system has swung into deficit mode after remaining in surplus mode for almost 40 months.
- The banking system liquidity recently touched a deficit of Rs 21,873 crore. By comparison, the liquidity surplus was around Rs 8 lakh crore in November 2021.

## Banking System Liquidity

- Liquidity in the banking system refers to readily available cash that banks need to meet short-term business and financial needs.
- On a given day, **if the banking system is a net borrower from the RBI** under Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF), the system liquidity is said to be in **deficit**.
- If the banking system is a **net lender to the RBI**, the system liquidity is said to be in **surplus**.
  - ✓ **LAF** refers to the RBI's operations through which it injects or absorbs liquidity into or from the banking system.

Factors Causing The Current Deficit	Impact Of Tight Liquidity On Consumers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The change in the liquidity situation has come due to <b>advance tax outflows</b> for the second quarter. This also pushed the <u>call money rate temporarily above the repo rate</u>.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ The repo rate is the interest rate at which central bank of the country lends money to recognized commercial bank</li></ul></li><li>• There is an <b>improvement in the credit demand</b> and at the same time, the <b>incremental deposit growth has not kept pace</b> with the credit demand.</li><li>• Besides, there is <b>continuous intervention of RBI in the forex market</b>, to prevent the fall in the rupee against the US dollar.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ In order to prevent the fall in rupee's value, RBI purchases rupees by selling dollars, which reduces the supply of rupee in the market.</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A tight liquidity condition could lead to a <u>rise in the government securities yields</u>.</li><li>• Short-term rates would increase at a faster pace as the direct reflection of tighter liquidity and lead to a <u>hike in repo rate by the RBI</u>.</li><li>• Banks will increase their repo-linked lending rates and the marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR), to which all loans are linked to. This rise will <u>result in higher interest rates for consumers</u>.</li></ul>

## Way Ahead

- RBI's actions will depend upon the nature of the liquidity situation.
- If the current liquidity deficit situation is temporary and is largely on account of advance tax flow, the RBI may not have to act, as the funds should eventually come back into the system.
- However, if it is long-term in nature then the RBI may have to take measures to improve the liquidity situation in the system.

## Call Money rate

- Call money rate is the rate at which short term funds are borrowed and lent in the money market. The duration of the call money loan is 1 day.
- Banks resort to these type of loans to:
  - Fill the asset liability mismatch;
  - Comply with the Cash Reserve Ratio(CRR) and Statutory Liquidity Ratio(SLR) requirements;
  - To meet the sudden demand of funds.
  - RBI, banks, primary dealers etc. are the participants of the call money market.
- Demand and supply of liquidity affect the call money rate. A tight liquidity condition leads to a rise in call money rate and vice versa.

## MCLR

- MCLR is the lowest rate at which the banks can lend and is an internal benchmark (means a reference rate determined internally by the bank).
- MCLR is based on four components—marginal cost of funds, negative carry on account of cash reserve ratio, operating costs and tenor premium.
- MCLR is linked to the actual deposit rates. Hence, when deposit rates rise, it indicates the banks are likely to increase MCLR and lending rates will increase.
- Deposit rate is the interest rate paid by commercial banks/ financial institutions on cash deposits of account holders



### National Technical Textiles Mission

- The Ministry of Textiles cleared 23 strategic research projects worth Rs 60 crores, in the areas of Specialty fibres, Sustainable Textiles, Geotextiles, Mobiltech and Sports textiles.
- These projects fall under the flagship programme **National Technical Textiles Mission**.

#### Technical Textiles

- These are textile materials and products **manufactured primarily for technical performance and functional properties** rather than aesthetic characteristics.
- They have **application** in several sectors including infrastructure, water, health and hygiene, defence, security, automobiles, aviation, etc.
- Till now, India has primarily focused on cotton textiles. However, two-thirds of the international trade market is of man-made and technical textiles.
- To address this, the government had launched the **National Technical Textiles Mission** for promoting R&D efforts in the sector.

#### National Technical Textiles Mission (NTTM)

- NTTM was approved in 2020, with an implementation period from FY 2020-21 to 2023-24. The total outlay of the mission is Rs 1480 crores.
- Its aim is to position India as a global leader in Technical Textiles. It has a target to take domestic market size of technical textile sector to **\$ 40-50 billion by the year 2024** with an average growth rate of 15-20% per annum.
- It also supports the Make in India initiative, promoting domestic manufacturing of related machinery and equipment.
- The mission includes the following **four components**:

Research, Innovation  
and Development

Promotion and  
Market Development

Export Promotion

Education, Training,  
Skill Development

#### PLI Scheme for Textiles

- In addition to NTTM, the government has also launched a Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for textiles, to boost the textile industry.

- It is specifically aimed at boosting the production of **man-made fibre (MMF) fabric, MMF apparel and technical textiles.**
- MMFs are made from various chemicals, or are regenerated from plant fibres. Examples include viscose, polyester, acrylics etc.
- The domestic MMF industry mainly comprises of two components i.e., polyester and viscose, which together account for about 94% volume.

### Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme

- The National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC) has recently shared that **one in every six loans** disbursed under the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) has turned bad in just 27 months.
- This highlights the continuing distress in the MSME sector.

### Details of ECLGS

- ECLGS was launched as part of the Covid-19 relief package in May 2020. Loans under the first component (ECLGS 1.0) of ECLGS allowed a **two-year moratorium.**
- ECLGS was launched in different phases - ECLGS 1.0, ECLGS 2.0, ECLGS 3.0, ECLGS 4.0.
- In different phases, the scope of this scheme was increased to include **multiple sectors.**
- Recently, in August 2022, the govt. increased the ceiling of the scheme to 5 lakh crore.
- MSMEs were provided additional loans up to a maximum of 20% of their outstanding debt. The maximum loan provided was Rs 50 crore.
- These loans were to be categorised as Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) when they remained unpaid even **three months** after the **two-year moratorium.**
- Loans to 16.22 lakh accounts or 16.4% of the total 98.86 lakh accounts, disbursed since May 2020 turned into NPAs. Most loans that have now turned bad were awarded under ECLGS 1.0.
- The defaults are mainly in the lower end of the loan bands (up to Rs 20 lakh), the data reveals.
- However, loans under the ECLGS carry a **government guarantee** and 75% of the total loan amount is immediately paid to the banks in case of loan accounts turning bad; the rest after the bank fails to recover the loan amount.

### Significance of ECLGS

- According to a State Bank of India report (January 2022), ECLGS was crucial in maintaining the continuity of MSMEs.
- It saved an estimated 13.5 lakh MSME accounts, 1.5 crore jobs and prevented an estimated 14% of outstanding MSME loans amounting to Rs 1.8 lakh crore turning bad.

### National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company

- NCGTC is a **private limited company** incorporated under the **Companies Act 1956** in 2014.
- It is 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.**
- **Credit guarantee programmes** are designed to share the lending risk of the lenders and in turn, facilitate access to finance for the prospective borrowers.
- Thus, NCGTC acts as a part of a larger financial inclusion programme of the government, which covers different cross-sections and segments of the economy like students, micro entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs, SMEs, skill and vocational training needs, etc.

## New Account Settlement System

- Beginning October 1, the new account settlement system for the stock broking industry will be effective.
- Under the guidelines issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in July, the trading members will have to settle the accounts on a monthly or quarterly basis on the first Friday of the month or quarter

### Settlement of Accounts

- SEBI mandates stockbrokers to settle i.e., transfer the available credit balance from trading account to bank account, at least once in a quarter (90 days) or 30 days.
- The process of transferring the unutilised funds back into the bank account is called **Running Account Settlement** or **Quarterly Settlement of Funds**.
- The **funds are transferred back to the primary bank account of the customer** that is linked to the trading account.
- As per the latest guidelines, the settlement will now be done on the first Friday of the quarter or the month ***depending upon the option selected by the customer***.
- If the first Friday of the quarter is a trading holiday, then such settlement shall happen on the previous trading day.

Impact	Concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It will help to protect the investors by <u>preventing the misuse of money lying in trading accounts of investors for long periods</u>.</li> <li>• It will help brokers develop a system just like banks, which credit interest in the accounts of their customers at the end of the quarter. This will give <u>certainty to investors and trading members</u>.</li> <li>• If a customer has <b>more than one demat account</b> with different brokers, having one settlement date for the entire industry will make it <u>easier for the investors to keep track of their funds in all accounts</u> as they would all get settled on the same day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• However, brokers are worried that bunching of all settlements on one day (as against individual settlement dates for different clients in 30 or 90 days) may create challenges for the industry as a whole.</li> <li>• Brokers will have to <u>organise cash which could otherwise be in their working capital</u>.</li> <li>• It will also <u>lead to a decline in volumes in the following trading session</u> as clients will have to transfer funds from their bank accounts to their trading accounts in order to trade.</li> </ul>

## Build Ahead Coalition

- Recently, the Build Ahead Coalition was launched. It is a **business-led alliance** bringing together key industry majors - JLL, Godrej Construction, Lodha, JSW Cement, SED Fund and Shell India.
- It aims to bring together multiple stakeholders from the **construction value chain** in India
- Partners include producers, consumers, financiers and technology providers who can accelerate the use of low carbon building materials to support India in achieving its net-zero targets by 2070.
- The coalition will pursue three key goals:

	Enhance the adoption of low-carbon building materials through <b>increased awareness, defining application-based standards and developing common definitions</b> of low-carbon materials.
	Improving <b>access to new de-carbonisation technologies and finance</b> needed to enable manufacturers of building materials to reduce emissions from the production of these building materials.
	<b>Advocating policies</b> to support increased procurement and production of low carbon building materials.

## National Logistics Policy

- The Union Cabinet has approved the **National Logistics Policy**, which aims at cutting transportation cost and improve global performance of the sector.
- It lays down an *interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral, multi-jurisdictional and comprehensive* policy framework for the logistics sector.

**Logistics:** It broadly includes facilities crucial to trade:

- **Transport services** for the movement of goods, **storage facilities** that are particularly essential for trade in perishable goods such as food items, fruits, and vegetables
- Smooth functioning of **government services** that facilitate trade such as licensing and customs.

## Need For The Logistics Policy

- **High Logistic Cost:** India spends nearly **13 to 14%** of its GDP on logistics cost, while countries like Japan and Germany only spend 8-9% of its GDP on the cost.
- According to the 2018 World Bank Logistics Index, **India is ranked 44th** in the logistics cost. India is behind developed countries like the US and China, which were ranked at 14th and 26th position respectively.

## Vision

To develop a technologically enabled, integrated, cost-efficient, resilient, sustainable and trusted logistics ecosystem for accelerated and inclusive growth.

Targets	Monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce cost of logistics in India to be comparable to global benchmarks by 2030.</li><li>• Improve the Logistics Performance Index ranking, to be among <b>top 25 countries</b> by 2030.</li><li>• Create data driven decision support mechanism for an efficient logistics ecosystem.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The framework comprising Empowered Group of Secretaries (<b>EGoS</b>), under <b>PM Gati Shakti national master plan</b>, will monitor the implementation of the policy.</li><li>• A Services Improvement Group will also be set up for monitoring of parameters of processes, regulatory and digital improvements in logistics sector.</li></ul>

## Key Points

- Focus will be on enabling adequate development of *modern warehouses with optimal spatial planning, promotion of standards, digitization and automation* across the logistics value chain and better *track and trace mechanisms*.
- NLP will focus on other components such as world-class infrastructure, regulations, ease of arranging shipment, and timeliness.
- In order to enhance integration with regional and global value chains, it will have **sector-specific logistics plans** on *coal, steel, fertiliser, food grains, cement, and port connectivity*.
- Measures to facilitate *seamless coordination between different stakeholders* and *speedy issue resolution, streamlined EXIM processes, human resource development* to create an employable pool of skilled manpower, are also laid out in the policy.
- Also, **all States and UTs** have been fully onboarded. Fourteen States have already developed their respective State Logistics Policies on the lines of the NLP and for 13 States, it is in draft stage.
- It also supports enhancing competitiveness of MSME and other sectors.

## Key Features

Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP)	• It will bring all the digital services related to the transportation sector into a <b>single portal</b> , freeing the exporters from long and cumbersome processes.
Ease of Logistics Services (E-Logs)	• It is a new digital platform. It will allow industry associations to directly take up <b>operational issues with government agencies</b> for speedy resolution.
Integration of Digital System (IDS)	• Under IDS, 30 different systems of <b>7 departments</b> are integrated for smooth cargo movement. These include data from the road transport, railways, customs, aviation and commerce departments.
System Improvement Group (SIG)	• Officers from ministries will monitor all logistics projects regularly to remove bottlenecks in a time-bond manner.

## Benefits

- It is expected to **reduce logistics cost** to achieve global benchmarks and improve country's Logistics Performance Index ranking and its global positioning.
- With greater predictability, transparency and reliability, wastages in supply chain and need for huge inventory will reduce.
- It will lead to **greater integration of global value chains** and **higher share in global trade** besides facilitating accelerated economic growth in the country.
- **PM GatiShakti** will get further boost and complementarity with the launch of NLP.
- Optimal cycles will enhance logistical efficiencies, and **reduce carbon footprint**.
- It will not only make it easier to do business, but also to generate substantial employment and ensure improvement in wages and working conditions.

## Challenges and Way Ahead

- The **rail sector** suffers from many structural deficiencies which have to be eliminated fast if the logistics cost has to be halved to global benchmarks.
  - ✓ The average speed of a freight train has stagnated at 25 kmph for decades— it has to be urgently doubled to 50 kmph at least.
  - ✓ The railways need to have a time-table based goods operation. It has to become an aggregator at the source of freight, and dis-aggregator at the destination, to capture the high-value small-load business (as against **rake-load goods**)
- For decades the country has talked about **eco-friendly and cost-effective inland waterways** freight movement, but nothing has happened. There is valuable learning available from the river ports of China.
  - ✓ Apart from improvement in key functional areas, the size of the country's ports have to grow manifold.
- Road logistics is a totally fragmented sector, where a large chunk of truck owners have a very small fleet. There is a need for aggregation of small operators with government-supported aggregation apps. Similarly, there is a need for large players in the sector to drag costs down.
- Lastly, it is time to give wings to **air logistics** and drastically improve the transport of high-value and perishable items.

## Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019

The Supreme Court of India directed the Union government to file its response to the batch of petitions challenging the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019 which came into force from **January 2020**.

### Constitutional Provisions Relating To Citizenship In India

- The regime of citizenship in India is governed by Articles from 5-11 of Part-II of the Constitution
- Article 11 explicitly accords to **Parliament the power** to make laws to regulate citizenship. It was this power that Parliament used when it enacted the Citizenship Act of 1955.
- Entry 17 of the Union list under 7<sup>th</sup> Schedule provides for "Citizenship, naturalisation and aliens" making the subject of citizenship an exclusive domain of union

### Key Provisions Of Citizenship Act, 1955

- It provided for acquisition of Indian citizenship in the following ways:



- It defined **illegal migrant** and prohibited them from acquiring citizenship under aforesaid recognized paths.
  - ✓ The illegal migrant is a foreigner who has entered India **without a valid passport or travel documents (visa)** or with a valid passport or travel documents but remained in the country **beyond the permitted period of time**.
- It doesn't allow dual nationality or citizenship.

### Key Provisions Of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019

- Provides Indian citizenship to persecuted religious minorities (which include Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Parsis, Jains and Sikhs) from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan who came to India (without valid documents) on or before December 31, 2014.
- The aforesaid category of persons "shall not be treated as an illegal migrants"
- Proposed to protect the applicants under this category from all pending legal cases with regard to 'illegal migration'.
- The Naturalization requirement is reduced from **11 years to 5 years** for the aforesaid category of persons
- Exemptions: Act would not apply to Tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura as well as to states such as Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland that are protected by Inner Line Permit under Bengal Eastern frontier Regulation 1873.

### Concerns Expressed Over The Act

- It violates Article 14 of the constitution that guarantees equal protection of laws, even to aliens, in the territory of India in addition to Articles 21 and 25.
- Creating a regime of citizenship on the basis of religion violates the principle of secularism, equality and Justice which constitute part of basic structure of Indian constitution
- It goes against Assam Accord of 1985, which among other things maintains that all illegal immigrants irrespective of their religion who came to Assam after 24<sup>th</sup> March 1971 will be deported.
  - ✓ People in Assam now have apprehensions that the act would selectively benefit non-Muslim foreigners in Assam which would alter their demographic and cultural uniqueness
- Will deepen religious fault lines in India

- It does not protect many religious minorities who are facing persecution in our neighbourhood. For example, Rohingyas in Myanmar, Eelam Tamils in Sri Lanka.
- Persecution can happen on grounds of race, political beliefs, membership in particular social group and not just on ground of religion

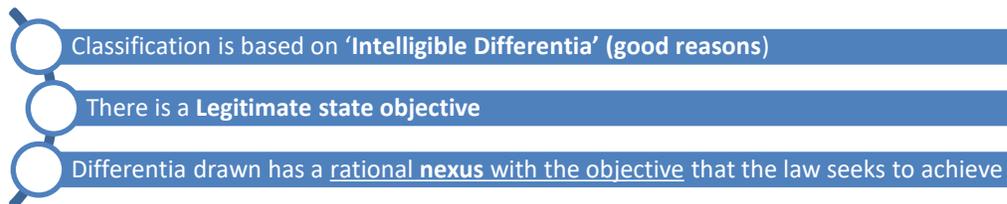
### Arguments Put Forward In Support Of CAA

- Dwindling of minority populations in countries of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh deserves special protection.
- The non-Muslim minorities in our neighbourhood have nowhere else to go except India.
- Helps non-Muslims escaping persecution in India's neighbouring Muslim-majority nations of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

### CAA and Article 14 of the Indian Constitution

Article 14 is at the center of debate on citizenship amendment act 2019. This article provides that state shall not deny to any person equality before law or equal protection of laws within the territory of India. It therefore places a specific obligation on the state to treat all people regardless of whether they are citizens or non-citizens equally.

