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PRELIMS



POLITY & GOVERNANCE



INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM 2023

Context: Recently, the India Internet Governance Forum 2023 took place.

About India Internet Governance Forum 2023:-

- **Date: 05, December, 2023.**
- **Venue: New Delhi** [.\(India Internet Governance Forum \(IIGF\)\)](#)
- The forum is a **multi-stakeholder platform** bringing together representatives from various groups to discuss public policy issues related to the Internet.
- **Theme: Moving forward - Calibrating Bharat's Digital Agenda.**
- The event is an effort to discuss issues such as building a secure, trusted and resilient cyberspace for Bharat, Enabling Innovation for India's Developmental Goals, Bridging Divides and Calibrating Bharat's Digital Agenda.
- The India Internet Governance Forum is an **initiative associated with the UN Internet Governance Forum.**
- The session will be graced by the presence of Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Minister of State for Electronics & Information Technology and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship.
- A special address will be delivered by Shri S Krishnan, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), and the welcome address is slated to be given by Shri Sushil Pal, Joint Secretary, MeitY.
- The India Internet Governance Forum is aligned with the **UN Internet Governance Forum (UN IGF).**
- It was established in 2021.
- The Indian chapter, IIGF, is supported by a **14-member multi-stakeholder committee** representing government, civil society, industries, the technical community, think tanks, and industry associations

Significance:-

- It serves as a crucial platform for fostering a common understanding of maximizing internet opportunities while addressing associated risks and challenges.

MUST READ: [Digital India Programme](#)

SOURCE: [AIR](#)

ELECTORAL BONDS

Context: Political funding through anonymous **electoral bonds** shot up by over 400% during the recent Assembly elections in Telangana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Mizoram, as compared to the last polls in these states in 2018.

Background:-

- The latest sales (29th tranche) under the electoral bond scheme saw the highest sales in Telangana's capital of Hyderabad (Rs 359 crore), followed by Mumbai (Rs 259.30 crore), and

Delhi (Rs 182.75 crore).

About Electoral bonds:-



IMAGE SOURCE: [THE INDIAN EXPRESS](#)

- An Electoral Bond is **like a promissory note** that may be purchased by a person who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India.
- A person being an **individual can buy [Electoral Bonds](#)**, either **singly or jointly with other individuals**.
- The bonds are **like banknotes** that are payable to the bearer on demand and **are interest-free**.

Historical Background:-

- The electoral bonds system was **introduced in 2017** by way of a **Finance bill**.
- It was **implemented in 2018**.

Salient Features:-

- Electoral Bonds serve as a **means for individuals and entities to make donations** to registered political parties while maintaining donor anonymity.
- **State Bank of India (SBI)** issues the bonds in denominations of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh, and Rs 1 crore.
- It is payable to the bearer on **demand and interest-free**.
- It is **purchased by Indian citizens** or entities established in India.
- It can be bought **individually or jointly** with other individuals.
- It is **valid for 15 calendar days** from the date of issue.
- The State Bank of India (SBI) is the **authorized issuer**.
 - Electoral Bonds are issued through designated SBI branches.
- Electoral Bonds **can be purchased digitally or through cheques**.
- Encashment only through an authorized **bank account of the political party**.
 - Political Parties **must disclose** their bank account with the [Election Commission of India \(ECI\)](#).

Eligibility:-

- **Only the Political Parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951** and which secured not less than one per cent of the votes polled in the last General Election to the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly of the State, shall be eligible to receive the Electoral Bonds.

Advantages of Electoral Bonds:-

- **Ensures Accountability:** Donations through Electoral Bonds will only be credited to the party bank account **disclosed with the ECI**.
- **Discourage Cash:** The Purchase will be possible only through a limited number of notified banks and that too through **cheque and digital payments**.
- **More Transparency:** It helps the political parties to operate in a more transparent manner with the election commission, regulatory authorities and the general public at large.
- **Maintains Anonymity:** The individuals, groups of individuals, NGOs, religious and other trusts are permitted to donate via electoral bonds without disclosing their details. Therefore, the identity of the donor is being preserved.

Disadvantages of Electoral Bonds:-

- **Hindering Right to Know:** Voters will not know which individual, company, or organisation has

funded which party, and to what extent. Before the introduction of electoral bonds, political parties had to disclose details of all their donors, who have donated more than Rs 20,000.

- The change **infringes the citizen's 'Right to Know'** and makes the political class even more unaccountable.
- **Unauthorized Donations:** In a situation where the contribution received through electoral bonds is not reported, it cannot be ascertained whether the political party has taken any donation in violation of provision under Section 29B of the RPA, 1951 which prohibits the political parties from taking donations from government companies and foreign sources.
- **Leads to Crony-Capitalism:** It could become a convenient channel for businesses to round-trip their cash parked in tax havens to political parties for a favour or advantage granted in return for something.
 - Anonymous funding might lead to an infusion of black money.

MUST READ: [Supreme Court Ruling on Electoral Bonds, Election Commission of India](#)

SOURCE: [THE INDIAN EXPRESS](#)

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Context: Recently, the **ethics committee** of the Lok Sabha is believed to have recommended the expulsion of Trinamool Congress Member of Parliament (MP) Mahua Moitra from the Lok Sabha for her “unethical conduct” and “breach of privileges”.

Background:-

- Ethics Committee, tasked with overseeing the moral conduct of parliamentarians.

About the ethics committee:-

- The ethics committee was constituted in **2000**.
- **Objective:** to oversee the moral and ethical conduct of members and examine cases of ‘unethical conduct’ referred to it.
- The Committee **examines complaints filed against members of the House** by other members; outsiders through a member; or referred by the Speaker.
- The Committee **makes a prima facie inquiry before deciding to examine a complaint**.
- It presents its report to the Speaker, who places it before the House for consideration.
- The term **‘unethical’ is not defined**.
- It is **left to the Committee to decide** whether any act is unethical or not.

Privileges Committees:-

- While the **Ethics Committee handles cases of unethical conduct, the Privileges Committee, or Special Inquiry Committee, deals with more severe accusations against a member**.
- These committees have historical precedence, with a special committee in 1951 finding a member guilty of promoting a business interest through questions in return for financial benefits.

About Committees of Parliament:-

- [Parliamentary committees](#) are broadly categorized as **Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees**.
- Standing Committees are **permanent and operate continuously**, while Ad Hoc Committees are temporary and disband upon task completion.

- It includes **Financial Committees, Departmental Standing Committees, Committees to Enquire, Committees to Scrutinise and Control, Committees Relating to the Day-to-Day Business of the House, and House-Keeping Committees.**
- **Ad Hoc Committees** are subdivided into Inquiry Committees and Advisory Committees.
- The Parliamentary committees **draw their authority from the constitution.**
- **Article 105:** Powers, privileges, etc., of the houses of Parliament and of the members and committees thereof.
- **Article 118:** Each House of Parliament may make rules for regulations, subject to the provisions of this constitution, its procedure and the conduct of its business.

Functions of the Parliamentary Committees:-

- **Reviewing and scrutinising the work of the government.**
- Power to **summon ministers** and officials.
- Parliamentary committees play a key role in the legislative process by **examining and reviewing bills** before they are passed into law.
- They can **make recommendations for changes to the bill** and ensure that it is consistent with the Constitution and the laws of the land.

Signification of Parliamentary Committees-

- Parliamentary committees are **crucial for legislative decision-making**, offering expertise to MPs who may lack in-depth knowledge on specific issues.
- These committees, **acting as mini-parliaments**, comprise MPs from various parties, elected proportionally.
- They **serve as instruments for meticulous scrutiny, closely examining bills** and seeking input from external stakeholders, including the public.

MUST READ: [Joint Parliamentary Committee](#)

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

ZONAL COUNCIL

Context: Recently, Union Home Minister Amit Shah chaired the 26th Eastern **Zonal Council** Meeting in Patna.

Background:-

- Addressing the representatives of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha Mr. Shah appealed to all members to work with the spirit of cooperative federalism for all-round development.

About Zonal Council:-

- Zonal Councils are the **statutory** (and not the constitutional) bodies.
- They are established by an Act of Parliament, that is, the **States Reorganization Act of 1956.**

Historical Background:-

- The idea of the creation of [Zonal Councils](#) was mooted by the **first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in 1956.**
- Five Zonal Councils were set up vide Part-III of the States Re-organisation Act, 1956 – **north,**

south, east, west and central.

- The **North Eastern States** i.e. (i) Assam (ii) Arunachal Pradesh (iii) Manipur (iv) Tripura (v) Mizoram (vi) Meghalaya and (vii) Nagaland **are not included in the Zonal Councils**
- Their special problems are looked after by the North Eastern Council, set up under the **North Eastern Council Act, of 1972.**
- The State of **Sikkim has also been included in the North Eastern Council** vide the North Eastern Council (Amendment) Act, 2002.

Objectives:-

- Zonal Councils aim to **promote collaboration and coordination** among states, UTs, and the Union.
- They discuss and **give recommendations on several topics.**
- They are only consultative and deliberative bodies.
- The States Reorganization Act of 1956 established these statutory entities. The country was divided into 5 zones by the Act:-
- **Northern Zonal Council:** It comprises the States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, the National Capital Territory of Delhi, Union Territory of Chandigarh and Ladakh.
 - Headquarter: New Delhi
- **Central Zonal Council:** It comprises the States of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
 - Headquarters: Allahabad
- **Eastern Zonal Council:** It comprises the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Sikkim and West Bengal.
 - Headquarters: Kolkata
- **Western Zonal Council:** It comprises the States of Goa, Gujarat, and Maharashtra and the Union Territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli.
 - Headquarter: Mumbai
- **Southern Zonal Council:** It comprises the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry.
 - Headquarters: Chennai

Structure:-

- **Chairman** – The Union Home Minister is the Chairman of each of these Councils.
- **Vice Chairman** – The Chief Ministers of the States included in each zone act as Vice-Chairman of the Zonal Council for that zone by rotation, each holding office for a period of one year at a time.
- **Members**- Chief Minister and two other Ministers as nominated by the Governor from each of the States and two members from Union Territories included in the zone.

Functions:-

- Each Zonal Council is an advisory body and may discuss any matter in which States have a common interest and advise the Government.
- In particular, a Zonal Council may **discuss, and make recommendations** with regard to:
 - any matter of common interest in the field of economic and social planning;
 - any matter concerning border disputes, linguistic minorities or inter-State transport;
 - any matter connected with or arising out of, the re-organization of the States under the

State's Reorganization Act.

MUST READ: [Integration of North-Eastern India and its Significance](#)

SOURCE: [AIR](#)

ARTICLE 370

Context: Recently, PM Modi wrote that 'The SC verdict on **Article 370** has strengthened the spirit of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat.

Background:-

- On December 11, the honourable Supreme Court of India delivered a historic judgment on the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35(A).
- Through its judgment, the court has upheld the sovereignty and integrity of India, something that is cherished by every Indian.
- The court rightly observed that the decision taken on August 5, 2019 was done with the purpose of enhancing constitutional integration and not disintegration.
- The court has also recognised the fact that Article 370 was not permanent in nature.

About Article 370:-

- Article 370 of the Indian constitution dealt with the **provision of certain special powers to the state of Jammu and Kashmir**.
- It grants a '**temporary**' autonomous status to the state of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K).
- The article was an **outcome of Kashmir's accession** to India after the Independence. ([Delimitation in Jammu and Kashmir](#))

Provisions of Article 370:-

- It permitted J&K to **draft its own Constitution**.
- It further **restricted the Indian Parliament's legislative powers in the state**.
- **Except for Defense, Foreign Affairs Finance and Communications**, the Indian Government was required State Government's nod to apply all other laws.
- The central govt. had **no power to impose financial emergencies** in the state.
 - Emergency could be imposed **only on the grounds of internal disturbances and imminent danger from a foreign enemy**.
- **Indian nationals belonging to other states cannot buy land or property** in the state of J&K.
- **woman** who marries a person belonging to any other state loses her **right to ownership**.

Background:-

- **Post independence:** Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) acceded to the Dominion of India by signing the Instrument of Accession on **26 October 1947** with certain **special provisions**.
- On the same line, **Article 370** was added to the Indian constitution in **1949**.
 - It was added as a '**temporary provision**', giving certain exemptions to the state of Jammu & Kashmir.
- These provisions **gave the state government control over how it needs to govern** the state without worrying about the consent of the central government.

Removal of Article 370

- In accordance with the authority afforded by **Clause (1) of Article 370** of the Indian Constitution, the **President of India** issued the **Constitution (Implementation to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019** on August 5, 2019, **repealing the special status** previously accorded to Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Resulting Consequences:-**
 - Jammu and Kashmir **no longer has its own constitution, flag, or anthem**.
 - Its population **no longer has dual citizenship** as a result of the repeal of Article 370.

- Jammu and Kashmir now **abide by all legislative amendments** made by the parliament, including the Right to Information Act and the Right to Education Act.
- **Jammu & Kashmir is fully covered by the Indian Constitution** and all 890 Central legislation.

MUST READ: [Operation Sadbhavana](#)

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

NATIONAL CRIME RECORDS BUREAU (NCRB)

Context: Recent **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** data revealed that Delhi leads in the rate of FIRs of crimes against women in 2022.

Background:-

- Delhi logged the highest rate of FIRs linked to crimes against women in the country in 2022.

About National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB):-

- **Established: 1986.**
- **HQ: New Delhi.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Home Affairs.**
- **Objective:** To function as a repository of information on crime and criminals so as to assist the investigators in linking crime to the perpetrators.
- NCRB was set up to function as a **repository of information on crime and criminals** to assist the investigators in linking crime to the perpetrators.
- It was recommended by the **Tandon Committee, the National Police Commission (1977-1981) and the MHA's Task force (1985).**
- NCRB is entrusted with the responsibility for **monitoring, coordinating, and implementing the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) project.** ([Criminal Procedure \(Identification\) Act, 2022](#))

Important publications of NCRB:-

- Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India.
- Prison Statistics India.
- Fingerprints in India.
- Report on missing women and children in India.

MUST READ: [CBI and ED](#)

SOURCE: [HINDUSTAN TIMES](#)

ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE (ED)

Context: Recently, the **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** has summoned Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav for questioning in connection with job-for-land scam.

Background:-

- He has been asked to appear before the probe agency's Delhi office to record his statements under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

About Prevention of Money Laundering Act(PMLA):-

- It is a **criminal law** of the Parliament of India passed by the NDA government in 2002
- PMLA became law and came into **force on July 1, 2005**.
- It has **blanket powers assigned to the Enforcement Directorate (ED)** under PMLA for seizing, investing, searching and attaching assets.
- It was introduced due to India's commitment at the **Vienna Convention** to combat money laundering. ([Supreme Court verdict on PMLA](#))
- The PMLA is applicable to **all persons which include individuals, companies, firms, partnership firms, associations of persons or incorporations and any agency, office or branch owned or controlled by any of the above-mentioned persons**.

About Enforcement Directorate (ED):-

- **Establishment: 1956.**
- **Ministry: Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.**
- **Headquarters: New Delhi.**
- The Enforcement Directorate is a **multi-disciplinary organization**
- It is a law enforcement organization tasked with **enforcing economic laws and combating economic crime in India, such as money laundering and foreign exchange irregularities.**

Functions:-

- The functions of the Directorate include the enforcement of the following Acts:-
 - **The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA)** ([Prevention of Money Laundering Act \(PMLA\) 2002](#))
 - **The Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA):** A civil law under which ED conducts an investigation into suspected contraventions of foreign exchange laws and regulations. ([Foreign Exchange Management Act](#))
 - **The Foreign Exchange Regulation Act 1973**
 - **Sponsoring Organizations under the 1974 Foreign Exchange Conservation and Smuggling Activity Prevention Act**
 - **The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA):** A law whereby the Directorate is mandated to **attach the properties of fugitive economic offenders who have escaped from India** warranting arrest and providing for the confiscation of their properties to the Central Government.

Structure:-

- **Director of Enforcement:-**
 - **Appointed by the central government** on the recommendation of a committee chaired by the **Central Vigilance Commissioner** and **members comprising of Vigilance Commissioners, Home Secretary, Secretary DOPT and Revenue Secretary.**
 - **Tenure:** up to 5 years.
- **Recruitment of other officers:-**
 - Other officers may be **recruited directly from other investigative agencies** or indirectly.
 - It is made up of representatives from the **police, excise, customs, and income tax departments** of the Indian Revenue Services (IRS), the Indian Police Services (**IPS**), and the Indian Administrative Services (**IAS**).

Powers of ED:-

- Statements recorded before an ED investigation officer (IO) **are admissible as evidence in court** under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).
- All offences under the PMLA, which the ED deals with, are classified as **non-bailable**.
- **Individuals in ED custody are sent to the nearest police station's lock-up**, irrespective of their status.
- Once the ED attaches properties belonging to an accused, it can be a lengthy and **challenging process to retrieve those assets**.
- Unlike regular criminal law, under the PMLA, **the burden of proof lies with the accused rather than the prosecutor**.
- **Accused individuals are required to furnish proof** in their defence, making it harder to deal with the ED's investigations

MUST READ: [CBI and ED](#)

SOURCE: [AIR](#)

THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS BILL, 2023

Context: The Telecommunications Bill, 2023, was passed in Parliament recently.

Background:-

- When it receives the assent of the President, the Bill will replace three archaic laws such as the **Telegraph Act of 1885, the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act of 1933 and The Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1950**.

About Telecommunications Bill, 2023:-

- It aims to **consolidate the law for wireless networks and Internet service providers** and **simplify** the process of application for licenses and permits for telecom operators.
- The Bill **governs authorization of telecommunication networks and services**, provides for auctioning as well as administrative allocation of spectrum, and **defines the mechanism for exercising the right of way for laying telecom infrastructure** such as cables in public as well as private property.
- It states that **prior authorization will be needed from the central government** for providing telecom services, establishing, operating, maintaining, or expanding telecom networks, and possessing radio equipment.
- The **existing licenses remain valid** for the grant period or **five years** if unspecified.
- It also **spells out emergency measures the government can take in the interest of national security and public safety** such as intercepting messages, suspending telecommunication services as well as taking temporary possession of any telecommunication service or network.
- It states that **spectrum will only be assigned through auction, except for specified uses** such as national security, defence, disaster management, weather forecasting, transport, satellite services (DTH and satellite telephony), BSNL, MTNL, and public broadcasting.
- The Bill also states that **rules will be framed to protect consumers** with the setting up of a **'Do Not Disturb' register** to ensure they don't receive a specified class of messages without prior consent.

- Entities have also been mandated to **carry out biometric authentication** of their users as a measure to curb fraud.
- The Bill **allows the government to curb the import of telecom equipment from potentially adversarial nations.**
- The bill **prescribes punishment for unauthorized provision** of telecom services or access to networks/data punishable with imprisonment, fines, or both. ([The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India \(TRAI\)](#))
- The central government will appoint an **adjudicating officer** (rank of joint secretary and above) for civil offences.
- Appeals to Designated Appeals Committee and **Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT).**
- **Territorial Applicability:** It now **extends to offences committed outside India** if the offence in question involves a telecom service provided in India.

Significance:-

- Replaces Archaic Laws.
- Provides Clarity for Satellite broadband services.
- Provides technology-based Solutions for Governance.

MUST READ: [Telecom industry in India](#)

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

BHARATIYA NYAYA SANHITA, BHARATIYA NAGARIK SURAKSHA SANHITA AND BHARATIYA SAKSHYA BILL 2023

Context: Recently, President Droupadi Murmu has given her assent to **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Bill 2023.**

Background:-

- These three new criminal justice bills were passed by the Parliament.

About Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Bill 2023:-
Key Provisions of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bill 2023:-

- The **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 replaced the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860**, which is the principal law on criminal offences in the country.
- The new act **adds community service** as a form of punishment. ([Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code \(IPC\)](#))
- For the first time **terrorism has been defined** in the criminal justice system.
- **Sedition:** Under the IPC, section 124-A deals with the offence of sedition and prescribes a sentence of life imprisonment or imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which a fine may be added. In the BNS Bill, **provision 150** under the chapter pertaining to 'offences against the State' talks about acts **endangering the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India.**
- The offence of **defamation now carries a simple imprisonment of up to two years, or with a fine, or with both or with community service.**
- For the first time **capital punishment has been introduced for the offence of mob lynching** apart from the offence being made **punishable with 7 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment.**
- **Sexual exploitation of women** on the pretext of marriage, job, promotions or by concealing identity will be considered a crime.

- **Adultery:** The new Bill omits the provision for the offence of **adultery**.
- **Homosexuality:** The new Bill does not include any punishment for 'unnatural sexual offences against men'.

Key Provisions of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita, 2023:-

- The **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita, 2023** has replaced the **Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 (CrPC)**.
- The CrPC provides for the procedure for **arrest, prosecution, and bail**.
- Trials, appeal proceedings, and recording of depositions including those of public servants and police officers, may be held in **electronic mode**.
- The statement of the accused too can be recorded through **video-conferencing**.
- Summons, warrants, documents, police reports, and statements of evidence can be done in **electronic form**.
- The Bill adds **electronic communication including "communication devices"**.
- On the directions of a court or police officer, **a person is required to produce any document/device that is likely to contain digital evidence for the purpose of an inquiry**.
- A police officer may be **permitted to use handcuffs** while arresting a person if he is a **repeat offender who escaped from custody, or has committed an organized crime, terrorist act, offences against the state, etc.**
- There is a provision on **procedures for the timeframe to file mercy petitions** in death sentence cases.
- A decision to **grant or reject sanction to prosecute a public servant** must be reached by the government within 120 days of receiving a request. If the government fails to do so, the sanction will be **deemed to have been accorded**.
 - No sanction is required in cases including sexual offences, trafficking, etc.
- There are provisions for police to detain or remove any person resisting, refusing or ignoring, or disregarding directions given as part of **preventive action**.

Key Provisions of Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Bill, 2023:-

- The **Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Bill, 2023** replaced the **Indian Evidence Act, 1872**.
 - The Act **governs the admissibility** of evidence in Indian Courts.
 - It applies to all **civil and criminal proceedings**.
- It **retains most provisions** of the IEA including those on confessions, relevancy of facts, and burden of proof.
- The IEA provides for **two kinds of evidence - documentary and oral**.
- **Documentary evidence** includes primary (original documents) and secondary (that proves the contents of the original). It **retains the distinction**. It classifies **electronic records as documents**.
- Under the IEA, **electronic records are categorized as secondary evidence**.
- It classifies **electronic records as primary evidence**.
- It expands such records to include information stored in semiconductor memory or any communication devices (smartphones, laptops).
- It expands **secondary evidence** to include: **(i) oral and written admissions, and (ii) the testimony of a person who has examined the document and is skilled in the examination of documents**.

MUST READ: [Rape and sexual crimes law in India](#)

SOURCE: [AIR](#)

CENTRAL WATER COMMISSION.

Context: Recently, Kerala state government held a meeting with the **Central Water Commission**.

Background:-

- The State government has urged the Centre to speed up measures for building a new dam at Mullaperiyar in Idukki district.

About Central Water Commission (CWC):- Establishment: 1945.

- **HQ: New Delhi.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.**
- **Objective:** To promote integrated and sustainable development and management of India's water resources using state-of-the-art technology and competency and to coordinate all stakeholders.
- It is charged with **initiating, coordinating, and advancing plans for the control, conservation, and utilisation of water resources** across the nation for flood control, irrigation, navigation, drinking water supply, and hydropower development in consultation with the State Governments concerned.
- Also, it carries out any necessary **research, development, and execution of such plans.**

Structure:-

- The [CWC](#) is chaired by a **Chairman** who also serves as the Government of India's Ex-Officio Secretary.
- The Commission's work is organized into three categories: **Designs and Research (D&R), River Management (RM), and Water Planning and Projects.**
- A full-time Member leads each wing with the rank of **Ex-Officio Additional Secretary** to the Government of India.
- A distinct **Human Resources Management Unit**, led by a Chief Engineer, oversees the CWC's Human Resources Management or Development, Financial Management, Training, and Administrative issues.

Functions Of Central Water Commission:-

- Planning and Development.
- Water Resources Assessment.
- Flood Forecasting.
- Reservoir Operation.
- River Management.
- Dam Safety.
- Hydrological Information System.
- International Cooperation.

MUST READ: [Kalasa-Banduri Project](#)

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT.

Context: Recently, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra and, the UN Under-Secretary-General discussed India's presidency of the **Conference on Disarmament**.

Background:-

- Their talks centred around global advancements in arms control and disarmament, with a focus on key initiatives discussed at the recent 78th UNGA First Committee.

About Conference on Disarmament (CD):-

- **Established: 1979.**
- **HQ: Palais des Nations in Geneva.**
- It is a **multilateral disarmament forum** established by the international community.
- **Objective:** to negotiate arms control and disarmament agreements.
- The Conference **meets annually** in three separate sessions in Geneva.
- **Members:** The Conference is comprised of 65 member States, including the five NPT nuclear-weapon States and 60 other States of key military significance.
- The CD has **three sessions each year.**
- The CD conducts its **work by consensus.**
- The **Director-General of the United Nations Office** at Geneva is the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.
- The CD and its predecessors have negotiated major multilateral arms limitation and disarmament agreements such as:-
 - the Treaty on the [Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons \(NPT\)](#),
 - the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and
 - Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC),
 - the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and Their Destruction (CWC)
 - Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Historical Background:-

- The Conference on Disarmament (CD), was recognized by the **Tenth Special Session** on Disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly (SSOD-I) (1978) as a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community.
- It succeeded other **Geneva-based negotiating fora**, which include the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament (1960), the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (1962-68), and the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (1969-78).
- It was **renamed the Conference on Disarmament in 1984.**

Functions:-

- Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament.
- Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters.
- Prevention of an arms race in outer space.

- Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.
- New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons.
- Comprehensive programme of disarmament.
- Transparency in armaments. ([India's Nuclear Doctrine](#))

MUST READ:[Fragile State of Nuclear Disarmament](#)

SOURCE: [AWAZ](#)

KARRAR COMBAT DRONES.

Context: Recently, Iran unveiled advanced **Karrar combat drones**.

Background:-

- The drones were showcased during a ceremony at the Khatam Al-Anbia Air Defence Academy.