**Differentiation & classification are however permissible** under Article 14 but must satisfy following **3 tests** as per Supreme Court:



Application of the test of reasonable classification over CAA under Article 14 raises following questions:

**Question 1** ○ If the objective is to protect persecuted individuals from neighbouring countries, then why does the classification made by the act exclude people from certain countries such as Sri Lanka (Eelam Tamils), Myanmar (Rohingyas), Tibet and Nepal.

**Question 2** ○ If the objective is to protect people persecuted from pre-partition India, then why to include those from Afghanistan and why not Myanmar after all Burma was part of British empire up until mid-1930's

**Question 3** ○ If the objective is to only protect persecuted people from countries that have a state religion, then why not include people from Sri Lanka which is a majority Buddhist state?

These are some of the questions that the Supreme Court will delve upon to decide whether the CAA is predicated on legitimate state aim and reasonable classification.

### Road Safety In India

The tragic death of former chairman of Tata sons, Cyrus Mistry in a road accident had brought into focus once again the question of road safety in India.

### Severity Of The Problem Of Road Safety In India

- As per the World Road Statistics (WRS) 2018, brought out by the International Road Federation, India ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in terms of number of accidents.
- As per National Crime Record Bureau's (NCRB) Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India (ADSI) report:
  - ✓ About 1.5 lakh Indians lost their lives because of road accidents in 2021 and 63% of all deaths occurred in the 18-45 age group.

- ✓ As many as **18 Indians die every hour** on the roads.
- ✓ Road deaths increased by almost 17% in 2021 compared to 2020.
- These High annual death tolls brought into question India’s ability to meet Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.6, which aims to halve the fatalities and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2030.

### Causes For Poor Road Safety In India

<i>Behavioral Causes</i>	<i>Infrastructural Causes</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Driving at excessive speeds as well as under the influence of drugs and alcohol</li> <li>o Noncompliance of safety standards such as: Not wearing a seat belt and helmets</li> <li>o Overtaking vehicles from the wrong side</li> <li>o unauthorized road parking</li> <li>o Redlight jumping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Faulty design and engineering of roads</li> <li>o Poor maintenance of roads (potholes, road damages)</li> <li>o Inadequate signage and road markings</li> <li>o Absence of speed limit signs</li> </ul>

- Road safety advocacy group Save Life Foundation has consistently flagged “fatal” corridors where a disproportionately high number of crashes and fatalities occur as a result of poor road engineering.
- Vehicle related causes: Mechanical defects like failure of brakes, Tyre burst etc.
- Adverse Weather Conditions such as Fog, snow, heavy rainfall, wind storms, hail storms which makes driving riskier. Road accidents are relatively higher in the periods of May-June and December-January which shows that extreme weather influences the occurrence of road accidents
- Governance related causes:
  - ✓ Lax enforcement of rules governing road safety.
  - ✓ Corruption among law enforcement agencies.

### Government Initiatives To Strengthen Road Safety

- **Motor Vehicles Act Of 1988** which was subsequently amended in 2019 to augment road safety.
- Constitution of expert Committee under the chairmanship of **Sundar** in 2007
- Approval of **National Road safety Policy** outlining various policy measures such as:
  - ✓ Promoting awareness.
  - ✓ Establishing road safety information data base.
  - ✓ Encouraging safer road infrastructure including application of intelligent transport, enforcement of safety laws etc.
- Constitution of **National Road Safety Board** as the lead agency at the national level as an advisory body on matters relating to road safety
- Formulation of multi-pronged strategy to address the issue of road safety based on **4 Es**:



- Publicity campaign through the social media, electronic and print media
- Road safety advocacy scheme to provide financial assistance to various agencies for administering road safety advocacy.
- Placing of **ambulances** at toll plaza on highways, Creation of helipads along national expressways to cater to emergency care.
- Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (NCAP) to provide ‘Star Ratings’ to automobiles based upon their performance in crash tests will be rolled out from April 2023.

- ADAS (AI-powered Advanced Driver Assistance systems) pilot project in Nagpur: Under this project Nagpur city buses will be equipped with ADAS which will provide an alert to the driver two seconds before any collision happens.
- Govt. is planning to come up with a notification **mandating seat belt for rear car seats.**

### Supreme Court Judgments (SC) on Road Safety

- *In Save life Foundation Vs Union of India 2016*, SC issued guidelines for the protection of **Good Samaritans** and **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)** for their examination by police and during trial, and invoked its inherent jurisdiction under Article 141 to make them binding on all States and Union Territories.
- *S.Rajasekaran Vs Union of India 2017*: It gave directions to the Supreme court committee on Road safety to submit a report on issues concerning Potholes along with measures to determine the quantum of compensation in case of crashes arising due to them.

### Suggestions To Improve Road Safety

- Strict Enforcement of rules relating to road safety through effective policing as well electronic surveillance, including high-visibility and high-speed patrol vehicles, drones and speed tracking cameras, especially within and ahead of high-risk zones
- Intensifying behaviour change campaigns, educational programmes.
- Regular safety audits to assess road safety performance.
- Scientific investigation of road crashes to uncover the infrastructural, vehicular and human factors so as to fix liability and accountability
- Identifying road engineering issues and fixing them as well as acting against poor road construction and maintenance.
- Identification and rectification of black spots (accident prone spots).
- Exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven technologies for enforcing lane discipline on national highways, detection of over-speeding and seatbelt usage, observing pattern of accidents at black spots etc.
- Promoting transport research to find out localized solutions in a cost-effective manner.
- For better vehicular safety:
  - ✓ Force car manufacturers to put safety features through regulation. There is a lot of evidence that introduction of safety technology will have less impact on prices
  - ✓ Vigorous permanent car safety assessment rating system for cars

## Case Study:

### Zero Fatality Corridor (ZFC) solution

- NGO Save LIFE Foundation (SLF) in collaboration with government introduced the Zero Fatality Corridor (ZFC) solution in 2016.
- This model was first deployed on the 'Mumbai-Pune Expressway' where between 2010 and 2016 4,500 road crashes led to 1,300 deaths. Together with Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) and Maharashtra police, the SLF undertook 'forensic investigation of these crashes to uncover the key causal factors, the solutions to which were then implemented'.
- As part of this programme thousands of engineering errors were corrected, technology was employed for police enforcement and faster emergency care was ensured.
- As a result of this initiative between 2016 and 2020 fatal road crashes on the Mumbai-Pune Express way reduced by 52%.
- Taking notice of its success, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways from 2021 decided to take the ZFC model to 15 states across India



### Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act 2019: Key Provisions

- Tightened road traffic regulations such as issuance of driving license and imposed stricter penalties for violations of Traffic rules.
- Minimum Compensation for road accident victims: for hit and run cases have been increased to:
  - ✓ 2 lakhs from 25,000 in cases of death; 50,000 from 12,500 in cases of injury
- Permits and defective vehicles:
  - ✓ In the case of motor defects, safety issues or environmental damage the central government may ask for **recall of the vehicle** requiring the manufacturer to fully reimburse buyers and replace the recalled vehicle with another one of 'similar or better specifications'
- Good Samaritans: No civil or criminal action against a good Samaritan in case of injury or death of accident victim
- National Transportation Policy: The central government in consultation with state governments is to develop a national transportation policy to establish a support structure for granting permits and specify the framework and priorities under road transport
- Motor Vehicle Accident Fund: will be created to provide compulsory insurance for all and will be utilized for:
  - ✓ road accident victims brought into the hospital for treatment during **golden hour**
  - ✓ compensation for the kin who lose someone in a hit-and-run case as well as to those hurt in a hit and run case
- National Road Safety Board: is to be constituted by the central government which will provide structure and give advice to state and central governments on safety measures, traffic management, motor vehicle suitability and standard, registration and licensing and new vehicle technology
- Driving tests: will be computerized in a bid to promote transparency, ease of function of RTO's and to avoid fake licenses.

### Quota \Benefits for Dalit Muslims and Christians

- In response to various petitions filed challenging **Paragraph 3 of 1950 Presidential order**, the Supreme Court asked the central government to clarify its stance on the issue of extending **Scheduled castes (SCs) reservation** benefits for Dalits who have converted to **Islam or Christianity**.
- **Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians** have long been demanding **Scheduled Cates** status and reservations for themselves and have filed petitions challenging the **Paragraph 3 of 1950 Presidential order**.
- According to reports, the Central government is likely to constitute a commission to study the social, economic and educational status of members of Dalits who have converted to religions other than Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism.

### Who are Scheduled Castes (SCs)?

- The Constitution does not specify the castes which are to be called as the SCs. It leaves the power to list these castes to the President
- Scheduled Castes, according to Article 366(24) read with Article 341, are those castes, races or tribes, or parts thereof, as the President may notify.
- Article 366(24): "Scheduled Castes" means such castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups thereof as are deemed under Article 341
- Article 341: The President may by public notification specify what castes, races or tribes, or groups thereof in each State and UT would be regarded as the Scheduled Castes for the purposes of the Constitution in relation to that State or UT.
- Under Art. 341(2), however, once the notification is issued by the President under Art. 341(1), any modifications therein, by way either of including or excluding from the list any caste, race or tribe or a part or a group thereof, can be made by Parliament by law and not by a Presidential notification.
- Under the above-mentioned provisions, the President promulgated The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 {1950 order} mentioning the list of Scheduled Castes.

## Why Dalits Converted To Christianity And Islam Doesn't Get Quota Benefits?

- The 1950 order confined the Scheduled Caste status only to Hindus. The Paragraph 3 of this order declares that:
  - ✓ “No person who professes a religion different from Hinduism” would be deemed to be a member of a Scheduled Caste”.
- In **1956**, the Paragraph 3 of the 1950 order was amended to include Dalits who have converted to Sikhism and in **1990** to include Dalits who have converted to Buddhism into the fold of constitutionally-recognized SCs.
- As it stands today the Paragraph 3 of the 1950 order states that:
  - ✓ “No person who professes a religion different from the **Hindu, Sikh or Buddhist** religion shall be deemed to be a member of Scheduled Caste”
- As a result of this, only Dalits from Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism would officially claim the benefits of reservation and the same has been denied to Dalits who converted to Islam and Christianity.
- It is, however, to be noted that the 1950 order **didn't explicitly state the reasons** for inclusion of three religions-Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and excluding others for the purposes of SC list.

## Supreme Court Judgment: Soosai V. Union of India 1985

- In this case, the constitutional validity of Paragraph 3 of 1950 order was challenged as being discriminatory on the basis of religion.
- In this Judgment, the SC accepted that the **Caste continued** even after conversion from one religion to another but insisted for 'material' to show that the handicaps of persons of Scheduled Castes had remained the same even after conversion to Christianity.
- The Court was not satisfied with the material placed before it and therefore decided in favour of the **constitutionality of 1950 order.**

## Does The Religion-Based Bar On Reservations Apply To Converted Scheduled Tribes (STs) And OBCs?

Unlike SCs, the reservation benefits for STs and OBCs are **not linked** to one's religious identity and as a result of which converted STs and OBCs are claiming the benefits of reservation.

## Grounds On Which Case Is Made For Extending SC Status To Dalit Muslims And Dalit Christians

- Restrictions imposed on them on the ground of religion was a violation of the fundamental right to equality (Art 14, 15(1)), religious freedom and non-discrimination (Art 25)
- The debilitating effects of caste neither cease to exist nor become less severe upon conversion to Christianity or Islam.
  - ✓ Reports by Ranganath Misra Commission (submitted in 2007) and by Satish Deshpande stated that Dalits who embrace Christianity and Islam continue to suffer extreme social educational and economic hardships.
- Deprivation from various constitutional and legal safeguards that have been made available to other Dalits.

**Ranganath Misra Commission 2004**, in its report, recommended that

- Paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950 should be made religion neutral.
- But no action has been taken by the government on this recommendation “on the ground that it was not substantiated by field studies”.

**Rajinder Sachar Committee 2005** observed that “social and economic situation of Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians did not improve after conversion”.

A study commissioned by **National Commission for Minorities**, under the leadership of Satish Deshpande, made a strong case for extending SC status to Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims. It was also not considered reliable due to insufficient data.

## Draft Telecommunication Bill 2022

Central government, in an effort to overhaul the regulatory framework of the Indian Telecom space, had come up with a new Draft Telecommunication Bill 2022 and invited feedback and suggestions from public over it.

### Need For A New Legal Framework

- To replace and consolidate outdated British era laws governing the telecom sector such as:

Indian Telegraph Act, 1885

Indian Wireless Telegraphy act,  
1933

Telegraph Wires (Unlawful  
Possession) Act, 1950

- To create level playing field between **Telecom entities** and **OTT** (Over-the-top) players that provide calling and messaging services by bringing the latter within regulatory framework
  - ✓ The telecommunication services (**Airtel, Vi, Jio**) had to incur high costs of licences and spectrum, while OTT communication players (**WhatsApp, Telegram**) used their infrastructure to offer free services.
- To keep pace with the changing nature of telecommunication and technologies.
- To bring in a world class regulation in line with global best practices.
- To protect users from cyber frauds.
- To address bottlenecks in the rapid expansion of telecom infrastructure as the existing regulatory framework based on **Right of way rules 2016** has had a limited impact.
- To provide certainty regarding spectrum management.

### Key Proposals Of The Draft Bill

- Internet-based and OTT communication services such as WhatsApp, Zoom, Facetime, Google Meet etc. to come under definition of Telecom services.
- OTT services will **need licenses** to operate.
- Entities that have been granted licence have to identify the user of their platforms via a verifiable mode of identification
  - ✓ To prevent cyber fraud, the Bill provides that the identity of the person sending a message through telecom services shall be available to a user receiving it.
- Spectrum** should primarily be allocated through auction; but for specific functions related to government and public interest like defense, transportation and research the spectrum is assigned through administrative process.
- Equip government with power to **intercept communication** in the interest of sovereignty, integrity or security of India, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, or preventing incitement to an offence.
- Power to government to terminate spectrum allocations partly or in full, if it determines that assigned spectrum has remained unutilized for insufficient reasons over a period of time.
- Dilution in some crucial powers and responsibilities of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI):

by eliminating the need for the government to seek **regulator's recommendations before issuing licenses**

by removing the provision that empowered TRAI to **request the government to furnish information or documents** necessary to make such recommendations

- TRAI may direct operators "to abstain from predatory pricing"
- Simplify the framework for mergers, demergers, acquisitions or other forms of restructuring**, by only requiring intimation to the licensing authority
- In case a telecom entity in possession of spectrum goes through insolvency or Bankruptcy, the spectrum assigned to that entity will revert to central government control.

- **Right of way enforceable at the state and municipal corporation level.** A public entity that owns the land **has to Grant** right-of-way permission expeditiously unless it gives a substantive ground for refusal. This legal framework is key to the rollout of 5G services.
- **Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)** which was created under the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, will be referred to as the “**Telecommunication Development Fund**”.
  - ✓ USOF is name for the levies collected by the Centre from telecom companies with a view to ensuring funding & development of communication services in rural & underserved areas.
  - ✓ Currently, USOF has a surplus cash of around Rs. **60,000 crore lying unutilised**.

### Concerns Raised By The Bill

- Centre **can't** take coercive action against **states or Municipal corporations** to impose right of way rules as **land is a state subject**.
- OTT communication platforms are already regulated under **IT Act** to protect interest of consumers and keep platforms in check. Additional regulatory burden would increase the compliance cost and curb innovation in the sector.
- More clarity is also required as to how government plans to regulate OTT communication services.
- Government's power to tap into all kinds of communications without making sure that the common man has a **legal protection in the form of data protection law** is problematic.
- Adversely impact the consultative role of TRAI weakening its position as it excludes the obligation of the government to consult TRAI on licensing issues.
- Communications over WhatsApp are typically end-to-end encrypted and therefore can't be intercepted

### Live Streaming of Supreme Court Proceedings

In a landmark move, the Supreme Court (SC) of India had taken a decision to live stream all the proceedings of Constitution Benches on a regular basis for the general public. The move has been touted as a significant reform in the functioning of Judiciary. Earlier, in Swapnil Tripathi V. Supreme Court of India 2018, the SC has held that the Court proceedings of national and constitutional importance shall be live-streamed in larger public interest.

**Global Scenario:** Across the world, live-streaming of judicial processes is an established practice. Examples include Canada, US, UK, Australia, Brazil, South Africa etc.

**Live streaming in High Courts:** Six high courts across India have been live streaming their proceedings which include Gujarat, Odisha, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Patna, and Madhya Pradesh.

Importance Of Live Streaming By Supreme Court	Concerns Surrounding Live Streaming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes <b>transparency and accountability</b> in the functioning of the Judiciary which are considered to be hallmark of democracy</li> <li>• Significantly enhance the <b>public's right to know</b> about happenings in the court. It is to noted that '<u>Right to access Information</u>' is a part of Fundamental right under <u>Article 19(1)</u>.</li> <li>• Will help in strengthening the <b>trust and confidence</b> of public over the Judiciary's functioning</li> <li>• <b>Accessibility:</b> Help in overcoming the <b>barriers of distance</b> as Citizens from any corner of the country can be informed about proceedings in the SC.</li> <li>• Help in <b>De-congestion of courts</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much like <u>live telecast of parliament</u>, the Live streaming could lead to <b>grandstanding or showmanship</b> by lawyers or Judges</li> <li>• Fears of irresponsible and motivated use of content. For example, Judges Observations during court proceedings can be extracted and <u>used out of context on social media platforms</u>.</li> <li>• May lead to <b>judicial populism</b>-Judges may act to maximize individual exposure</li> <li>• Cases may get sensationalized</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps in <b>legal research and training</b></li> <li>• Will improve <u>conduct of lawyers and judges</u> in the court halls</li> <li>• The video archives will be an excellent opportunity to identify and address systemic patterns that affects judicial functioning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of digitally trained court officials</li> <li>• Judges during hearings may not ask questions or make comments that could be perceived as unpopular.</li> </ul>
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### Amendments To BCCI's Constitution

The Supreme Court (SC) allowed amendments proposed to the constitution of the **Board of Cricket Control of India (BCCI)** to **relax** the mandatory cooling-off period requirement.

#### Relaxation In Cooling-Off Period

- *Cooling-off period* is a duration till which one **can't contest election** for a particular post in BCCI or at state level after completion of their tenure. It was introduced into BCCI's constitution based on **RM Lodha committee** recommendations.
  - In 2015, the Supreme Court had appointed a committee headed by ret'd. Chief Justice of India **R M Lodha** to recommend reforms for cricket in India particularly suggesting amendments to the processes followed by BCCI
  - The committee suggested various changes within the BCCI such as the appointment conditions of the CFO and CEO, age of office bearers, advertisements during the IPL matches, and appointment of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) official.
  - In 2016, the Supreme Court upheld the recommendations made by the Lodha committee, paving the way for a major change within the BCCI.
- **Rationale behind cooling-off period:** To prevent the concentration of power in the hands of few individuals in BCCI's governance structures
  - ✓ To safeguard cricket administration from any vested personal interest
  - ✓ To bring new blood into the administration
- The current cooling-off regime is based on **2018 order** of the SC. In its latest Judgment, SC agreed to give further relaxation to cooling-off period.

Earlier Regime On Cooling Off Period	New Regime
<p>An officer bearer who has held any post for <b>two consecutive terms</b> either <i>in a state association or in the BCCI or a combination of both</i> must undergo a <u>three-year cooling-off period</u>. This means that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One who serves as an office bearer in a state association for 2 consecutive terms would have to undergo a cooling-off period.</li> <li>• One who serves as an office bearer of BCCI for 2 consecutive terms would have to undergo a cooling-off period.</li> <li>• <u>One who served as an office bearer in a state association for one term followed by one term as an office bearer of BCCI similarly have to undergo cooling-off period.</u></li> </ul>	<p>The cooling-off period of 3 years would come into effect only if a person serves two consecutive terms at the BCCI or the State Association. To put it simply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One who serves as an office-bearer in the State Association for 2 consecutive terms has to undergo a cooling off period.</li> <li>• One who serves as an office-bearer in the BCCI for 2 consecutive terms has to undergo a cooling off period.</li> <li>• <u>One who has been part of a state association for two consecutive three-year terms <b>will not have to undergo a cooling-off period if they are contesting for a BCCI post — and, if elected, they can continue in the BCCI for six years.</b> In effect, an individual can continue to remain in a state body and the BCCI together for an unbroken period of 12 years.</u></li> </ul>

## How Changes In Cooling-Off Period Regime Benefit BCCI Administration

- *Longer tenures for office bearers facilitated by the relaxation in cooling-off period would*
  - ✓ ensure continuity of worthy administrators at the BCCI
  - ✓ enable utilization of expertise of experienced individuals by the BCCI
  - ✓ enable office bearers to master the art of administration
  - ✓ enable office bearers to get acquainted with workings of the organization and demonstrate leadership
- Experienced and long-serving office bearers would be in a better position to effectively represent BCCI's case at the *International Cricket Council (ICC) and other multilateral fora*

## Other Amendments Approved By Supreme Court To BCCI Constitution

- Currently the 'ministers', 'government servants' or 'persons holding public offices' are barred from being part of cricket administration. SC agreed to **remove 'public office'** from the ambit of the disqualification.
- Currently a person can be disqualified from contesting BCCI or state elections if they are charged for committing any criminal offence. SC agreed to apply disqualification only to those persons '**convicted**' of an offence.
- Bar on office bearers of other sports bodies from being part of BCCI or state associations has also been lifted.

## Supreme Court's Latest Move On The Death Penalty

The Supreme Court (SC) has referred to a **five-judge constitution bench** to 'frame **uniform guidelines** for the trial courts' due to lack of clarity on the manner in which the sentencing decisions are arrived at in cases relating to death penalty. This intervention by the SC is seen as a major step in plugging gaps in the way in which trial courts award the death sentence.

## Legal Mandate On Sentence Hearing Relating To Death Penalty

- Sec 235 of CrPC talks about "Judgment of acquittal or Conviction"
  - ✓ Sec 235(1) states that "after hearing arguments and points of law, the judge shall give a Judgment in the case"
  - ✓ Sec 235(2) states that "*if the accused is convicted*, the Judge shall, hear the accused on the question of sentence and then pass sentence".
- Sec 354(3) of CrPC
  - ✓ When an offence is punishable with death or imprisonment for life, the judgment shall **state the reasons** for the sentence awarded, and *if the sentence is death*, "special reasons" for the sentence.
  - ✓ In line with this directive under Sec 354(3) CrPC, **Bachan Singh case** laid down a *sentencing framework* that requires courts to weigh aggravating and mitigating circumstances of both the crime and the accused and ensure that the option of life imprisonment is unquestionably foreclosed.
- **Bachan Singh vs State of Punjab (1980)**
  - ✓ While maintaining that death penalty can be awarded only in 'rarest of rare cases', the SC has mandated a **separate sentence hearing of the accused**.
- The importance of a separate sentence hearing on the issue of mandatory imposition of death sentence was reiterated in several other judgments such as *Santa Singh v. State of Punjab*, *Muniappan v. State of Tamil Nadu*, *Malkiat Singh v. State of Punjab* etc.
- Thus, while the importance of separate sentence hearing on death penalty has been emphasized by various judgments, there are question marks on when a separate sentence hearing is supposed to take place before imposing death sentence on the guilty.

## When A Separate Sentence Hearing Is Supposed To Take Place?

- There are conflicting rulings as to when a separate hearing is supposed to take place.

- At least three SC rulings have allowed separate sentencing hearing on the same day as the conviction and therefore death sentence can be granted on the same day of conviction.
- However, some three-judge decisions have ruled that same-day sentencing in capital offences **violate the principles of natural justice**.
- In ‘Dattaraya v State of Maharashtra’, a 2020 ruling, a three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court commuted the death sentence to life imprisonment on the grounds that an adequate sentencing hearing was not held.
- The adequate sentence hearing **can’t happen on the same day** of conviction as the judge is required to consider not just factors that necessitate awarding the highest sentence (**aggravating factors**), but also the **mitigating circumstances**.
  - ✓ Further, collecting information on mitigating factors will take time for defence team & requires expertise in different fields like mental health, social work & anthropology etc.

The five-judge constitution bench is going to decide when a separate hearing is supposed to take place whether it is on the same day or at a future date after conviction.

### What are Mitigating Circumstances?

- Mitigating circumstances are those factors that necessitate the reduction of a sentence.
- The SC while referring the issue to a larger bench listed mitigating circumstances that are to be accounted at the time of sentence hearing. These include:



*Note:* Aggravating circumstances are those factors that necessitate awarding of the highest sentence.

### Issues In Current Sentencing Regime Relating To Death Penalty

- Non-consideration of Mitigating factors while awarding death penalty:
  - ✓ The Trial courts in India have **heavily relied only on aggravating factors** (circumstances of the crime) to decide the outcome of the crime contrary to the constitution bench decision in Bachan Singh (1980) case which emphasized on the relevance of mitigating factors in capital sentencing.
- Same day sentencing: In complete defiance of the spirit of **individualized justice** envisaged under Sec 235(2) CrPC, in several cases the trial courts have awarded death sentence on the same day of the conviction order instead of adjourning sentence hearing to a future date.
  - ✓ Even when the sentence hearings are not conducted on the same day, it was noticed that **barely time is given** for meaningful sentence hearings.
- Frequent usage of ‘**collective conscience and society’s cry for Justice approach**’ to the complete exclusion of mitigating factors:
  - ✓ **Bachan Singh case (1980)** had placed no importance on the role of public opinion in deciding the outcome while creating a sentencing framework for courts deciding between life imprisonment and the death penalty.
  - ✓ **Machhi Singh V. State of Punjab (1983)**: made public opinion relevant to capital sentencing by stating that death penalty might be deserved in cases where the conscience of the society had been shaken up.
  - ✓ As a result of Machhi Singh case, the SC had frequently used the “collective conscience and society’s cry for justice” approach to impose death penalty.
  - ✓ This approach however has the criticized by the SC itself in ‘Santosh Kumar Satishbhushan Bariyar v. State of Maharashtra’ for *want of clarity around the meaning of ‘collective conscience’ and the counter-majoritarian role of courts*.
- *Factors such Possibility of life imprisonment, reformation had hardly been considered according to a study by Project 39A.*

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## Liz Truss To Take Over As U.K.'S Next Prime Minister

- Liz Truss has won the Conservative leadership race and will become the next UK prime minister. She defeated former Chancellor, Rishi Sunak.
- She won a vote share of **57.4%** or 81,326 votes versus Sunak's **42.6%** or 60,399 votes.
- Ms. Truss is set to become **Britain's 56th Prime Minister (PM)**.

{For more about Electoral system and Resignation of Boris Johnson, refer The Recitals - July 2022}

UK'S 3rd FEMALE PRIME MINISTER	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Liz Truss, 47, is UK's 3rd female PM after Theresa May &amp; Maggie Thatcher; will be Tories' 4th PM since 2015 election</li><li>&gt; Was born in Oxford to a maths professor father and nurse teacher mother</li><li>&gt; Graduated in philosophy, politics and economics from Oxford University, was president of its Liberal Democrat branch</li><li>&gt; Is married to accountant Hugh O'Leary, has 2</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>teenage daughters</li><li>&gt; Had voted for the UK to remain in the European Union in the 2016 referendum</li><li>&gt; As foreign secretary, was at the forefront of UK response to Russia's war on Ukraine, imposing tough sanctions</li><li>&gt; Signed off on India-UK Enhanced Trade Partnership as international trade secretary last year, marking the starting point of FTA negotiations</li></ul>



## India, Japan 2+2 Meet

The **second** India-Japan 2+2 ministerial dialogue took place recently in Tokyo, Japan.

### Key Highlights

- Without specifically naming Russia or China, during the summit, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to a rules-based global order that respects sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- During the summit, the Japanese side expressed its resolve to examine all options necessary for national defence, **including so called counterstrike capabilities**.
- The Japanese side also expressed its determination to fundamentally reinforce Japan's defence capabilities and to secure substantial increase of Japan's defence budget required for it.
- While acknowledging Japan's determination to reinforce its defence capabilities, Indian side expressed its support to work towards enhanced security and defence cooperation.
- The two sides also concurred to launch the Joint Service Staff Talks between the Japan Joint Staff and the Indian Integrated Defence Staff.
- India side welcomed:
  - ✓ The participation of Japan for the **first time** in the **multilateral exercise MILAN** and
  - ✓ The **operationalization of the Agreement** (signed in Sept. 2020) **Concerning Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services** between the Self-Defense Forces of Japan and the Indian Armed Forces in the exercise.

### About 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue

- 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.
- 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.
- India has 2+2 dialogues with four **key strategic partners**: US, Australia, Japan, and Russia.

### 2+2 with Japan

- India and Japan held their inaugural 2+2 minister level dialogue in **November 2019**.
- The idea of such a 2+2 meeting was initiated during the summit meeting between Modi and Abe in Tokyo in October 2018.

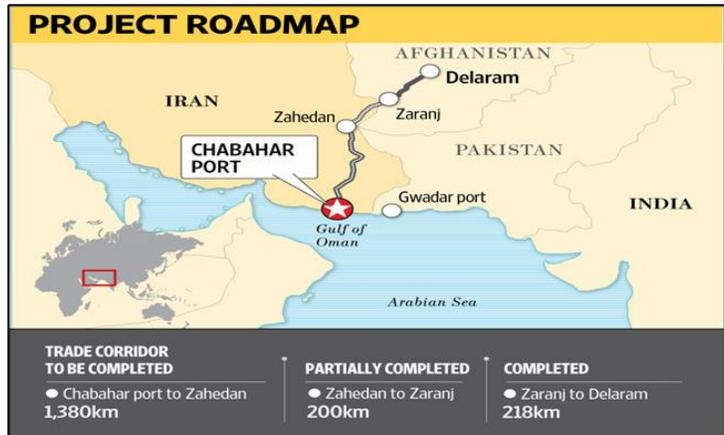
- India and Japan have had a 2+2 foreign and defense dialogue led by **secretary level officers** from **2010**.

### PM Modi Meets Iran President, Reviews Chabahar Port Progress

At the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, PM Modi met Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi. During the meeting, both the leaders discussed India – Iran relations and the progress on Chabahar port development project.

#### About Chabahar Port

- It is a seaport in Chabahar located in south-eastern Iran, on the **Gulf of Oman**.
- The port consists of two separate ports named **Shahid Kalantari** and **Shahid Beheshti**, each of which has five berths.
- In May 2016, India and Iran signed a bilateral agreement in which India would refurbish one of the berths at Shahid Beheshti port, and reconstruct a 600-meter-long container handling facility at the port.



#### Significance of The Port

- The port is partly intended to provide an alternative for trade between India and Afghanistan as it is 800 kilometres closer to the border of Afghanistan than Pakistan's Karachi port.
  - ✓ At present, Pakistan does not allow India to transport through its territory to Afghanistan.
- In October 2017, India's first shipment of wheat to Afghanistan was sent through the Chabahar Port. In December 2018, India took over the port's operations.
- However, the sanctions imposed by the US in 2019 played a role in reducing India's involvement and investment in the USD 1.6 billion **Chabahar–Zahedan railway project**.

### India – Iran Relationship: In Brief

- India-Iran relations span centuries marked by meaningful interactions. The two countries shared a border till 1947 and share several common features in their language, culture and traditions.
- Independent India and Iran established diplomatic links in **March 1950**.
- Both South Asia and the Persian Gulf have strong commercial, energy, cultural and people-to-people links.

#### Relations Between 1950 and 1991

- During much of the Cold War, relations between India and Iran suffered due to their differing political interests.
- India endorsed a **non-aligned** position but fostered strong links with the Soviet Union (USSR), while Iran was an open member of the Western Bloc and enjoyed close ties with the United States.

#### Post-Cold War Era

- Iran's continued support for Pakistan in the India–Pakistan conflict and India's close relations with Iraq during the **Iran–Iraq War** greatly strained bilateral ties.
- However, in the 1990s, both India and Iran supported the Northern Alliance's fight against the Taliban in Afghanistan.
- They continued to collaborate in supporting the broad-based anti-Taliban government, until the Taliban recaptured Afghanistan in 2021.
- India has expressed strong opposition to Iran's nuclear program.

## Economic Ties

- India-Iran bilateral trade during the FY 2020-21 was **USD 2.1 billion**, a decrease of 56 % as compared to **USD 4.8 billion** during FY 2019-20.
- **Major Indian exports** – rice, tea, sugar, fresh fruits, drugs/pharmaceuticals, man-made staple fibres, electrical machinery, artificial jewellery etc.
- **Major Indian imports** – dry fruits, inorganic/organic chemicals, glass and glassware, natural or cultured pearls, precious or semiprecious stones, leather, gypsum etc.
- **Why has India stopped importing crude oil from Iran?**
  - ✓ In 2019, due to the sanctions imposed by the US on Iran, India had stopped importing crude oil from the country.
  - ✓ Before 2019, India was the **second biggest buyer** of oil from Iran.
- **Why it is in India's favour to restart oil import from Iran?**



Firstly, most of India's refineries are adept to Iranian sweet oil

Secondly, Iran trades oil for Indian rupee or goods.

Thirdly, transportation costs of goods from **Bandar Abbas port** and **Chabahar port** are lower.

## Far-Right Leader To Be Italy's 1st Woman PM

- Giorgia Meloni won a clear majority in Italian election. She is set to become the **country's first female Prime Minister** as the head of the most right-wing government since World War II.
- Her alliance, which also includes Matteo Salvini's League and Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia, claimed about 43% of the vote.
- That would give the bloc at least 114 seats in the Senate, where 104 votes are required for a majority.

## Italy's Political System

- Italy is a **parliamentary republic** with a head of government - the Prime Minister - appointed by the President who is the head of state.
- The Constitution of Italian Republic was enacted by the Constituent Assembly in December 1947.
- The Parliament is composed of 2 houses – **Chamber of Deputies (400 seats)** is the Lower House; **Senate of the Republic (200 seats)** is the Upper House.
- The country is subdivided into 20 regions. 5 of these have a special autonomous status, enabling them to pass legislation on some local matters.

## Electoral System

- All citizens **18 years and older** may vote. The turnout for elections in Italy is high, often reaching well over 80% of the electorate for parliamentary elections.
- For almost half a century after World War II, Italy's electoral system was based on **proportional representation**. Between 1993 and 1995, several changes were made by national legislation and popular referenda. In the current electoral system, 63% of the seats will be allocated based on proportional representation system. The rest (37%) are allocated by the first-past-the-post-principle.
- Also, a number of bonus seats are allocated to the winning coalition – in the Chamber of Deputies – to guarantee a majority for the victors.
- Candidates can compete in parties or coalitions and voters need to give one vote each for the Chamber and the Senate.

# SUMMITS AND ORGANISATIONS

## UN Accuses China Of Uighur Rights Abuses

- The United Nations has accused China of committing serious human rights violations against **Uyghur Muslims** and other ethnic minorities in **Xinjiang province**
- This was mentioned in a report published by UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). An investigation was conducted by the UNHRC, following allegations of abuse.

### Key Highlights

- The UN accused China of serious human rights violations that may amount to crimes against humanity in a report examining a crackdown on Uighurs and other ethnic groups.
- China has long carried out heavy-handed **ethnic assimilation** of Uighurs, but the policies reached new levels under President Xi Jinping.
- Uighur **commercial and cultural activities** have been gradually curtailed by the Chinese state.
  - ✓ For example, in July 2014, some Xinjiang government departments banned Muslim civil servants from fasting during the holy month of Ramadan.
- In 2017, China began a massive “political re-education program”, with more than 1 million Uighurs taken into detention. These detentions lasted for months or even years.
  - ✓ In these detention camps, many have said they were tortured, sexually assaulted, forced sterilization, forced disappearances and forced to abandon their language and religion.
- During the same period, the Xinjiang government rolled out a high-tech surveillance system across the region that tracked Uighurs’ movements through police checkpoints, facial recognition surveillance cameras and house visits by officials.
- It calls for urgent attention from the UN, the world community and China itself to address them.