About Karrar Combat Drones:-

- The Karrar interceptor drone was **initially introduced in 2010**.
- It now incorporates the '**Majid**' thermal missile, which reportedly has an **eight-kilometre range**.
- This missile was **developed entirely within Iran**.
- It is an Iranian jet-powered target drone manufactured by **Iran Aircraft Manufacturing Industrial Company (HESA)**.
- The Karrar features a **small, clipped delta wing, a cylindrical, blunt-nosed fuselage, and twin arrowhead-shaped tailfins**.
- It has a **dorsal air intake** for the engine and utilizes a rocket-assist system for takeoff, recovered by a parachute.
- It is capable of **high and low altitude flight, day and night operation**.
- It's purported to have an **autopilot system with INS and/or GPS guidance**. ([Import Ban on Drones](#))
- The Karrar can **carry a range of armaments**, including bombs like the Mk 82 general-purpose bomb, anti-ship missile.

MUST READ:[MQ-9B predator Drone](#)

SOURCE: [HINDUSTAN TIMES](#)

Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD)

Context: India re-elected the **Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD)** General Conference (GC) president for the third successive term recently.

Background:-

- The Information & Broadcasting Ministry Secretary, Apurva Chandra, said this was a first in the history of AIBD.
- The move showed the confidence broadcasting organizations across the Asia Pacific and the world reposed in India.

About Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD):-

- **Established:1977**
- **Host: Government of Malaysia**

- **Secretariat: Kuala Lumpur.**
- **Objective:** to achieve a vibrant and cohesive electronic media environment in the Asia Pacific region through policy and resource development.
- **Membership:** It has **92 member organizations** from across 44 countries, including 26 government members (countries) represented by 48 broadcasting authorities and broadcasters.
- It also has 44 affiliates (organizations) represented by 28 countries and regions in Asia, the Pacific, Europe, Africa, Arab States, and North America.
- **India** is one of the founding members of this organization.
- **Representative body:** The **Prasar Bharati** is the representative body of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, at AIBD.
- It was established under the auspices of the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).**
- It is a **unique regional inter-governmental organization** servicing countries of the **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP)** in the field of electronic media development.
- The Institute seeks to fulfill this mandate by **mobilizing the intellectual and technological** resources available within the national broadcasting organizations of its member countries as well as regional and international bodies.
- It does it through a well-established **infrastructure and networking mechanism** which includes government agencies, non-governmental organizations, institutions of higher learning, the private sector, and individual professionals.

MUST READ: [Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development \(BIND\) scheme](#)

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

Context: Recently, Palestine-based Hamas militants launched a barrage of rockets on Israel on Saturday infiltrating the towns near the Gaza Strip through land, air, and sea.

- **Hamas or the Islamic Resistance Movement:** is a militant group that governs the Gaza Strip.
 - It emerged in 1987 as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood during the first Palestinian intifada, or uprising, against the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank.
 - It was founded by **Sheikh Ahmed Yassin**, a Palestinian cleric.
 - Its military wing, **the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades**, was established around 1991.

About ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT:-
Background of the war:-

IMAGE SOURCE: [express.co.uk](https://www.express.co.uk)

- Both Israelis and Palestinians have been in a struggle for **self-determination and sovereignty over the territory**, developing respective movements for their causes.

- Both Palestinians and Israelis see the territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea as their own, and Christians, Jews, and Muslims all hold parts of the land as sacred.



- The past seven decades have brought war and uprisings. ([15th India-Israel Joint Working Group](#))

Historic Timeline:-

- **Ottoman Empire:** The **Ottoman Empire** had controlled that part of the Middle East from the early 16th century until control of most of the region was granted to the British after World War I.
- **In 1916:** the **Sykes-Picot Agreement** secretly negotiated between Britain and France planned to carve up the Middle East into spheres of influence, and determined that the land in **question was to be internationalized**.
- **In 1917:** Britain's foreign secretary, Lord Arthur Balfour, expressed his government's support for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."

1947: UN resolution

- **1947:** After World War II, nearing the end of the British Mandate for Palestine, the **United Nations General Assembly in 1947 passed Resolution 181**, urging the partition of the land into two independent states — one Arab and one Jewish.
- Religiously significant **Jerusalem** is to be **under special international administration**.
- The plan is not implemented after the **Arab side rejects** it, arguing that it is unfavorable to their majority population.
- Violence in the regional conflict grows.

1948: Israel declares independence.

- Israel declared independence in May 1948.
- The next day, a coalition of Arab states, allied with Palestinian factions, attacked Israeli forces in what became the first of several Arab-Israeli wars.
- In the end, **Israel gains control of an even larger portion** of territory — not including the areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

1967: the Six-Day War

- In June of 1967, a war known as the "**Six-Day War**" or the 1967 Arab-Israeli War broke out amid lingering conflicts, including **Egypt's continued blockade of shipping into the Gulf of Aqaba**.
- Israel ultimately took control of the **Gaza Strip, Sinai, the West Bank, the Golan Heights**, and predominantly **Palestinian East Jerusalem**.
- The Arab armies suffered massive losses.

1987: First intifada

- A Palestinian uprising, or intifada, brings largely spontaneous clashes, protests, and civil disobedience against Israeli occupation in the **West Bank, Gaza, and Israel**, leading to harsh Israeli military crackdowns.
- Unrest continues for years, with many killed or injured on both sides.

1993: Oslo Accords

- The first of two pacts, known as the Oslo Accords, was signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).
- It set out a **peace process based on previous U.N. resolutions**.
- It charted out the **expansion of a limited Palestinian self-rule** in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- A follow-up accord was signed in **1995**.
- However, key **issues** such as **Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the status of Jerusalem**, were left unresolved.

2006: Hamas elected in Gaza

- Israel withdrew its troops from Gaza in 2005.
- The Palestinian militant group Hamas wins legislative elections the next year, leading to political strains with the more moderate Fatah party controlling the West Bank.

2017: U.S. recognizes Jerusalem as capital

- The **Donald Trump administration** recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and announces that it plans to shift the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv, stirring outrage from Palestinians.

2023: Recent events:-

- **January 2023:** Israeli forces raid the Palestinian city of Jenin, killing nine people in a shootout.
- **Summer 2023:** Retaliatory attacks flare
- Israel launches surprise airstrikes across the Gaza Strip in May.
- **October 2023:** Israel is attacked by Hamas.
- Prime Minister of Israel, Netanyahu formally declared war on Hamas on Oct. 8 following a surprise assault by Hamas militants that came a day after the 50th anniversary of the start of the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

MUST READ: [India-Israel Industrial R&D & Technological Innovation Fund \(I4F\)](#)

SOURCE: [HINDUSTAN TIMES](#)

PROJECT PRAYAS.

Context: Recently, UN migration agency launched **Project PRAYAS**.

Background:-

- It was launched to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration for Indian workers and students.

About Project PRAYAS:-

- **Launched by:** **The International Organisation for Migration (IOM)** launched Project PRAYAS (Promoting Regular & Assisted Migration for Youth and Skilled Professionals) in partnership with **Ministry of External Affairs**.
- It is a **joint collaboration** between the **IOM India** and **Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA)**.
- **Objective:** to facilitate safe, orderly, and regular migration for Indian workers and students.
- It envisages development of a roadmap for **improved coordination between Central and State Governments** to encourage sharing of best practices between States and enhanced engagement with the MEA on matters related to the international migration cycle.
- It will **consolidate all the state-level initiatives for safe, orderly, and well-managed international migration**.
- The project adheres to the objectives of the **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)** and the **Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF)**.
- It also aligns with **Goal 10.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** to facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people.

Significance:-

- It will **strengthen international migration** governance.
- More than **32 million Indians** and people of Indian origin residing abroad.

MUST READ: [The International Migration Outlook Report 2022](#)

SOURCE: [THE ECONOMICS TIMES](#)



Economy



NATIONAL PENSION SYSTEM (NPS)

Context: Recently, **National Pension System (NPS)** Investors Can Now Choose Multiple Fund Managers To Maximise Returns

Background:-

- The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has issued new guidelines allowing NPS subscribers to select up to three fund managers for various asset classes.

About NPS:-

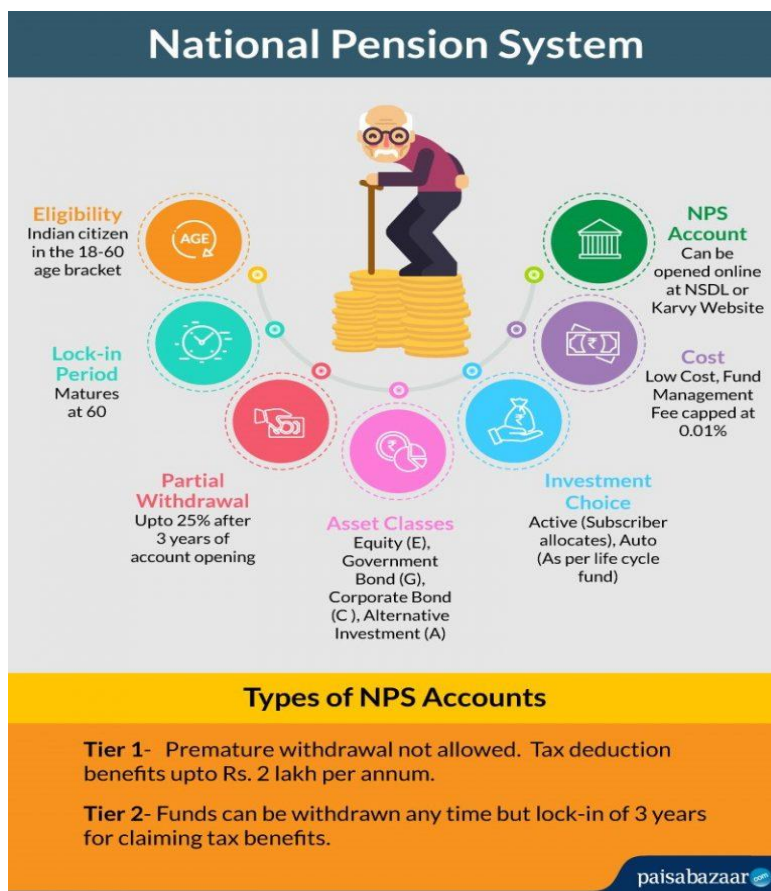


IMAGE SOURCE: [NPS: National Pension Schemes Eligibility, Types, Calculator \(paisabazaar.com\)](https://paisabazaar.com)

- [NPS](#) is a government-sponsored pension scheme, launched in 2004 for government employees and in 2009, it was opened to all sections.

- **Implementation and Regulation Agency:**

- **PFRDA (Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority)** – a statutory body established by the **PFRDA Act, 2013**.

Eligibility:-

- **Any Indian citizen** (Both Resident and Non-Resident) between **18 and 60 years** can join NPS.

- The only condition is that the person **must comply with Know Your Customer (KYC) norms**.
- Not Eligible: **OCI (Overseas Citizens of India)** and **PIO (Person of Indian Origin)** cardholders and Hindu Undivided Family (HUFs).

BENEFITS OF NPS:-

- NPS is a **transparent and cost-effective**.
- **It is portable** - Each employee is identified by a unique number and has a separate Permanent Retirement Account Number (PRAN) which is portable i.e., will remain the same even if an employee gets transferred to any other office.
- **It is regulated** - NPS is regulated by PFRDA.

MUST READ: [National Social Assistance Programme \(NSAP\)](#)

SOURCE: [TIMES NOW](#)

SOVEREIGN GREEN BONDS

Context: Recently, **Sovereign Green Bonds** of Rs. 16,000 crores were raised by the government in 2022-23 for financing renewable energy projects.

About Sovereign Green Bonds:-

- It is financial instruments that are issued by a sovereign entity, inter-governmental group, alliance, or corporation and are **utilized for projects classified as environmentally sustainable**.
- [Green bonds](#) are **issued by companies, countries and multilateral organizations** to exclusively fund projects that have positive environmental or climate benefits and provide investors with fixed-income payments.
- These are issued with a **longer maturity period**.

Challenges associated with Sovereign Green Bonds:-

- **Monitoring challenge:** There would be a challenge with respect to monitoring how this green grading performs.
- **Pricing issue:** Should they be lower than the regular bond or higher is the major question here.
- **Overseas launch:** The downside is that once the government goes global, then credit rating will matter a lot as all bonds issued globally need to be rated.

MUST READ: [Climate Finance](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

FINANCIAL STABILITY BOARD (FSB)

Context: Recently, the **Financial Stability Board (FSB)** in their latest report assessed the risks associated with multi-function crypto-asset intermediaries (MCIs)

Background:-

- The Financial Stability Board (FSB)'s latest report on crypto-asset intermediaries sought measures to enhance cross-border cooperation and information sharing among local authorities

About Financial Stability Board (FSB):-

- **Establishment:** It was established in April 2009 **after the G20 Summit in London** as the **successor to the Financial Stability Forum**.
- **HQ:** **Basel, Switzerland**.
- The board includes all **G20 major economies**.
- The FSB is an international body that **monitors and makes recommendations about the global financial system**.
- **Members:** The FSB consists of 68 member institutions.
 - It comprises several central banks, ministries of finance, and supervisory and regulatory authorities from 25 jurisdictions, as well as 10 international organizations and six Regional Consultative Groups (RCGs).
 - **India is an active Member** of the FSB, having three seats in its Plenary represented by the Secretary (Dept of Economic Affairs), Deputy Governor-RBI, and Chairman-SEBI.
 - The FSB's decisions are **not legally binding** on its members.

Objectives:-

- Assess vulnerabilities affecting the global financial system as well as identify and review, on a timely and ongoing basis within a macro-prudential perspective, the regulatory, supervisory and related actions needed to address these vulnerabilities and their outcomes.
- Promote coordination and information exchange among authorities responsible for financial stability
- Monitor and advise on
 - market developments and their implications for regulatory policy.
 - best practices in meeting regulatory standards.

Functions:-

- It **promotes international financial stability** and strengthens financial system of the world.
- It fosters a **level playing field by encouraging coherent implementation** of policies across sectors and jurisdictions.

About Multifunction crypto-asset intermediaries (MCIs):-

- MCIs are **individual firms, or groups of affiliated firms, that combine a broad range of crypto-asset services, products, and functions typically centred on the operation of a trading platform.**
- It typically combine many services, which may include **exchange, brokerage, dealing, market-making, custody, clearing and asset management activities; issuing, promoting and distributing crypto-assets**, including so-called stablecoins.
- Additionally, some MCIs have **substantial proprietary trading and investment functions**

Structure:-

- They operate their **platforms using a global website** that serves as a primary entry point for services.
- Some have chosen to create country-specific local versions of their platforms with legal structures purportedly separate from their main operations.
- Some **MCIs also establish local subsidiaries** that may receive some level of regulatory permission to provide crypto-asset services to domestic residents, while still connecting to the global platform.

Governance:-

- MCIs do not generally disclose their internal governance, but there are strong indications that independent and robust risk management functions are lacking.

Vulnerabilities of MCIs:-

- **Leverage:** MCIs engaging in proprietary trading or market-making on their own trading platforms could exacerbate the build-up of leverage.
- **Liquidity mismatch:** MCI investment programmes, including staking-as-a-service and yield/earn programmes, create liquidity mismatch.
- **Technological and operational vulnerabilities:** MCIs are susceptible to several technological and operational vulnerabilities.

MUST READ: [Crypto Asset Regulation](#)

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

Context: Recently, the **Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA)** will hold 'National Conference on Responsible Business Conduct 2023.

Background:-

- IICA will hold the 'National Conference on Responsible Business Conduct 2023: Embracing ESG in India' on 14th and 15th December 2023.

About Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA):-

- **Established: 2008.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Corporate Affairs.**
- **IICA** was registered as a society in 2008, under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- It is an autonomous institute.
- It works to deliver opportunities for **research, education, and advocacy.**
- It is also a **think tank that curates a repository of data and knowledge** for policy makers, regulators as well as other stakeholders working in the domain of corporate affairs.
- **Objective:** is to continuously **improve the quality of all corporate financial reporting** in India.

MUST READ : [Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code \(Amendment\) Bill, 2020](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

CLIMATE CHANGE PERFORMANCE INDEX 2023.

Context: Recently, India ranked **7th** on the **climate change performance index 2023.**

Background:-

- India ranked up one spot from the previous one and also **remained among the highest performers.**

About Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI):-

- **Published annually since 2005 by German Watch, New Climate Institute and Climate Action Network International based in Germany.**
- **Objective:** to enhance transparency in international climate politics and enables comparison of climate protection efforts and progress made by individual countries.
- CCPI is **an independent monitoring tool** for tracking the climate protection performance of 59 countries (those of which account for 92% of global greenhouse gas emissions) and the EU.
- The climate protection performance is assessed in four categories:
 - **GHG Emissions (40% of overall score),**
 - **Renewable Energy (20% of overall score),**
 - **Energy Use (20% of overall score) and**
 - **Climate Policy (20% of overall score).**

Key highlights:-

- **Denmark retained the top spot, Estonia and the Philippines** occupied the **second and third ranks.**
- **Saudi Arabia was at the bottom 67th.**
- The host country **United Arab Emirates** occupied the **65th position.**

India's performance:-

- While India is the world's most populous country, it has **relatively low per capita emissions,** the

index said.

- **India's growing energy needs are still being met by its heavy reliance on coal**, along with oil and gas.
- **Suggestions:-**
 - The policies are largely mitigative, yet they should also **focus on transformative adaptation and disaster risk management**.
 - The policymakers should also **adopt ecosystem-based solutions** and consider equity.

MUST READ: [Mitigating Climate Change](#)

SOURCE: [INDIA TODAY](#)

EXCHANGE-TRADED FUNDS (ETFs)

Context: Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has invested Rs 27,105 crore in **exchange-traded funds (ETFs)** during the current fiscal till October, Parliament was informed recently.

Background:-

- EPFO had invested Rs 53,081 crore in the ETFs during the fiscal 2022-23, higher than Rs 43,568 crore in 2021-22, Minister of State for Labour and Employment Rameshwar Teli said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

Understanding Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs)

- ETFs are collections of investments like equities or bonds.
- They allow for large-scale investment in a variety of securities.
- ETFs often have cheaper fees and are more easily traded.
- ETFs are not a one-size-fits-all solution.

Advantages of ETFs:

- Easy to trade, tax efficient, and offer a diversified investment portfolio.
- Provides a diversified portfolio with carefully selected stocks.
- Offers anytime liquidity through exchanges.

Risks of ETFs:

- Trading cost: No-load funds may be less expensive for modest investors.
- Market risk: Subject to market fluctuations and volatility.
- Liquidity risk: Low trading volume or wide bid-ask spreads can affect liquidity and price.
- Regulatory risk: Subject to changing laws and regulations.

Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) Overview

- Under the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India.
- One of the world's largest Social Security Organisations.
- Established with the Employees' Provident Funds Ordinance on November 15, 1951.
- Replaced by the Employees' Provident Funds Act, of 1952.
- Introduced in 1952 as the Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952.

EPFO Schemes

- EPF Scheme 1952: Provides accumulation plus interest upon retirement and death.
- Pension Scheme 1995 (EPS): Provides monthly benefits for superannuation/retirement, disability, survivor, widow(er), and children.
- Insurance Scheme 1976 (EDLI): Provides benefit in case of an employee's death.
- Maximum benefit is 6 lakhs.

MUST READ: [Alternate Investment Fund and Credit Default Swap](#)

SOURCE: [THE ECONOMIC TIMES](#)

SOCIAL STOCK EXCHANGE.

Context: Recently, Unnati became the first entity to list on the **social stock exchange**.

Background:-

- There are 38 more NPOs registered with the NSE SSE, and more listings could be in the offing in the next few months.

About Social Stock Exchange:-

- A platform for investors to invest in select social enterprises or initiatives.
- Functions as a separate segment within existing stock exchanges.
- The Social Enterprise Investment Platform (SEIP) was proposed by the Union Budget in 2019-20 and was constructed by SEBI under the chairmanship of Ishaat Hussain in 2019.

Salient Features:

- It serves private and non-profit sector providers by channeling greater capital.
- Retail investors can only invest in securities offered by for-profit social enterprises.
- Institutional and non-institutional investors can invest in securities issued by SEs.

Eligibility:

- Any **non-profit organization (NPO) or for-profit social enterprise (FPSEs)** that establishes the primacy of social intent would be recognized as a social enterprise (SE), which will make it eligible to be registered or listed on the SSE.
- NPOs can raise money through issuance of **Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP) Instruments** from private placement or public issue, or donations from mutual funds.

About Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP) Instruments :

- Are issued by **NPO**, registered with the **SSE segment** of a recognized stock exchange.
- The Finance Ministry has declared **ZCZP as securities for the purposes of the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956**.
- These instruments will be governed by rules made by the [SEBI](#).

About Zero-coupon bond

- No interest, trades at deep discount.
- Investor's return indicated by difference between purchase price and par value.

MUST READ: [Allowing non-profit organisations to list on social stock exchanges recommended](#)

SOURCE: [BUISINESSLINE](#)

SURRENDER VALUE

Context: Recently, insurance stocks declined up to 5 per cent in trade after the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) proposed a higher **surrender value** and lower charges for life insurance companies in a consultation paper.

Background:-

- An exposure draft released by the insurance regulator pitched for a significant increase in the

surrender value specifically for non-participating insurance products.

- Some modifications are suggested to calculate Surrender Charges.

About Surrender value:-

- **Surrender - indicates the voluntary conclusion of a life insurance policy** opted by the policyholder prior to its maturity or before the occurrence of the insured event.
 - It's a **percentage of the total premiums paid minus any applicable charges or fees.**
- Applies: **toterm insurance policies with a surrender benefit.**
- IRDAI allows term plan holders to surrender their insurance policy.
 - The surrender value payout is only available after three years of policy in effect.
- As per the existing norms, **Policy surrender can occur anytime during the term, provided two full years' premiums have been paid.**
 - In the first year, the IRDAI proposes, offering Adjusted Surrender Value to the policyholder.
 -

About the Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India (IRDAI):-

- **Nodal Ministry:Ministry of Finance**
- **Head Office: Hyderabad.**
- It is an **autonomous and statutory body** established under the **IRDA Act 1999.**
- **Objective:** To protect the interests of policyholders, to regulate, promote and ensure orderly growth of the insurance industry in India.
- **Composition:** IRDAI is a **10-member body** appointed by the Government of India.
 - It has a **Chairman, five full-time members, and four part-time members.**
- **Functions:-**
 - Fair regulation of insurance industry.
 - Regulatory oversight of insurance companies.
 - Protection of policyholders' interests.
 - Licensing and norms for insurance intermediaries.

MUST READ:[The Securities Appellate Tribunal \(SAT\)](#)

SOURCE: [HINDU BUSINESS LINE](#)

LEADS REPORT 2023

Context: LEADS report 2023 was released recently.

Background:-

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, and Textiles, Sh. Piyush Goyal released the “Logistics Ease Across Different State (LEADS) 2023” report in New Delhi on 16th December 2023.
- Tamil Nadu has retained the top slot in the logistics ease across different states (LEADS) 2023 rankings.

AboutLEADS report:-

- **Launched: 2018.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Commerce & Industry.**
- Launched by: **Commerce and Industry Ministry and Deloitte.**

- It ranks states on the **score of their logistics services and efficiency**, quality and capacity of **key infrastructure such as road, rail and warehousing** that are indicative of economic growth.

Key Highlights of LEADS Report 2023:-

- The **5th edition** of the LEADS annual exercise signaled a **positive shift in States' performance** across the key pillars – Logistics Infrastructure, Logistics Services and Operating and Regulatory Environment.
- This report is based on a **pan-India primary survey, conducted between May and July 2023**, covering across 36 States/UTs.

Performance Highlights:

- **Coastal Group**
 - Achievers: Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu
 - Fast Movers: Kerala, Maharashtra
 - Aspirers: Goa, Odisha, West Bengal
- **Landlocked Group**
 - Achievers: Haryana, Punjab, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh
 - Fast Movers: Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand
 - Aspirers: Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand
- **North-East Group**
 - Achievers: Assam, Sikkim, Tripura
 - Fast Movers: Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland
 - Aspirers: Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram
- **Union Territories**
 - Achievers: Chandigarh, Delhi
 - Fast Movers: Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep, Puducherry
 - Aspirers: Daman & Diu/ Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh

MUST READ: [LEADS Report 2021](#)

SOURCE: [FINANCIAL EXPRESS](#)

SECURITIES APPELLATE TRIBUNAL (SAT)

Context: The **Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT)** recently, quashed regulator Sebi's order banning Future Retail chairperson Kishore Biyani and some other promoters from the securities market for one year in an insider trading case.

Background:-

- Dismissing the Sebi's order, the appellate tribunal said that the **entities did not trade in the shares of Future Retail Ltd (FRL)** on the basis of unpublished price sensitive information (UPSI) relating to demerger as such information was already in the public domain through multiple media reports.

About Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT):-

- **Established: 2014.**
- **HQ: Mumbai.**

- It is under the jurisdiction of **Ministry of Finance**.
- It is a **statutory body** established under the provisions of the **Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992**.
- **Objective:** to hear and dispose of appeals against orders passed by the SEBI or by an adjudicating officer under the Act. It has **same powers as those vested in a civil court**.
- Further, SAT hears and disposes of appeals against orders passed by the:-
 - **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** under the **PFRDA Act, 2013**.
 - **Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** under the Insurance Act, 1938,
 - **General Insurance Business (Nationalization) Act, 1972** and
 - **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999**
- **Composition:** It consists of a **Presiding Officer and two other Members**.
- **Appeal:** If any person feels aggrieved by SAT's decision or order **can appeal to the Supreme Court**.

MUST READ: [\(SEBI\) extends trading ban on Agri commodities](#)

SOURCE: [THE ECONOMICS TIMES](#)

CONSUMER HELPLINE 2.0

Context: The **Consumer Helpline 2.0** was inaugurated recently on National Consumer Day.

Background:-

- The National Consumer Day is observed every year in India on **24th December** and the **World Consumer Rights Day** on 15 March.
- The [Consumer Protection Act, 2019](#) was passed by the Parliament in August 2019 to replace the Consumer Protection Act, of 1986.

About National Consumer Helpline 2.0:-

- **Launched: 2023.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.**
- **Objective:** to provide telephonic advice, information and guidance to empower Indian consumers and persuade businesses to reorient their policy and management systems to address consumer concerns and grievances adopting world-class standards.

Salient Features:-

- At the pre-litigation level, the National Consumer Helpline 2.0 **serves as an alternative dispute resolution method**.
- It is **available in over 17 languages**.

Benefits of NCH:-

National Consumer Helpline supports consumers by:-

- **Providing information** related to Companies and Regulatory Authorities.
- **Facilitating consumers in filing complaints** against defaulting Service Providers.
- **Empowering consumers** to use available Consumer Grievances Redressal Mechanisms, Educating Consumers about their Rights and Responsibilities.

MUST READ: [Central Consumer Protection Authority \(CCPA\)](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

PENSION FUND REGULATORY AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (PFRDA)

Context: Recently, **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** has allowed National Pension System (NPS) subscribers to deposit their contributions through the convenience of the Unified

Payments Interface (UPI) QR code.

Background:-

- The introduction of QR code - UPI for D-Remit is a positive & revolutionary step towards making NPS contributions more accessible, efficient, and flexible.

About Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA):-

- **Established: 2003.**
- **HQ: New Delhi.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Finance.**
- **Objective:** to oversee the National Pension System (NPS), and regulate India's pensions sector.
- The interim **PFRDA transitioned into the PFRDA** with the passage of **Pension Fund Regulatory Development Authority (PFRDA) Act, 2013.**
- It consists of a **Chairperson and not more than six members**, of whom at least three shall be whole-time members, to be appointed by the Central Government.

Functions:-

- Promoting pension schemes to secure the old age financial requirements of retired individuals.
- Regulating pension schemes under PFRDA act (NPS and Atal Pension Yojana).
- Governing and supervising Tier-1 and Tier-2 accounts.
- Registering and regulating intermediaries like Central Record-Keeping Agency (CRA), Pension Fund Managers, etc.
- Establishing a grievance redressal mechanism.
- Regulating the regulated assets.

MUST READ: [Old Pension vs New Pension Scheme \(NPS\)](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES CENTRES AUTHORITY (IFSCA)

Context: Recently, the Prime Minister, during his speech at the Infinity Forum 2.0, emphasised making **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)** a global hub of Sustainable Finance.

Background:-

- IFSCA has undertaken numerous regulatory initiatives for the development of financial instruments at IFSC to facilitate capital flows towards climate action in India and other developing countries.

About International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA):-

- **Establishment: April 2020.**
- **HQ: GIFT City, Gandhinagar in Gujarat.**
- It is a **statutory authority** established under the **International Financial Services Centres Authority Act, 2019 ("IFSCA Act")**.
- **Objective:** To develop and regulate the financial products, financial services, and financial institutions in the International Financial Services Centres ('IFSC').

Historical Background:-

- Before the establishment of IFSCA, the **domestic financial regulators, namely, RBI, SEBI, PFRDA and IRDAI regulated** the business in IFSC.

- **GIFT-IFSC** is the maiden IFSC in India.

Salient Features:-

- Its main objective is to develop a **strong global connection**.
- It also aims to **ensure inter-regulatory coordination** within the financial sector.
- **Structure of IFSCA:** It consists of **nine members**, appointed by the **central government**.

About Infinity Forum 2.0:-

- **Hosted by:** IFSCA and [Gujarat International Finance Tec-City, GIFT City](#).
- **Theme 'GIFT-IFSC: Nerve Centre for New Age Global Financial Services.'**
- The Infinity Forum is a **global thought leadership platform on financial services**.

MUST READ: [National Stock Exchange \(NSE\) and Bombay Stock Exchange \(BSE\)](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

CARD-ON-FILE TOKENISATION (COFT)

Context: Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has enabled **card-on-file tokenisation (CoFT)** through card-issuing banks and institutions.

Background:-

- It is to make digital payments more secure, safe and sound.

About Card-on-File Tokenization:-

- The central bank implemented [CoFT](#) in **2022**.
- **Objective:** to enhance convenience for cardholders in getting tokens created and linking them to their existing accounts with e-commerce applications.
- Tokenization is the **replacement of actual credit and debit card details** with an alternate code called the "token", which will be unique for a combination of card, token requestor, and device.
- **Significance:** The move will facilitate the creation and linking of tokens to cardholders' existing accounts with e-commerce applications.

Benefits of tokenization:-

- **Enhanced safety and security**
- **Quicker checkouts**
- **No more 'False Declines'**
- **Easy card management**

MUST READ: [Open Network for Digital Commerce \(ONDC\)](#)

SOURCE: [BUSINESS STANDARD](#)



GEOGRAPHY



INDIA METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT (IMD)

Context: Recently, the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** has predicted a wet spell with thunderstorm activity over Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Background:-

- It has also predicted isolated heavy rainfall over coastal Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal and Kerala.

About India Meteorological Department (IMD):-

- **Established: 1875.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Earth Sciences.**
- **IMD Headquarters: New Delhi.**
- It is the **National Meteorological Service** of the country.

Objectives:-

- To warn against severe weather phenomena **tropical cyclones, duststorms, heavy rains and snow, cold and heat waves**, etc.,
- To conduct and promote **research in meteorology and allied disciplines.**
- To provide **meteorological statistics required** for agriculture, water resource management, industries, oil exploration and other nation-building activities.

The IMD uses 4 colour codes:-

- **Green (All is well):** No advisory is issued.
- **Yellow (Be aware):** Yellow indicates **severely bad weather** spanning several days.
- **Orange/Amber (Be prepared):** The orange alert is issued as a **warning of extremely bad weather**
- **Red (Take Action):** When **extremely bad weather conditions** are certainly going to disrupt travel and power and pose significant risk to life, the red alert is issued.

MUST READ:[The India Meteorological Department \(IMD\) may introduce new monsoon models](#)

SOURCE: [AIR](#)

MOUNT MARAPI

Context: Recently, the volcano **Mount Marapi** erupted.

Background:-

- Mount Marapi (Mount of Fire) in Indonesia erupted, with 23 people dead or presumed dead.

About Mount Marapi:-

- **Location: West Sumatra, Indonesia** (Located on the Pacific Ring of Fire).
- Merapi a **stratovolcano**, is the combination of two Javanese words: “**Meru**” which means “Mountain” and “**api**” which means “fire.”
- Mount Merapi sits on a subduction zone where the Indo-Australian Plate subducts under the **Eurasian Plate**
- Merapi is **the youngest volcano in southern Java.**
- It is also the **most active volcano** in Indonesia.

MUST READ: [Mt. Mauna Loa](#)

SOURCE: [INDIA TODAY](#)

KAMBALAKONDA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Context: Recently, a first-of-its-kind Eastern Ghats Nature Interpretation Centre, located along the periphery of the Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary opened up.

Background:-

- The new Nature Interpretation Centre, a separate section at the recently-inaugurated Eastern Ghats Biodiversity Centre near PM Palem, is an immersive experience of traversing through the diverse ecosystems of the region that has long awaited systematic documentation.

About Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary:-

- **Location:** Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. The sanctuary derives its name from the local hill, Kambalakonda.
- **Vegetation:** Dry evergreen forests and scrubland.
- It was declared a Wildlife Sanctuary in 1970 under the Wildlife Protection Act of India, 1972.

Biodiversity:-

- It is Home to Indian leopards, deer species, wild boar, jackals, reptiles, birds, and medicinal plants.
- **Flora:** Predominantly dry evergreen forests with moist deciduous patches.
- **Fauna:** The indicator species is the Indian leopard. Other species found here are Indian clouded gecko, bulbuls, barbets, cuckoos, flycatchers, hornbills and leafbirds, starlings.

MUST READ: [Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary \(KWS\)](#)

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

INDIRA GANDHI ZOOLOGICAL PARK (IGZP)

Context: Recently, the Indira Gandhi Zoological Park (IGZP) got two new species from Warangal Zoo as part of an animal exchange programme.

Background:-

- As part of the exchange, the IGZP has received Mouse Deer and Chowsinga (four horned antelope).
- In return, the zoo is sparing hog deer, barking deer and Lutino Parakeets.

About Indira Gandhi Zoological Park (IGZP):-

- **Location:** Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh, is located amidst Seethakonda Reserve Forest.
- Being a Large category Zoo recognized by the Central Zoo Authority it houses 843 number of animals like mammals, carnivores, lesser carnivores, canids, ungulates, reptiles, birds and butterflies belonging to 123 species in a natural ambience.
- This place is also home to many free-ranging animals and birds owing to its existence in a forest area close to Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary.

MUST READ: [Wildlife Protection](#)

SOURCE: [TIMES OF INDIA](#)

VALMIKI TIGER RESERVE

Context: Reduced human activity, including mining bans, helped increase tiger numbers in Valmiki Tiger

VALMIKI TIGER RESERVE

reserve as per recent data.

Background:-

- Authorities in Bihar's Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR) have credited the rise in the protected area (PA)'s big cat numbers to a reduction in human activities, including restrictions on illegal mining in its eco-sensitive zone.

About Valmiki Tiger reserve:-

IMAGE SOURCE: wpsi-india.org

- **Location:** West Champaran district, Bihar.

- Valmiki Tiger Reserve forms the **easternmost limit of the Himalayan Terai forests** in India.
- **Wild mammals found** in the forests of Valmiki Tiger Reserve include **tiger, sloth bear, leopard, wild dog, bison, wild boar, etc.**
- **Flora:** The vegetation types include mainly Moist mixed deciduous, Open-land vegetation, Sub-mountainous semi-evergreen formation, Freshwater swamps, Riparian fringes, alluvial grasslands, high hill savannah and Wetlands.
- In 1978, it was designated as a **Wildlife Sanctuary**.

MUST READ: [Kali Tiger Reserve](#)

SOURCE: [DOWN TO EARTH](#)

KATARNIAGHAT WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Context: Recently a watchman was trampled to death by elephants near Uttar Pradesh's **Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary**.

Background:-A few people found the victim's mutilated body in the bushes of the forest, the officials said.

About Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary (KWS):-

- **Location:** Uttar Pradesh. It was brought under the purview of the 'Project Tiger' in 1987.
- Its fragile **Terai ecosystem** comprises a mosaic of **sal and teak forests, lush grasslands, numerous swamps, and wetlands**.
- [Katarniaghat](#) Forest provides strategic connectivity between the tiger habitats of Dudhwa and Kishanpur in India and the Bardia National Park (Nepal). The Gairwa river flows in the sanctuary area is declared as a sanctuary for **Mugger and Gharials**.
- It is among the few places in India where **Gangetic dolphins (freshwater dolphins) are found in their natural habitat**.
- **Fauna:** Endangered species including, tiger, rhino, swamp deer, hispid hare, Bengal florican, the white-backed and long-billed vultures.
- **Flora:** Its fragile Terai ecosystem comprises a mosaic of sal and teak forests, lush grasslands, numerous swamps and wetlands.

MUST READ: [Wildlife Institute of India \(WII\)](#)

SOURCE: [HINDUSTAN TIMES](#)



Environment and Ecology



FARLOWICHNUS RAPIDUS

Context: Recently, Scientists Discovered A New Dinosaur Species, **Farlowichnus rapidus** From Footprints In Brazil.

Background:-

- The new species, called Farlowichnus rapidus, was a small carnivorous animal about the size of a modern-day seriema bird, or about 60-90 cm tall.

About Farlowichnus rapidus:-

- It was a **small carnivorous** animal, It lived in the **desert**.
- From the large distance between the footprints found, it is possible to deduce that it was a very fast reptile that ran across the ancient dunes.
- The early **Cretaceous period** stretched from 100 to 145 million years ago.

Significance:-

- The discovery not only **enhances our understanding of ancient desert ecosystems**.
- It also underscores **the importance of continuous exploration** and analysis of fossil records.

MUST READ: [Saltwater crocodile](#)

SOURCE: [BBC](#)

NUGU WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Context: Recently, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has recommended to the authorities that the **Nugu Wildlife Sanctuary** abutting the Bandipur Tiger Reserve be declared as a core critical tiger habitat.

Background:-

- This followed a site visit by Assistant Inspector General of Forests, NTCA, and Ms. Harini Venugopal. The visit followed a slew of issues raised by conservation activist Giridhar Kulkarni pertaining to Bandipur.

About Nugu Wildlife Sanctuary:-

- **Location:** Mysuru district, Karnataka.
- **Geographic Area:** In 1974 Nugu was declared as **Wildlife Sanctuary** and it encompasses **30.32 sq km** and receives rainfall of **1000mm**.
- Most of the vegetation in the forests is **dry, deciduous**, interspersed with patches of plantations.
- Nugu is a vulnerable area as far as **human–elephant conflicts are concerned**.
- It was added to the **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve** in the year **2003-2004**.
- **Flora:** Anogeissus latifolia, Tectonia grandis, Terminalia tomentosa etc.
- **Fauna:** elephant, leopards, jungle cats, wild pig, spotted deer, sambar deer, barking deer, etc.

MUST READ: [Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary](#)

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

UNFCCC COP 28.

Context: The Adaptation Fund head expressed worries about not receiving adequate funds at **UNFCCC COP 28.**

Background of the issue:-

- The Adaptation Fund, the **global body that finances projects for vulnerable communities** in developing countries to adapt to climate change.
 - It was established **under the Kyoto Protocol of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.**
 - It **finances projects and programmes that help vulnerable communities** in developing countries adapt to climate change.
- It has only received around half of the funds at the ongoing COP28 compared to what it minimally requires.
- In March, the Adaptation Fund Board has calculated that **at least \$300 million is required** and expected that fund to be raised at COP28.
- But so far, **only around \$165 million** has been promised.
- Earlier, during informal consultations, developing countries expressed disappointment that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's Standing Committee on Finance had failed to arrive at a baseline for the doubling of adaptation finance.

About COP28:-

- The 28th meeting of the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).**
- The **Conference of Parties (COP)** is the decision-making body.
- It reviews and guides the implementation of the Convention.
- The '**parties**' are governments that have signed the **UNFCCC.**
- The UNFCCC is the parent treaty of the **2015 Paris Agreement** and the **1997 Kyoto Protocol.**
- The COP rotates the office of the COP President among the five UN regional groups.
- Expected focus: transitioning to sustainable energy production and reducing fossil fuel reliance.

Key Issues at COP28:-

- **Global Divide in Climate Responsibility:** Developed countries feel disproportionately burdened by climate action.
- **1.5 Degree Celsius Target:** Addressing resource and trust deficits in climate action.
- Paris Agreement and Kyoto Protocol: Recognizing 'Common but Differentiated Responsibilities' principle.
- **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM):** Adapting carbon content of imports to domestic prices.
- **Unfulfilled Commitment:** Developed countries pledged \$100 billion in climate finance from 2020.
- Progress: Developed nations are expected to claim fulfilment of this promise at COP28, though it remains inadequate compared to the trillions required for climate action.
 - Issue: The greater challenge lies in negotiating additional funding beyond the **\$100 billion** annually, commencing next year.

MUST READ: [COP 27: A field guide to climate jargon](#)

SOURCE: [DOWN TO EARTH](#)

INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE (INC)

Context: Recently, the **Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC)**, under the United Nations Environment Programme, met in Nairobi.

Key highlights:-

- INC-3 was a crucial stage in negotiations for an international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution.
- Under UNEA Resolution 5/14, the INC is tasked with delivering a global plastics treaty by 2025.
- The 'zero draft' text, developed by the Committee's Secretariat, contained options for core obligations and control measures.
- The zero draft was a starting point for negotiations, catering to ambitions at all levels: Strong, binding, moderate, flexible, weak, and voluntary.

About Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC):-

- **Established in 2022** at the 5th session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.
- Aims to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including marine pollution.
- The instrument should include marine, land, and water plastic pollution and promote sustainable production and consumption through circular economy approaches.
- Countries are expected to **develop, implement, and update** national action plans to contribute to the instrument's objectives.
- The INC engages with stakeholders across the value chain of plastics production at various levels.
- The **INC is assisted by the IUCN** for a strong global plastics treaty.

Mitigation Efforts to Reduce Plastic in India:-

- The Indian government has implemented **bans on certain single-use plastic** items known to cause environmental harm.
- **National Frameworks and Policies:** The Plastic Waste Management Rules (2016), focus on reducing plastic waste, enhancing recycling, and phasing out the use of non-recyclable plastics.
- The **Swachh Bharat Mission**, a nationwide campaign to clean up the streets, roads, and infrastructure of India's cities and rural areas, addresses plastic waste as a significant component of municipal solid waste.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):** Under the EPR framework, producers, importers, and brand owners are held responsible for the collection and processing of post-consumer plastic waste, ensuring a reduction in plastic waste leakage into the environment.

MUST READ: [Global Treaty on Pollution](#)

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

INDIAN BISON

Context: Recently, the Koya tribe rode the eco-friendly wave to help conserve the **Indian Bison** of Eastern Ghats.

Background:-

- In a move to conserve the Indian Bison in their forests, the indigenous Koya tribe inhabiting the Papikonda hill range in Andhra Pradesh has made an exemplary transition by shedding the use of bison horns to make their traditional flute, Permakore, and replacing it with an instrument made

of eco-friendly palm leaf.

About Indian Bison:-

- Indian Bison are **one of the largest extant bovines**. ([Wildlife Institute of India \(WII\)](#))
- It is one of the **largest species among the wild cattle**, reaching a shoulder height of up to 220 cm.
- The Indian gaur, a reclusive beast that **lives in the wild**.
- They are found on the forested hills and grassy areas of south to **Southeast Asia**.
- In India, they are found in **Nagarhole, Bandipur, Masinagudi National Parks and BR Hills**.

Threats:-

- Food Scarcity, Poaching, Habitat Loss due to deforestation and commercial plantations.

Conservation status:-

- **Wild Life Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I.**
- **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List: Vulnerable.**

About Koya tribe:-

- The Koya population is **primarily found in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha**.
- They speak the **Koya language**, which belongs to the **Dravidian language family**.
- They **practice Podu form of shifting cultivation**, as practiced by various tribal groups in forest areas has for long been an economic survival versus environmental sustenance issue.
- They held **ST status in Chattisgarh** but they were **not granted ST status in their migrated states such as Telangana**.
- Koyas popularly call themselves as **Dorala Sattam (Lords group)** and **Putta Dora (original lords)**.
- The **Godavari and Sabari Rivers** which flow through their area of habitation exercise profound influence on Koyas' economic, social and cultural life.

MUST READ: [New Breeds of Indian Council of Agricultural Research \(ICAR\)-National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources \(NBAGR\)](#)

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

MEGAMOUTH SHARK

Context: Recently, the First EVER Pregnant **Megamouth Shark** Washes Up On Philippines Beach.

Background:-

- The 18-foot shark was discovered in Aurora, the Philippines, and was pregnant with seven pups that had been ejected from her body.

About Megamouth Shark:-

- **Scientific Name: Megachasma pelagios**
- It was first discovered in **1976 off the coast of Hawaii**.
- Size: Up to 5.5 meters (18 feet) in length.
- It has a large mouth, bulbous head, rubbery lip, and dark grey/black body with a white underbelly.
- Diet: Filter feeder, consuming **plankton, jellyfish, and small fish**.
- It swims with its **mouth wide open**, filtering water for plankton and jellyfish. ([National](#)

[Surveillance Programme for Aquatic Animal Diseases\)](#)

- It is recognizable from its **large head with rubbery lips**.
- A relatively poor swimmer, the megamouth has a **soft, flabby body and lacks caudal keels**.
- Reproduction is **ovoviviparous**.

Conservation Status:- IUCN: Least Concern.

MUST READ: [Zebrafish](#)

SOURCE: [TIMES NOW](#)

INDIAN TENT TURTLES

Context: Recently, DRI rescued 436 baby **Indian Tent Turtles** in Lucknow.

Background:-

- Acting on the basis of specific intelligence developed by Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Zonal Unit, Lucknow, seized 436 baby Indian Tent turtles from a person illegally transporting them interstate.

About Indian Tent Turtles:-

- The **colour of the turtles also varies** according to each subspecies.
- Subspecies tentoria has an olive or brownish head with a red postocular spot, the carapace is brown in colour with amber or hazel stripe in the first three vertebrae and the plastron is yellow with black blotches.
- A **semi-aquatic species** mainly found in rivers and associated systems.
- Reproduction is **oviparous**.
- **Distribution:-**
 - The species is **native to India, Nepal and Bangladesh**, with three subspecies recorded from the region viz., P. t. tentoria, P. t. circumdata and P. t. flaviventer. P. t. tentoria occurs in peninsular India and is recorded from Orissa, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Madhya Pradesh. P. t. circumdata occurs in the western tributaries of the Ganga and the rivers of Gujarat.
- **Threats:** Damming of river, habitat degradation.

Conservation Status:-

- IUCN: Least concern
- IWPA: Schedule I
- CITES: Appendix II

MUST READ: [National Marine Turtle Action Plan](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

ENDOTHELIO TROPIC HERPESVIRUS SUBTYPES (EEHV)

Context: A recently undertaken study of **endotheliotropic herpesvirus subtypes (EEHV)** might help in the development of diagnostics & therapeutics.

Background:-

- The research on the path-epidemiology or the study of the determinants, occurrence, and distribution of the disease can help develop sero-diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutics against the disease.
- The study by ICAR-Indian Veterinary Research Institute (ICAR-IVRI), Izatnagar, Bareilly, supported

by Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), an attached institution of Department of Science and Technology, has found the exact status of EEHV and its subtypes circulating among Asian elephant population in India.

About Endotheliotropic herpesvirus subtypes (EEHV):-

- It is a type of herpesvirus that can cause a **highly fatal haemorrhagic disease in young Asian elephants**.
 - It belongs to the **Herpesviridae family and specifically affects elephants**.
 - Subtypes : **EEHV1A** (being the most common and associated with severe disease in young Asian elephants), **EEHV1B** and **EEHV2**
- **Transmission:**
 - EEHV **spreads primarily through contact with infected bodily fluids like saliva, blood, or urine**.
 - Additionally, indirect transmission via **contaminated objects**, including equipment and surfaces, poses a risk.
 - Elephant dies of massive **internal bleeding and symptoms which are hardly visible**.

Diagnosis:-

- PCR testing to detect the virus in bodily fluids, serology to identify antibodies, and biopsies for microscopic examination.

Treatment:-

- Presently, there's **no specific antiviral treatment** for EEHV-HD.
- **Supportive care** through intravenous fluids, blood transfusions etc to alleviate symptoms and enhance survival chances.

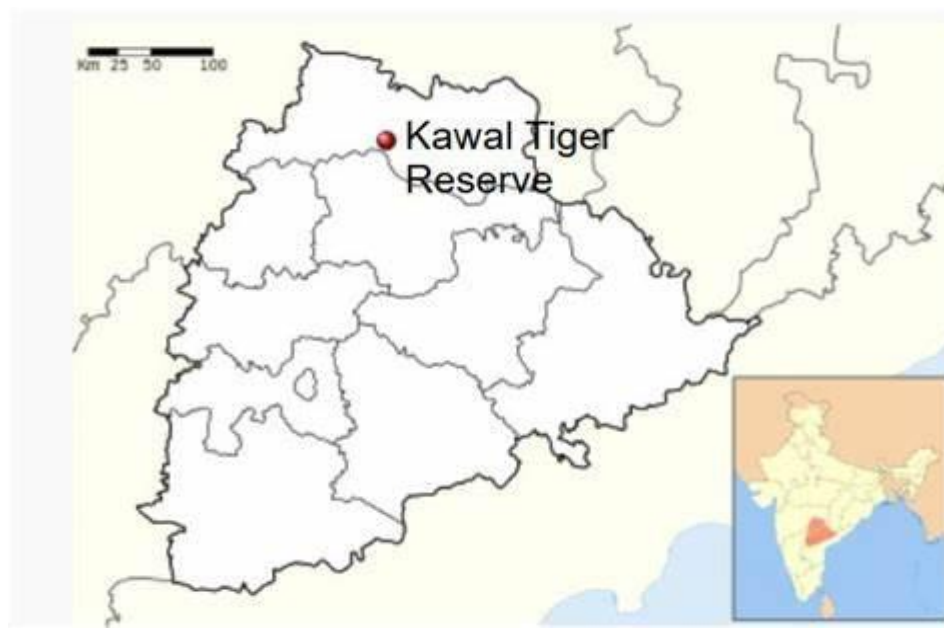
MUST READ:[Endangered Asian elephant in Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

KAWAL TIGER RESERVE

Context: Kawal Tiger Reserve turned into a haven for smooth-coated otters recently.

Background:-



- These creatures live along the banks of the Kadam River, on the bunds of the canals, and also on the banks of the Godavari River.

About Kawal Tiger Reserve:-

IMAGE SOURCE:
[adivasi resurgence.com](#)

- **Location: Telangana.**
- Kawal Tiger Reserve is in the **North Eastern part of Telangana.**
- The reserve is flanked

by the **Godavari River** and **River Kadam** (a tributary of Godavari) flows through this area.

- Kawal Wildlife Sanctuary was declared a **Tiger Reserve in 2012**.
- **Vegetation:** Southern Tropical Dry Deciduous Forest.
- **Flora:** Teak and Bamboo stands, Anogeissus latifolia, Mitragyna parviflora, Terminalia crenulata, Terminalia Arjuna, Boswellia serrata, and many more.
- **Fauna:** nilgai, chousinga, chinkara, black buck, sambar, spotted deer, wild dog, wolf, jackal, fox, tiger, leopard, and jungle cat etc.

About Smooth-Coated Otter:-

- Smooth-coated otter is **characterised by a very smooth, sleek pelage, strong swimmers and hunt in groups**
- Their **eyes and ears are small, the tail is flattened, limbs are short and strong**, and the fore and hind paws are large and **well-webbed**.
- These otters have generally been described as fish specialists.
- Found: in **lowlands, coastal mangrove forests, peat swamp forests, freshwater wetlands, large forested rivers, lakes, and rice paddies**.

Threats:-

- Construction of large hydroelectric projects
- Conversion of wetlands for settlements and agriculture
- Reduction in prey biomass
- Poaching and
- Contamination of waterways by pesticides.

Conservation Status:- IUCN Red List: Vulnerable

MUST READ: [Global Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards \(CA|TS\)](#)

SOURCE: [THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS](#)

FANGED FROG SPECIES

Context: Recently, World's Tiniest **Fanged Frog Species** Found Lurking in The Indonesian Jungle.