### Who Are Uighurs?

- The Uighurs are a nomadic Turkic people native to China’s Xinjiang province.
- About 12 million Uighurs live in Xinjiang, with smaller groups in Kazakhstan, Turkey and other countries.
- They are considered as one of China's 55 officially recognized ethnic minorities. They don’t speak Mandarin as their native language

### Where is Xinjiang Province?

- Xinjiang, officially known as the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR), lies in the north-west of China and is the country’s largest province.
  - ✓ Like Tibet, it is autonomous, meaning - in theory - it has some powers of self-governance.
  - ✓ But in practice, both regions are subjected to major restrictions by the central government.
- The region produces about a fifth of the world's cotton.
- It is also rich in oil and natural gas and because of its proximity to Central Asia and Europe, it is seen by China as an important trade link.



### Why Is There Tension Between The Chinese Communist Party And The Uighurs?

- Most Uighurs are Muslim and Islam is an important part of their life and identity.
- Their language is similar to Turkish language, and they regard themselves as culturally and ethnically close to Central Asian nations.

- In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Uighurs briefly declared independence for the region but it was brought under the complete control of China's new Communist government in 1949.
- In the 1990s, open support for separatist groups increased after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of independent Muslim states in Central Asia. However, the Chinese government suppressed these demonstrations.

### Changing Demographics Of The Region

- Major development projects have brought prosperity to Xinjiang's big cities, attracting young and technically qualified Han Chinese from **eastern provinces**.
- The Han Chinese are said to be given the best jobs while Uighurs are treated as second class citizens, something that has fuelled resentment among Uighurs.
- In 1949, Uighurs numbered approximately 76% of the total population of the region while Han Chinese accounted for just 6.2%.
  - ✓ As per the census 2010 data, the population of the region is now made up of **45% Uighurs and 40% Han Chinese**.

### About UNHRC

- The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system.
- It is made up of **47 States** responsible for the promotion & protection of all human rights around the globe.
- The Council was **created by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** on 15 March 2006 by resolution.
- The Human Rights Council replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
- Members of the Council serve for a **period of three years**. They are **not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms**.

### Criticism Faced by UNHRC

- **Notorious human rights abusers as members** - In October 2020, China and Russia were elected to the Council.
  - ✓ Earlier, Congo was elected as a member even as mass graves were being discovered there
- **Prone to corruption and back-door deals** – Members are elected **directly by secret ballot** by a majority of the U.N. General Assembly. This makes it prone to back-door deals and corruption.
- **Entrenched bias against Israel** – Many analysts blamed this organisation for its bias against Israel.

### Eastern Economic Forum Summit

- Recently, PM Modi virtually addressed an online plenary session at the 7<sup>th</sup> Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) — held in the Russian city of Vladivostok.
- At the summit, PM Modi said that Russia can become an important partner for the Indian steel industry with the supply of coking coal.
- PM Modi's comments came against the backdrop of concerns raised by the West, including the US and Europe, over countries buying oil from Russia.
- Hence, India's willingness to increase economic cooperation with Russia is a sign that India's foreign policy is driven by its national interests. It is not going to be dictated by the Western blocs.

### Eastern Economic Forum (EEF)

- The EEF It was established by the President Vladimir Putin, in 2015.
- The forum aims to support the economic development of Russia's Far East, and to expand international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

- Since its establishment, more than 17 different countries have invested in the Far East. These include countries like China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and Vietnam.

#### Significance of the Russia's Far East (RFE)

- 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 region's resources contribute to 5 % of Russia's GDP. Procuring and supplying them is an issue due to the unavailability of personnel.
- RFE is geographically placed at a strategic location, acting as a gateway into Asia

#### India's Engagement with Russia's Far East (RFE)

- India is the first country in the world to open a consulate in Vladivostok (Sangam' of Eurasia and Pacific).
- Indian PM was the chief guest at 5th EEF (2019), first by an Indian Prime Minister.
- In 2019, India announced a commitment to an "Act Far-East" policy, with an aim to increase cooperation with this area. India gave a line of credit worth USD 1 billion for investment in this region.
- **International Trade and commerce:**
  - ✓ India and Russia agreed to open a maritime route between Chennai and Vladivostok to give impetus to cooperation between India and Russian Far East.
  - ✓ This connectivity project along with International North-South Corridor (INSC) will bring India and Russia physically closer.
- **Energy:** Indian workers are participating in major gas projects in the Amur region, from Yamal to Vladivostok and onward to Chennai.

#### 10th IBSA Trilateral Ministerial Commission

- The **10th India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA) Trilateral Ministerial Commission** meeting took place in New York.
- India is the incumbent IBSA Chair and will be hosting the **6th IBSA Summit** on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in November 2022. So far, only 5 IBSA summit has taken place (5th IBSA Summit – Tshwane, October 2011).

#### India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA)

- IBSA is a unique Forum which brings together India, Brazil and South Africa, three large democracies and major economies from three different continents, facing similar challenges.
- The dialogue forum was created in 2003, with the adoption of **Brasília declaration**.
- IBSA does not have a headquarters or a permanent executive secretariat.
- Cooperation in IBSA is on three fronts:
  - ✓ As a forum for consultation and coordination on global and regional political issues. E.g., the reform of the global institutions of political and economic governance, WTO/Doha Development Agenda, climate change, terrorism etc.
  - ✓ Trilateral collaboration on concrete areas/projects: This is done through 14 working groups and 6 People-to-People Forums, for the common benefit of three countries.
  - ✓ Assisting other developing countries by taking up projects in the latter through **IBSA Fund**.
    - The **United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)** is the **fund manager** of IBSA fund.
    - Each IBSA member country is required to contribute \$1 million per annum to the fund.
    - Through this initiative, development projects are executed in fellow developing countries.

- It has, since its inception, allocated over US \$44 million, supporting 39 South-South cooperation development projects in 35 partner countries with the majority being Least Developed Countries.
- IBSA Fund received the 2010 MDG Award for South-South cooperation.

### Achievements of IBSA: In Brief

- The three Foreign Ministers have been meeting regularly to provide a coordinated leadership to the grouping. The recent meeting in New York was 10<sup>th</sup> such meeting.
- While the IBSA Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (IBSA Fund) is small in monetary terms, it has succeeded in implementing many development projects in diverse countries.
  - ✓ IBSA projects cover Haiti, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Burundi, Palestine, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Sierra Leone.
  - ✓ A sports complex has been completed and inaugurated in 2011 in Ramallah under the IBSA Fund.
- India has been running an innovative IBSA Visiting Fellows Programme through the Delhi-based think tank, Research and Information System for Developing Countries.
- One of the most significant commitments of the IBSA towards enhancing economic ties was the initiative to establish the MERCOSUR-SACU (Southern African Customs Union)-India Trilateral Free Trade Agreement (T-FTA).

### G7 Agrees To Implement Price Cap On Russian Oil

Finance Ministers of all G7 countries as well as the European Union announced their plan to implement a **price cap** on oil exports from Russia. The plan, however, doesn't include **Russian gas**, which Europe is still quite dependent on.

#### Price Cap Plan

- The introduction of a price cap on Russian oil means countries that sign up to the policy will only be permitted to purchase Russian oil and petroleum products that are sold at or below the price cap.
- The price cap is being designed to limit Russia from profiting from its war of aggression while limiting the impact on global energy prices.
- For countries that join the coalition, it would mean simply not buying Russian oil unless the price is reduced to where the cap is determined.
- For countries that don't join the coalition, or buy oil higher than the cap price, they would lose access to all services provided by the coalition countries.
- G7 countries say they are aiming to reduce the price of oil, but not the quantity of oil that Russia sells, so as to control inflation globally while hurting the Russian economy.

#### India's Response

- Western countries have tried to pressurize India by asking it:
  - ✓ to change its uncritical stance on Russia at the United Nations,
  - ✓ to cut down oil imports,
  - ✓ to stopping defence and other purchases from Russia,
  - ✓ to avoid the rupee-rouble payment mechanism that circumvent their sanctions.
- However, so far, India has not obliged, and there is little indication that New Delhi is likely to, just yet.
  - ✓ At the recently concluded Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) summit, Indian PM expressed his desire to strengthen ties with Russia in energy field and boost India's \$16 billion investment in Russian oilfields.
- India's oil intake from Russia, which was minuscule prior to the war has soared **50 times** over. Indian government's stand is believed to be driven by its national interest which, at this moment, is to provide affordable oil to Indian consumers.

## INS Vikrant Commissioned

India's biggest ever indigenous military project – the **aircraft carrier** INS Vikrant – was commissioned by PM Modi at the Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) Kochi, Kerala.

- So far, such aircraft carriers were only made by developed countries. India has taken a step towards being a developed country by being part of the league.
- On this occasion, PM Modi also unveiled the Indian Navy's new ensign.

[For details on INS Vikrant, refer topic **"Cochin Shipyard delivers aircraft carrier to Navy"** in Recitals - July 2022.]

## The Indian Navy's Ensign

- As the name suggests, a naval ensign is a **flag** that is installed atop naval warships, on ground stations, at air bases and other institutions used as a **form of maritime identification**.
- Every country's navy has its own ensign which can be the same as their country's flag or a distant one.

## Tracing The History Of India's Naval Ensign

- The existing ensign of the Indian Navy draws its origin from the colonial past.
- On October 2, 1934, the naval service was renamed **Royal Indian Navy (RIN)**, with its headquarters at Bombay (now Mumbai) and the ensign also changed to the one which used by the Royal Navy till 1950.
  - ✓ Pre-Independence ensign of the Indian Navy had the red George's Cross on a white background with the Union Jack of the UK on the top left corner.



- **From 1950 to 2001**, the navy's ensign was the St George's Cross - red cross on a white background, with the **national flag** in the upper canton before it was changed in 2001.
  - ✓ The Saint George's Cross is named after a **Christian Warrior Saint** who is believed to have been a crusader during the third crusade.
  - ✓ This cross also serves as the flag of **England** which is a constituent of the United Kingdom.
- **Between 2001 and 2004**, the Indian Navy adopted an Indianized ensign that showed only the Indian flag and the navy crest, bringing in commonality with the flags of the Indian Air Force and Indian Army (the Army and Air Force adopted their current ensigns in 1950).
- **In 2004**, the Indian Navy returned to its pre-2001 ensign with the addition of the **state emblem** placed at the intersection of the cross.
- The next change in ensign came in **2014** when **"Satyamev Jayate"** were placed under the **national emblem** at the centre of the St George's Cross.

## The New Ensign And Its Significance

- The new ensign now features the national emblem (encircled by an octagonal shield and sitting atop an anchor) with the Tricolour on the upper canton (top left corner of the flag).
- The Saint George's Cross has been removed from the Indian Navy's new flag in **an effort to distance itself from its "colonial past."**

- Beneath the anchor is the Navy's motto '**Sam No Varunah**' (Oh Varuna, be auspicious to us).
- The golden border surrounding the national emblem draws inspiration from the seal of Indian emperor **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj** and depicts steadfastness.
- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj placed a high priority on maritime prowess, laying the foundation for a modern naval force in the 17th century.
  - ✓ Shivaji built ships in towns such as Kalyan, Bhivandi, and Goa, both for trade and to establish a fighting navy. He also built a number of sea forts and bases for repair, storage and shelter.
  - ✓ The fleet grew to reportedly 160 to 700 merchant, support and fighting vessels. He started trading with foreigners on his own after possession of eight or nine ports in the Deccan.
- **Kanohji Angre** (the Maratha Navy commander) led the Maratha navy and is credited with creating a solid naval foundation that assured the Marathas were a maritime power to be reckoned with.
  - ✓ He ensured that the merchants plying their trade for the Maratha empire were protected on the seas. He set up a base in Colaba with more bases at Suvarndurg and Vijaydurg near Ratnagiri.
- The Indian Navy has always recognized these facts, naming a training facility in Lonavla as INS Shivaji and a shore-based logistics and administrative centre of the Western Naval Command in Mumbai as INS Angre.
- The octagonal shape of the national emblem has been designed to **represent eight directions**, symbolising the multi-directional reach and multi-dimensional operational capability of the Indian Navy.

### Operation Megh Chakra

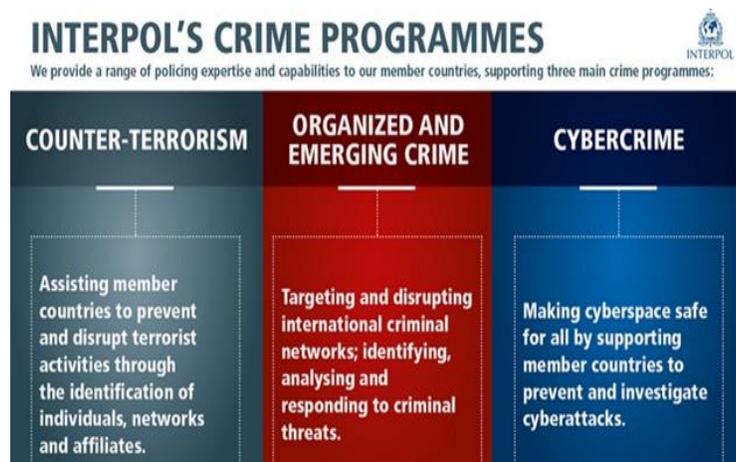
- As part of a **pan-India drive** against the circulation and sharing of **Child Sexual Abuse Material**, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) conducted searches at different locations across the country.
- The operation was code-named as "**Megh Chakra**". It was carried out following the inputs received from **Interpol's Singapore special unit.**
  - ✓ In November 2021, the agency had launched a similar exercise code named "**Operation Carbon**", in which the suspects in 13 States and one Union Territory were raided.

### Interpol

- **Full Name** - International Criminal Police Organisation.
  - ✓ Interpol is the radio-telegraph code for the organisation.
- Interpol is an **international police organisation** made up of 195 member countries.
- It **does not work under UN**. It has enjoyed a special role – that of Permanent Observer at the United Nations - since 1996.
- It was founded in 1923 and is **headquartered at Lyon, France.**

### Functions

- It is not a police force in traditional sense— its agents are **not able to arrest criminals.**
- It is more of an information-sharing network, providing a way for national police forces to co-operate effectively and tackle international crime ranging from human trafficking and terrorism to money laundering and illegal art dealing.
- The organization operates **centralised criminal databases** that contain fingerprint records, DNA samples and stolen documents.



## Types of Interpol Notices

- Interpol issues different types of notices which have different objectives.
- **Red Notice** - A notification that a member state would like someone "**arrested**". States are not obliged to follow these notices, but will often treat them as a warrant for someone's arrest and extradition.

## Interpol General Assembly

- The General Assembly is Interpol's supreme governing body, and comprises representatives from all its member countries.
- It meets annually for a session lasting approximately four days, to vote on activities and policy. It takes decisions in the form of resolutions.
- **India will host the 91<sup>st</sup> Interpol General Assembly in 2022** as part of celebrations of the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence.

**TYPES OF INTERPOL NOTICES**

- RED NOTICE:** To seek the location and arrest of wanted persons with a view to extradition or similar lawful action.
- BLUE NOTICE:** To collect additional information about a person's identity, location or activities in relation to a crime.
- GREEN NOTICE:** To provide warnings and intelligence about persons who have committed criminal offences and are likely to repeat these crimes in other countries.
- INTERPOL-UN SECURITY COUNCIL SPECIAL NOTICE:** Issued for groups and individuals who are the targets of UN Security Council sanctions committees.
- YELLOW NOTICE:** To help locate missing persons, often minors, or to help identify persons who are unable to identify themselves.
- BLACK NOTICE:** To seek information on unidentified bodies.
- ORANGE NOTICE:** To warn of an event, a person, an object or a process representing a serious and imminent threat to public safety.
- PURPLE NOTICE:** To seek or provide information on modus operandi, objects, devices and concealment methods used by criminals.

## Centre Signs Pact With 8 Armed Tribal Groups In Assam

- The Centre, **Assam government** and 8 armed adivasi groups signed a **tripartite agreement** to end the decades-old crisis of *adivasis and tea garden workers*.
- The eight adivasi groups together comprised **1,182 cadres**. These groups are:
  - ✓ All Adivasi National Liberation Army (AANLA), AANLA (FG), Birsas Commando Force (BCF), BCF (BT), Santhal Tiger Force, Adivasi Cobra Militant of Assam (ACMA), ACMA (FG) and Adivasi People's Army (APA).
  - ✓ These groups have been on a **ceasefire pact** with the government of India since **2016**.

## Key Highlights Of The Settlement Agreement

- The major provisions of the agreement included fulfilling *political, economic, and educational aspirations*.
- This agreement also aims at protecting, preserving, and promoting social, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic identities.
- An **Adivasi Welfare and Development Council** would be established by **Government of Assam**.
- Necessary measures would be taken for the *rehabilitation of cadres of armed groups* and for the *welfare of tea garden workers*.
- A special development package of **₹1,000 crore** would be provided over a period of 5 years for infrastructure development in Adivasi-populated villages and areas.

## Tea Tribes Community

- There are more than 1000 tea gardens in Assam where workers originally coming from **Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal** have engaged themselves and subsequently settled in Assam permanently.
- They are known as *Tea and Ex-Tea Garden Tribes*, who are recognized as **Other Backward Classes by the Government**.
- These people not only constitute a sizable chunk of the population in the State but also play major role in tea production of the State.
- People belonging to the tea tribes communities are spread all over the State of Assam.
- Economically, they are quite backward and literacy level among these communities is extremely low.

## Why This Community Chose Violent Path?

### 1. Historical Injustice

- These Adivasis, who settled in the Assam tea gardens, were subjected to various forms of torture (slave like conditions) and sufferings under the **colonial regime**.
- Also, the British planters, in collusion with administration, had systematically grabbed the lands of the indigenous tribal population in Assam almost throughout the colonial period.
- Their conditions hardly changed in post-colonial period. As a result, in the post-colonial period, they increasingly mobilized themselves at various levels.

### 2. Identity Politics

- The tea tribes form a distinct population of Assam and are **demanding Scheduled Tribe status** from the state to counter the unequal distribution of power and resources in present-day Assam.
- This has unleashed social and political tensions.

### 3. Persecution Faced

- The violence upon the community had increased following the rise of **ethnic nationalism** and related militancy in Assam.
- There were two ethnic clashes between **Bodo and Adivasi** during the **1990s** at the height of Bodoland statehood movement.

## Disturbed Areas In North East

- The Home Minister said the disturbed areas under the **Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)** had been reduced from a large part of the northeast.
  - ✓ This happened because of the improvement in the security situation.
- About 60% of **Assam** is now free from the AFSPA.
- In **Manipur**, 15 police stations in 6 districts were taken out of the periphery of the disturbed area.
- In **Arunachal Pradesh**, the AFSPA remains in only three districts and two police stations in one district.
- In **Nagaland**, the disturbed area notification was removed from 15 police stations in seven districts.
- In **Tripura and Meghalaya**, the AFSPA was **withdrawn completely**.

## Bihar Free Of Naxal Presence

- Director-General of CRPF said that the fight against **naxalism** is in its final stages.
- He said that Bihar is free of left-wing extremism now and security forces have made inroads into areas in Jharkhand that were once inaccessible due to the presence of Maoists.

## Key Highlights

### Number Of Districts Affected By Violence

- The number of **districts affected** by violence stood at **39**, down from **60** in 2010.
- The number of **most affected districts**, accounting for 90% of the violent incidents, had reduced from 35 in 2015 to 25 in 2021.
- These districts are mostly in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Maharashtra, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

### Incidents Of Violence

- Incidents of violence have come down from the highest level of 2,258 in 2009 to **509 in 2021**.
- The **death rate** due to violence has come down by 85%.
- In the year 2010, the death toll was at the highest level of 1,005 which has come down to 147 in the year 2021.

### Considerable Success Achieved In Bihar, Jharkhand And Chhattisgarh

- The CRPF had launched **Operation Octopus, Operation Double Bull, Operation Thunderstorm and Operation Chakarbandha** in the three States.
- As a result, considerable success was achieved in 2022 in these states.

## Left Wing Extremism (LWE)

- It is the single internal security threat that affects the largest number of States in India.
- LWE aims to overthrow the existing democratic state structure with violence as their primary weapon, and mass mobilization and strategic united fronts as complementary components.
  - ✓ They plan to usher in So-called '**New Democratic Revolution**' in India.
- Left-wing extremists are popularly known as Maoists worldwide and as Naxalites in India.

## Causes For Spread Of LWE

- **Land Related Factors:**
  - ✓ Encroachment and occupation of Government and Community lands (even the water-bodies) by powerful sections of society.
  - ✓ Lack of title to public land cultivated by the landless poor.
  - ✓ Poor implementation of laws prohibiting transfer of tribal land to non-tribals in the 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule areas.
  - ✓ Non-regularisation of traditional land rights.
- **Displacement and Forced Evictions:**
  - ✓ Eviction from lands traditionally used by tribals.
  - ✓ Large scale land acquisition for '**public purposes**' without appropriate compensation or rehabilitation.
- **Livelihood Related Causes:**
  - ✓ Lack of food security – corruption in the Public Distribution System (PDS)
  - ✓ Disruption of traditional occupations and lack of alternative work opportunities.
  - ✓ Deprivation of traditional rights in common property resources.
- **Social Exclusion:**
  - ✓ Denial of dignity and continued practice, in some areas, of **untouchability** in various forms.
  - ✓ Poor implementation of special laws on Prevention of atrocities, Protection of civil rights and the Abolition of bonded labour etc.
- **Governance Related Factors:**
  - ✓ Corruption and inadequate provision/non-provision of essential public services including primary health care and education.
  - ✓ Misuse of powers by the police and violations of the norms of law.
  - ✓ Perversion of electoral politics and unsatisfactory working of local government institutions.

## Steps Taken By The Government

- Though primarily a State subject, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has promulgated a 'National Policy and Action Plan' since 2015 to address the menace of LWE.
  - ✓ The significant features of the policy are zero tolerance towards violence coupled with a big push to developmental activities.
- MHA is supporting the State Governments for Capacity Building and strengthening of Security Apparatus by deployment of CAPF Battalions, provision of helicopters and UAVs etc.
- Funds are also provided for modernization and training of State Police under

- Modernization of Police Force (MPF)
- Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme
- Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS)

- For development of LWE Affected States, Government has taken several developmental initiatives which include:

- sanction of 17,600 kms of road
- installation of mobile tower in LWE affected districts
- financial inclusion through opening of banks, ATMs etc
- imparting quality education to the youth with special focus on opening of Eklavya Model Residential Schools

- Under Special Central Assistance (SCA) Scheme for further impetus to development in the most affected districts, more than 10000 projects have been taken.

#### Sub-categorization Of Districts

- MHA had categorized certain districts as LWE affected and covered under **Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme**.
- Of these SRE districts, the districts accounting for more than 85% of country-wide LWE violence and are categorized as '**Most Affected Districts**'.
  - ✓ This is done for focused deployment of resources -both security & development related.
- To arrest the expansion and also to restrict them to bounce back in the areas recently taken away from LWE influence, 08 districts have been categorized as '**District of Concern**'.

#### Eastern Command's Ex-chief is New CDS

- The Union Government has appointed former Eastern Army Commander **Lt. General Anil Chauhan** as the next Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).
- The post has been vacant since the death of the country's first CDS **Gen. Bipin Rawat** in a helicopter crash in December 2021.

#### About Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

- It is the highest-ranking uniformed officer on active duty in the Indian military.
- The first Chief of Defence Staff, **General Bipin Rawat**, took office on 1 January 2020.
- The position was created with the aim of –
  - ✓ Improving coordination,
  - ✓ Tri-service effectiveness and
  - ✓ Overall integration (army, air force and the navy) of the combat capabilities of the Indian armed forces..
- **Age limit:** The retired officer should not have attained **62 years** on the date of appointment.

#### Need for a CDS

- The need for a Chief of Defence Staff was felt as early as 1960s following wars with **Pakistan** and **China**. Over the years the creation of such as post was raised, repeatedly.
- Officially, it was only following the **Kargil Review Committee's** recommendation in 1999 that the Group of Ministers (GoM) officially proposed the creation of the post of CDS in 2001.
- Following committees, including the **Naresh Chandra task force** (2012) and the Lieutenant General **D. B. Shekatkar committee** (2016), also proposed their own versions of a CDS.
- In 2017, the Cabinet Committee on Security started the process of making the final decision related to the creation of a post for the CDS.

#### Roles & Powers of the CDS

- The CDS is a **four-star General/Officer** who acts as the Principal Military Advisor to the Defence Minister on all tri-services (Army, Navy and Indian Air Force) matters.

- Earlier, the Government of India has notified new rules to appoint the CDS who could be anyone from the three serving chiefs, any serving three-star officer, any retired chief who is below 62 or any retired three-star officer also below the same age
- He also acts as the military advisor to the Nuclear Command Authority.
- The CDS is the –
  - ✓ Permanent Chairman of the existing Chiefs of Staff Committee,
  - ✓ Member of the Defence Acquisition Council and
  - ✓ Member of the Defence Planning Committee.
- The CDS has a responsibility for coordination among the three services in equipment and arms procurement, training and staffing.
- The CDS **assigns inter-services prioritisation** to capital acquisition proposals based on the anticipated budget.
- The CDS is also charged with bringing about reforms in the functioning of the three services with the aim to augment combat capabilities of the Armed Forces by reducing wasteful expenditure.

### **Department of Military Affairs (DoMA)**

- The CDS heads the Department of Military Affairs within the Ministry of Defence and acts as its secretary.
- The mandate of the Department of Military Affairs includes, among other things, facilitation of restructuring of military commands for optimal utilisation of resources by bringing about jointness in operations, including through establishment of joint/theatre commands.

### **Vostok-22**

- Recently, Russia held its annual military exercises in its eastern region, with about **13 countries including India and China** sending contingents. This exercise is known as Vostok-22.
- The exercises in Vostok-2022 were the first such multilateral exercises to be held since the Russian war in Ukraine began.
- **India's participation –**
  - ✓ India only sent its **army contingent**. It did not take part in the maritime section of the two-part event.
  - ✓ This is because the maritime part of the exercises was to be held in the **Sea of Okhotsk** and the **Sea of Japan**, near the disputed South Kuril Islands
    - Both Russia and Japan claim their sovereignty on South Kuril Islands.
  - ✓ India's decision not to take part in the naval exercises is believed to be in deference to Tokyo's sensitivities.
  - ✓ By sending an army contingent to join Russian and Chinese troops in the exercises at this time, New Delhi aimed to send following messages:
    - The first is its continuing relationship with Russia despite the Ukraine war.
    - The second is to signal balance and non-alignment in the current crisis.
    - India participates in routine Indo-Pacific exercises with its Western partners including the Quad, as well as in bilateral exercises, like the India-U.S. Yudh Abhyas.
    - By staying away from the maritime exercises, New Delhi has shown both its sensitivity to Japan's concerns on maintaining the status quo over the disputed islands, as well as stressing the importance of territorial sovereignty and integrity for India.

## Zombie Ice

The Scientists predicted that the melting **Greenland's Zombie Ice** would raise global sea levels by at least 10.6 inches.

### About Zombie Ice

- It is also known as **dead or doomed ice**.
- It is ice that is **not receiving fresh snow** even while continuing to be part of the parent ice sheet.
- There is an equilibrium state where the snow falling from higher altitudes of the ice cap flows down to recharge the glaciers' edges, thereby thickening them.
- Zombie ice melts away from the ice cap and blends into the ocean.
- In the last few decades, more melting and less replenishment have been seen.
- **Without replenishment, the doomed ice is melting** from climate change and will inevitably raise seas.

### Impact Of Sea Level Rise

- Globally, the **rate of sea-level rise was 4.5 millimeter per year between 2013 and 2021**. This was more than twice the rate between 1993 and 2002. It implies storms, huge tides, flooding, becoming more frequent.
- According to the UN Atlas of the Oceans, **8 of the world's 10 largest cities are near a coast**.
- The World Economic Forum's 2019 Global Risk Report states that **an estimated 800 million people in more than 570 coastal cities are already vulnerable to a 0.5m rise in sea level**.
- It will **force people to migrate to higher ground**.
- As the rising ocean eroded shorelines and floods areas in which coastal animals live, **animals will also suffer**.

### Way forward

- We can reduce the impact of sea level rise by **building sea walls**, this will reduce flooding from the tides.
- Similar to seawalls, **beaches, dunes, coral reefs and mangroves can act as a natural wall** and reduce the impact of rising sea level.

## Climate Reparations

- Facing the worst flooding disaster in its history, Pakistan has begun demanding reparations, or compensation, from the rich countries that are mainly responsible for causing climate change.
- The current floods in Pakistan have already claimed over 1,300 lives, and caused economic damage worth billions of dollars.

### About Climate Reparations

- It refers to a **call for money to be paid by the Global North to the Global South as a means of addressing the historical contributions** that the Global North has made toward climate change.
- It is also about the need for acknowledgment and accountability for the loss of land and culture and how that has affected the Global South.

### Historical Emissions Argument/ Polluter Pays Principle

- Historical responsibility toward emissions is important, because **CO<sub>2</sub> remains in the atmosphere for hundreds of years**, and it is the cause of global warming.
- In the climate change framework, the **burden of responsibility falls on those rich countries** that have contributed most of the greenhouse gas emissions since 1850.

- **U.S. and European Union, including UK, account for over 50%** of all emissions during this time.
- If **Russia, Canada, Japan, and Australia too are included, the combined contribution goes past 65%** of all emissions.
- A country like India, currently the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest emitter, accounts for only 3% of historical emissions.
- China, which is the world's biggest emitter for over 15 years now, has contributed about 11% to total emissions since 1850.
- Countries that have had negligible contributions to historical emissions and have severe limitations of resources are the ones that face the most devastating impacts of climate change. Countries across the **Global South** are facing the sharpest end of the consequences when it comes to climate change.
  - ✓ From severe heat waves in India to flooding in Kenya and hurricanes in Nicaragua.

#### Step to Accept Responsibility Towards Climate Reparations

- The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 1994 explicitly acknowledged this *differentiated responsibility of nations*.
- At the **15th COP** of the UNFCCC in 2009, developed countries committed to a collective goal of mobilizing USD 100 billion per year by 2020 for climate action in developing countries.
  - ✓ At COP21 in Paris, with the developed countries having failed to keep their commitment, it was decided to extend the US\$100 billion per year goal through to 2025.
- The **Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for Loss & Damages**, established at the UNFCCC in 2013 (19th COP), was the 1<sup>st</sup> formal acknowledgment of the need to compensate developing countries affected by climate disasters.
  - ✓ The discussions under WIM so far have focused mainly on enhancing knowledge and strengthening dialogue. **No funding mechanism** has come about

#### Why Do Climate Reparations Matter For Climate Justice?

- It is a framing that **places justice and the movement toward an equitable world at the core of climate activism**.
- It directly **benefits those affected by systems of oppression**, such as colonialism and racism.
- It is not a panacea but is **better understood as one key part of a system of wider measures (including -debt cancellation, just transition from fossil fuels, and ending corporate immunity)**.
- It can be a starting point for radically reorienting our world toward climate justice.

#### How Can Climate Reparations Act As A Reasonable Alternative?

- Currently, the majority of climate finance given to the Global South is in the **form of loans**. It should not be given in loans, they **should be grant based**.
- **Debt cancellation** also plays an important role in the context of climate reparations and justice, and this extends beyond just the debts accrued through climate finance.
- Countries should **stop listening to the Global North**, and instead actively organize themselves the way they control their locations.

#### Miyawaki Method

By the help of Miyawaki method in less than one year, an unused one-acre plot of land in Kuharianwali village, Punjab developed into the forest.

#### About Miyawaki Method

- It is a technique pioneered by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki that helps build dense, native forests in a short time.

- It involves **planting dozens of only native species** as close as possible **in the same area** which not only saves space, but the planted saplings also support each other in growth and block sunlight reaching the ground, thereby preventing the growth of weed.
- It becomes maintenance-free after the first three years.
- The approach is supposed to ensure that plant growth is **10 times faster** and the resulting plantation is **30 times denser than usual**. Miyawaki method helps to create a forest in just 20 to 30 years, while conventional methods takes 200 to 300 years.
- The purpose of creating these types of forests is that they are **suitable for urban areas**, where greenery is becoming a challenge.
- They help lower temperatures in concrete heat islands, reduce air and noise pollution, attract local birds and insects, and create carbon sinks.



### Miyawaki Forest Areas In India

- In 2010, the **first-ever Miyawaki forest was created in Toyota’s industrial land in Bidadi, Bengaluru.**
- The **country's largest Miyawaki forest is in Hyderabad planted across 10 acres.**
- The 4.75 acres of Miyawaki forest was created on Indian Railway Institute of Disaster Management land in Hejjalla, Bengaluru.

### One Water Approach

- It is the newest **water management approach**, also referred to as *integrated water resources management (IWRM)*. This approach recognizes that **all water has value** and should **never** be treated as a waste product.
- It is also a concept that is about bringing together all diverse stakeholders to advance **common ground solutions** to address water and urban ecology challenges.
- The approach provides the potential to enhance the urban, social and environmental landscape.

### Why One Water Approach Is The Need Of Time?

- The UN has estimated that **by the year 2050, 4 billion people** will be seriously affected by water shortages, which might lead to multiple conflicts between countries over water sharing.
- At the global level, **31 countries** are already facing a shortage of water and by 2025, there will be 48 countries facing serious water shortages.
- Apart from water scarcity, there are other challenges such as recognising, measuring, and expressing water’s worth and its incorporation into decision making.

### How Is One Water Approach Superior To The Conventional Water Management Approach?

One Water Approach	Conventional Method
All the water systems are connected intentionally and managed meticulously for water, energy and resources.	Drinking water, wastewater and storm water are managed separately.
Water is <b>recycled and reused</b> several times.	Water goes to a <b>one-way route</b> from supply to use, treatment and disposal.
Stormwater is utilised as a valuable resource to fight against water scarcity.	<b>Ignores storm water</b> as a valuable source.

<p><b>The water system includes green infrastructures and a mix of grey and green infrastructure that form a hybrid system</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Grey infrastructure:</b> structures such as dams, seawalls, roads, pipes or water treatment plants.</li> <li>• <b>Green infrastructure:</b> Natural systems including forests, floodplains, wetlands and soils that provide additional benefits for human well-being, such as flood protection and climate regulation.</li> </ul>	<p>The water system includes grey infrastructure</p>
<p>Active collaborations with industry, agencies, policymakers, business leaders and various stakeholders is a regular practice</p>	<p>Collaboration is <b>need-based</b></p>

## Shoonya Campaign

NITI Aayog commemorated the one-year anniversary of Shoonya Campaign.

### About Shoonya Campaign

- It is a **consumer awareness campaign to reduce air pollution by promoting the use of electric vehicles (EVs) for ride-hailing and deliveries.**
- It was **launched by the Niti Aayog and Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI)** in September 2021.
- It is a corporate-led campaign.
- The campaign has 130 industry partners, including ride-hailing, delivery and EV companies.

### 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 (Compound annual growth rate) of 8% through 2030. If this demand is met by internal combustion vehicles (ICE), it would significantly increase local air pollution.
- Compared to ICE vehicles, **EVs do not emit Particulate matter (PM) or NOx emissions**, they release 60% less CO<sub>2</sub> and have 75% lower operating costs.
- It supports India's 5-point agenda (Panchamrit), announced at COP 26, to reduce carbon emissions.