Background:-

- The lush, volcanic hills of Sulawesi in Indonesia are home to several species of fanged frogs with unusual reproductive habits, including Limnonectes larvaepartus – the only species of frog in the world known to give birth to live tadpoles.

About Fanged Frog Species:-

- **Distinctive Features:** Notable for fang-like structures, which are projections of their jaw bone. Fangs are used in **battles for territory and mates and capture tough-shelled prey** like giant centipedes and crabs. It is the **smallest species among fanged frogs**.
- **Distribution:** East and Southeast Asia.
- Adults are **brown in color**.
- It earned the nickname "**leaf-nester**" as they do not lay eggs in water instead they make nests on tree leaves or moss-covered boulders away from water, with males guarding the eggs.

MUST READ: [Jerdon's narrow-mouthed frog \(Uperodon montanus\)](#)

SOURCE: [SCIENCE ALERT](#)

VIOLA ARVENSIS.

Context: Recent studies show shows signs of self-pollination in plant **Viola arvensis**.

Background:-

- In the first evidence of rapid evolution, scientists have discovered a flower growing in Paris, France is producing less nectar and smaller flowers to attract fewer pollinators.
- The scientists also found evidence that the plant field pansy, scientifically known as *Viola arvensis*, is self-pollinating, as indicated the research.
- Ongoing convergent evolution of a selfing syndrome threatens plant-pollinator interactions, said the paper published in the journal *New Phytologist*.

About *Viola arvensis*:-

- **Distribution:** It is native to **Europe, western Asia, and North Africa**.
- **Leaf arrangement**
 - **Is alternate** ie; there is one leaf per node along the stem.
 - The edge of the **leaf blade has teeth**.
- The flower
 - Is **bilaterally symmetrical**.
 - There are **five petals, sepals, or tepals** in the flower.
 - Both **petals and sepals are separate** and not fused.
- The fruit is **dry and splits open when ripe**.

MUST READ:[Lantana Camara](#)

SOURCE: [DOWN TO EARTH](#)

PANTOEA TAGOREI.

Context: Recently, Scientists discovered a plant growth-promoting bacterium, **Pantoea Tagorei**.

Background:-

- It was named after **Rabindranath Tagore**.

About *Pantoea Tagorei*:-

- *Pantoea Tagorei* was discovered from soil samples collected in the **Jharia coal mines**.
- The bacteriah as unique properties **beneficial for plant growth**. ([Disease Surveillance System](#))
- It **solubilizes potassium and phosphorus** and **replenishes nitrogen** exhibiting properties of aiding in enhanced plant growth.
- The bacteria have been **introduced to farmers in and around the coal mines** and they have expressed satisfaction with the positive results.

Possible Uses:-

- A significant stride toward fostering environmentally friendly and sustainable agricultural methods.
- Can help revive degraded lands.
- Promote organic farming.

MUST READ: [New species of black corals](#)

SOURCE: [THE ECONOMIC TIMES](#)

WANG'S GARDEN LIZARD

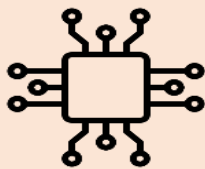
Context: Recently, a new reptile species **Wang's Garden Lizard** was discovered in China.

About Wang's Garden Lizard:-

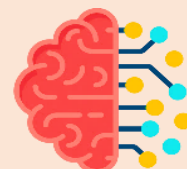
- **Scientific Name:** **Calotes wangi**.
- The lizard has been named **Calotes wangi** or **Wang's garden lizard**.
- It measures under **9 centimetres long**.
- It has an **orange-hued tongue** that distinguishes it.
- The name **honors Professor Yuezhao Wang**, former director of the Chengdu Institute of Biology's herpetology museum, for his contributions.
- It lies on **sloping shrub branches at night**, sleeping close to the branches.
- It eats a variety of **insects, spiders, and other arthropods**. ([Wildlife Protection](#))
- It is active from April to October every year, while in the tropics it is active from **March to November or even longer**.

MUST READ: [Bengal monitor lizard](#)

SOURCE: [MSN](#)



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



HH 1177 SYSTEM

Context: Recently, for the first time, astronomers have glimpsed a young star **HH 1177 system** outside the Milky Way galaxy.

Background:-

- Newborn stars with these circumstellar disks had been observed by astronomers only in our Milky Way galaxy - until now

About HH 1177 system:-

- It is a massive star, with a rotating disk that was **spotted in the Large Magellanic Cloud**, a neighbouring dwarf galaxy that's about 160,000 light-years away.
- A colossal star such as HH 1177 lives fast and dies young with a less life span.
- This shortened timeline makes the **early stages of a massive star hard to observe in our galaxy**.
- HH 1177 is within a **stellar nursery, called N180** that has less dust and lower metal abundance.
- A newborn star **grows in size by pulling in matter from its surroundings**.
- **The gas and dust accumulate in a flat disk around the star**, known as an **accretion disk**, as a result of strong gravitational forces.
- The **spinning disk transports** the matter onto the star, which gets increasingly larger.
- The **greater the star's mass, the more powerful its gravitational field becomes**, thereby pulling more gas and dust into the disk.
- **MUST READ:** [Dark galaxy](#)

SOURCE: [CNN](#)

HEMOCHROMATOSIS

Context: Recent studies show that High iron levels raise the possibility of hereditary **hemochromatosis (HH)**.

Background:- Hemochromatosis or 'bronze diabetes', the rare genetic disorder that causes organ dysfunction - its causes, signs, and treatment.

About Hemochromatosis:-

- It causes your **body to absorb too much iron from the food you eat**.
- Excess iron is stored in your organs, especially your **liver, heart, and pancreas**.
- Too much iron can lead to life-threatening conditions, such as **liver disease, heart problems, and diabetes**
- **Symptoms:-**Such as - Joint pain, abdominal pain, fatigue, diabetes, impotence etc

Causes:-

- Mostly by a **change in a gene** which controls the amount of iron your body absorbs from food.
- The altered gene is passed from parents to children. This type is the most common type. It's called **hereditary hemochromatosis**.

Treatment:-

- **Phlebotomy** is the standard treatment for primary hemochromatosis.
- In this, iron toxicity is reduced by **removing red blood cells**, the body's main mobilizer of iron.

MUST READ: [India's Health Sector](#)

SOURCE: [OREGON](#)

'COSMIC VINE'

Context: Recently, James Webb Space Telescope recently discovered the 'Cosmic Vine' of 20 connected galaxies in the early universe.

Background:-

- Astronomers using James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) data have discovered a massive chain of at least 20 closely packed galaxies from the early universe, and it could reveal insight into how the most massive structures in the cosmos form.

About Cosmic Vine:-

- It is a **very ancient and** massive “**vine-like structure**” that encompasses **20 galaxies** and stretches for over 13 light years.
- The researchers pegged it at **redshift 3.44**, meaning it's situated in the early universe.

Unique Characteristics:-

- It is exceptionally lengthy and vast, surpassing the size of other known compact galaxy groups at similar redshifts.
- It **harbours two of the most massive galaxies** ever discovered at such a high redshift—**Galaxy A and Galaxy E**, both in a quiescent state, indicating a reduced rate of star formation.

Significance:-

- It offers new perspectives on the formation and evolution of massive galaxies.
- It suggests that massive quiescent galaxies can form within expanding large-scale structures, contrary to some earlier models.

MUST READ: [IN-SPACE](#)

SOURCE: [SPACE](#)

GUILLAIN-BARRE SYNDROME

Context: Recent research found out that the risk of developing 'extremely rare' **Guillain-Barre syndrome** increases due to COVID-19.

About Guillain-Barre syndrome:-

- The syndrome is a **rare disorder** in which the **body's immune system attacks your nerves**.
- **Weakness and tingling in your hands and feet** are usually the first symptoms.
- These **sensations can quickly spread**, eventually paralyzing your whole body.
- In its most severe form they syndrome is a **medical emergency**.
- The **exact cause is unknown**.
- But **two-thirds of patients report symptoms** of an infection in the six weeks preceding.
- These include **COVID-19, respiratory or gastrointestinal infection or [Zika virus](#)**.

Symptoms:-

- A pins and needles sensation in your fingers, toes, ankles or wrists
- Weakness in your legs , unsteady walking or inability to walk or climb stairs

- Difficulty with facial movements, including speaking, chewing or swallowing
- Double vision, rapid heart rate, low or high blood pressure, difficulty breathing are some of the symptoms.
- Difficulty with bladder control or bowel function

Types:-

- **Acute inflammatory demyelinating polyradiculoneuropathy (AIDP):** the most common form in North America and Europe. Symptoms: muscle weakness.
- **Miller-Fisher syndrome (MFS):** in which paralysis starts in the eyes. It is associated with unsteady gait. It is less common in the U.S. but more common in Asia.
- **Acute motor axonal neuropathy (AMAN) and acute motor-sensory axonal neuropathy (AMSAN):** are less common in the U.S. But AMAN and AMSAN are more frequent in China, Japan and Mexico.

Treatment:-

- There is **no known cure** for this syndrome. Most commonly treated by **intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG)**, made of donated blood that contains healthy antibodies.

MUST READ: [iNCOVACC](#)

SOURCE: [OPHTHALMOLOGY TIMES](#)

DEEPPFAKES.

Context: Recently, the Government reviewed social network progress in curbing **deepfakes**.

Background:-

- Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar met social media platforms to review progress made by them in tackling misinformation and deepfakes and asserted that advisories will be issued in the next two days to ensure 100 per cent compliance by platforms.

About Deepfakes:-

- The term [deepfake](#) originated in 2017, when an **anonymous Reddit user called himself “Deepfakes.”**
- The term refers to **digital representations (video and images)**, which are **produced by artificial intelligence to replace the person in the original video** with someone else.
 - They technology used: **deep learning algorithms, particularly Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs)** and autoencoder models.
- It is a **method for manipulating videos, images, and audio** utilizing powerful computers and deep learning.
- It is used to **generate fake news** and **commit financial fraud** among other wrong doings.
- The **algorithms** of deepfake are intelligent enough to **make decisions on their own**.

Applications:-

- **Entertainment Industry:** Used in entertainment industry, enabling the creation of engaging visual effects, digital doubles, and realistic character animations in movies and video games.
- **Social Media and Misinformation:** It has amplified concerns about the spread of misinformation, as

manipulated videos and audio recordings can deceive the public and influence public opinion.

- **Cybersecurity Threats:** It poses cybersecurity threats, as malicious actors can utilize this technology for identity theft, impersonation, and fraud, jeopardizing the security and privacy of individuals and organizations.
- **Political Manipulation and Disinformation:** Used for political manipulation and disinformation campaigns raises concerns about the integrity of democratic processes and public trust in political institutions.

Challenges:-

- It has raised concerns due to its **potential misuse, posing significant challenges to various aspects of society.**
- It has gained attention for its applications in **fake news, hoaxes, celebrity pornography, and identity theft.**

India's Current Stand on Deepfakes:-

- India **lacks a comprehensive legal framework dedicated to regulating deepfakes.**
- India relies on pre-existing laws, such as **Sections 67 and 67A of the Information Technology Act (2000)**, which may be applicable to defamation and explicit material dissemination.
- **Defamation Provision: Section 500 of the Indian Penal Code (1860)** offers punishment for defamation.
- **Personal Data Protection Bill (2022):** provide some protection against the misuse of personal data, but it doesn't explicitly address the issue of deepfakes.

MUST READ: [Deepfake technology & China](#)

SOURCE: [PTI](#)

BETELGEUSE

Context: Recent studies show that **Betelgeuse** Is Set to Almost Disappear.

Background:-

- Betelgeuse, one of the most visible stars in our skies, has been behaving strangely over the past few years.

About Betelgeuse:-

- Betelgeuse (called '**Thiruvathirai**' or '**Ardra**' in Indian astronomy) is a **red supergiant star** (20 times bigger than the Sun) in the **constellation Orion**.
 - It is the **second-brightest in the constellation of Orion.**
 - It is a **distinctly reddish, semiregular variable star**
 - **At near-infrared wavelengths**, Betelgeuse is the **brightest star** in the night sky.
- It is **one of the largest visible to the naked eye.**
- It is known for its **periodic dimming and brightening up.**
- In massive stars like Betelgeuse, the carbon-burning stage lasts only up to a few hundred years, after which the star 'dies' and **collapses into a supernova** within a few months.

Supernova

- It is the name given to the **explosion of a massive star** and they are the **largest explosion** happens in space.
- A star can go supernova in one of two ways:-
 - **Type I supernova:** Star accumulates matter from a nearby neighbour until a runaway nuclear reaction ignites.
 - **Type II supernova:** Star runs out of nuclear fuel and collapses under its own gravity.

Orion constellation

- It is named after the **hunter in Greek mythology**.
- It is one of the **most prominent and recognizable constellations** in the sky.
- It is home to **10% of the seventy brightest stars**, despite covering **only 1.4% of the sky**.

MUST READ: [SpaceTech Innovation Network \(SpIN\)](#)

ADITYA-L1

Context: Recently, the payload onboard **Aditya-L1** captured full-disk images of the Sun.

Background:-

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced that the Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT) instrument on board the Aditya-L1 spacecraft has successfully captured the first full-disk images of the Sun.

About Aditya-L1:-

- It shall be the **first space-based Indian mission to study the Sun**.
- **Launched by: ISRO.**
- **Launch Vehicle: PSLV-XL.**
 - **Destination site:** To be placed in a halo orbit around the Lagrange point 1 (**L1 was Founded by: Joseph Louis Lagrange**) of the Sun-Earth system, which is about 1.5 million km from the Earth.
 - **Lagrange points:** locations in space where the gravitational forces of two large bodies, such as a planet and its moon or a planet and the Sun, produce enhanced regions of gravitational equilibrium.
 - There are **five primary Lagrangian points**, labeled L1 through L5, in a Sun-Earth system.
- **Significance of Aditya L1:** It will provide a greater advantage in **observing solar activities** and their effect on space weather in real-time.

Objectives of Aditya L1:-

- Study of **Solar upper atmospheric** dynamics and of **chromospheric and coronal heating**, physics of the partially ionized plasma, initiation of the coronal mass ejections, and flares.
- Study of **the Physics of the solar corona** and of **Diagnostics of the coronal and coronal loops** plasma: Temperature, velocity, and density.
- Study of **Magnetic field topology** and magnetic field measurements in the solar corona.

Payloads in Aditya L1:-

- There are a **total of seven payloads on board:-** i.e four of them carry out **remote sensing** of the Sun and three of them carrying **in-situ observation**.

Remote Sensing Payloads:-

- Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC)
- Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT)
- Solar Low Energy X-ray Spectrometer (SoLEXS)
- High Energy L1 Orbiting X-ray Spectrometer (HEL1OS)

In-situ Payloads:-

- Aditya Solar wind Particle Experiment (ASPEX)
- Plasma Analyzer Package For Aditya (PAPA)
- Advanced Tri-axial High-Resolution Digital Magnetometers

MUST READ: [Shukrayaan](#)

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

PERTUSSIS

Context: According to the UK Health Security Agency, 716 cases of **pertussis** were reported between July and November, three times more than the same period in 2022.

Background:-

- Following reports, Dr Gayatri Amirthalingam, the agency's Deputy Director of Public Health Programmes, said that the number of infections dropped during the COVID-19 epidemic due to social distancing and lockdown regulations but is currently on the rise.

About Pertussis:-

- It's famously known as **whooping cough**, is a highly contagious respiratory infection caused by the bacteria **Bordetella pertussis**.
- Prolonged coughing causes air to be expelled from your lungs. When you gasp for air quickly and deeply after a coughing fit, a whooping cough sound might accompany the inhalation of air. This sound is a loud, high-pitched "**whooping**" noise. That's where pertussis gets its name.
- It **only humans are affected** by the disease.
- Pertussis spreads easily from person to person mainly **through droplets** produced by coughing or sneezing.
- The disease is most **dangerous in infants**, and is a significant cause of disease and death in this age group.

Symptoms:-

- The first symptoms generally **appear 7 to 10 days after infection**.
- Early pertussis symptoms may resemble those of the common cold. These symptoms may persist for one to two weeks and may include:-
 - Slight fever.
 - Mild or occasional coughing.
 - Runny nose.
 - A pause in breathing in babies (apnea).
- Whooping cough symptoms after the first or second week have passed usually include:
 - Prolonged, repeated or violent coughing episodes (paroxysms) that recur intermittently for up to 10 weeks or more.
 - Whooping sound when inhaling after the coughing stops.
 - Vomiting.
 - Exhaustion due to prolonged coughing.

Treatment:-

- Whooping cough treatment should begin as soon as possible after diagnosis. ([Disease Surveillance System](#))
- A provider will prescribe **antibiotics** to help prevent the spread of the disease. But antibiotics can't prevent or treat your cough.
- **Cough syrups** and other medicines can't relieve your coughing spells, so you'll need to use other forms of home treatment to manage your symptoms.
- In the 1950s, a **vaccine was developed** that significantly reduced its impact.
- Getting the whooping cough vaccine is the best way to prevent it getting whooping cough.

MUST READ: [Non communicable and communicable diseases](#)

SOURCE: [FREE PRESS JOURNAL](#)

ANTHROBOTS

Context: Scientists have created **Anthrobots** recently.

Background:-

- These are tiny living robots from human cells that can move around in a lab dish and may one day be able to help heal wounds or damaged tissue, according to a new study.

About Anthrobots:-

- Anthrobots are **novel bioengineered robots** created from **human tracheal cells**.
- These biobots possess the **remarkable ability to autonomously configure into diverse forms and sizes**.

WORKING:-

- The process involves **cultivating groups of human tracheal skin cells to create anthrobots** equipped with cilia functioning as paddles.
- When positioned on damaged neural tissue, the anthrobots **amalgamate into a 'superbot,' facilitating full recovery within three days** without the need for genetic alterations.

Significance:-

- The researchers anticipate employing personalized anthrobots for various functions such as arterial clearance, mucus disruption, or drug administration, showcasing potential uses in the **field of regenerative medicine**.
- In contrast to earlier xenobots derived from frog cells, anthrobots **possess self-assembling capabilities** and are crafted from human tissue, offering a promising avenue for personalized medicine.

MUST READ: [Robo Sapiens- Future of the Work](#)

SOURCE: [INDIATIMES](#)

VOYAGER 1

Context: Scientists recently suspected a major glitch in NASA's **Voyager 1** as it sent weird signals to Earth.

Background:-

- Voyager 1, is facing difficulties in transcribing data to planet Earth, scientists have suspected a major crack in the spacecraft.
- NASA's Voyager 1 has been travelling in space for the past 46 years and has travelled 24 billion kilometres.

About Voyager 1:-

- **Launch: September 5, 1977.**
- **Launch Site: Cape Canaveral, Fla. / Launch Complex 41.**
- **Launch Vehicle: Titan IIIE-Centaur (TC-6 / Titan no. 23E-6 / Centaur D-1T).**
- **Agency: NASA ([NASA's DART mission](#))**
- **Objective: It was launched to fly by Jupiter and Saturn.**
- Voyager 1 is the **oldest human-made spacecraft** in history.

- No spacecraft has gone farther than NASA's Voyager 1.
- **It crossed into interstellar space** in August 2012 and continues to collect data.
- Voyager 1 has been exploring our solar system for **more than 45 years**.
- The probe is now in interstellar space, the **region outside the heliopause**, or the bubble of energetic particles and magnetic fields from the Sun.
- Voyager 1 and its sister ship Voyager 2 have been **flying longer than any other spacecraft in history**.

MUST READ: [SpaceTech Innovation Network \(SpIN\)](#)

SOURCE: [FINANCIAL EXPRESS](#)

KETAMINE

Context: Ketamine drug was reported to be involved in actor Matthew Perry's death recently.

Background:-

- In recent years, ketamine has been a subject of widespread debate due to its growing use for treating depression and other serious mental health issues.

About Ketamine:-

- Ketamine is **an anaesthetic listed as a hallucinogen** by the US Drug Enforcement Administration.
- It is derived from **Phencyclidine (PCP)**, a hallucinogenic drug.
- It operates by **blocking the NMDA receptor** in the brain and spinal cord.
- It increases the release of the **neurotransmitter glutamate**.
- It is used for **treating mental illnesses** in conventional therapy-resistant patients.
- It is also used as a **recreational drug**.
- A recreational drug is any drug that is **used for inducing pleasure or altering one's state of mind**.
- Their types include:
 - **Stimulants:** Increase alertness and energy. E.g., cocaine, methamphetamine, and caffeine.
 - **Depressants:** Produce a calming effect. E.g., alcohol, marijuana, and benzodiazepines.
 - **Hallucinogens:** Produce hallucinations. E.g., LSD, psilocybin, and DMT.

Applications:-

- It is classified as a **dissociative anaesthetic** with psychedelic properties.
- It is used **strictly under medical supervision** for anaesthesia.
- Also employed in the **treatment of conditions such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, end-of-life distress, chronic pain, and substance abuse issues**.

Regulatory Status in India:-

- It is classified as a **Schedule X drug** in India.
- It is **Subject to stringent control and monitoring** on a case-specific basis by the prescribing doctor.
 - Schedule X drugs are categorized as "**restrictive drugs**" under the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act and Rules**. ([National Fund to Control Drug Abuse](#))
 - The classification of drugs under Schedule X signifies a **high level of regulatory control and monitoring**.

MUST READ: [Bisphenol A](#)

SOURCE: [THE INDIAN EXPRESS](#)

WATSONX.AI

Context: Recently, at the COP28, NASA and IBM announced that an Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool called

watsonx.ai would be available on the open-source AI platform Hugging Space.

Background:-

- Watsonx.ai will help users monitor the Earth from space, measuring environmental changes that have already happened while also making predictions about the future.

About watsonx.ai:-

- Watsonx.ai is a **collaborative AI tool developed by IBM and NASA** .
- **Objective:** to enhance the ability to predict hurricanes, droughts, and other severe weather events with increased precision.
- The platform has a **set of AI assistants to help one scale and accelerate the impact of artificial intelligence** through trusted data across his/her business.
- In the case of watsonx.ai, **NASA provides the datasets** and IBM created the foundation model to interpret them.
- The model is also **designed to be extremely simple to use**.
- A user would merely need to select a location and a date, and the model will highlight changes in floodwater, reforestation efforts and other relevant factors.
- It is an **end-to-end toolkit** encompassing both data and AI governance.
- It will help users **monitor the Earth from space**, measuring environmental changes that have already happened while also making predictions.
- The Indian government is testing AI to build climate models to improve weather forecasting as torrential rains, floods, and droughts proliferate across the country.

MUST READ: [Doppler Weather Radar Network](#)

SOURCE: [THE INDIAN EXPRESS](#)

NOMA

Context: Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) added, **noma**, to its official list of neglected tropical diseases (NTD).

Background:-

- The severe gangrenous disease of mouth and face has 90% mortality rate and is associated with extreme poverty, malnutrition.

About Noma:-

- It is also known as **cancrum oris or gangrenous stomatitis**. ([World Neglected Tropical Diseases \(NTD\) Day](#))
- The name of the disease comes from the **Greek word “nomē”, meaning “to devour”, as noma eats away facial tissue and bones if not treated early.**
- **Noma is associated with a number of risk factors**, including poor **oral hygiene, malnutrition, weakened immune systems, infections, and extreme poverty.**
- It is a **severe gangrenous disease** of the mouth and face with a mortality rate of approximately 90 per cent.
- It is also associated with **extreme poverty, malnutrition and poor access to sanitation and oral hygiene.**
- It mainly **affects children aged 2-6 years old** and is found most commonly among those living in **poor communities.**
- While the disease is **not contagious**, it prefers to attack when the body's defences are weak.
- The disease **begins with gum inflammation** and is thought to be caused by bacteria found in the

mouth.

- It can also occur among **immunocompromised adults due to HIV, leukemia and other diseases.**
- It is prevalent in **Africa, Asia and Asia-Pacific, the Americas, the Middle East and Europe.**

Treatment: -It includes a prescription of widely available antibiotics, advice and support on practices to improve oral hygiene, disinfectant mouthwash, and nutrition supplements.

MUST READ: [National Non-Communicable Disease Monitoring Survey \(NNMS\)](#)

SOURCE: [DOWN TO EARTH](#)

ASTEROID APOPHIS.

Context: Recently, NASA has embarked on a mission to intercept a near-Earth asteroid **Apophis.**

Background:-

- NASA has embarked on a mission to intercept a near-Earth asteroid, nicknamed the "God of Chaos."

About asteroid Apophis:-

- The asteroid Apophis, named after the **Egyptian god of chaos.**
- Asteroid 99942 Apophis is a **near-Earth object (NEO)** .
- **It is estimated** to be about **1,100 feet (340 meters) across.**
- When it was **discovered in 2004**, Apophis was identified as one of the most hazardous asteroids that could impact Earth.
- A radar observation campaign in March 2021, combined with precise orbit analysis, allowed astronomers to conclude that there is **no risk of Apophis impacting our planet for at least a century.**
- Its next close pass happening on April 13, 2029.
 - On that date, Apophis will come within **20,000 miles of our planet** – closer than some human-made satellites – making it visible to the naked eye.
- To analyze this rare cosmic encounter, NASA has redirected the [OSIRIS-REx](#) spacecraft that recently returned from the asteroid Benu.
- Now called **OSIRIS-APEX**, its mission is to observe Apophis before, during and after its 2029 flyby.

Significance:-

- While Apophis poses no threat to Earth, analyzing such near-passes enhances preparedness while shedding light on an asteroid's response to gravitational stresses.
- Even minor alterations could help project Apophis' future trajectory as it cycles between Earth and sun.

MUST READ: [IN-SPACE](#)

SOURCE: [MSN](#)



HEALTH



RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

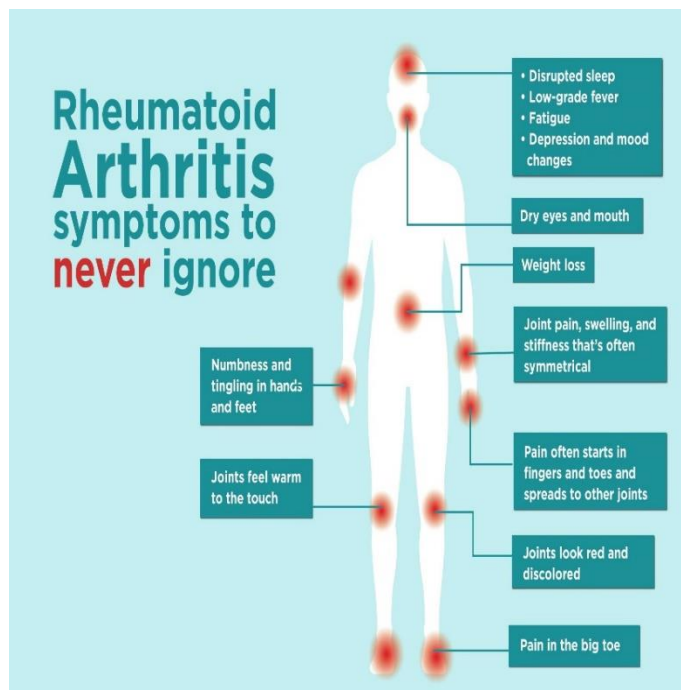
Context: Recent studies show cases of **rheumatoid arthritis** in young adults.

Background:-

- According to health experts, youngsters with RA may find themselves navigating a world of chronic pain, fatigue and limited physical abilities.

About Rheumatoid arthritis:-

IMAGE SOURCE: [CreakyJoints](#)



- Rheumatoid arthritis is a **chronic inflammatory disorder**.

- It is an **autoimmune disorder**, which occurs when the immune system mistakenly attacks its own body's tissues.

Causes:-

- In a healthy person, the immune system fights invaders, such as bacteria and viruses.
- But with an autoimmune disease like RA, the immune system mistakes the body's cells for foreign invaders and releases inflammatory chemicals that attack those cells.
- Unlike the wear-and-tear damage of osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis affects the lining of joints, causing a painful swelling that can

eventually result in bone erosion and joint deformity.

Symptoms:-Tender, warm, swollen joints. Joint stiffness that is usually worse in the mornings and after inactivity. Fatigue. Fever. Loss of appetite.

Risk factors:-

- **Sex: Women** are more likely than men to develop rheumatoid arthritis.
- **Age:** Rheumatoid arthritis can occur at any age, but it most commonly begins in **middle age**.
- **Family history:** If a member of your family has rheumatoid arthritis, you may have an increased risk of the disease.
- **Smoking**

MUST READ: [Disease Surveillance System](#)

SOURCE: [HINDUSTAN TIMES](#)

IRRITABLE MALE SYNDROME

Context: Irritable Male Syndrome has been observed recently in males.

Background:-

- Christie Saju, Counselling Psychologist at Lissun, explained that IMS is not medically recognized yet, although it could be an issue of irregularities in testosterone levels.

About Irritable Male Syndrome (IMS):-

- IMS is characterized by men experiencing **frustration, anxiety, and anger**.
- It can be due to many factors, such as **hormonal changes and stress**.

Some of the common manifestations, according to experts, include:-

- **Mood swings:** May experience rapid and intense changes in mood
- **Fatigue:** Feelings of persistent tiredness and lethargy, even with sufficient sleep and rest.
- **Decreased libido:** Might notice a decline in their sexual desire and overall interest in sexual activities.
- **Social withdrawal:** decrease desire for social interaction, leading affected individuals to isolate themselves from others.
- **Poor concentration and memory:** difficulties with focus, concentration, and memory retention.

Irritable Male Syndrome can be diagnosed by:-

- **Evaluation of symptoms:** detailed information about the individual's symptoms, medical history
- **Physical examination:** Conducted to rule out any other possible causes for the symptoms and to assess general health.
- **Hormone testing:** Particularly testosterone may be measured through blood tests. However, it's important to note that hormone levels can vary throughout the day, so testing may not always provide a definitive diagnosis.
- **Psychological assessment:** To evaluate mental health and identify any underlying psychological factors that could be contributing to the symptoms.

Treatment:-

- **Lifestyle modifications:** Adopting a healthy lifestyle.
- **Counselling or therapy:** Talk therapy, such as cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), can be beneficial in managing mood swings, irritability, and other emotional symptoms associated with IMS.
- **Hormone replacement therapy (HRT):** In some cases, if low testosterone levels are identified through blood tests, a healthcare professional may recommend hormone replacement therapy.
- **Symptom management:** Addressing specific symptoms that may involve strategies such as stress management techniques.

MUST READ: [DENGUE](#)

SOURCE: [THE INDIAN EXPRESS](#)

COVID SUB-VARIANT JN.1

Context: Recently, India reported 21 cases of **COVID sub-variant JN.1**, now a WHO 'variant of interest'.

Background:-

- We need to be on the alert, but there is no need to panic, says Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya.

About COVID sub-variant JN.1:-

- Previously JN.1 was classified and tracked as part of its **parent BA.2.86 lineage**, which itself is a **descendant of the Omicron or B.1.1.529 variant of SARS-CoV-2**, the virus causing COVID-19 disease.
- In comparison with its parent lineage BA.2.86, It has an **additional mutation (the L455S mutation) in the spike protein**.
- **Spread:** has been found in countries, including **India, China, the United Kingdom, and the USA**.
- WHO said that based on the currently available data, “the additional **global public health risk posed by JN.1 is currently evaluated as low**”
- **Transmission:** Currently, there is **no evidence suggesting that JN.1 causes more severe symptoms or spreads faster** than other circulating variants.
- **Risk:** cases **have been mild**, with patients recovering at home.

Symptoms:-

- **Include: fever, runny nose, sore throat, headache, loss of smell, and gastrointestinal issues like diarrhea and stomach cramps.**
- **Extreme fatigue** is reported among individuals with the JN.1 variant.
- **Both Pirola and JN.1 have been effectively neutralized by serum from infected and vaccinated individuals**, according to the WHO Technical Advisory Group on COVID-19 Vaccine Composition.

Variants of concern (VOCs):-

- JN.1 is classified as a separate variant of interest (VOI) is down to “**its rapidly increasing spread**” around the globe.
- **WHO updated its working definitions** for variants of concern (VOCs), VOIs, and variants under monitoring (VUMs) **in March 2023**.
- VOI defines: variant is considered a **SARS-CoV-2 variant with genetic changes that are predicted or known to affect virus characteristics such as transmissibility, virulence, antibody evasion, susceptibility to therapeutics, and detectability**.

COVID sub-variant JN.1 in India:-

- Following the identification of the **first case of the Coronavirus sub-variant JN.1 in Kerala**.
- **INSACOG:** detected 19 sequences of the JN.1 variant, with one cases in **Maharashtra and Goa**.
 - The **India SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG)**, a multi-laboratory and multi-agency network, is actively involved in surveillance efforts.

MUST READ: [INCOVACC](#)

SOURCE: [DOWN TO EARTH](#)

DENGUE

Context: Recent studies show that El Nino effect may have caused the cases of **dengue** to have increased globally.

Background:-

- There has been a ten-fold increase in dengue cases between the years 2000 and 2019, according to an analysis by the World Health Organization (WHO).

About Dengue:-

- Dengue is a **vector-borne disease**.
- **Caused by: dengue virus (DENV)**.
- **Transmission** through the bite of an infected female *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito.

- The mosquito becomes infected **when it feeds on the blood of a person infected with the virus.**
- Dengue **cannot be spread directly** from person to person.
- There are **4 serotypes of the virus** that cause dengue: **DEN-1, DEN-2, DEN-3, and DEN-4.**
- It is more common in **tropical and subtropical climates.**
- It is mostly in urban and **semi-urban areas.**

Symptoms:-

- High fever (40°C/104°F), severe headache and pain behind the eyes.
- Muscle and joint pains
- Nausea with Vomiting
- Swollen glands

Treatment:- Most cases of dengue fever can be treated at home with pain medicine.

Prevention:-

- Wear protective clothing.
- Use mosquito repellent.
- Reduce mosquito habitat.

DNA Vaccines:- DNA vaccines are often referred to as third-generation vaccines.

MUST READ:[Controlling Dengue Using Wolbachia Bacteria](#)

SOURCE: [DOWN TO EARTH](#)



HISTORY AND ART & CULTURE



GURUPURAB

Context: Recently, **Gurupurab** was celebrated at Nanakshahi Gurudwara in Dhaka.

Background:-

- The 554th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev was observed at the historic Nanakshahi Gurudwara in Dhaka.
- Gurudwara Nanakshahi is a historic Gurudwara in Dhaka.
- Guru Nanak Dev visited Dhaka in the year 1506-07.
- The gurdwara was built in 1830 to commemorate the visit of Guru Nanak.
- Guru Tegh Bahadur also stayed in Dhaka for over two years.
- The Nanakshahi gurudwara at Dhaka houses two important relics including the wooden sandal of Guru Tegh Bahadur and two handwritten copies of Guru Granth Sahib.

About Gurupurab:-

- Guru Nanak Gurupurab is also called **Guru Nanak Jayanti** or **Guru Nanak Prakash Utsav**.
- The day celebrates the birth of the **first guru of Sikhism, Guru Nanak**. ([Guru Nanak Jayanti](#))
- His teachings and life laid the foundation for Sikhism, a monotheistic religion based on the principles of **equality, social justice, and devotion to God**
- Guru Nanak was born in **Puranmashi of Kattak** according to the Bikrami calendar.
- He was born in **Talwandi, now in Pakistan**.
- He was **born in 1469**.
- However, the **Bhai Bala Janamsakhi** claims that Guru Nanak was born on the full moon of Karthi (a lunar month).
- For this reason, some of the Sikhs celebrate **Guru Nanak Jayanti in November month**.
- 2023 is the **554th birth anniversary** of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.
- He was born on **the fifteenth lunar day in the month of Kartik**, per the Hindu calendar.
- It usually **falls in October and November**, as per the Gregorian calendar.

MUST READ: [Sikh Separatism](#)

SOURCE: [AIR](#)

GARBA

Context: Recently, the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi today expressed happiness on the inscription of the **Garba** of Gujarat on the Intangible Heritage List of UNESCO.

Background:-

- The Prime Minister posted on X; "Garba is a celebration of life, unity and our deep-rooted traditions. Its inscription on the Intangible Heritage List showcases to the world the beauty of Indian culture. This honour inspires us to preserve and promote our heritage for future generations. Congrats on this global acknowledgement."
- Garba, was included in the [UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage](#).

About Garba:-

- Garba is a traditional dance form **from Gujarat. ([Mohiniyattam](#))**
- Garba is the **15th cultural item from India** to be featured on the UNESCO list.
- It is a traditional dance form primarily **performed during the Navratri festival to worship the Hindu goddess Durga.**
- It celebrates **fertility, honour womanhood**, and pay respect to any of an array of mother goddesses.
- The term “Garba” comes from “**Garbha**” (**womb**) and “**Deep**” (**lamp**).
- The dance is performed around a central lamp or a representation of the Goddess, symbolizing life, death, and rebirth.
- The **light (the Garba Deep) or a picture of the Goddess Durga** is put in the centre of concentric rings, and the people dance around it, bending sideways with each step and making sweeping gestures with their arms, each movement concluding with a clap.
- Women wear a **chaniya choli** (a colourful, embroidered skirt set) and **men don a kediyu and dhoti or pyjama**, often embellished with mirrors and embroidery.
- Garba is often followed by **Dandiya Raas**, another dance form using sticks (dandiyas), especially after the Aarti (worship ritual).

MUST READ: [Kathakali dance](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

EGYPT'S MUMMIFIED BABOONS

Context: The mystery origin of **Egypt's mummified baboons** has been finally cracked recently.

Background:-

- The scientists have recently retrieved **ancient mitochondrial DNA** (Deoxyribonucleic acid) from a mummified baboon found at the **Gabbanat el-Qurud site in Egypt**, which will help discover its origin.

About Egypt's mummified baboons:-

- The Egyptian god Thoth was represented by a baboon — which is odd because **baboons aren't native to Egypt.**
- In 1905, Egyptologists **Louis Lortet and Claude Gaillard** discovered **mummified baboons in Gabbanat el-Qurud** (is also known as the 'Valley of the Monkeys').
- The baboons belonged to the ancient city of **Adulis** in present-day coastal Eritrea, **a trade centre between the 1st and 7th centuries AD.**
- The **lost city of Punt** can be one of the potential locations of its origin.
 - The city was mentioned in **accounts of Greco-Roman historians** and was associated with the **trade of leopard skin, gold, and lives exotic animals.**

Significance of discovery:-

- Study draws attention to the **significance of the Red Sea in traderelationships between India, Egypt, and Europe.**

About Baboons:-

- Baboons are some of the **world's largest monkeys with a strong torso, a snoutlike face, the same dentition with long, sharp canine teeth, and powerful jaws.**
- **Distribution:** Africa & Arabia.
- **Habitat:** prefer savanna and other semi-arid habitats, though a few live in tropical forests.
- Baboon social behaviour is matrilineal, in which a **network of social relationships** is sustained

over three generations by the female members of the species.

MUST READ: [India-Egypt relations](#)

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

THANJAVUR.

Context: Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has recently, replied to a social media post by Hollywood actor Michael Douglas on his visit to **Thanjavur**.

Background:-

- The Prime Minister said: "Thanjavur is beautiful indeed! And, there is a lot more to see in India which will leave tourists from across the world spellbound."

About Thanjavur:-

- Thanjavur (Thanjavur or Tanjore) is a **temple site in the Tamil Nadu** region of southern India.
- Thanjavur was the **capital of the great Chola (Cola) king Rajaraja I** who commissioned the **site's magnificent temple, the Brihadishvara**, in the early **11th century CE**.
- Thanjavur is listed by [UNESCO as a World Heritage Site](#).

About Brihadishvara temple:-

- Brihadishvara (or Brhadisvara) temple was **constructed between c. 995 and 1025 CE** using Chola war booty and tribute from Sri Lanka.
- The temple was dedicated to the **Hindu god Shiva**.
- Inside the compound are **various secondary shrines and a monumental double gateway entrance (gopuras)**.
- The two-storey Brihadishvara temple is built on a high **dadoed-base platform**.
- The **granite tower (vimana)**, rises in thirteen diminishing levels above the sacred garbhagriha (inner shrine).
- It is **topped by a dome structure** which rests on a single 7.7 m square granite block weighing around 80 tons.
- The temple was laid out on a precise plan of 16 x 16 squares, a design known as **padmagarbhmandala** in the Dravida architecture of southern India.
- The **garbhagriha** contains a 4-metre tall Shiva linga (phallus).
- **Murals decorate the interior walls**, and, once hidden by later Nayaka period paintings, these include fine **images of Rajaraja I, his spiritual advisor or guru, and his three queens**.
- Other subjects include a **Nataraja** (Shiva as Lord of the Dance) who was the clan deity of the Cholas (kuladevata).

MUST READ: [Hoysala temples](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

KADALEKAYI PARISHE

Context: Kadalekayi Parishe started recently.

Background:-

- Efforts are being made to keep the festival plastic-free.

About Kadalekayi Parishe:-

- It is **ground nut fair** held at heart of **Bengaluru near basavana gudi**.
- It is **offering of first crop to dodda basava or nandi** whose temple is atop the bugle rock. During the festival **special pooja and prayers** are held at the bull temple.
- It **welcomes the first yield of the groundnut crop** and known as **groundnut festival**.
- It is held on the **last Monday of Karthika Masa** each year.

- Kadale kai parishe in Basavanagudi of Bengaluru is from **9th December 2023 to 11th December 2023**.
- Karnataka's farmers congregate at the Bull Temple each year to seek blessings for a good harvest.
- During the festival, **visitors buy groundnuts in bulk directly from farmers** at prices cheaper than market rates.

MUST READ: [Sari Festival "VIRAASAT"](#)

SOURCE: [HINDUSTAN TIMES](#)

GIRSU

Context: Recently, two temples, were discovered in the ancient megacity of Girsu in Iraq.

Background:-

- Archaeologists found the two temples, one buried atop the other.

About Girsu:-

- **Location: Iraq.**
- It was a **Sumer civilization city** and was discovered in the **nineteenth century**.
- Sumer Civilization was **one of the earliest known civilizations**, flourishing between approximately **4100 and 1750 BCE** in the historical region of southern Mesopotamia.
 - The Sumerians were responsible for much technological advancement, including measurements of time as well as writing.
 - They built the first known cities as well as creating the **first known code of law**.
- The **first excavations took place in the 1880s** by the French archaeologist **Ernest de Sarzec**.
- It was noteworthy because **it first revealed the existence of the Sumerian civilization to the world**.
- It also brought to light some of Mesopotamian art and architecture's most important monuments.

MUST READ: [Language in Indus Valley Civilization](#)

SOURCE: [LIVESCIENCE](#)

STONEHENGE

Context: As per recent reports, **Stonehenge is at risk of being 'de-listed'** as a UNESCO World Heritage site if the A303 tunnel goes ahead.

Background:-

- Recently, the efforts to stop the construction of a two-mile road tunnel close to the Great Circle of **Stonehenge** in the United Kingdom were seen by activists. ([New sites added to India's tentative list of UNESCO world](#))

About Stonehenge:-

- **Location: Salisbury Plain in England.**
- It is **not clear who built Stonehenge**. The monument called Stonehenge was built in six stages between **3000 and 1520 BCE**.
- The site was used for ceremonial purposes **beginning about 8000–7000 BCE**.
- Stonehenge is **constructed from sarsen stones**, a type of silicified sandstone found in England, and bluestones, a dolomite variation extracted from western Wales.
- The site has been **used for ceremonial purposes** and modified by many different groups of people at different times.
- Archaeological evidence suggests that the **first modification of the site was made by early**

Mesolithic hunter-gatherers. ([Bhimbetka cave](#))

- Previously thought to be a Druid temple, Stonehenge may instead be, according to researchers and others, a burial monument, a meeting place between chiefdoms, or even an astronomical “computer.”

MUST READ: [Archaeological Survey of India](#)

SOURCE: [BBC](#)

KASHI TAMIL SANGAMAM

Context: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will inaugurate the second phase of **Kashi Tamil Sangamam** on 17th December 2023.

Background:-

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi today called Kashi Tamil Sangamam forum a testament to the unity and diversity of India, strengthening the spirit of [‘Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat’](#).

About Kashi Tamil Sangamam:-

- **Date: 17th to the 30th of December 2023**
- **VENUE: Varanasi.**
- **Inauguration:** Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated it at **Namo Ghat**.
- The **second phase of [Kashi Tamil Sangamam](#)** will commence at the holy city of **Kashi (Varanasi)**.
- It will celebrate the many aspects of the historical and civilizational **connection between India's North and South**.
- Nearly **1400 (7 Groups of 200 persons each) people** are expected to be travelling from different parts of Tamil Nadu.
- The **7 groups of Students (Ganga), Teachers (Yamuna), Professionals (Godavari), Spiritual (Saraswati), Farmers and Artisans (Narmada), Writers (Sindhu) and Traders and Businessmen (Kaveri)** have been named after seven sacred rivers of India will travel from Chennai, Coimbatore and Kanyakumari to Kashi.
- **IIT Madras** will be acting as **the implementing agency** in Tamil Nadu and **Banaras Hindu University (BHU)** in Uttar Pradesh.

History of ties between Kashi and Tamil Nadu:-

- Many **households in Tamilnadu adopted the names of Kailasanatha and Kashinatha** for naming their children, like those who are living in Kashi and Uttar Pradesh.
- **King Adhivēera Rama Pandiyan** of the Pandya Dynasty dedicated a Shiva Temple at Tenkasi of Tamilnadu **after his pilgrimage to Kashi**, whose ancestors established Sivakasi.
- **Saint Kumaragurupara** from Sri Vaikundam, Tuthukudi District of Tamil Nadu has **excelled in bargaining with the Sultanate of Kashi** with audacity and drove a lion to his courtyard to get back the Kedarghat and a place for the consecration of Vishweshwara Lingam.
- He has **written “Kashi Kalambakam”** a grammatical composition of **poems on Kashi**.

MUST READ: [India’s Cultural Renaissance](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

ANDRIAMAMELO CAVE

Context: Unique, prehistoric rock art drawings have been discovered in the **Andriamamelo Cave** in western Madagascar recently.

Key Features:-

- Madagascar cave art **hints at ancient connections between Africa and Asia.**
 - **Pictorial art**, depicting images of nature with **human-like and animal-like figures** have been discovered.
 - Previously, Madagascar's rock art **mainly featured basic symbols**. The new findings depict **more complex scenes and figures**.
- Some scenes bear a **resemblance to motifs from Egypt's Ptolemaic period (300-30 BCE)**.
- Major images **hint at Egyptian deities like Horus, Thoth, Ma'at, and Anubis**.
- Symbols and writings suggest **cultural links to the Ethiopian and Afro-Arab worlds**.
- The art shares **similarities with a two-millennia-old cave art style from Borneo**.
- The art may **depict at least three extinct animals** of Madagascar, including a **giant sloth lemur, elephant birds, and a giant tortoise**.
- The **ubiquitous M-shaped symbol** matches the Amharic alphabet's "hawt" and is linked to the concept of the "breath of life" in some Austronesian languages.
- The art **lacks Christian, Muslim, Hindu symbols**, and modern motifs, indicating its ancient origins.
- **Significance:** The discovery's hold significance in the **reconstruction of Malagasy early history**. ([Ratnagiri's pre-historic rock art](#))

About Andriamanelo Cave:-

- It is situated in the **western part of Madagascar**.
- The cave is nestled within the **karstified limestone terrain** of the Paysage Harmonieux Protege de Beanka, contributing to its unique geological structure.
- It includes the Parc National de Bemaraha, acknowledged as a **UNESCO World Heritage site**.
- It is characterized by intricate **underground formations resulting from the dissolution of soluble rocks like limestone**.

MUST READ: [Buddhist caves, temples in Madhya Pradesh's Bandhavgarh](#)

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

YOGMAYA TEMPLE

Context: Recently, the now-abandoned part of **Yogmaya Temple** was explored as a testament to Delhi's syncretic roots.

Background:-

- From a Mughal-sponsored structure to a concrete building, the Yogmaya Temple in Mehrauli is a historically important monument believed to be standing at the site of an ancient temple that is said to have come up during the period of the Mahabharata but of which no trace exists anymore.

About Yogmaya Temple:-

- **Location:** Mehrauli, Delhi.
- **Built:** between 1806 and 1837 by Lala Sidhu Mal, a noble in the court of Akbar II .
- The area was **known as Yoginipura in ancient Jain texts**.
- **Prithviraj Chauhan** himself was said to have **patronised a Yogini temple** here shortly before his city's destruction.
- It Houses a **replica of the Goddess Yogmaya**, also known as the "Pure Goddess."
 - The goddess is believed to be the **sister of Lord Krishna and an incarnation of Durga**.
 - It is believed to have been built by the Pandavas after the end of the epic war.
- The temple was **among the 27 temples reportedly destroyed** by Mamluk rulers.

- Hindu king **Samrat Vikramaditya Hemu** is credited with restoring the temple after its destruction by Islamic rulers.
- Unique Festival '**Phoolwalon ki Sair.**' is celebrated.

Significance:-

- It **symbolizes unity** amid diverse communities.
- It is **Integral to Delhi's historical and cultural heritage.**

MUST READ:[Hoysala Temples](#)

SOURCE: [THE INDIAN EXPRESS](#)

PANDIT MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA

Context: PM remembered **Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya** on his birth anniversary recently.

Background:-

- On the occasion of the 162nd birth anniversary of Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will release first series of 11 volumes of 'Collected Works of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya'.

About Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya:-

- The **birth anniversary** is celebrated on **25th December.**
- He is an Indian **educationist and politician** notable for his role in the Indian Independence movement.
- He is remembered as an **outstanding scholar and freedom fighter.**

Contributions:-

- He Founded **Hindu Mahasabha in 1906** and He Founded **Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in 1915.**
- He served as **Vice-Chancellor from 1919 to 1938.**
- He joined the Indian National Congress at its **Calcutta session in 1886** and was **president of INC four times** – in 1909, 1918, 1932 and 1933.
- He was a successful legislator, serving as a member of the **Imperial Legislative Council for 11 years (1909–20).**
- He espoused **free and compulsory primary education, opposed the system of indentured labour** in the British Empire, and **supported the nationalization of railways.**

Achievements:-

- He is referred to as '**Mahamana**'.
- In 2015, the government **bestowed Malviya with the Bharat Ratna.**
- In 2016, the Indian Railways started the **Varanasi-New Delhi Mahamana Express in the leader's honour.**
- **Books** – A Criticism of Montagu-Chelmsford Proposals of Indian Constitutional Reform, Speeches and Writings.

MUST READ:[Satyendra Nath Bose](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

'VEER BAAL DIWAS'

Context: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will participate in the programme marking '**Veer Baal Diwas**' on 26th December, 2023 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.

About Veer Baal Diwas:-

- The day was observed to mark the **martyrdom of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's sons Sahibzadas Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Baba Fateh Singh Ji.**
- On the day of the [Prakash Purab of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji](#), on **9th January 2022**, the Prime Minister announced that 26th December will be observed as 'Veer Bal Diwas', to mark the martyrdom of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's sons Sahibzadas Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Baba Fateh Singh Ji.

Historical Background:-

- Guru Gobind Singh ji had four sons – all four of his sons were initiated into the Khalsa and **all were executed by Mughal forces** before the age of 19.
- Sikhism honors the illustrious martyred sons of Guru Gobind Singh ji in the prayer of ardas for their valor and sacrifice as '**Char Sahibzade**', that is the four princes of the Khalsa warrior order.
- Sahibzada Jorawar Singh (9) and Sahibzada Fateh Singh (7) are among the **most revered martyrs in Sikhism.**
- The two sons of Guru Gobind Singh **were captured.** They **were offered safe passage** if they became Muslims.
- These two greats **preferred death instead of deviating from the noble principles of Dharma.**

Key events to mark the day:-

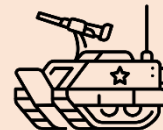
- On the occasion, Prime Minister will also flag off a **march-past by youth in Delhi.**
- A **digital exhibition** detailing the life story and sacrifice of the Sahibzades will be displayed.
- A **film on 'Veer Baal Diwas'** will also be screened nationwide.
- Also, there will be various online **competitions like interactive quizzes** which will be organised through **MYBharat and MyGov portals.**

MUST READ: [Guru Nanak Dev](#)

SOURCE: [THE INDIAN EXPRESS](#)



DEFENCE & SECURITY.



BSF RAISING DAY.