### Significance of Shoonya Campaign

Till April 2022, the estimated number of **electric deliveries and rides completed** by corporate partners via the Shoonya campaign was close to **20 million and 15 million**, respectively.

- ✓ This translates to a carbon dioxide emission savings of over 13,000 tonnes.

## Shallow-water Mining

A new study has highlighted that shallow-water mining could trigger local extinctions of marine species.

### About Shallow Water Mining

- It is a **mining which takes place in the sea at a depth of less than 200 meters**, occurring on the **continental shelf** with easier access to the coast.)
- It is **opposed to deep-sea operations** that target less accessible resources and require specialised technology.
  - ✓ The part of the ocean that lies below a depth of 200 m is defined as deep sea, and the process of extracting minerals from this area is known as deep sea mining.

- Compared with **terrestrial mining and deep-sea mining operations**, it may save operational costs, as mining takes place closer to shore and uses existing technology.

### Impact of Shallow Water Mining

- It involves removing sediment-bearing minerals, which offer refuge to seafloor organisms. This could trigger local extinctions and changes in species composition.
- Ploughing the seafloor releases plumes, which could **impact water quality**.
- Other impacts could be the **release of harmful substances from the sediment** and disturbance from noise and light.
- In near-shore areas, **mining activities are likely to overlap with other maritime sectors**, such as fisheries. This results in a higher likelihood of conflict over resource access.

### Countries Already Adopting Shallow Water Mining

- Namibia has been mining diamonds off its coast in depths of up to 130 m.
- Indonesia has been extracting placer deposits, sediments containing gold, silver, tin, and platinum.
- Mexico, New Zealand and Sweden have proposed shallow-water.

## World Ozone Day

Every year, **16th September** is observed as the **International Day for Preservation of Ozone layer** (World Ozone Day). It is celebrated to commemorate the signing of the **Montreal Protocol**.

### About Ozone Layer

- It is a form of **oxygen with the chemical formula O<sub>3</sub>**.
- Most ozone **occurs naturally in the Earth's Stratosphere**, between 10 and 40km above Earth's surface.
- It forms a protective layer that shields earth from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays.
- It is gradually being **destroyed by Ozone-Depleting Substances, including CFCs, HCFCs, halons, methyl bromide, carbon tetrachloride, and methyl chloroform**.

### Effects of Ozone Depletion

- It causes increased UV radiation levels at the Earth's surface, which is damaging to human health. Negative effects include increases in certain types of **skin cancers, eye cataracts and immune deficiency disorders**.
- UV radiation also affects terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, altering growth, food chains and biochemical cycles.
- UV rays also affect plant growth, reducing agricultural productivity.

### About Montreal Protocol

- It was **adopted in September 1987** and entered into force on 1 January 1989.
- Its objective is to cut down the production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances.
- Montreal Protocol led to the replacement of CFCs with Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)
- Global consumption of ozone-depleting substances has been reduced by some 98-99% since countries began taking action under the Montreal Protocol.
- **India joined the Montreal Protocol in 1992.**

### Kigali Agreement (2016)

- The terms of the Kigali Amendment entered into force in 2019.
- India ratified the **Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol** on phasing down climate-damaging refrigerant HFCs in August 2021. The goal is to achieve over 80% reduction in HFC consumption by 2047.
- Because HFCs were not ozone-depleting, they were not controlled substances under the Montreal

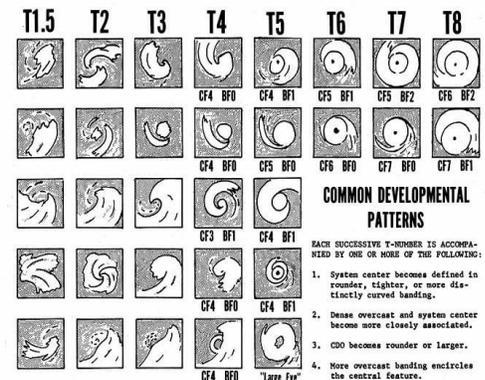
Protocol. They were part of the greenhouse gases whose emissions are sought to be curtailed through Kyoto Protocol of 1997 and the 2015 Paris Agreement.

## Dvorak Technique

The American meteorologist Vernon Dvorak, who is credited for developing of the Dvorak technique in the early 1970s, passed away at the age of 100.

### About Dvorak Technique

- It is a **Cloud Pattern Recognition Technique (CPRT)** based on a concept model of the **development and decay** of the tropical cyclone.
- It is a statistical method using *enhanced Infrared/ visible satellite imagery to quantitatively estimate the intensity of a tropical system.*
  - ✓ During day time, images in the **visible spectrum** are used, while at night, the ocean is viewed using **infrared images.**
- Cloud patterns in satellite imagery normally show an indication of **cylogenesis** before the storm reaches tropical storm intensity.
- Using these features, the pattern formed by the clouds of a tropical cyclone (TC), expected systematic development, and a series of rules, an *intensity analysis and forecast can be made.*
  - ✓ This information is then standardized into an intensity code.
- It quantifies TCs intensity on a 1-8 scale (at 0.5 intervals) called T-numbers and final output is Current Intensity (CI) number.



## Fly Ash

- According to a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), three **thermal power plants** dumped fly-ash in low-lying areas without permission from the Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB).
- The three thermal powers are operated by Torrent Power, Adani Power and Tata Power.

### Concerns Regarding Fly Ash

- **Many heavy metals are found in it**, including nickel, cadmium, arsenic, chromium, lead.
- **Its particles are toxic air pollutants**, can trigger heart disease, cancer, respiratory diseases and stroke.

### Initiatives Taken to Tackle With Fly Ash

- An official notification came in **1999** and it outlined some methods for the constructive use of fly ash to manufacture *cement, concrete blocks and bricks etc.*
- In **2021**, NTPC Limited had invited Expression of Interest for sale of fly ash.
- A **web portal** for monitoring the data of fly ash (*generation and utilization*) of Thermal Power Plants and a mobile based application titled "**ASHTRACK**" has been launched.

## About Fly Ash

- It is an unwanted unburnt residue of coal combustion in a coal thermal power plant.
- It is emitted along with flue gases during the burning of coal in a furnace and collected using the electrostatic precipitators.
- Low-grade coal used in thermal power generation carries 30-45% ash content.
- The high-grade imported coal has a low ash content of 10-15%.
- It contains substantial amounts of silicon dioxide (SiO<sub>2</sub>), aluminum oxide (Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>), ferric oxide (Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>) and calcium oxide (CaO).
- It resembles Portland cement but is chemically different.

### Fly Ash Management and Utilization Mission

- The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** directed the constitution of this Mission in January 2022.
- Its primary goal will be to coordinate and monitor the handling & disposal of fly ash and associated issues.
- It will also look after how 1,670 million tons of legacy (accumulated) fly ash could be utilized in least hazardous manner.
- The **secretary of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)** will be the nodal agency for coordination and compliance.

### Fly Ash Notification 2021

- Fly Ash Notification 2021 was issued under the **Environment (Protection) Act 1986**.
- Prohibiting **dumping and disposal** of fly ash discharged from coal or lignite based thermal power plants on *land or into water bodies*
- Centre has made it mandatory for such plants to ensure 100% utilization of ash in an eco-friendly manner, and introduced for the first time a **penalty regime** for non-compliance based on 'polluter pays' principle.
- The amount, collected by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) from the thermal power plants, will be used towards the safe disposal of the unutilised ash.

### Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)

It has focused on new construction technologies such as using fly ash bricks that are innovative, environmentally friendly.

### World Rhino Day

- Theme 2022 - "Five Rhino Species Forever". It is celebrated on 22<sup>nd</sup> September every year.
- The aim of the day is to celebrate five rhinoceros' species and to create awareness about the threats faced by them.
- It was first announced by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) - South Africa in 2010.

### Five Species of Rhino

#### White Rhino

- Africa's largest species of rhino, also known as the 'square-lipped' rhino.
- IUCN Status: Near Threatened
- Distribution: South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya, Uganda

#### Black Rhino

- IUCN Status: Critically endangered
- Distribution: South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Kenya

#### Greater one Horned Rhino

- Asia's largest species of rhino, also known as the Indian rhino.
- IUCN Status: Vulnerable and Wild Life Protection Act, 1972: Schedule 1
- Distribution: India, Nepal
  - Assam is home to the largest population of greater-one horned rhinos, with more than 90% in Kaziranga National Park.

#### Sumatran Rhino

- IUCN Status: Critically Endangered

- Distribution: Indonesian islands of Sumatra and Borneo.

#### Javan Rhino

- IUCN Status: *Critically Endangered*
- Live only in Ujung Kulon National Park in Java, Indonesia.

#### MoU To Tackle Plastic Pollution

- The National Cadet Corps (NCC) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) signed a MoU effective for 3 years to tackle the issue of plastic pollution.
- It aims to achieve the **universal goal of clean water bodies** through ‘Puneet Sagar Abhiyan’ and ‘Tide Turners Plastic Challenge programme’.

#### Objective of MoU

- To engage in environmental sustainability capacity building and awareness initiatives through information sharing and training initiatives.
- To synergise and collate efforts towards **engaging youth** for promoting clean water bodies.

Puneet Sagar Abhiyan	Tide Turner Challenge Programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a <b>nationwide flagship campaign to clean sea shores of plastic &amp; other waste material, launched by the NCC in December 2021.</b></li> <li>• Initially it was for one month, but it was subsequently extended as a Pan-India round-the-year campaign to cover <i>rivers and other water bodies</i> as well.</li> <li>• Since its launch, over 100 tones of plastic waste have been collected from nearly 1,900 locations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is being developed as part of <b>United Nations Environment Programme’s (UNEP) Clean Seas Campaign.</b></li> <li>• It is supported and funded by the UK, Norway and the Global Environment Facility(GEF)</li> <li>• It aims to encourage young people to play a part in resolving pressing environmental issues.</li> </ul>

#### Why Plastic is a Concerning Issue?

- Global plastics production doubled from 2000 to 2019 to reach **460 million tones.**
- India generates about 3.5 million tons of plastic waste annually and the per capita plastic waste generation has almost doubled over the last five years.
- About **11 million tons** of plastic waste flows into the oceans annually. This could triple by 2040.
  - ✓ It has infiltrated the ocean and is now found in the smallest plankton up to the largest whale.
- Exposure to plastic harms human health, and potentially affecting fertility, hormonal, metabolic and neurological activity.
- It **accounts for 3.4% of global greenhouse gas emissions.**

#### Step Taken So Far By India To Tackling Plastic Waste

- India is a signatory to MARPOL (International Convention on Prevention of Marine Pollution).
- India’s pledge to phase out single use plastics by 2022. The Environment Ministry has already **banned all single use plastics from July, 2022.**
- Increased minimum thickness of carry bags from existing 75 micron to 120 micron by December 2022.
- Under the project named **REPLAN** (Reducing PLastic in Nature), KVIC (Khadi and Village Industries Commission) has started manufacturing plastic-mixed handmade paper. In it plastic waste is de-structured, degraded, diluted and used with paper pulp thus reduces plastic waste from nature.
- The **India Plastic Challenge – Hackathon 2021** is a unique competition calling upon start-ups and students to develop innovative solutions to mitigate plastic pollution.

## Way Forward

- We need to phase plastic production down to sustainable levels in alignment with the United Nations-mandated **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12**.
- We should also promote the upscaling of reuse, refill and traditional packaging systems tailored to national contexts.

## Flex Fuel Vehicle (FFV)

India's 1<sup>st</sup> flex fuel car, a Toyota sedan, has been developed with an aim to reduce the country's dependence on imported fossil fuels for transportation.

### About FFV

- It is **also called a dual-fuel vehicle**. It has an internal combustion engine (ICE), but unlike a regular petrol or diesel vehicle, this can run on **more than one type of fuel, or even a mixture of fuels**.
- It is capable of running on a combination of 100% petrol or 100% bio-ethanol and their blends.
  - ✓ The most common versions use a blend of petrol and ethanol or methanol
- According to IHS Markit, there were over 21 million flex fuel vehicles (as of 2018) in the United States, but **Brazil** is the biggest market and a leader in this segment.
- Since ethanol blending is expected to reach 20% by 2025-26, **the groundwork will be laid for the introduction of FFV-SHEV (Flex Fuel Strong Hybrid Electric Vehicle) vehicles in India**.

Advantages of FFV	Challenges in FFV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It <b>reduced dependence on petrol/diesel</b> and thus reduced dependence on oil imports from other countries.</li><li>• Many <b>FFVs run on ethanol</b>, so it contributes fewer <u>greenhouse gases, making it a more environmentally friendly option</u>.</li><li>• Provides employment opportunities for setting up <b>bio-ethanol plants</b> across India.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some experts claim it has <b>lower gas mileage</b>. When using ethanol, a flex fuel vehicle <b>typically loses 4-8% of its fuel efficiency</b>. While increased levels of ethanol reduce fuel economy, many flex fuel vehicles <b>improve acceleration performance</b> when operating on higher ethanol blends.</li><li>• According to an NITI Aayog report, sugarcane accounted for more than 90% of total ethanol produced in the country in 2019-20. A major issue with ethanol blending is that crops like <b>sugarcane require a lot of water</b> in a country with scarce fresh water resources.</li><li>• <b>Ethanol absorbs dirt easily</b>, which can potentially corrode and damage the engine.</li><li>• <b>Diversion of food crops to ethanol production which can cause food scarcity</b>.</li></ul>

### Way forward

To introduce FFVs we will require adoption of vehicle standards, technologies and retrofitting configurations. Most importantly, if we want proper implementation of FFVs we need to increase the ethanol production in India.

## Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) finds Buddhist caves, temples in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve.

### About Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve

- It is located in the eastern Satpura hill range of Umariya, Madhya Pradesh.
- It was declared a national park in 1968 and then became Tiger Reserve in 1993.

- It consists of mixed vegetations ranging from tall grasslands to thick Sal Forest and so is the perfect habitat of variety of animals and birds.
- It was the former hunting preserve of the Maharaja of Rewa and at present is a famous natural hub for **White Tigers**.
- It is the first in India to launch '**Hot Air Balloon Safari**' for tourists.

### Global Gateway Initiative

- It is a project created by the European Union to develop new infrastructures in developing countries.
- Within it, India and EU inaugurated the **First EU-India Green Hydrogen Forum**.
- The Forum served as a platform to exchange best practices, policy frameworks and production and application technologies for renewable hydrogen.
- EU is keen to explore the possibility of building a pipeline of hydrogen projects in India, by leveraging the investments under the Global Gateway initiative.

### Global Terrestrial Stilling

- This is a **decrease in wind speed observed near Earth's surface** over the past three decades, originally referred to as "stilling".
- This slowdown of near-surface terrestrial winds has mainly affected mid-latitude regions of both hemispheres.
- The exact cause of the global terrestrial stilling is uncertain and has been mainly attributed to two major drivers:
  - ✓ changes in large scale atmospheric circulation,
  - ✓ an increase of surface roughness due to e.g. forest growth, land use changes, and urbanization.

### International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources For Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)

- ITPGRFA is also known as the International Seed Treaty or Plant Treaty.
- It is a comprehensive international agreement in harmony with the **Convention on Biological Diversity(CBD)**
- It aims at guaranteeing food security through the conservation, exchange and sustainable use of the world's **Plant Genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA)**.

### Zero Budget Farming

There are three components of Zero budget farming:

- **Beejamrit** - It is used for seeds, seedlings or any planting material. It is effective in protecting young roots from fungus.
- **Jeewamrit** - It is a natural liquid fertilizer. It is made by mixing water, dung and urine from cows with some mud from the same area as the manure will be applied in later. Food is added to speed the growth of microbes.
- **Achhadan (Mulching)** - This process involves creating a micro climate using different mulches with tree, crop biomass to conserve soil moisture.

### Boro Rice

- It is commonly known as winter rice.

- It is photo-insensitive, transplanted rice cultivated in waterlogged, low or medium lands with supplemental irrigation during November to May.
- Boro rice system takes advantage of residual moisture after harvesting of Kharif rice.

### Pacific Meridional Mode (PMM)

- It is a climate mode in the North Pacific.
- In its **positive state**, it is characterized by the coupling of weaker trade winds in the northeast Pacific Ocean with decreased evaporation. This **increases sea surface temperatures (SST)**.
  - ✓ The scenario is reversed during its negative state.
- It can modulate hurricane activity in the East Pacific and typhoon activity in the West Pacific oceans and alter precipitation on the continents surrounding the Pacific Ocean.