Context: Recently, the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi conveyed his greetings on the occasion of **BSF Raising Day**.

Background:-

- The Prime Minister posted on X; “On BSF’s Raising Day, we laud this excellent force, which has made a mark as a guardian of our frontiers. Their valour and unwavering spirit in protecting our nation is a testament to their dedication. I would also like to appreciate the role of BSF during rescue and relief work in the wake of natural disasters.”

About BSF Raising Day:-

- The BSF was **raised in 1965 after the India-Pakistan war**.
- The Raising Day is the day the **BSF unit was raised**.
- It is under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** and is one of the **five Central Armed Police Forces** of the Union of India.
 - Other Central Armed Police Forces are **Assam Rifles (AR), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), National Security Guards (NSG) and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)**.
 - They are deployed on the **Line of Control (LoC)** along with the Indian Army and in Anti-Naxal Operations.
- The BSF **has its own cadre of officers but its head, designated as a Director-General (DG)**, since its raising has been an officer from the Indian Police Service (IPS).
- BSF has been **crusading against natural calamity** and contributes dedicated services to the **UN peacekeeping Mission**.

MUST READ: [Mobile app 'Prahari](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

'SCATTERED SPIDERS'

Context: The FBI Issued Warning About Dangerous '**Scattered Spiders**' Hackers recently.

Background:-

- The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has issued a warning to organizations about a hacking group called Scattered Spiders.

About Scattered Spiders:-

- It is a **hacking group notorious for invading various organizations** across the world.
- This hacker group is known by other aliases as well, including **Starfraud, UNC3944, Scatter Swine, and Muddled Libra**.
- The members are as **young as 16 years old and primary English speakers**.
- It Techniques: **phishing, push bombing, SIM swap attacks, and social engineering**.
- Previous attacks targeted prominent companies such as **Riot Games, DoorDash, and MailChimp**.
- It even drew attention from companies like **Microsoft**.

MUST READ: [Cyber Attacks in India](#)

SOURCE: [TIMES OF INDIA](#)

PATRIOT SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE SYSTEM

Context: The U.S. is sent the Patriot surface-to-air missile system to Middle East recently.

Background:-

- The Pentagon recently said that it will send additional Patriot air defense missile system battalions to the Middle East in response to recent attacks on U.S. troops in the region.

About Patriot Air Defence Missile System:-

- It is a **surface-to-air guided missile system**, was **first deployed** in the 1980s.
- It is named after the **Patriot** (Phased Array Tracking Radar to Intercept on Target) **radar system used in it with range of over 150 km**
- **It replaced the Nike Hercules system** and the **MIM-23 Hawk system** as the U.S. Army's primary High to Medium Air Defense (HIMAD) system and medium tactical air defense system respectively.
- It was initially developed as a **system to intercept high-flying aircraft**, by U.S. aerospace and defense giant **Raytheon Technologies Corp.**
- it was **modified in the 1980s** to counter other threats such as [ballistic missiles](#).
- Currently, Patriot batteries can defend **against ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, drones, jets and "other threats"**.
- It has been **deployed in 18 countries, including the U.S.**

Limitation:-

- It doesn't offer protection **against low-flying small drones.**
- A Patriot battery can need as many as **90 troops to operate and maintain it.**

MUST READ: [S-400 missile defence system](#)

SOURCE: [MSN](#)

VINBAX-2023

Context: The Indian Armed Forces contingent reached Hanoi, Vietnam to take part in the fourth edition of Joint Military Exercise **VINBAX-2023** recently.

Background:-

- The Indian contingent **comprises 39 personnel** from an Engineer Regiment of Bengal Engineer Group and six personnel of Army Medical Corps.
- The Vietnam People's Army contingent will also be represented by **45 personnel.**

About VINBAX-2023:-

- **Date: from 11th to 21st December 2023**
- **Venue: Hanoi, Vietnam.**
- Exercise VINBAX was **instituted in 2018** and the first edition was conducted at **Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh.**
- It is an **annual training** event conducted alternatively in India and Vietnam. ([Military Exercises](#))
- The last edition was conducted at **Chandimandir Military Station in August 2022**
- **Objective:** to foster collaborative partnership, promote interoperability and share best practices

between the two sides under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter on Peacekeeping Operations.

- The joint exercise will help in **promoting understanding and interoperability between the two contingents** and further **strengthen the defence cooperation between the friendly armies**.

MUST READ: [India and Vietnam relations](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

VIJAY DIWAS

Context: Vijay Diwas was commemorated recently.

Background:-

- PM Narendra Modi paid tribute to all the brave hearts who dutifully served India in 1971 on Vijay Diwas.

About Vijay Diwas:-

- It is commemorated on **December 16** and marks the **end of the 1971 Indo-Pak War and the liberation of Bangladesh**.
- India declared victory on this day 51 years ago after **Pakistan signed the Instrument of Surrender**.

Historical Background of the war:-

- After the partition of India following the **end of British rule in 1947**, two independent countries were formed – India and Pakistan.
- The latter consisted of **East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and West Pakistan (present-day Pakistan)**.
- **East Pakistan was often overlooked in terms of administration** as the top posts were held by those in the West.
- In the **mid-1960s**, leaders such as **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**, who is also known as the founder of Bangladesh actively began protesting against these policies and helped form the Awami League.
- Soon, their **demand became one for freedom and greater autonomy**.
- The **League ended up winning a stunning 160 of the 162 seats** in East Pakistan in the 1970 elections and won no seats in the West.
- However, instead of recognizing the mandate, on March 25, 1971, the **Pakistani military began a brutal crackdown** that saw the mass slaughter of Bengalis.
- India had declared support for the League previously but without direct intervention.
- But when the **Pakistan Air Force launched pre-emptive strikes towards Western India** (including Amritsar, Pathankot, Srinagar, Avantipura, Ambala, Sirsa and Agra) on December 3, 1971, **India formally declared war on December 4**.
- On December 6, **India formally recognised Bangladesh as an independent nation**.
- Two days later, the Indian Navy launched an attack on Karachi.
- From December 12 to 16, Indian forces pushed through to Dhaka and entered the city, **ending the war with a total victory**.

Significance:-

- This war not only **reshaped regional geopolitics** but also underscored the importance of **upholding human rights during conflicts**.
- Vijay Diwas is a day to **honor the courage, sacrifice, and bravery of the soldiers** who fought and to pay tribute to the martyrs.

MUST READ: [India-Bangladesh Relations](#)

SOURCE: [INDIAN EXPRESS](#)

INDIAN COAST GUARD

Context: Recently, the **Indian Coast Guard** has deployed its ships, aircraft and disaster relief teams in flood-affected areas of South Tamil Nadu.

Background:-

- Coast Guard said, they have saved 200 lives stranded in flood waters of Tuticorin and adjoining areas.

About the Indian Coast Guard (ICG):-

- **Established: August 1978.**
- **HQ: New Delhi.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Defense.**
- ICG, the **fourth largest** Coast Guard in the world, was established by the **Coast Guard Act, of 1978** as an independent armed force of India.
- Jurisdiction: **overterritorial waters** of India, including its **contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone.**
- It is an **Armed Force, Search and Rescue and Maritime Law Enforcement agency.**
- For effective command and control, the Maritime Zones of India are divided into five Coast Guard Regions, namely:
 - North-West (Regional Headquarters in Gandhinagar)
 - West (Regional Headquarters at Mumbai)
 - East (Regional Headquarters at Chennai)
 - North-East (Regional Headquarters at Kolkata)
 - Andaman & Nicobar (Regional Headquarters at Port Blair)

Functions:-

- Preventing Smuggling. ([Defence Acquisition Council](#))
- It is responsible for marine environment and is the **coordinating authority for response to oil spills in Indian waters.**
- It is also working in close coordination with Central and State agencies to put in place a robust **coastal security mechanism.**

MUST READ:[Self-reliance in defence](#)

SOURCE: [AIR](#)

INS IMPHAL

Context: The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, expressed pride as **INS Imphal** was commissioned into Indian Navy recently.

Background:-

- Hailing India's growing self-reliance in defence, the Prime Minister posted on X: "Proud moment for India as INS Imphal has been commissioned into our Navy, a testament to India's growing self-reliance in defence. It epitomises our naval excellence and engineering prowess. Compliments to everyone involved in this milestone for Aatmanirbharta. We shall keep securing our seas and strengthening our nation."

About INS Imphal:-

- It is the third ship of the [Project 15B Class](#) of stealth-guided missile destroyers.
 - The first ship of P15B Class, **INS Visakhapatnam**, was commissioned in 2021.

- The second ship **INS Mormugao** was commissioned in 2022.
- The fourth, **INS Surat**, was launched in 2022.
- Imphal was **the first naval warship** commissioned with accommodation for **women officers and sailors**.
- The ship is equipped with **two helicopters** onboard and was **constructed using indigenous steel "DMR 249A"**.
- It is among the **largest destroyers** built in India.
 - It is **indigenously developed anti-submarine weapons and sensors**.
- It is armed with **supersonic Surface-to-Surface Brahmos missiles** and **Barak-8 Medium Range Surface-to-Air missiles**.
- **Its all-round capability** against enemy submarines, surface warships, anti-ship missiles, and fighter aircraft would enable it to **operate independently without supporting vessels**.
- The ship is propelled by a **powerful Combined Gas and Gas Propulsion Plant (COGAG)**.

MUST READ: [Mormugao: Indian Navy's indigenous stealth destroyer](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

INDIAN OCEAN NAVAL SYMPOSIUM (IONS)

Context: The 8th edition of **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)** Conclave of Chiefs (CoC) was conducted recently.

Background:-

- Chiefs of Navies/ Senior Delegates from 27 Members/ Observer countries participated in the event. Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff, attended the event with a three member Indian Naval delegation.

About INDIAN OCEAN NAVAL SYMPOSIUM (IONS) – 2023:-

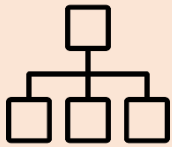
- **Date: December 19 to 22, 2023.**
- **Venue and Chair: Bangkok, Thailand.**
- **IONS was conceived by the Indian Navy in 2008.**
- **Objective:** to enhance **maritime cooperation among Navies of the littoral states** of the Indian Ocean Region by providing an open and inclusive platform for discussions on regionally relevant maritime issues that would lead to common understanding on the way ahead.
- The **inaugural edition of IONS was held in Feb 2008 at New Delhi**, with Indian Navy as the Chair for two years (2008 - 2010).
- A noteworthy development was the **selection of a flag designed by India** as the official IONS flag.
- India is also scheduled to **take over as the Chair of IONS (2025-27) during 9th CoC** planned to be conducted in India in end 2025.
- The **Republic of Korea Navy** was welcomed as the latest observer.

Member groups:-

- **South Asian Littorals** – Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and United Kingdom (British Indian Ocean Territory).
- **South East Asian and Australian Littorals** – Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Timor-Leste.
- **East African Littorals** – France (Reunion), Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania.
- **West Asian Littorals** – Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.

MUST READ: [International Maritime Exercise/ Cutlass Express 2023](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)



GOVT. INITIATIVES, SCHEMES AND POLICIES, ORGANISATION



"GRAM MANCHITRA" APP

Context: Recently, the Panchayati Raj Ministry Launched the "Gram Manchitra" App.

Background:-

- This information regarding the "Gram Manchitra" App was given by the Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj, Shri Kapil Moreshwar Patil in a written reply in Lok Sabha.

About Gram Manchitra application:-

- **Launched: October 2019.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Panchayati Raj**
- **Objectives:** to encourage Spatial Planning by the Gram Panchayat.

Salient Features Gram Manchitra:-

- "Gram Manchitra" GIS Application and **Mobile-based Solution**
- GIS application supports Gram Panchayats in planning using **geospatial technology**.
- GIS analyzes and displays geographically referenced information.
- Provides a unified **Geo-Spatial platform** for visualizing developmental works.
- **mActionSoft**, a mobile-based solution, captures photos **with Geo-Tags**, incorporating GPS coordinates.
- Geo-tagging of assets occurs before, during, and after work.
- Information repository includes sectors like **natural resource management**, water harvesting, sanitation, agriculture, check dams, and irrigation channels.
- Assets geo-tagged using **mActionSoft** integrate with "Gram Manchitra" for enhanced visualization.
- Linked with Socio-Economic Caste Census report and **Mission Antyodaya**. is also **linked with the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) report** and Mission Antyodaya.

MUST READ: [E-PANCHAYAT FACILITY](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

INFINITY FORUM 2.0.

Context: Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the 2nd Edition of the flagship Financial Technology event - **Infinity Forum 2.0**.

Background:-

- Distinguished speakers from the Central and State Governments include Chief Minister of Gujarat Bhupendra Patel, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, and Minister for Railways, Communications and IT Ashwini Vaishnaw will witness the event.

About Infinity Forum 2.0:-

- Hosted by IFSCA and Gujarat International Finance Tec-City, **GIFT City**.
- Theme: **GIFT-IFSC: Nerve Centre for New Age Global Financial Services**.
- Organized as a pre-cursor to the Vibrant **Gujarat Global Summit 2024**.
- Held in hybrid mode, with invite-only in-person event in **GIFT City** and virtual participation worldwide.

- 1st edition organized in December 2021.
- Involves participation and discussions by financial sector luminaries in India and globally.
- Preceded by an Investors **Meet for FinTech** entities authorized by IFSCA or recommended by institutions with MoU with IFSCA

MUST READ: [National Stock Exchange \(NSE\) and Bombay Stock Exchange \(BSE\)](#)

SOURCE: [AIR](#)

PM VISHWAKARMA SCHEME

Context: As per recent data, the **PM Vishwakarma Scheme**, launched by the Centre has received over 21 lakh applications in two and a half months.

Background:-

- The highest number of applications came from Karnataka (6.28 lakh), followed by West Bengal (4.04 lakh), Assam (1.83 lakh), Uttar Pradesh (1.53 lakh) and Andhra Pradesh (1.21 lakh).

About PM Vishwakarma Scheme:-

- **Launched: September 2023.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).**
- It is a **Central Sector Scheme.**

Objectives of PM Vishwakarma scheme:-

- To strengthen and nurture the Guru-Shishya parampara or **family-based practice of traditional skills** by artisans and craftspeople working with their hands and tools.
- To **improve the quality, as well as the reach of products and services** of artisans and craftspeople.

Salient Features of PM Vishwakarma scheme:-

- The **artisans and craftspeople will be provided recognition** through a **PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card.**
- **Credit Support:** Credit of **up to Rs.1 lakh (First Tranche) and Rs.2 lakh (Second Tranche)** will be given with a concessional **interest rate of 5%.**
- **Skill learning:** The Scheme will further provide **Skill Upgradation, Toolkit Incentives, Incentives** for Digital Transactions, and Marketing Support.
- **Stipend:** Participants are entitled to a **stipend of Rs 500 per day** during their training period.
- **Modern Tools and Equipment:** Beneficiaries are eligible for financial support of **up to ₹15,000 to procure modern tools**, enhancing their efficiency and productivity.
- **Sectors: Eighteen traditional trades will be covered** in the first instance under PM Vishwakarma.
- **These trades include** (i) Carpenter (Suthar); (ii) Boat Maker; (iii) Armourer; (iv) Blacksmith (Lohar); (v) Hammer and Tool Kit Maker; (vi) Locksmith; (vii) Goldsmith (Sonar); (viii) Potter (Kumhaar); (ix) Sculptor (Moortikar, stone carver), Stone breaker; (x) Cobbler(Charmkar)/Shoemaker/Footwear artisan; (xi) Mason (Rajmistri); (xii) Basket/Mat/Broom Maker/Coir Weaver; (xiii) Doll & Toy Maker (Traditional); (xiv) Barber (Naai); (xv) Garland maker (Malakaar); (xvi) Washerman (Dhobi); (xvii) Tailor (Darzi); and (xviii) Fishing Net Maker.

Eligibility Criteria: -

- **Indian Citizenship:** Applicants must be Indian.
- **Artisan or Craftsman:** The applicant should be a traditional artisan or craftsman.
- **Age Limit: No Age Limit** for applying to the scheme.

Benefits of PM Vishwakarma scheme:-

- The scheme will provide **support to artisans and craftspeople** in rural and urban areas across

India.

- It caters to both urban and rural areas, **facilitating employment**.
- Funding for training programs to enhance **traditional skills**.

MUST READ: [Small savings schemes](#)

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

'GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SUMMIT' (GPAI)

Context: Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 'Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence Summit' (GPAI).

Background:-

- He said that India is committed to responsible and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Mr Modi stressed that Artificial Intelligence is for social development and inclusive growth.

About Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence Summit (GPAI):-

- **Date: December 2023.**
- **Venue: Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.**
- It is a **multi-stakeholder initiative with 29 member countries** to bridge the gap between theory and practice on AI
- India is the **lead chair of GPAI in 2024.**
- As one of **the founding members of GPAI in 2020**, the current incoming Support Chair of GPAI, and the Lead Chair for GPAI in 2024, India is hosted the Annual GPAI Summit from December 12-14, 2023.
- Other attractions at the summit include the **Research Symposium, AI Gamechangers Award and India AI Expo.**
- The summit will witness the **50+ GPAI experts and 150+ speakers from across the countries.**
- Further, **Top AI Gamechangers from across the world will be participating** in different events including Intel, Reliance Jio, Google, Meta, AWS, Yotta etc.

MUST READ: [RAISE 2020 Artificial Intelligence Summit](#)

SOURCE: [AIR](#)

INDIAN FOREST & WOOD CERTIFICATION SCHEME

Context: Recently, the **Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme** was launched.

Background:-

- It was launched by **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.**
- This national forest certification scheme offers voluntary third-party certification designed to promote sustainable forest management and agroforestry in the country.

About INDIAN FOREST AND WOOD CERTIFICATION SCHEME:-

- **Launched: 2023.**
- **Objective: to promote Sustainable Management of forests and agroforestry.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.**
- The scheme **includes forest management certification, tree outside forest management certification, and chain of custody certification.**
- This **includes state forest departments, individual farmers, or Farmer Producer Organizations** engaged in agroforestry and farm forestry, as well as other wood-based industries in the value chain.
- The Forest Management certification is **based on the Indian Forest Management Standard, consisting of 8 criteria, 69 indicators and 254 verifiers, which is an integral part of the National Working Plan Code**

2023, launched earlier this year.

- **A separate Trees Outside Forests Standard is now introduced** as a part of Scheme.
- **Supervision:** The Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme will be **overseen by the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council**, which will act as a multistakeholder advisory body.
- **Implementation:** the **Indian Institute of Forest Management**, Bhopal will act as the scheme **operating agency** and will be responsible for overall management of the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme.
- **Accreditation:** The **National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies** under the **Quality Council of India** will accredit the certification bodies which will carry out independent audits and assess adherence of various entities on the standards prescribed under the scheme.

MUST READ: [Natural Farming](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

NATIONAL GEOSCIENCE DATA REPOSITORY PORTAL

Context: Recently, the Mines Ministry launched the **National Geoscience Data Repository Portal** To Foster Innovation in Exploration.

Background:-

- The launch ceremony will be graced by Union Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs Shri Pralhad Joshi in the presence of Shri Raosaheb Patil Danve, Minister of State for Coal, Mines and Railways.

About National Geoscience Data Repository Portal (NGDR):-

- **Launched on :** 19th December 2023.
- **Launched by:** Ministry of Mines.
- NGDR Portal will be launched in a ceremony in **New Delhi**. ([National Geoscience Awards -2022](#))
- **Objective:** to Foster Innovation in Exploration.
- NGDR is a **comprehensive online platform for accessing, sharing, and analyzing geospatial information** across the nation.
- It is spearheaded by the **Geological Survey of India (GSI) and Bhaskaracharya Institute of Space Applications and Geoinformatics (BISAG-N)**.
- It represents a significant leap forward in **democratizing critical geoscience data, empowering stakeholders across industries and academia** with unprecedented access to invaluable resources.

About the Geological Survey of India (GSI):-

- **Established:** 1851, **HQ:** Kolkata.
- It has six regional offices located in **Lucknow, Jaipur, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Shillong and Kolkata and state unit offices in almost all states of the country.**
- GSI is an attached office of the **Ministry of Mines**.
- It was **set up primarily to find coal deposits for the Railways with** main functions relate to **creating and updating national geoscientific information** and mineral resource assessment.
- Objectives are achieved via **ground surveys, air-borne and marine surveys, mineral prospecting and investigations**, multi-disciplinary geoscientific, geo-technical, geo-environmental and natural hazards studies, glaciology, seismo-tectonic study and carrying out fundamental research.

About BISAG-N - Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics:-

- **Ministry:** MeitY, Government of India. ([Indian Bureau of Mines](#))

- At present, BISAG is a state agency of the Department of Science and Technology Government of Gujarat, located at **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**.
- It is an **Autonomous Scientific Society registered under the Societies Registration Act, of 1860**.
- **Objective:** to undertake technology development & and management, research & and development, facilitate National and international cooperation, capacity building and support technology transfer & and entrepreneurship development in the area of geo-spatial technology.
- It has implemented GIS and **geospatial technologies for major Ministries and almost all States**.
- For this purpose, geo-spatial science (GIS Remote Sensing, Image Processing, Photogrammetry, GPS, Cell Phone etc.), Information Science Systems (MIS, Database, ERP, Project Management, Web, Artificial Intelligence etc.) and Mathematics Science Systems (Geometry, Fluid, Mechanics, Trigonometry, Algebra etc.) have been integrated in-house by BISAG.

MUST READ: [‘Wetlands of India’ Portal](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

SMART INDIA HACKATHON 2023

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will interact with the participants of the Grand Finale of **Smart India Hackathon 2023** through video conferencing on 19th Dec, 2023.

Background:-

- Mr Modi will also address the participants on the occasion.

About Smart India Hackathon 2023 (SIH):-

- **Launched: August 2023.**
- **Objective:** to inculcate a culture of product innovation and a mindset of problem-solving.
- SIH is a **nationwide initiative to provide students with a platform to solve some of the pressing problems** we face in our daily lives. ([Agri India Hackathon](#))
- It is an initiative by the **Ministry of Education, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Persistent Systems and Inter-Institutional Inclusive Innovation Centre (i4C)**.
- SIH has been conducted **every year since 2017** in two formats, **SIH Software and SIH Hardware Editions** for higher education students.
- The **Grand Finale of the SIH 2023** is being held from the **19th to the 23rd December 2023**.
- **Themes:** A total **one thousand 282 teams** have been shortlisted this year for the grand finale to provide solutions on various themes including **Space Technology, Smart Education, Disaster Management, Robotics and Drones, Heritage and Culture and others**.

MUST READ: [‘Hack The Crisis-India’ Hackathon](#)

SOURCE: [AIR](#)

‘RAIL KAUSHAL VIKAS YOJANA’

Context: Recently, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that Indian Railways’ **‘Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana’** graduates are not preferred for railway jobs.

Background:-

- The statement comes as a response to a query by BJP MP Narayana Koragappa regarding job preferences for the trained youth.

About Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana:-

- **Launched: September, 2021.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Railway.**
- **Objective:** imparting training skills to the youth across several trades to bring qualitative

improvement.

- It is a sub-scheme under [Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana \(PMKVY\)](#).

Salient Features:-

- The skill development scheme provides free of cost training is imparted in **fourteen (14) industry-relevant technical trades** such as **Electrician, Welder, Machinist, Fitter etc.**
- There is **no provision for providing employment under this scheme.**
- Participants will be selected from **applications received online** based on marks in matriculation.
- Candidates, who have passed **class X and are aged between 18 and 35** are eligible to apply.
- After the end of the program, **trainees have to pass a standardized assessment** followed by a certificate in the allotted trade by the National Rail and Transportation Institute.

Significance:-

- It will improve the employability of the youth as well as **upgrade the skills of self-employed.**
- It will also cater to those who are working with contractors through **re-skilling and up-skilling.**

MUST READ: [PM SVANidhi scheme](#)

SOURCE: [FINANCIAL EXPRESS](#)

BHARAT NEW CAR ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME (BHARAT-NCAP)

Context: Recently, the first round of crash testing under the Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (Bharat-NCAP) was completed.

Background:-

- Tata Motors' home-grown sports utility vehicles (SUV) Tata Safari and Tata Harrier have received the highest five-star ratings after being crash-tested under the Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (Bharat-NCAP).
- They are the first two cars to have received the highest ratings for adult occupant protection and child occupant protection, under the new system.

About Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (Bharat NCAP):-

- **Launched: 2023.**
- **Implementation:** October 1, 2023.
- **Ministry: Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.**
- **Objectives:** to enhance road safety by elevating vehicle safety standards for up to 3.5-tonne vehicles in India.
- [Bharat NCAP](#) is a **new car safety assessment program** which proposes a mechanism of awarding **'Star Ratings' to automobiles** based on their performance in crash tests.
- It is a **safety assessment program** for passenger vehicles **weighing less than 3.5 tonnes** and capable of **seating up to eight people.**

Salient Features of Bharat NCAP:-

- It proposes a mechanism of **awarding 'Star Ratings' to automobiles** based on their performance in crash tests.
- It would assign vehicles between **one and five stars** on parameters such as **Adult Occupant Protection (AOP), Child Occupant Protection (COP), and Safety Assist Technologies (SAT).**
- [Bharat NCAP](#) standard is aligned with **global benchmarks.**
- The **testing of vehicles** for this programme will be carried out at testing agencies, with the

necessary infrastructure.

Benefits of NCAP:

- Develop a **safety-sensitive car market** in India and increase the consumer awareness.
- Enhanced Safety and **Export Potential**.
- Making the Indian automobile industry **self-reliant**.

MUST READ: [Electric Vehicles](#)

SOURCE: [HINDUSTAN TIMES](#)

RAMP (RAISING AND ACCELERATING MSME PRODUCTIVITY) PROGRAMME.

Context: Recently, the MSME Ministry launched 3 sub-schemes under the **RAMP (Raising and Accelerating MSME Productivity) programme**.

Background:-

- MSME Minister Narayan Rane launched three sub-schemes under the ministry's existing RAMP ((Raising and Accelerating MSME Productivity) programme to encourage the adoption of sustainable technology in business, boost the circular economy and address delayed payments issue.

About RAMP ((Raising and Accelerating MSME Productivity) programme:-

- **Launched: 30th June 2022.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises.**
- **Objectives:** to scale up the implementation capacity and coverage of MSMEs in the States of states of **Gujarat, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu**, with impact enhancement of existing MSME schemes.

Salient Features of RAMP:-

- RAMP is a **Central Sector Scheme**.
- The scheme shall **implement regulatory, financial, and implementation reforms** as well as firm-level access reforms to provide targeted interventions to MSMEs across recognized challenge areas.
- It aims to **enhance access to market and credit** by strengthening institutions, enhancing centre-state partnerships, addressing issues of delayed payments and greening of MSMEs, and **ramping up implementation capacity** and MSME coverage in states, with the impact enhancement of existing MSME schemes. [A Scheme for Promoting Innovation, Rural Industry & Entrepreneurship \(ASPIRE\)](#)

Eligibility:-

- The MSME should be **registered under the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act, 2006**.
- The MSME should have a **valid Udyog Aadhaar Number (UAN)**.

Benefits:-

- **Address Challenges in the MSME Sector:** it will address the generic and Covid related challenges in the MSME sector by way of impact enhancement of existing MSME schemes on the competitiveness front.
- **Address inadequately Addressed Blocks in MSME:** it will bolster the inadequately addressed blocks of capacity building, handholding, skill development, quality enrichment, technological upgradation, digitization, outreach, and marketing promotion, amongst other things.

- **Generate Employment:** The program in collaboration with States, will be a job enabler, market promoter, and finance facilitator, and will support vulnerable sections and greening initiatives.
- **Usher in Larger Formalization:** In States where the presence of MSMEs is on the lower side, the program will usher in larger formalization resulting from the higher impact of the schemes covered under RAMP.

Complement the Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission:

- RAMP will complement the Atmanirbhar Bharat mission by fostering innovation and enhancement in industry standards, and practices and providing the necessary technological inputs to the MSMEs.

MUST READ: [Empowering MSMEs digitally](#)

SOURCE: [FINANCIAL EXPRESS](#)

PRADHAN MANTRI JANJATI ADIVASI NYAYA MAHA ABHIYAN (PM-JANMAN)

Context: Recently, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs initiated the IEC Campaign on **Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN)**.

Background:-

- With an aim of reaching out to 22000 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) majority tribal habitations and PVTG families in 200 districts across the country, Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs has initiated an Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaign for the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN).

About Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN):-

- **Launched: December, 2023.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Tribal Affairs+ 8 other Ministries.**
- **Objective:** to raise awareness and ensure 100% saturation of Government Schemes in PVTG majority tribal habitations.
- **Seventy-five communities** spread across 18 states and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been identified as **PVTGs**.
- Focus areas include
- **11 critical interventions** with focus areas- housing, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and connectivity.
- Mission will operate over the **next three year**.

Salient Features:-

- The IEC campaign has **started initially in 100 districts**, 15,000 PVTG habitations across 18 states and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- **In phase II, will cover the remaining districts.**
- This campaign aimed at **saturating PVTG families with individual entitlements and habitations with basic facilities.**
- **Aadhar cards, Community certificates and Jan Dhan accounts will be provided** as these are basic requirements for other schemes such as the **issue of Ayushman card, [PM Kisan Samman Nidhi](#), Kisan credit card etc.**
- It will **cover every PVTG household that has remained unreached and facilities are provided at their doorstep.**
- Places like **Haat Bazar, CSC, Gram panchayat, Anganwadi, Multipurpose Centre, Vandhan Vikas Kendras, and Krishi Vigyan Kendras** will be used to organize these events.

MUST READ: [Significance of Tribal Culture in Sustainable Development](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

LAKHPATI DIDI

Context: Recently, the President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu graced the **Lakhpati Didi** Sammelan at Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

Background:-

- Speaking on the occasion, the President said that she was happy to address this conference as the self-help groups are contributing significantly in making deprived and backward sections of the society, especially women, self-reliant.

About Lakhpati Didi Scheme:-

- **Launched: 2023.**
- **Objective:** to empower women in rural areas by encouraging them to start micro-enterprises and become economically self-sufficient.
- It serves as a platform to **motivate and support women in establishing and operating micro-enterprises.**
- The scheme covers **2 crore women in rural villages, empowering them through skill development initiatives.**
- Women will be provided **skill training** so that they can earn over Rs 1 lakh per year.
- **Skills covered:** plumbing, LED bulb making, and operating and repairing drones, among others.
- This initiative aims to **leverage technology to transform the agricultural landscape** and around 15,000 women's SHGs will be given training in **operating and repairing drones.**

Benefits:-

- This training will not only **create new avenues for income** generation but also equip women with cutting-edge skills. ([National Commission for Women](#))

MUST READ: [Reimagining Self-Help Groups \(SHGs\)](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

PRADHAN MANTRI KISAN URJA SURAKSHA EVAM UTTHAAN MAHABHIYAN (PM-KUSUM)

Context: The Union Minister for New & Renewable Energy and Power has informed that the main objectives of the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM)** recently.

Background:-

- They include de-dieselisation of the farm sector, providing water and energy security to farmers, increasing the income of farmers, and curbing environmental pollution.

About Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM):-

- **Launched: 2019.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).**

Objectives of PM KUSUM:-

- To subsidize farmers to **install solar irrigation pumps** for cultivation and ensure **energy security.**
- To honour **India's commitment** to increase the share of installed capacity of electric power from non-fossil-fuel sources to 40% by 2030 as part of **Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs).**
 - These are the intended reductions in greenhouse gas emissions under the UNFCCC.
- Each farmer will receive a **60% subsidy** to set up tube wells and pump sets.

- They will also **get 30% of the total cost** as a loan from the Government. ([PM KUSUM](#))

Benefits of PM KUSUM:-

For Discoms:-

- Electricity for agriculture is highly subsidized and is often termed as the **main cause of the poor financial position of Discoms**.
- This scheme will support the financial health of discoms by **reducing the burden of subsidy** to the agriculture sector.

For States:-

- The scheme will **promote decentralized solar power production**, and reduce transmission losses.
- For state governments, this is a potential way to **reduce their subsidy outlay towards irrigation**.
- It will also help States meet the **RPOs (Renewable Purchase Obligation) targets**.

For Farmers:-

- If farmers are able to **sell surplus power, they will be incentivized to save power**.
- This means their will be efficient use of groundwater and **provide water security to farmers**.

For Environment:-

- With providing of decentralized solar-based irrigation will help in **moving away from polluting diesel**.
- It will fill the void in solar power production in the intermediate range between rooftops and large parks.

MUST READ: [Solar Energy in India](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

DEENDAYAL ANTYODAYA YOJANA-NATIONAL RURAL LIVELIHOODS MISSION (DAY-NRLM'S)

Context: Recently, the Ministry of Rural Development signed a MoU with Reliance Retail's JioMart, to onboard **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM's)** SHGs.

Background:-

- The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Reliance Retail's JioMart towards its efforts to help enhance the outreach of the products of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) thereby empowering the rural SHG artisans.

About Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM):-

- **Launched: June 2011.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Rural Development.**
- **Objective:** to reduce poverty by reaching out to **around 10 Crore rural poor households** in a **phased manner by 2022-23** to access gainful self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities resulting in sustainable and diversified livelihood options for the poor.

Historical Background:-

- The [DAY-NRLM](#) was launched in 2011 by the Government of India by **restructuring the erstwhile Swarnajayanti Grameen Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY)**.
- The new programme design was **based on the experiences gained from the large-scale community-based projects** in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Bihar, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- In November 2015, the program was **renamed DAY-NRLM**.

Salient Features:-

- DAY-NRLM is a **flagship poverty alleviation program** of the Government of India.

- It is the **world's largest initiative to improve the livelihoods of the rural poor.**

Values:-

- **Inclusion of the poorest**
- **Transparency and accountability**
- **Ownership** and key role of the poor and their institutions in all stages – planning, implementation, and monitoring
- **Community self-reliance** and self-dependence

Components of mission:-investing in **four core components**:-

- **Social mobilization and promotion and strengthening of self-managed and financially sustainable community institutions of the rural poor:**At least one woman member from each identified rural poor household is to be brought under the Self Help Group (SHG) network in a time-bound manner.
- **Financial inclusion of the rural poor:**-It works on both the demand and supply sides of financial inclusion. On the demand side, it promotes financial literacy among the poor and provides catalytic capital to the SHGs and their federations.
- **Sustainable livelihoods:**-NRLM focuses on stabilizing and promoting the existing livelihood portfolio of the poor through its three pillars: **vulnerability reduction, livelihood enhancement and employment.**
- **Social inclusion, social development and convergence:**-NRLM places a high emphasis on convergence with other programmes of the MoRD and other Central Ministries.

MUST READ:[Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

ANGANWADI-CUM-CRÈCHE

Context: A National Level Programme on **Anganwadi-Cum-Crèche** Under Palna was held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi recently.

Background:-

- It was to release the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) of the scheme.

About National Programme on Anganwadi-cum-Crèche (AWCC):-

- **Launched: 2023.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Women and Child Development.**
- **Objective:** the central aim of Anganwadi-cum- Crèches is to meet the demand for quality childcare facilities and enable women to actively participate in the workforce.

Salient Features:-

- The **initiative under the Palna Scheme** underwent revisions and was included as part of the Samarthyaa sub-component of Mission Shakti, starting from April 2022.
- The government has **expanded childcare services through AWCC** as part of the **Palna scheme**, a sub-component of **Mission Shakti**.
 - **Palna scheme:** will offer a **safe and secure environment for the children of working women** to function as a catalyst for increasing female labour force participation.
 - **Its objectives are:-**
 - To provide day-care facilities for children (6 months to 6 years) of working mothers in the community and improve the nutrition and health status of children.
 - To promote physical, cognitive, social and emotional development (Holistic Development) of children.

- To educate and empower parents /caregivers for better childcare.
- **The scheme will provide an integrated package of the following services:**
 - Daycare Facilities including Sleeping Facilities.
 - Early Stimulation for children below 3 years and pre-school education for 3 to 6 years old children.
 - Supplementary Nutrition (to be locally sourced)
 - Growth Monitoring.
 - Health Check-up and Immunization.
- **Mission Shakti:** it is the Government of India's **Integrated Women Empowerment Programme.**
- It was launched as an **Umbrella Scheme** for Women's Safety, Security, and Empowerment, with implementation dates from **2021-22 to 2025-26.**
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has established a **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the administration and execution of the AWCC scheme** to enable states and districts to operationalize Palna.
- AWCC aims to provide **high-quality crèche services** in a safe and secure setting **for children aged 6 months to 6 years.**
- Anganwadi facilities are the **world's greatest childcare institutions.**
- The government aims to **establish 17,000 Crèches under the Palna scheme.**
- **Two additional Crèche workers and helpers will be deployed** along with existing Anganwadi workers and helpers under the Palna scheme. ([Mid-day Meal \(MDM\) scheme](#))

MUST READ: [National Creche Scheme \(NCS\)](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

SPORTS

IBA JUNIOR WORLD BOXING CHAMPIONSHIP 2023.

Context: Recently, India bagged 3 gold, 5 silver and 1 bronze medals in **IBA Junior World Boxing Championship 2023**.

About IBA Junior World Boxing Championship 2023:-

- **Date:** 23 November – 4 December
- **Venue:** MIKA Sports Arena, Yerevan
- Akansha won gold in the 70 kg category, Pari clinched the gold medal in the 48 kg weight category.
- Nisha won gold in the 52 kg category. ([Sports Code](#))
- In the 52 kg weight category, Vini won the silver medal.
- Srishti Sathe won a silver medal in the 63 kg weight category.
- In the boys' category, Jatin won the silver medal in the 54 kg category.
- While Hardik Panwar in the 80 kg category, Ameesha Kereta in the 54 kg category and Prachi Tokas in the 80 kg weight category had to settle for silver medals only.

MUST READ: [Chess Olympiad](#)

SOURCE: [AIR](#)

KHELO INDIA PARA GAMES

Context: Recently, the First-ever **Khelo India Para Games** concluded in New Delhi.

Background:-

- Addressing the closing ceremony, Union Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Anurag Thakur hailed the Khelo India Para Games as a celebration of human passion and spirit.

About Khelo India Para Games:-

- **Date:** December 10 and 17, 2023.
- **Venue:** New Delhi.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- Over **1400 athletes from across the nation** will compete in seven para sports—**athletics, shooting, archery, football, badminton, table tennis, and weightlifting.** ([Grand Slam](#))
- The grand opening at: **KD Jadhav Indoor Hall, Indira Gandhi Sports Complex.**
- The **Delhi Police band** will showcase a grand performance, followed by a lively dance performance by 'We Are One' group.
- **Objective behind organizing the Khelo India Para Games is to empower para-athletes.**

Results:-

- **Haryana** won 105 medals including 40 gold, 39 silver, and 26 bronze.
- **Uttar Pradesh** came **second** with 62 medals including 25 gold, 23 silver, and 14 bronze.
- **Tamil Nadu** finished **third** with 20 gold, eight silver, and 14 bronze medals. Athletes from 32 states and Union Territories participated in the Games.

MUST READ: [Chess Olympiad](#)

SOURCE: [AIR](#)

WRESTLING FEDERATION OF INDIA (WFI)

Context: Recently, Sanjay Singh has been elected the new president of the **Wrestling Federation of India (WFI)**.

Background:-

- He was elected after the results of election of office bearers, in which he got 40 votes.

About Wrestling Federation of India:-

- **HQ: New Delhi.**
- Being the apex body for wrestling in India.
- It **promotes wrestling players** for the Olympics, Asian Games, National Wrestling Championships, and World Wrestling Championships.

WFI's Contract System for Wrestlers:

- In 2018, the WFI rolled out its revolutionary contracts system for the grapplers.
- It is **recognized by the Government of India and the [Indian Olympic Association](#).**
- It organizes various national and international wrestling events, such as **the Pro Wrestling League, the National Wrestling Championship, and the Asian Championships.**

MUST READ: [Sports Code](#)

SOURCE: [AIR](#)

MISCELLANEOUS

BOOKER PRIZE

Context: Recently, Paul Lynch who is an Irish author won the 2023 **Booker Prize** for his fifth novel 'Prophet Song.'

Background:-

- After being honoured with the award, Lynch said, "It is with immense pleasure that I bring the Booker home to Ireland."

About Booker Prize:-

- Established in **1969** by **Booker McConnell**, a British conglomerate.
- Awarded annually for a single book translated into English.
- **£50,000** prize divided **equally between author and translator** each year.
- Eligible novels must be **English-language**, published in the UK or Ireland, and published in the year of award.
- Judged by **five respected literary figures**.
- Shortlist of **six novels selected from all eligible novels**.
- Winner announced in London in November each year.

Indian-origin writers have won the Booker in the past:-

- **Arundhati Roy** ('The God of Small Things')
- **Salman Rushdie** ('Midnight's Children')
- **Kiran Desai** ('The Inheritance of Loss')
- **Aravind Adiga** ('The White Tiger')

MUST READ: [Golden Globes Award](#)

SOURCE: [BBC](#)

EMMY DIRECTORATE AWARD.

Context: Recently, Ekta Kapoor was honoured with the International **Emmy Directorate Award**.

Background:-

- She became the First Indian Woman Producer to receive the International Emmy Directorate Award.
- Additionally, Vir Das, along with Derry Girls season 3, was honoured with the International Emmy for Comedy.

About Emmy Awards:-

- The Emmy Awards are a set of prestigious honours **specifically for television and emerging media**.
- The Emmy Awards, **initially conceptualized in 1948**, made their debut on January 25, 1949.
- The different sectors within television:-

Primetime Emmy Awards	Administered by the Television Academy, these honour American TV shows aired during primetime.
International Emmy Awards	Recognize excellence in international television programs outside the United States.
Daytime Emmy Awards	Awarded to American shows aired during late-morning and afternoon time slots.
Sports, News, and Documentary Emmy Awards	Overseen by the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, these categories focus on excellence in sports, news, and documentary programming.
Technology and Engineering Emmy Awards	Recognize achievements in technological advancements within the television industry.
Regional Emmy Awards	Celebrate excellence in regional television markets, including local news, state-to-state programming, and locally produced shows.

These awards are **presented by three distinct organizations:-**

- The Television Academy administers the Primetime Emmy Awards. ([Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award \(PBSA\)](#))
- The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences oversees daytime, sports, news, and documentary categories.
- The International Academy of Television Arts & Sciences is responsible for the International Emmys.

MUST READ: [Golden Globes Award](#)

SOURCE: [THE MINT](#)

NYHOLM PRIZE.

Context: Recently, Mumbai professor bagged Royal Society of Chemistry’s **Nyholm prize**.

Background:-

- Professor Savita Ladage from Mumbai’s Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research received the Royal Society of Chemistry’s Nyholm Prize for Education in recognition of her contributions to chemistry education.
- Prof. Ladage bagged the award for her **advocacy of the significance of chemical education**.
- Her efforts include **mentoring chemistry educators and spearheading impactful teacher and student programs** that advance chemistry education in the country.
- In addition to the prize, Prof. Ladage will be awarded **£5,000, along with a medal and a certificate**.

About Nyholm prize:-

The Royal Society of Chemistry presents an annual award to celebrate individuals across education levels, teachers, technicians, and professionals. The 2023 winner receives £5000, medal, and certificate, and completes UK-based lectures or workshops, chosen by the Education Prize Committee.

MUST READ: [Sastra Ramanujan Prize](#)

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Context: Recently, the Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed \$250 million loan for Industrial Corridor Development in India.

Background:-

- The loan will continue support to industrial corridor development to make manufacturing more competitive, strengthen national supply chains and links with regional and global value chains, and create more and better jobs.

About Asian Development Bank (ADB):-

Asian Development Bank Member Countries

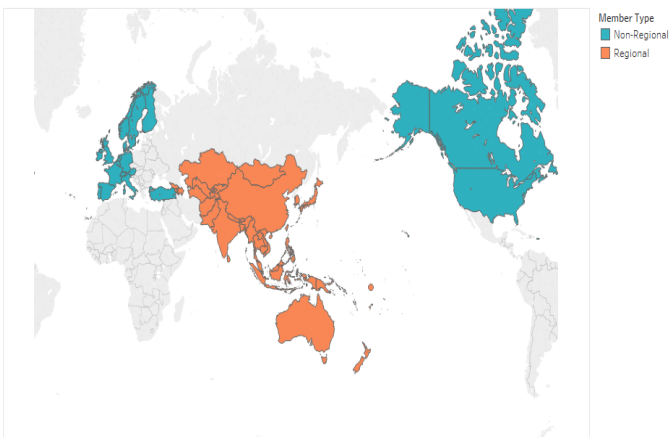


IMAGE SOURCE:

[CORPORATEFINANCEINSTITUTE.COM](https://www.corporatefinanceinstitute.com)

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a **regional development bank**.
- It was established in **1966**.
- **First President:** Takeshi Watanabe
- **HQ:** Manila, Philippines
- **Objective:** to promote social and economic development in Asia. ([Multi-tranche financing facility](#))
- **Membership:** the bank admits members

of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (**UNESCAP**) and **non-regional developed countries**.

- **Shareholders:** Japan and the United States (each with 15.6% of total shares), the People's Republic of China (6.4%), India (6.3%), and Australia (5.8%).
- **Voting rights:** votes are distributed in **proportion to members' capital subscriptions**.
- ADB is the official **United Nations Observer**.
- **Roles and functions:-**
 - It is dedicated to **reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific** through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

Key Publications:-

- **ADB Annual Report 2022, Asian Development Outlook April 2023**
- **Asian Economic Integration Report 2023: Trade, Investment, and Climate Change in Asia and the Pacific, Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2022**

India and ADB

India is a founding member of ADB.

India is the **bank's fourth-largest shareholder**.

- ADB operations promote **private sector development, gender empowerment, regional integration, knowledge solutions, and capacity development**.
- ADB supports India's priorities for robust, **climate resilient, and inclusive growth**, aligned with ADB's Strategy 2030 and the forthcoming **country partnership strategy, 2023–2027**.

MUST READ: ([Differences between the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank \(ADB\).](#))

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE

Context: Recently, PM remembers former PM **Atal Bihari Vajpayee** on his birth anniversary.

Background:-

- Praising his dedication towards the nation, he said that Shri Vajpayee will always remain a source of inspiration.
- The Prime Minister posted on X:
- "पूर्वप्रधानमंत्री आदरणीय अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी जी को उन की जयंती पर देश के सभी परिवारजनों की ओर से मेरा कोटि-कोटि नमन। वे जीवन पर्यंत राष्ट्र निर्माण को गति देने में जुटे रहे। मांभारती के लिए उनका समर्पण और सेवा भाव अमृतकाल में भी प्रेरणा स्रोत बनारहेगा।"

About Atal Bihari Vajpayee:-

- **Birth: 25, December 1924.**
- **Born in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh.**
- **Died: 16, August 2018.**
- **Sadaiv Atal: the Samadhi of Atal Bihari Vajpayee.**
- He was **Prime Minister thrice in 1996, 1998-1999, and 1999-2004.**

Political Career:-

- He was the **first non-Congress PM to have finished a full term.**
- He was **elected 10 times to the Lok Sabha** from four different States.
- He was **twice a member** of the **Rajya Sabha.**
- His birthday, December 25, is observed as **Good Governance Day** by the government.

Awards:-

- **2015:** He was awarded India's highest civilian honour, **Bharat Ratna.**
- **1992:** He was also awarded **Padma Vibhushan.** ([Padma awards](#)).

Ideology:-

- He advocated and practised **positive nationalism.**
- He proudly took **Hindi to the UN first time** and spoke it in the General Assembly.

Important Initiatives:-

- He conducted the **nuclear test in Pokhran** in 1998. He himself **rode a bus to Lahore** in 1999 for Indo-Pak peace. He initiated the **Delhi Metro rail** as a mass transit system.
- He brought in the **National Highway Development Project** leading to the East-West North-South Corridor or the **Golden Quadrilateral.**
- He envisaged and executed the **first round of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana** which connected rural India greatly.
- **The New Telecom Policy of 1999** brought in by him was also a crucial part of the Indian telecom revolution.

Flagship Policy Initiatives:-

- **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan:** Launched in 2000-2001 to provide free and compulsory education to children between 6 to 14 years.
- **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana:** it was launched on 25th December 2000 to provide all-weather access to unconnected habitations.
- **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas:** these conventions have been held every year since 2003. ([Inauguration of Atal Tunnel](#))

MUST READ: [Shaheed Bhagat Singh](#)

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

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MAINS

PAPER 1

CYCLONE MICHAUNG

GS I - GEOGRAPHY

Context: Recently the Cyclone Michaung made landfall over **Nellore in Andhra Pradesh** as a super-cyclonic storm.

ABOUT MICHAUNG

- It **originated in the south west Bay of Bengal**, and gradually intensified into a deep depression as ionic strong and finally a super cyclonic storm.
- They were aided by **warm sea surface temperatures** and the Madden-Julian oscillation, a weather anomaly that influences rainfall patterns.
- The name was suggested by **Myanmar**, which symbolizes **strength and resilience**.
- This is the fourth tropical cyclone of the year or the way of Bengal and the first super cyclic Strom since 1999.

WHY DID CYCLONE INTENSIFY?

- Global warming resulted in detectable increase in the number of **higher intensity cycle**, as well as intensification.
- Changes increase the sea surface temperature, which is conducive to cyclone intensification. According to study tropical cyclones **with wind speed above one 85 km/h** had **become 15% more likely since 1979**.
- Maiden-Julian oscillation, throw seeds of rotational, low pressure systems over the Indian and specific questions. This indicated favorable conditions for the cyclone.
- Rapid intensification is defined as an **increase in maximum sustain by at least 55 km/h in 24 hour**. Period.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE INTENSIFICATION

- Prolonged rains allows to make a landfall with more energy move further in land, survive longer, and extend their own ground devastation to previously inaccessible areas
- Cyclone Michaung reached a **peak intensity of 90-100 km/hr winds gusting to 110 km/hr** at the time of landfall.
- The cyclone generator, strong sear and tile waves up to 1.5 m along with flash floods in low lying areas
- **It affected around 40 lakh people**, many people stranded in flood without access to basic amenities like food, water, etc.
- Resulted in widespread damage to infrastructure crops and livelihood.

CYCLONE

- As per national disaster management authority (NDMA), cyclones result from atmosphere disturbances surrounding low pressure area, characterized by rapid and often distractive circulation.
- The air circulation is in anticlockwise direction in the northern hemisphere and clockwise in the southern hemisphere
- Cyclonic move across all the reasons on the earth except the equatorial belt.
- Conditions for cyclone
 - Large and continuous supplier of warm and moist air that can release, enormous, latent heat.
 - Strong core is forced, then can prevent feeling of low pressure at the center.
 - Unstable condition through the troposphere that creates local disturbance around which cyclone develops.
 - Abscess, a strong, vertical veg, which disturbs the vertical transport of latent heat

PROBLEMATISING PERIODISATION OF HISTORY

GS I – HISTORY

Context: Periodization in history refers to the division of historical time into distinct periods for the purpose of

analysis and study. Historians use periodization to organize and make sense of the vast and complex sweep of human history. All societies evolved their own modes of dividing their history into periods most familiar historical periodization is ancient, medieval and modern. This triad took birth in Europe around the 16th-17th centuries, first in the history of theology and steadily in society's history.

ISSUES WITH CURRENT PERIODISATION OF HISTORY

- **Eurocentrism:** Traditional periodizations often focus on Western civilizations, leading to a biased understanding of global history.
- **Artificial Boundaries:** The rigid demarcation of history can oversimplify the complexity of historical events and processes.
- **Overlooking Local and Regional Histories:** Global periodizations may overlook the richness of local and regional histories.
- **Neglect of Social and Cultural History:** Traditional periodizations often overlook social and cultural history, resulting in an incomplete understanding of lived experiences.
- **Continuity and Change:** Emphasis on discrete periods may obscure continuous processes and long-term trends shaping history.
- **Subjectivity:** Different historians may propose different periodizations, leading to disagreements within the historical community.

MODERNITY

- Modernity is a complex and multifaceted term that has been used to describe various aspects of **social, cultural, economic, and political changes** that have occurred in the world over the past few centuries.
- The modern world that we inhabit was thus essentially the West's creation.
- It is often associated with the period from the late **18th century to the present day** and is characterized by a range of transformative developments.
- Modernity that had for long been accepted as an objective reality "**out there**" in **Chris Bayly's** words has become subjective in each variant context.
- Implied in this transformation is the premise that the modern world that we inhabit and its "**modernity**" are not the gift of any one region of the globe and any single segment of humanity nor confined to a given time bracket but rather the cumulative outcome of contributions of all societies and civilisations throughout the period of history known to us.