### Species In News

<p><b>Whale Shark</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a slow-moving, filter-feeding carpet shark &amp; the largest known extant fish species.</li> <li>• It is found in open waters of tropical oceans &amp; is rarely found in water below 21 °C.</li> <li>• Despite its size, it does not pose any danger to humans. It is a docile fish and sometimes allow swimmers to catch a ride.</li> <li>• It is listed as <b>Endangered in IUCN Red List</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sea Cucumber</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a marine <b>invertebrate</b> that live on the seafloor found generally in tropical regions. They are crucial to maintain the balance of ocean habitats.</li> <li>• Major threats to this species are illegal Trading and smuggling for food and traditional medicine.</li> <li>• It has no limbs or eyes, or blood.</li> <li>• Lakshadweep has created the world's first conservation area for sea cucumbers.</li> <li>• It is listed under <b>Schedule I in the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Moringa</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a fast-growing, drought-resistant, <b>deciduous trees</b> that are native to <b>India and Bangladesh</b>.</li> <li>• It is often called the <u>drumstick tree, the miracle tree, the ben oil tree, or the horseradish tree</u>.</li> <li>• It has been used for centuries due to its medicinal properties and health benefits. It also has antifungal, antiviral, antidepressant, and anti-inflammatory properties.</li> <li>• It is also used for water purification.</li> <li>• It has various healthy compounds such as vitamins, important elements such as Iron, Magnesium etc. and is extremely low on fats and contains <b>no cholesterol</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Red-Eared Slider Turtle</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a very popular aquatic turtle, native to South-Eastern USA and Mexico.</li> <li>• It is classified as <b>controlled pest animal</b> under the Victorian Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.</li> <li>• It emerges from the water for basking on rocks and logs. When basking, red-eared sliders commonly pile on top of each other.</li> <li>• They can tolerate a wide range of habitats and are sometimes found in estuaries</li> </ul>

	<p>and coastal wetlands with brackish water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is listed as <b>Least Concern in the IUCN Red List</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Placoderm</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a <b>class of armoured prehistoric fish</b>, known from fossils.</li> <li>They lived from the Silurian to the end of the Devonian period.</li> <li>They were among the first jawed fish; their jaws likely evolved from the first of their gill arches.</li> <li>Unlike all other jawed vertebrates, placoderms never had teeth. Instead, bony plates associated with the jaws performed the function of teeth.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Caracal</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a medium-sized and locally threatened cat species.</li> <li>It has been widely reported to be on the brink of extinction in India.</li> <li>It is also known by its persian name Siyahgosh or 'black ears'.</li> <li>In India it is found mostly in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.</li> <li>Besides India, it is found in several dozen countries across Africa, the Middle East, Central and South Asia.</li> <li>It is listed as <b>Least Concern in IUCN Red List and under Schedule I in Wildlife Protection Act, 1972</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Spotted Deer</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is also known as chital or axis deer.</li> <li>It is sexually dimorphic, males are larger than females, and antlers are present only on males.</li> <li>The upper parts are golden to rufous, completely covered in white spots.</li> <li>It is listed as <b>least concern in the IUCN Red List and under Schedule III of the Indian Wildlife Protection Act (1972)</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tomistoma</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a freshwater large, slender-snouted crocodilian species native to south-east Asia.</li> <li>It is distributed across part of Borneo, peninsular Malaysia and Sumatra.</li> <li>It is frequently associated with peat swamp forest.</li> <li>It shares its habitat with two other types of crocodilians; The saltwater crocodile and the Siamese crocodile.</li> <li>It is listed as <b>Endangered in IUCN Red List</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ghatiana Dwivarna</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new <b>Crab Species</b> has been discovered from Karnataka.</li> <li>It is the 75th crab species to be found in India.</li> <li>The name of this new species of crab is derived from a Sanskrit word 'dwivarna' which means two-colored.</li> <li>It is a <b>venomous and non-edible species</b> of crab.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Common Bottlenose Dolphin</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It found in tropical oceans and other warm waters around the globe.</li> <li>Each dolphin has a <b>special whistle</b> that it creates soon after it is born. This whistle is used for identification, just like a human's name.</li> <li>They track their prey through the expert use of <b>echolocation</b>.</li> <li>It is listed as <b>Least Concern in IUCN Red List</b>.</li> </ul>

### Mars Oxygen In-Situ Resource Utilization Experiment (MOXIE)

A study published about MOXIE, that it is successfully making oxygen from the carbon-dioxide-rich atmosphere of the Red Planet, Mars.

#### About MOXIE

- It is a **technology demonstration on the NASA's Mars 2020 Rover Perseverance**.
- It **produced oxygen from carbon dioxide in the Martian atmosphere** by using solid oxide electrolysis.
- Its objective is **to produce oxygen of at least 98% purity** at a rate of 6–10 grams per hour.
- It is the 1<sup>st</sup> experimental extraction of a natural resource from another planet for human use.

#### Process Of Oxygen Generation

- Inside Moxie, Martian air is 1<sup>st</sup> filtered in and pressurized.
- It is then sent through the **Solid OXide Electrolyzer (SOXE)** that electrochemically splits the **carbon dioxide-rich air** into oxygen ions and carbon monoxide.
- The oxygen ions are isolated and recombined to form breathable, molecular oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>).
- Finally, the gas is measured and tested for purity before being released into the atmosphere.

#### About Perseverance Rover

- It is a **Mars rover** designed **to explore the crater Jezero on Mars** as part of NASA's Mars 2020 mission
- It was launched in July 2020 and landed on Martian Surface in February 2021.
- It addresses high-priority science goals for Mars exploration, including key questions about the potential for life on Mars.
- The mission also provides opportunities to gather knowledge and demonstrate technologies that will address the challenges of future manned missions to Mars.
- The **rover carried Ingenuity, the 1<sup>st</sup> ever helicopters to fly on Mars**.

### Methamphetamine

Goa Police has revealed that political leader and actress Sonali Phogat died due to an overdose of Methamphetamine.

#### About Methamphetamine

- It is a **powerful, highly addictive stimulant that affects the central nervous system**.
- It is usually a white, bitter-tasting powder or a pill. It can be smoked, swallowed, snorted, and injected after dissolving the powder in water or alcohol.
- It is **used to treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and narcolepsy, a sleep disorder**.
- It is illegally smuggled and sold because of their **potential for recreational use**.
- The Golden Triangle (Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar), specifically **Shan State, Myanmar, is the world's leading producer of methamphetamine**.

#### Effects of Methamphetamine

- It increases the amount of the **natural chemical dopamine in the brain**. Dopamine is involved in body movement, motivation, and reinforcement of rewarding behaviors.

- Short-term health effects include increased wakefulness and physical activity, decreased appetite, and increased blood pressure and body temperature.
- Long-term health effects include risk of addiction, risk of contracting HIV and hepatitis, intense itching, violent behavior, and paranoia.

## Chinook Helicopter

The US Army has grounded its fleet of CH-47 Chinook helicopters after finding the helicopter to be at risk of engine fires.

### About Chinook helicopter

- It is an **American twin-engine, tandem rotor, heavy-lift helicopter**.
- It can carry goods and cargo of around 10 tonnes. It is used for transporting troops, artillery, equipment etc.
- It can also offer support during disaster relief, medical evacuation, search and rescue missions, aircraft recovery and parachute drops.

### Indian Air Force (IAF) and Chinook Helicopters

- **IAF operates a fleet of 15 Chinook helicopters** procured from Boeing through the Foreign Military Sales program of the U.S. government in 2015.
- It was **inducted into the IAF in 2019**.
- One Helicopter Unit of Chinooks is based in Chandigarh while other is based at Mohanbari airbase in Assam.

## Inflated Aerodynamic Decelerator (IAD)

An IAD was successfully test flown in a **Rohini sounding rocket (RH300 Mk II)** from Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS). Rohini sounding rockets are routinely used for **flight demonstration of new technologies** being developed by ISRO.

### Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS)

- It was established in 1963, operated by the ISRO to launch sounding rockets.
- It is located in Thumba, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

### About IAD

- It serves to **decelerate an object** plunging down through the atmosphere. It is a **technique used for an atmospheric entry payload**.
- It was **designed and developed by ISRO's Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC)**.
- It was initially folded and kept inside the payload bay of the rocket.
- **At around 84 km altitude, it was inflated and it descended through the atmosphere** with the payload part of a sounding rocket.
- It has **systematically reduced the velocity of the payload** through aerodynamic drag and followed the predicted trajectory.
- It has huge potential like recovery of spent stages of rocket, for landing payloads on to Mars/ Venus and in making space habitat for human space flight missions.

ISRO is planning the 200th **successful** launch of the Rohini **RH-200** sounding rocket in a row.

- RH-200 of the Rohini sounding rocket family has completed 198 consecutive successful flights.
- The 199th launch will happen in October 2022 during the World Space Week (4th-10th October) celebrations. The 200th will take place either towards the end of October or the beginning of Nov 2022.
- '200' in the name denotes the diameter of the rocket in mm. Other operational Rohini variants are RH-300 Mk-II and RH-560 Mk-III

# Sounding rocket

- It is a one or two stage solid propellant rocket used for probing the upper atmospheric regions and for space research.
- Sounding rockets take their name from the nautical term "to sound," which means to take measurements.
- It also serves as an easily affordable platform to test or prove prototypes of new components or subsystems intended for use in launch vehicles and satellites.
- ISRO began with the launch of indigenously built sounding rockets from 1965. The ISRO launched its own version - Rohini RH-75 - in 1967
- In 1975, all sounding rocket activities were consolidated under the Rohini Sounding Rocket (RSR) Program.
- RH-75 was the 1st truly Indian sounding rocket, which was followed by RH-100 and RH-125 rockets



## India's 1st Dark Sky Reserve (DSR)

The Department of Science & Technology (DST) has announced the setting up of India's 1<sup>st</sup> **dark sky reserve at Hanle in Ladakh**. World's 1<sup>st</sup> International Dark Sky Reserve is Mont-Megantic, located in Canada.

### About Dark Sky Reserve

- It is a **public or private land** with a distinguished nocturnal environment and starry nights that has been developed responsibly to prevent light pollution.
- The **International Dark Sky Association (IDSA)** is a **U.S.-based non-profit organisation that designates sites as international dark sky places** (parks, sanctuaries, reserves, **communities, and Urban Night Sky Places**) depending on the criteria they meet.
  - ✓ According to the IDSA, these reserves consist of a **core area** meeting minimum criteria for sky quality and natural darkness, and a peripheral area that supports dark sky preservation in the core.

### Goal of DSR Creation

- It will **identify and honor public or private lands** and their surrounding communities for exceptional commitment to success in implementing the ideals of dark sky preservation.
- It will **promote eco-and Astro-tourism** and provide international recognition for such sites
- It will **promote protection of nocturnal habitats**, public enjoyment of the night sky and its heritage and ideal for professional and amateur astronomy.

### About Hanle DSR

- Situated at a height of 4,500 metres above sea level at Hanle, it will come up **within the Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary**.
- The Department of Science and Technology and experts from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru, are providing scientific and technological support.
- The primary **objective is to promote astronomy tourism** in a sustainable and environment-friendly manner.
- India is still in the process of filing its nomination to IDSA.
- **Long and harsh winters** with minimum temperatures dropping to minus 40°C make large parts of the UT highly inhabitable. This **aridity, limited vegetation, high elevation and large areas with sparse populations, all make it the perfect setting for long-term astronomical observatories** and dark sky places.

## Process of Site Becoming a DSR

- Individuals or groups can nominate a site for certification to the IDSA.
- There are **5 designated categories, namely International Dark Sky parks, communities, reserves, sanctuaries and Urban Night Sky Places.**
- The IDSA considers a piece of land suitable for dark sky place only if:
  - ✓ it is either publicly or privately owned;
  - ✓ is accessible to the public partially or entirely during the year;
  - ✓ the land is legally protected for scientific, natural, educational, cultural, heritage and/or public enjoyment purposes;
  - ✓ the core area of the land provides an exceptional dark sky resource relative to the communities and cities that surround it,
  - ✓ the land offers prescribed night sky brightness either for a reserve, park or sanctuary.
- Between 2001 and January 2022, there have been 195 sites recognized as International Dark Sky Places globally.

### Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO)

- It is located in Hanle near Leh in Ladakh.
- It has **one of the world's highest located sites for optical, infrared and gamma-ray telescopes.**
- It is operated by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bangalore.
- **Telescopes located at Hanle observatory-** The Himalayan Chandra Telescope (HCT), High Energy Gamma Ray (HAGAR) Telescope, Major Atmospheric Cherenkov Experiment (MACE) Telescope and GROWTH-India.

## Spent Nuclear Fuel

- The Supreme Court (SC) has said the problem of storing spent nuclear fuel from the Kudankulam nuclear power plant (KKNPP) has to be worked out.
- The SC asked the Tamil Nadu government to file a schedule for the completion of public hearings on the issue of **Away from Reactor (AFR).**
- The scheme for the storage of spent fuel in a nuclear power plant was two-fold-
  - ✓ one facility is located within the reactor building, generally known as the spent fuel storage pool/bay
  - ✓ The other is located away from the reactor, called the **Away from Reactor (AFR)** Spent Fuel Storage Facility.

## Storage of Spent fuel

- It is **thermally hot and very radioactive** (radioactive waste, and also plutonium) so it is placed into water cooling pools at the reactor site for at least five years.
- These pools are at least 20 feet deep and provide shielding and a cooling mechanism.
- It is then moved to large storage casks where it passively cools and awaits final disposal.

## Can Used Fuel can be Recycled?

- It **contains large amounts of uranium**, therefore, lots of usable fuel still remains which makes recycling possible. It can be **recycled to make new fuel and by-products.**
- To recycle the waste, it is chemically processed and used in fast reactors.
- Reprocessing is much more expensive and difficult than mining uranium and enriching it.
- **Currently, France and Japan recycle fuel one time before it is disposed**, and the US previously had a recycling program that was shut down.

## Legionellosis

A cluster of pneumonia cases in Argentina has been identified as Legionellosis.

### About Legionellosis

- It is a **type of pneumonia** caused by legionella bacteria, found naturally in **freshwater**.
- It **doesn't spread from person to person**. It spreads via inhalation of contaminated aerosols from contaminated water, which could come from — air conditioning cooling towers, evaporative condensers, hot and cold-water systems, humidifiers and whirlpool spas.
- Many people exposed to the bacteria don't develop symptoms.
- Those who do develop symptoms may experience cough, fever, chills, shortness of breath, muscle aches, headaches and diarrhoea.
- There are **no vaccines that can prevent Legionnaires' disease**.
- It requires treatment with antibiotics and most cases of this illness can be treated successfully.

## Cyborg Cockroaches

An international team of researchers led by Japan's scientific institution, have devised a system that can create cyborg cockroaches, **that are part insect and part machine**.

### About Cyborg Cockroaches

- The **Madagascar hissing cockroach is used to create cyborg cockroaches** by the scientists.
- These insect movements are controlled by tiny integrated circuits (ICs), which are wired into the creature's nervous system.
- **Pressing a button sends a shock to the backpack that tricks the roach into moving a certain direction.**
- It will help to conduct surveillance in procedures like urban search and rescue, environmental monitoring and inspection of areas dangerous to humans.

## Tuberculosis

The President of India launched 'Pradhan Mantri TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan' to eliminate TB by 2025. It's an initiative of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW). Its objectives are -

- Provide **additional patient support** to improve treatment outcomes of TB patients
- Augment **community involvement** in meeting India's commitment to end TB by 2025
- **Leverage Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** activities.

### Components

- **Ni-kshay Mitra Initiative:** It is to ensure additional diagnostic, nutritional, and vocational support to those on TB treatment. Ni-kshay Mitra (Donor) are those who can support by adopting health facilities, blocks/urban wards/districts/states for accelerating response against TB to complement government efforts.
- **Ni-kshay Digital Portal:** It will provide a platform for **community support** for persons with TB.

### About Tuberculosis

- It is **caused by a bacterium called Mycobacterium tuberculosis**.
- In humans, it most commonly affects the lungs but it can also affect other parts of your body, including the kidneys, spine or brain.
- It is **spread from person to person through the air**.

- Common symptoms are cough with sputum and blood at times, chest pains, weakness, weight loss, fever.
- It is a **curable disease, treated by the standard 6-month course of 4 antibiotics.**
- Bacillus Calmette Guerin (BCG) vaccine is a vaccine primarily used against TB.
- According to WHO, more than 4100 people lose their lives to TB every day.

#### TB and India

- **India has the highest number of TB cases in the world**, accounting for about 26% of world's total TB cases.
- It is estimated that every year 26 lakh people suffer from this disease and about 4 lakh people die from this disease.
- In 2018, the UN committed to end TB globally by 2030, but **India announced it would try to eliminate TB in India by 2025, five years ahead of the UN's target.**

#### BPAL (Short anti-TB regimen)

- It is a 6-month, all-oral, three-drug regimen that is used to treat people with highly drug-resistant forms of TB.
- BPAL is a combination of three newer antibiotics – **bedaquiline, pretomanid and linezolid.**

#### Indian Initiatives to Eliminate TB

- **National TB Elimination Programme** - It provides, various free of cost, quality tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment services across the country through the government health system.
- **The Nikshay Ecosystem** - It is the National TB information system which is a one-stop solution to manage information of patients and monitor program activity and performance throughout the country.
- **Nikshay Poshan Yojana (NPY)** - It aimed at providing financial support to TB patients for their nutrition.
- **TB Harega Desh Jeetega Campaign** - Launched in 2019, it is showcasing the highest level of commitment for the elimination of TB.
- **The Saksham Project** - It is a project of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) that has been providing psycho-social counselling to DR-TB patients.
- **Joint Effort for Elimination of Tuberculosis (JEET)** - It is the largest private health sector engagement initiative for TB. The Government of India has partnered with the Global Fund to launch JEET.

#### Qimingxing-50

China's large unmanned aerial vehicle Called Qimingxing-50 completed its maiden flight.

#### About Qimingxing-50

- It is the **high-altitude, long-endurance (HALE) UAV**, also known as the **Morning Star**.
- It is the country's 1<sup>st</sup> major unmanned aerial vehicle that is all-electric and solely powered by solar energy.
- It is designed to fly at altitudes of **more than 20 km** above the Earth's surface where there is stable airflow with no clouds. As a result, it can make the maximum use of solar equipment to stay functional for longer durations.
- It is **capable of conducting high-altitude reconnaissance, apart from monitoring forest fires, providing communication and environment relay.**
- It can keep flying even during periods of overnight darkness.

## Bird Flu Detected In Cetaceans

- A bottlenose dolphin found dead in a Florida canal tested positive for a highly strong strain of bird flu.
- Swedish officials also reported that they had found the same type of avian influenza in a **stranded porpoise**.
- These findings represent the first two documented cases in cetaceans.
  - ✓ Cetaceans are an entirely aquatic order of mammals comprising whales, dolphins, and porpoises.

### About New Strain

- This **strain of bird flu is known as “Eurasian H5N1”**
- The risk to humans remains low, the spread of the virus to new species poses potential risks to wildlife and provides the virus with new chances to mutate and adapt to mammalian hosts.
- Besides birds, the virus has earlier turned up in foxes, bobcats, skunks, and seals.

### About Bird Flu (Types: H5N1, H7N2, H9N6, H17N10, H18N11 etc.)

- It is a disease **caused by avian influenza Type A viruses** found naturally in wild birds worldwide.
- The infection is deadly as it has a **high mortality rate of about 60%**.
- The most common route of virus transmission is direct contact, when a person comes in close contact with infected birds, either dead or alive.
- Symptoms may include fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, nausea, abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting, severe respiratory illness.
- A policy of killing infected and contact animals is normally used in an effort to rapidly contain, control, and eradicate the disease.

## Minuteman III

- The United State Air Force successfully launched a Minutemen III equipped with three test re-entry vehicles.
- It is a **land-based intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)** having range of more than 10000 km.
- Development of the Minuteman began in the mid-1950s.
- The Minuteman I entered service in 1962 and the Minuteman II entered service in 1965.
- In 1970, the Minuteman III became the first deployed ICBM with **multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRV)**.
  - ✓ **MIRV is an exo-atmospheric ballistic missile payload containing several warheads**, each capable of being aimed to hit a different target.

## Atomic Clock

- It is a clock that is **designed to measure the precise length of a second**, the base unit of modern timekeeping.
- It **uses atoms**, more precisely the electronic transition from one state to another as their pendulum.
- With an error of only 1 second in up to 100 million years, atomic clocks are among the most accurate timekeeping devices in history.
- It is far more precise than conventional clocks because atomic oscillations have a much higher frequency and are much more stable.

### Why Do We Need Atomic Clocks?

- It contributes to the calculation of International Atomic Time (TAI), one of the time standards used to determine Coordinated Universal Time and local times around the world.

- Satellite navigation systems also relied on precise time measurements to calculate positions accurately.

### SOVA virus

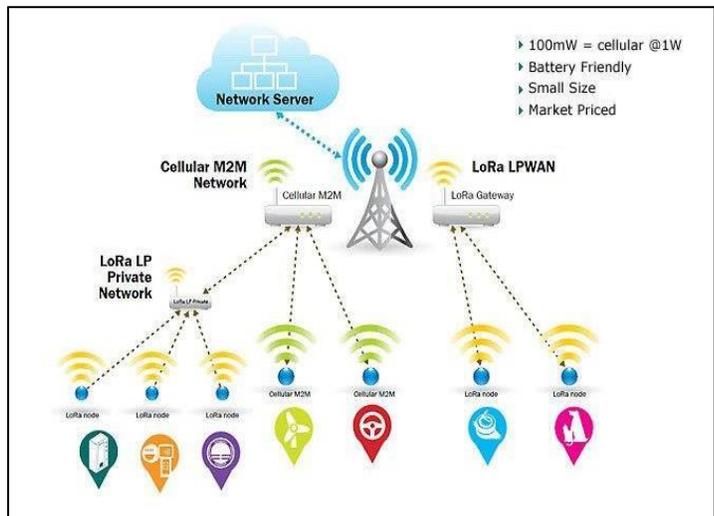
- The new **mobile banking Trojan' virus** SOVA is targeting Indian customers.
- A Trojan Virus is a type of malware that downloads into a device and disguised as a legitimate program.
- It can stealthily encrypt an **android phone** for ransom and is hard to uninstall.
- It can **add false overlays to a range of apps and mimic over 200 banking and payment applications** in order to con the Android user.
- It was earlier focusing on countries like the US, Russia and Spain. It added several other countries, including India, to its list of targets.

### Long Range Radio (LoRa)

Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT), an arm of RBI, has developed a low-cost financial network based on **LoRa (Long Range Radio) technology**.

#### About Long Range Radio (LoRa)

- It is a **wireless modulation** technique in the **physical layer**, allowing long-range communication using chirp spread spectrum.
- It encodes information on radio waves using chirp pulses - similar to the way dolphins and bats communicate.
- It uses **dedicated radios**, which are not usually present in end-user devices, limiting interferences from other devices.
- It is estimated to be 20% cheaper than alternative network technologies with an additional advantage of almost no maintenance and portability of devices.
- It can be used privately by banks to send encrypted texts to conduct financial transactions.
- It is ideal for applications that transmit small chunks of data with low bit rates.



### Virtual Autopsy

Comedian Raju Srivastava's post-mortem was conducted using a novel technique called virtual autopsy.

#### About Virtual Autopsy

- It is **also called virtopsy**. It is a new technique of **post-mortem that does not include dissections**. It is **done with the help of high-tech digital X-rays and CT scan**.
- Countries like Switzerland, USA and Australia are already using virtual autopsy.
- **AIIMS Delhi is the only institute in Southeast Asia** which has been doing virtual autopsy.

Significance of Virtual Autopsy	Drawbacks of Virtual Autopsy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is <b>less time consuming</b> as compared to the traditional post-mortem.</li> <li>• It also <b>enables the accurate finding of the depth of</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>physiological sense</b> of an <u>anatomical pathologist</u> like smell, texture, and color are restricted as there is no direct contact</li> </ul>

<p><b>foreign body</b>, which is not often possible with conventional autopsy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It <b>removes the ethical disadvantages of traditional autopsy</b> as many cultures and traditions do not accept the dissection of the body for autopsy.</li> </ul>	<p>with the dead body of the victim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is also difficult to use in underdeveloped countries where advanced technology is not prevalent.</li> </ul>
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### Rashid Rover

- It is the **1<sup>st</sup> mission (unmanned spacecraft) to Moon from the UAE**, which will be launched from Kennedy Space Centre in Florida in 2024.
- The rover will land in Lacus Somniorum, also known as the "**Lake of Dreams**", close to the lunar equator.
- It is designed to study **Moon's plasma and will attempt to explain why Moon dust is so sticky**.
- It will also study the lunar surface, mobility on the Moon's surface and how different surfaces interact with lunar particles.
- If it becomes successful, it will be the **smallest rover to land on Moon**, weighing approximately 10 kg with its payload.
- If successful in 2024, the UAE could become the **fourth nation** to land a spacecraft on the moon after the USA, the former Soviet Union and China.
- India, Israel and Japan have tried but failed in landing a spacecraft on the moon.
- Earlier, the UAE launched the Hope Mission to Mars, the Arab world's 1<sup>st</sup> interplanetary mission.

### Coffee-Ring Effect

- In physics, a coffee ring is a pattern left by a puddle of particle-laden liquid after it evaporates.
- The phenomenon is named for the characteristic ring-like deposit along the perimeter of a spill of coffee.
- It forms because the liquid evaporates faster at the edges, inducing a flow from the droplet interior towards the outside.
- The curious thing though is that this stain will always be a ring shape, not a solid circle.

### Implications

- It has implications for the manufacture of high-tech materials such as fuel cells, displays, and sensors. That's because a lot of these devices are made by depositing a coating onto a surface and one of the most popular ways of depositing a coating is by drop-casting.
- It has applications in agriculture, forensic science and even disease diagnosis.

### Lassa fever

Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC) said that in the year 2022, 171 people died of Lassa fever in Nigeria.

### About Lassa Fever

- It is an acute **viral haemorrhagic fever caused by Lassa virus**. Viral haemorrhagic fevers (VHFs) are a group of illnesses caused by four families of viruses, including Ebola, Marburg, Lassa fever & yellow fever viruses.
- It is **primarily transmitted to humans via contact with infected Mastomys rats**.
- The death rate associated with this disease is low, at around 1%.
- Symptoms may include fever, fatigue, weakness, headache, difficulty breathing, vomiting, facial swelling, pain in the chest, back, and abdomen.

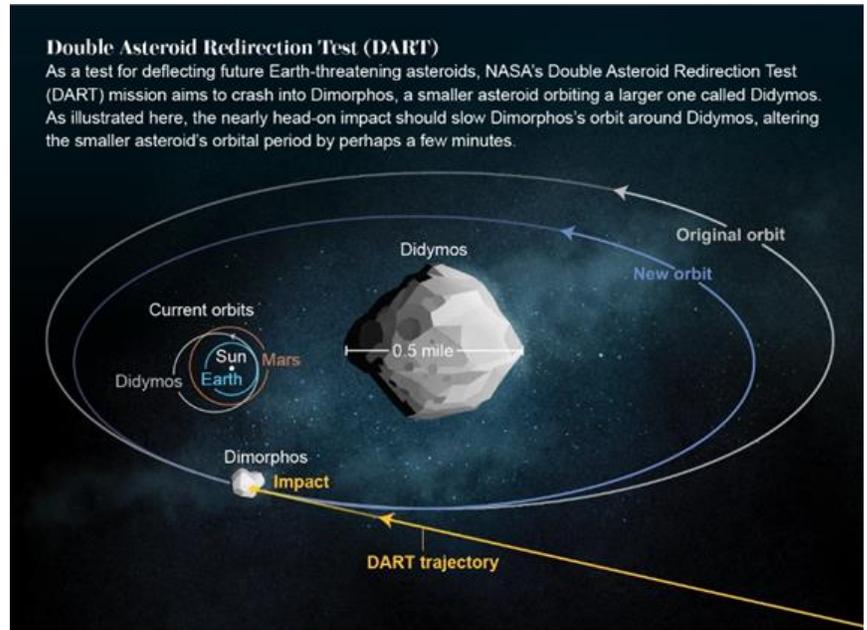
- The best way to avoid getting infected is to avoid contact with rats.
- The early stage of the infection can be treated using the antiviral drug ribavirin.

## DART Mission

**Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART)** successfully crashed into Dimorphos.

### About DART Mission

- It is a **NASA space mission** that aims to test a method of planetary defense against **Near-Earth objects (NEO)**.
- It was designed to assess the ability of a spacecraft impact to **deflect an asteroid**, through the **transfer of momentum**.
- The probe, launched from Earth, intentionally impacted **Dimorphos**, that is the minor-planet moon of the **asteroid Didymos**.
- The European Space Agency is developing Hera, a spacecraft that will be launched to Didymos in 2024 to do a detailed assessment.
- **International partners** include the European Space Agency (ESA), the Italian Space Agency (ASI), and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), contributing to related or subsequent projects.



### Significance Of This Mission

- It may one day **save humanity from a potentially catastrophic collision** by safely deflecting a deadly asteroid on its way to Earth.
  - ✓ **For example**, following NASA's lead, China plans to deflect 2020 PN1 in 2026 - a 40m diameter earth-crossing asteroid.
- It could also **fuel space mining technologies** and kickstart the space economy in the coming decades.
  - ✓ The 'kick' technique that deflects asteroids can then be used to move a small asteroid into a convenient position for space mining.
  - ✓ **Rare earth elements** such as yttrium, niobium, rhodium, palladium, osmium, iridium and scandium **are critical for developing green energy technologies** such as electric vehicles, solar panels, wind turbines, etc., ushering a low carbon economy in the future.
  - ✓ Mining for rare earth elements has a high environmental cost and they are in short supply.
  - ✓ Penalties for pollution may make space mining economically viable in the coming years.
  - ✓ NASA's **Asteroid Redirect Mission (ARM)**, which has been axed, aimed at bringing a 20-tonne space rock close to Earth for study and mining. In some ways, the DART mission is also included in this frame

## Very Short-Range Air Defense System (VSHORADS) Missile

DRDO conducted two successful test flights of the Very Short-Range Air Defense System (VSHORADS) missile.

### About VSHORADS Missile

- It is a Man Portable Air Defense System (MANPAD).

- ✓ MANPAD are short-range, lightweight and portable surface-to-air missiles that can be fired by individuals or small groups to destroy aircraft.
- It is designed and developed indigenously by Hyderabad-based Research Centre Imarat of the DRDO.
- The missile is propelled by a **dual thrust solid motor**, which is meant for neutralizing low altitude aerial threats at short ranges.

### Anti-Radiation Pills

- It is also known as **potassium iodide (KI) tablet**.
- It is known to provide some protection in cases of radiation exposure.
- It contains **non-radioactive iodine** and may help block the absorption, and subsequent concentration, of radioactive iodine in the **thyroid gland**.

### Photometeor

- It is an optical phenomenon produced by the reflection, refraction, diffraction or interference of light from the Sun or the Moon.
- The most common examples include halos, rainbows, glories, Bishop's rings, coronas, crepuscular rays, mirages, and green flashes.
- It is not reported in routine weather observation.

### iNOVACC

- It is an **intra-nasal Covid-19 vaccine**.
- It is developed by Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL).
- This vaccine will be used for primary immunization against COVID-19 in the 18+ age group for restricted use in emergency situations.
- The vaccine is stable between two and eight degrees Celsius for easy storage and distribution.

### IR36 and IR64

- **IR36** - It is a semi-dwarf rice variety that proved highly resistant to a number of the major insect pests and diseases that raised farmers' rice yields.
- **IR64** - It is a semi-dwarf rice variety. It is a relatively early duration variety, with a total growth duration of about 117 days.

### CSA6 Gene

- **CSA6 gene** can hold the key to **prevent** fungal infection **Candidiasis** that often affects intensive-care unit (ICU) patients, cancer patients and patients receiving immunosuppressive therapy.

### Candidiasis

- It is a fungal infection caused by a yeast, a type of fungus called **Candida Albicans** (A **fungal species** infamous for causing high rates of morbidity and mortality under certain immuno-compromised conditions such as AIDS or during cancer treatment).
- It normally lives on skin and inside the body, such as mouth, throat, gut, vagina, without causing problems.
- Signs and symptoms include white patches on the tongue or other areas of the mouth and throat, soreness and problems swallowing, which is treated with antifungal medications.

## Kedarnath Temple

- Priests of the Kedarnath shrine are protesting against the process of gold-plating of the walls of the sanctum sanctorum. Currently the sanctum sanctorum is covered with 230 kilogram of silver.
- Originally, built in 8th century A.D. by **Adi Shankaracharya**, Kedarnath temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to **Lord Shiva**.
- A conical rock formation inside the temple is worshipped as Lord Shiva in his **Sadashiva** form.
- It is part of the **Char Dham** pilgrimage circuit, and is one of the **12 Jyotirlingas** of Lord Shiva in India.
- The Kedarnath, along with Tungnath, Rudranath, Madmaheshwar and Kalpeshwar form the **Panch Kedar** pilgrimage circuit.
- The temple is located in the **Garhwal Himalayan range** near the **Mandakini river**.
- Due to extreme weather conditions, the temple is open to the general public only between April (Akshaya Tritiya) and November (Kartik Purnima, the full autumn moon).
- During the winters, the diety of the temple is carried down to **Ukhimath** to be worshipped for the next six months.

## Mandakini River

- It is a **tributary of the Alaknanda River**.
- The river emerges from the **Chorabari glacier** and runs between Rudraprayag and Sonprayag.
- It merges with river Songanga at Sonprayag, and drains into the Alaknada, which flows into the Ganga.



## Shumang Leela

- The 50th All Manipur Shumang Leela Festival 2021-2022 was held in Imphal.
- Shumang Leela is a traditional form of theatre in **Manipur**. Literally, Shumang means courtyard and Leela means play. Thus, Shumang Leela means a **play of the courtyard** and is generally performed in open spaces.
- The form has been prevalent since the time of monarchical rule in Manipur but the proper form of Shumang Leela had its inception in 1895 A.D.
- It is believed to have descended from **Lai-haraoba** (ritual ceremony of pleasing the God).
- The roles of female artists are all played by male actors, called **Nupi shabis** and male characters are played by female artists in case of female theatre groups.
- Shumang Leela groups of the early stage attempted to preserve and promote humanism, tolerance, devotion, truth and justice through their performances.
- The present-day performances focus on the issues of moral values, unity and integrity.

## Mohenjodaro

- The devastating floods in Pakistan have caused significant damage to Mohenjodaro.

- Built around 2500 BCE, Mohenjodaro is an archaeological site in the province of Sindh, Pakistan.
- The city was rediscovered **by Rakhil Das Banerji** of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in 1922 and was recognised as a **UNESCO World Heritage site** in 1980.
- The words 'Mohenjo Daro' literally translate to '**the mound of the dead**'. It is because the city of Harappa and other important Indus Valley sites were found on a series of mounds.
- It had meticulous urban planning, architecture, road plan with rectilinear buildings and channeled sanitation.
- The site is famous for its elaborate town planning with street grids with brick pavements, developed water supply, drainage, and covered sewerage systems, homes with toilets.
- It also had a huge well that served as a public pool to bathe - the Great Bath; and the Great Granary.
- At its peak it would have had between 30,000 and 60,000 residents with a highly evolved social organisation.
- The civilization went into decline in the middle of the second millennium BC for reasons that are believed to include catastrophic climate change.

### Hyderabad State Liberation Day

The Centre has decided to mark Hyderabad State Liberation Day on 17th September. In fact, the 75th anniversary of the event (that took place in 1948), will be marked as a year-long event till September 17, 2023.

#### Story of Liberation

- At the time of India's independence, British India was a mix of independent kingdoms and provinces that were given the options of joining India, Pakistan, or remaining independent.
- However, by 1948 almost all had acceded to either India or Pakistan. One major exception was that of the wealthiest and most powerful principality, Hyderabad.
- **Mir Osman Ali Khan**, the ruler of Hyderabad, chose independence and hoped to maintain his own army.
- In November 1947, Hyderabad signed a standstill agreement with the Indian government, declaring a status quo. This meant that until November 1948, the Nizam could let things be as they were and not finalise a decision as negotiations with the Indian union continued.
- However, in the first half of 1948, tensions grew as the **razakar leaders** and the government in Hyderabad began to speak of war with India and began border raids with Madras and Bombay Presidencies.
- As a response, India stationed troops around Hyderabad and began to ready itself for military intervention.
- With Nizam importing more arms and the violence of Razakars approaching dangerous proportions, India officially launched '**Operation Polo**' on September 9 and deployed its troops in Hyderabad four days later.
- On 17<sup>th</sup> Sept', three days after the deployment, Nizam surrendered and acceded to India in November.
- The Indian government decided to be generous and not punish the Nizam. He was retained as the official ruler of the state and given a privy purse of five million rupees.

#### Razakars

- Formed in 1938 by the Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM), the Razakars were the paramilitary force which supported the rule of Osman Ali Khan.
- It expanded considerably during the leadership of Qasim Razvi around the time of Indian independence and resisted the integration of Hyderabad State into India.
- Eventually, the Indian army routed the Razakars and the group was disbanded after India annexed the state.