CONCLUSION

- To address these issues, historians are increasingly adopting more inclusive and diverse approaches to periodization. This includes considering multiple perspectives, acknowledging the interconnectedness of global histories, and incorporating a broader range of themes, such as social, cultural, and environmental factors, into the study of history.

RISE OF CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

GS I – WOMEN

Context: The recent National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report highlights a decline in overall crime rate in 2022, However it highlights a 4% rise in crimes against women. The crime rate dropped to 258.1 per lakh population in 2022 from 268 per lakh in 2021, but crimes against women increased.

CAUSES FOR CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

- **Gender Inequality:** Deep-rooted gender inequalities persist in many societies, leading to the unequal distribution of power, resources, and opportunities between men and women. These inequalities contribute to a culture that normalizes and perpetuates violence against women.
- **Regressive value system-** It undermines women's movements and empowerment which promote conservative, traditional, or backward views on gender roles, sexuality, and morality.
- **Gender based violence-** Child marriage, female genital mutilation, honour killings, dowry violence etc., and increase the crime rate against women.
- **Women as commodity-** Dowry system have tragically transformed the sacred institution of marriage into a cold business transaction. It is associated with various forms of violence and abuse against women, such

as domestic violence, dowry deaths, and bride burning.

- **Policy paralysis**- India has women specific laws and schemes but the gap between the formulation of policies for protection of women and their implementation remains a key challenge.
- **Shock absorbers** - Women bear the brunt of the social and economic hardships caused by inequality, discrimination, and lack of opportunities.
- **Inequality**-The high crime rate reflects the persistent discrimination and oppression faced by women and girls in India, across different social and economic groups.

GOVERNMENT MEASURES FOR PROTECTION OF WOMEN

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

- The act provides for more effective protection of the rights of women **guaranteed under the Constitution** who are victims of violence of any kind occurring **within the family** and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

National Commission for Women (NCW)

- NCW is a statutory body set up by the Government of India.
- The commission is **mandated to study and monitor** all matters relating to the Constitutional and legal safeguards provided to women; review the existing legislations to suggest amendments wherever necessary, and look into complaints involving the deprivation of the rights of women.

Mission Shakti

- **“Mission Shakti”** is a programme in a mission mode that aims to improve interventions for women’s empowerment, safety, and security.
- The plan aims to economically empower women and provide them with the freedom to make their own decisions about their bodies and minds in a setting free from abuse and threat.

Legal Services Authorities (LSA) Act

- In order to ensure that no citizen is denied the opportunity to obtain justice due to economic or other disabilities, **the LSA Act, 1987** provides **free and competent legal services** to beneficiaries covered by Section 12 of the Act, including women and children.
- It also establishes **Lok Adalats** to ensure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice on the basis of equal opportunities.

Digital Shakti Campaign

- The Digital Shakti Campaign is a **pan-Indian initiative** run by the **National Commission for Women** with the goal of empowering and educating women and girls digitally.
- In keeping with its promise to establish safe spaces for women and girls online, **Digital Shakti** is concentrated on empowering women to confront any inappropriate or criminal behaviour online.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative is being implemented through multi-sectoral intervention in all the districts of the country. This is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Women & Child Development, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Department of School Education & Literacy, **Ministry of Education**.

LAWS GOVERNING CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

- **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) act 1956** aims to prevent trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation of women
- **Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 prohibits the giving and taking of dowry.**
- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 is enacted to prohibit the advertisement or publication or any kind of indecent representation of women including writings, paintings, figures, etc.
- **Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act 1987** prohibits the commission of sati, which is the act or rite of burning or burying alive of any widow or woman along with the body of her deceased husband.
- **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005** recognizes domestic violence as a human rights violation and provides the right to every woman to live in violence free home according to their wish.
- **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013** is enacted based on the Vishaka guidelines framed by the Supreme Court that provides measures to protect the working women from evil of sexual harassment.

CONCLUSION

- Need for Strong Political Will in effective policies and programs are required to elevate women’s status

and address the root causes of gender-based violence. Improving Law Enforcement and Judiciary, enhancing police training, increasing women's representation in the force, and expediting judicial processes are crucial steps.

INDIA'S EXTREME RAINFALL CORRIDOR

GS I – GEOGRAPHY

Context: The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has made lot of progress in predicting the weather pattern of India but a recent report has shown how Indian Monsoon pattern are more predictable than what is being done currently.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY RELATED TO INDIAN MONSOON

- **Global warming** has affected various aspects of the Indian monsoon leading to a decreasing trend in total seasonal rainfall over several decades.
- This change has resulted in longer but lower **intensity of dry spells, more intense wet spells** and alterations in the dynamics of the monsoon.
- Despite these changing monsoon patterns due to global warming, a stable **“highway”** exists where extreme rainfall events occur simultaneously.
- This highway extends from parts of West Bengal and Odisha to parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan. This corridor has remained unchanged from 1901 to 2019.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- This study contradicts the notion that stationary elements no longer exist in climate systems due to global warming. This finding also suggests that the Indian monsoon may be more resilient to climate change than previously thought.
- This study can help researchers understand the underlying mechanisms of extreme rainfall and potentially improve forecasting models.
- The ability to better predict extreme rainfall events can help mitigate risks in various sectors like agriculture, water management, energy, transportation, and health.

ABOUT EXTREME RAIN IN CORRIDOR

- India's monsoon forecasts rely heavily on its relation to the El Niño and the La Niña phenomena, although this relation holds only about 60% of the time.
- There are other Global events which effect the rainfall pattern but it requires additional information and also careful modeling experiments to analyze that effects.
- The so-called large-scale extreme rainfall events are simultaneous or near-simultaneous heavy rain episodes that are strewn across a 'highway' that extends from parts of West Bengal and Odisha to parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan.
- In the seemingly chaotic change in all aspects of the monsoon, such trapping of the extreme events to a relatively narrow corridor is good news for potential improvements in process understanding, which is bound to lead to better predictions of these synchronized extreme rainfall events.

PAPER 2

PEACE ARRANGEMENTS IN MANIPUR

GS II – GOVERNANCE

Context: The Union and Manipur governments have signed a peace agreement with the **United National Liberation Front (UNLF)**, a banned Meitei extremist organisation. UNLF is the oldest armed group based in the Manipur valley, marking this agreement as a notable event in the region's history.

HISTORY OF UNLF

- UNLF, **Manipur's oldest militant group**, established in 1964 by **Arambam Samarendra**.
- Aimed to liberate Manipur from India and form an independent socialist state.
- Promoted a long-term program to secede from India, form alliances with China, and capture political power.
- **Aimed to reclaim the Kabow Valley** in Myanmar.
- In 2005, it mooted a proposal to bring the Indo-Manipur conflict to end but it was not accepted by Indian government. The proposal included
 1. Plebiscite which should be conducted under **United Nations (UN)** supervision to know about the opinion of the people of the state on the core issue of restoration of Manipur's independence.
 2. UN peace keeping forces should be deployed in Manipur to ensure that the process is free and fair.
 3. **UNLF will surrender the arms to UN force**, after the withdrawal of Indian troops.
 4. Handling over of political power by the UN in accordance with the results of the plebiscite.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PEACE ACCORD

- First peace negotiations by a **valley-based proscribed organization** since 2023.
- UNLF renounces violence and participates in **democratic process**.
- **Centre's tripartite accords since 2014** resulted in significant reduction in violence.
- Agreement includes **rehabilitation and re-settlement** of UNLF's armed cadres.
- Peace Monitoring Committee to oversee **enforcement of agreed ground rules**.

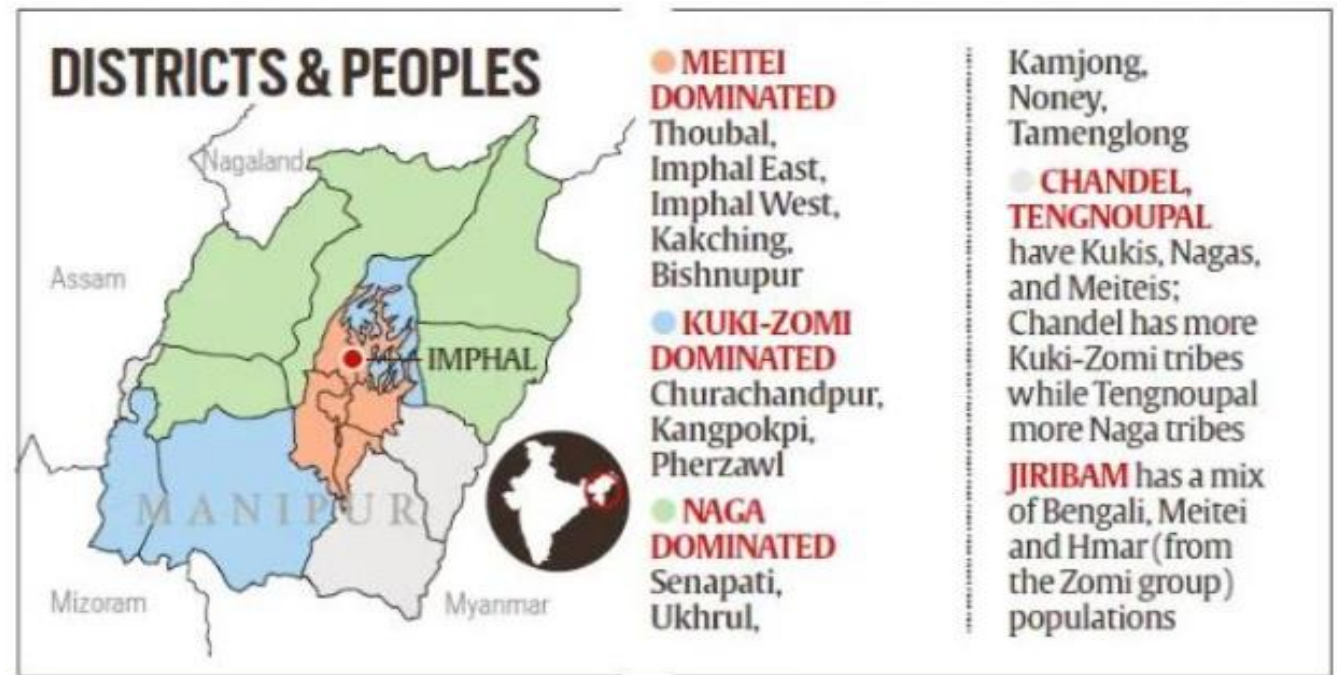
CHALLENGES WITH THE PEACE ACCORD

- The **peace agreement can be complex** to implement due to **multiplicity of stakeholders** and their divergent interests and grievances.
- The terms of the agreement are not known and the involvement of militants in the latest **ethnic conflict may complicate the issue** further.
- If criminal cases are withdrawn, then similar concessions have to be given on the other side to **the Kuki militants** who professedly are **continuing with the Suspension of Operations agreement**.
- The fragility of peace agreements also lies in their vulnerability to disruptions caused by extremist factions or splinter groups within these communities.
- Lack of trust in the government's commitment to fulfil promises outlined in peace agreement undermines its effectiveness.
- The reluctance of neighbouring countries to support peace processes or interference by external actors can destabilise the region.

HISTORY OF INSURGENCY IN MANIPUR

- Manipur has been in the cross-currents of **India's oldest** insurgent movements.
- **Naga movement** is the country's longest-running insurgency which fights for the Greater Nagaland or Nagalim.
- Kuki also have fought the Indian government for an **'independent Kuki homeland'**, spread across Manipur.
- The Kuki insurgency gained momentum after ethnic clashes with the **Nagas of Manipur in the early 1990s**.
- The Meiteis in Manipur opposed the merger agreement between the Manipuri king and the Indian

government in 1949.



CONCLUSION

- The peace agreement with the UNLF marks a critical step in addressing the long-standing insurgency in Manipur. It reflects a shift in the approach of Meitei insurgent groups towards dialogue and potential reconciliation. The success of this agreement could pave the way for further peace initiatives in the region, contributing to stability and development in Manipur.

IMPORTANCE OF REGIONAL PARTIES IN STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

GS II – GOVERNANCE

Context: The existence of several cultural, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and caste groups within the Indian community is significantly liable for the source and development of regional parties of India. Regional parties in India are regarded as any political party with its headquarters in a single area, irrespective of its purposes and medium. TDP or Telugu Desam Party is considered the first regional party of India after Independence and became the main competitor in the 8th Lok Sabha (1984).

CHARACTERISTICS OF REGIONAL PARTIES

Regional parties in India are established based on themes like– Autonomy, Identity, Statehood, and Development etc. The other features of regional political parties in India are as follows:

- Its **electoral ground is restricted** to a specific state or region.
- Regional parties in India mainly involve using the provincial resources of discontentment or maintaining a mixture of primordial needs **based on caste, language, community, or region**.
- It concentrates on regional or local matters and seeks to capture political power at the state level. It has no preference for growing and maintaining the central government.
- It has a political wish for greater provincial independence of states in the Indian Union.

SIGNIFICANCE OF REGIONAL PARTIES

- Representation of regional interests:** Regional parties advocate for local issues, reflecting India's diverse linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic landscape.
- Cultural and Linguistic Diversity:** Regional parties, rooted in specific linguistic or cultural identities, better connect with local populations and address issues not adequately represented by national parties.
- Federal Structure of Government:** Regional parties influence policies and governance at the local level, playing a crucial role in state governments.
- Coalition Politics:** Regional parties, holding significant seats in state assemblies, form national coalitions, crucial for central government stability.

- **Social Justice and Identity Politics:** Regional parties champion social justice and identity-based politics, addressing marginalized communities' concerns.
- **Check on Centralization of Power:** Strong regional parties prevent excessive centralization of power, ensuring regional concerns are not overshadowed.

CRITICISM FACED BY REGIONAL PARTIES

The rise of regional parties of India made politics a cruel rivalry. It encouraged using wrong-headed means, including muscular force and money, to acquire power politically. It is seen during the elections in various states of India in the form of violence.

- They also make it **hard to execute foreign contracts and procedures** on schedule.
- Regional parties **have put national interests at risk** by favoring narrow **regional objectives more**.
- The deterioration of national parties led to the instability of the Government.
- Regional parties initiated the **trend of state division along racial lines, like caste, tribe, language, and some other attributes**.
- The parties focus on populist initiatives, including standard loan forgiveness by different states, to extend their support base. **It damages the Government's revenue balance**.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) registers political parties for the purpose of elections and grants them recognition as national or state parties on the basis of their poll performance.

Conditions for Declaring a Party 'National':

As per the ECI's Political Parties and Election Symbols, 2019 handbook, a political party would be considered a national party if:

- It is '**recognised**' in **four or more states**; OR
- If its candidates **have secured at least 6% of total valid votes in at least 4 states** (in latest Lok Sabha or Assembly elections) and the party has at least 4 MPs in the last LS polls
OR
- If it has won at **least 2% of the total seats in the LS** from at least 3 states.

Conditions for Declaring a Party 'State':

- If it secures **6% of the valid votes** polled in the state at a **general election to the respective state legislative assembly (state LA)** and also, **it wins 2 seats in the same state LA**.
- If it secures **6% of the total valid votes** in the **state at a general election to the LS**; and also, it wins **1 seat in the LS** from the same state.
- If it wins **3% of seats in the LA** at a general election to the legislative assembly of the state concerned or **3 seats in the assembly** (whichever is more).
- If it wins **1 seat in the LS for every 25 seats** or any fraction thereof allotted to the state at a general election to the LS from the state concerned.
- If it secures 8% of the total valid votes polled in the **state at a General Election** to the LS from the state or to the State LA.

CONCLUSION

- The importance of regional parties in Indian politics lies in their ability to represent diverse regional interests, mobilize votes, influence state and national policies, and contribute to the overall democratic and federal character of the country. Their role is integral to the dynamic and complex political landscape of India.

INDIA'S GROWING NEIGHBORHOOD DILEMMAS

GS II – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Context: Atal Bihari Vajpayee in one of the meetings said "We can change history but not geography. We can change our friends but not our neighbors." Neighbourhoods are difficult for any major power, but contemporary India is faced with an exceptionally hard one, complicated by a rising superpower in its neighbourhood, for the first time in its history.

PRESENT DILEMMAS OF INDIA

Anti-India regime

- Politically anti-India regimes in South Asia are seen in
 - **Maldives - India Out campaign started since 2020 asking Indians to leave the country.**
 - Bangladesh - Opposition party has accused India of interfering in their internal affairs.

Aggressive China

- Beijing's growing influence in South Asia offering economic and strategic benefits to the smaller states in the region.
- **Belt and Road initiative** involves many South Asian countries in infrastructure, it also **infringes on India's sovereignty and territorial integrity.**
- Economic and strategic influence is achieved with projects like **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** and the China-Maldives Friendship Bridge.
- **China has engaged** with countries that are isolated or sanctioned **by the international community**, such as **Afghanistan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka**, providing them with diplomatic and military support.
- **China's predatory lending practices** in which poor countries are overwhelmed with unsustainable loans and would be forced to cede control of strategic assets to China. **Example Hambantota port in Sri Lanka**
- China tried to **resolve border disputes** with its neighbors except India as seen in the **case of Bhutan**, where China offered to swap territory in **exchange for Doklam plateau**, which is claimed by both Bhutan and China.

Geopolitical lock-in

- India will be geopolitically locked in within an unfriendly South Asia.
- **Influence of China** with the south Asian countries would weaken the **bilateral ties of other countries with India.**
- This would limit strategic options and regional leadership role.

CAUSES FOR THE DILEMMAS

- Regional geopolitical architecture is characterized by
 - **Diminishing presence of the United States**, which for a long time, was a geopolitical constant in the region.
 - The void created by USA withdrawal has been **filled by China.**
 - The aggressive and stupendous rise of China has come as a **'geopolitical buffer'**, at least for now, for the smaller states in the region which have become adept at using the **'China card'** in their foreign policy assertions.
 - South Asia is one of **the least interconnected and poorest regions** in the world, and that the inhabitants of the region naturally gravitate towards China which can **cater to their material needs.**
 - China has offered itself as a **no-frills non-normative alternative to India**, and that this has changed the India-centric calculus of the region.
- Other reasons for India's dilemma include its assumption, one being that South Asia minus Pakistan would be amenable to Indian geopolitics, the other assumption that India's special relationship with the region rooted in culture, soft power, history and ethnicity would help the country deal with the neighbourhood better than those without intimate knowledge of the region, namely China.

WAY FORWARD

- India should acknowledge the fundamental changes in the regional balance of power and operate within the framework of a new geopolitical reality.
- Actively involve friendly external actors to counterbalance China's influence in the region.
- Adopt a flexible diplomatic approach that engages with multiple actors in neighboring countries, focusing on reducing anti-India sentiments.
- Address the shortage of diplomats by significantly enhancing India's diplomatic workforce to effectively implement foreign policy objectives.

ADVOCATES AMENDMENT BILL

GS II – GOVERNANCE

Context: Advocate amendment bill 2023 was passed in Lok Sabha which amends the Advocates Act 1961 and

Legal Practitioners Act 1879. These acts have been central to the regulation of legal practitioners in India.

NEED TO AMEND THE BILL

- **Aim is to amend the Advocates Act, 1961** and to repeal obsolete provisions of the Legal Practitioners Act, 1879, to keep in line with the government's policy of repealing all obsolete laws or pre-independence Acts that have lost their utility,
- The bill seeks to make the offence of touting **as punishable and empowers judges to publish a list of offenders.**
- The act is **amended to reduce the number of superfluous enactments** in the statute book and repeal all obsolete laws.
- The bill aims to **ensure the regulation of legal profession** and protect the interests of advocates and public.
- The bill provides provision to **consult with the Bar Council of India on the regulation of legal profession.**

WHO IS TOUT?

- Tout refers to a person who:
 - either proposes to procure or procures the employment of a legal practitioner in a legal business in return of any payment
 - OR
 - Frequent places such as the precincts of civil or criminal courts, revenue-offices, or railway stations to procure such employment.

KEY PROVISIONS OF THE BILL

- High Court, district judge, session's judge, district magistrate, and revenue officer can frame and publish lists of touts.
- Authorities can order subordinate courts to investigate alleged or suspected touts.
- If proven a tout, their name will be included in the list.
- Courts or judges can exclude anyone whose name is in the list.
- No person can be included in lists without showing cause.
- Acting as a tout while their name is in the list can result in imprisonment up to 3 months or fine up to Rs 500.
- A new provision in Section 45 of the Advocates Act, 1961 prescribes 6 months imprisonment for illegal practitioners.

The Legal Practitioners Act, 1879

- The act **was enacted in 1880**, it aimed to consolidate the law relating to legal practitioners in certain Indian provinces.
- The Act defined legal practitioners as **advocates, vakils, or attorneys of any High Court.**
- A significant aspect of the law was the definition of 'tout', referring to individuals who procure clients for legal practitioners for remuneration.

The Advocates Act, 1961

- This Act was **enacted to unify and amend laws** relating to legal practitioners and establish Bar Councils and an **All-India Bar.**
- It **empowers the Bar Council of India** to make rules on matters such as legal education, professional conduct, legal aid, and recognition of foreign qualifications.
- Previously, legal practitioners were governed by multiple acts, **including the 1879 Act.**
- Post-independence, reforms were suggested by the Law Commission and the All-India Bar Committee, leading to the 1961 Act.

PM JANMAN SCHEME FOR PVTGs

GS II – HEALTH

Context: Recently, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has brought to light the ambitious Pradhan Mantri-Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN) Scheme. Aimed at uplifting Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), this initiative carries the potential to address their unique challenges and provide essential infrastructure for a brighter

future.

ABOUT PM-JANMAN SCHEME

- **PM JANMAN** is a government scheme that aims to **bring tribal communities into the mainstream**.
- The scheme (comprising Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes) will be implemented by the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**, in collaboration with the State governments and the PVTG communities.
- The scheme will concentrate on 11 critical interventions overseen by **9 line Ministries**, ensuring the implementation of existing schemes in villages inhabited by PVTGs.
- The plan also includes the **establishment of Van Dhan Vikas Kendras for trading in forest produce**, off-grid solar power systems for 1 lakh households, and solar street lights.
- The scheme is **expected to enhance the quality of life** and well-being of the PVTGs, by addressing their multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and exclusion, and by recognizing and valuing their unique and valuable contribution to national and global development.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

- **Data inaccuracy**-There is lack of current data on PVTGs, as no census since 1951 has accounted for them separately.
- **Lack of transparency**- The current project is going ahead with the baseline surveys but the results are not made public.
- **Lack of accountability**- The scheme involves multiple ministries, this may lead to issue of overlapping or conflicting mandate, gaps in service delivery etc.,
- **Loss of ecological diversity**- Some of the interventions such as road construction may affect the availability and quality of natural resources.
- **Loss of cultural heritage**- The scheme provides education, health, skill development etc., this may result in loss of their intellectual and cultural heritage, and reduce their resilience and adaptability.
- **Lack of autonomy**- Mobile connectivity, Anganwadi centres and Bandhan Vikas Kendra may bring the PVTGs under the purview of state and market forces and compromise their sovereignty and rights.

PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS (PVTGs)

- 75 PVTGs out of 705 STs, spread across 18 states and 1 Union Territory.
- Established in 1973 as a separate category, renamed Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in 2006.
- Mostly homogenous with small population, physical isolation, simple social institutes, and slower change rate.
- Highest PVTGs in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.
- Chhattisgarh has 7 PVTGs.
- Established in 2008 for holistic socio-economic development.
- Pradhan Mantri PVTGs Development Mission introduced in 2023-24 to improve socio-economic status.

WAY FORWARD

- National Advisory Council (NAC) 2013 report on the state of PVTGs had recommended that the Ministry of Tribal Affairs should design and conduct a Census specifically for the PVTG communities. The Census should not just enumerate but also find out the status of education, health, and housing.

SUPREME COURT JAMMU AND KASHMIR VERDICT

GS II – JUDICIARY

Context: The Supreme Court recently upheld the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A. The court recognized the fact that Article 370 is not permanent in nature, hence the abrogation which ended the special status was upheld by the judgment.

SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENT

- The SC held that merger of J&K with India was the same as the other princely states in India. The state of Jammu and Kashmir didn't enjoy any integral sovereignty.
 - SC cited that **Karan Singh's proclamation**, issued by the J&K's then ruler **Hari Singh**, on November 25, 1949, **accepted the supremacy of the Indian Constitution** and surrendered the J&K

sovereignty to it.

- SC also cited that **Section 3** of the J&K constitution held J&K as an integral part of India. **Section 147** of the J&K constitution prohibited any amendment to Section 3.
- SC held Article 370 that **Article 370 was a temporary provision**
 - SC contended that Art 370 as an interim arrangement **until the Constituent Assembly of the State was formed**. Article 370 served as a **temporary legal bridge between J&K and India**.
 - The provision was adopted because of the special **circumstances in the state, which was experiencing war conditions at that time**.
- SC upheld the legality of presidential proclamations CO 272 and CO 273 used to abrogate Article 370.
 - SC clarified that, after the Constituent Assembly of the state ceased to exist, **the President could have always unilaterally abrogated Article 370**.
- SC upheld the action of state reorganization of J&K during president's rule.
 - SC held that the decision taken during the President's rule to bifurcate the state of Jammu and Kashmir and to convert it into UT, was not malafide. Hence, no judicial review of the decision was required.

CHALLENGES EMERGED WITH SC VERDICT ON ARTICLE 370

- **Misuse of President Rule:** Majoritarian governments can use President's rule to make irrevocable changes to states, such as bifurcating J&K into two UTs.
- **Undermining Federal Principles:** Parliament can use amending powers to undermine federalism and democratic processes.
- **Threat to Regional Identity:** Article 370's primary rationale to respect and preserve the unique identity, history, and culture of Jammu and Kashmir could raise insecurity among regional communities.
- **Harmonious Relations:** The provision aimed to promote harmonious relations between Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of India could fuel separatism and radicalism.
- **Against Asymmetric Federalism:** The Verdict impinges upon the principle of asymmetric federalism, which is enshrined in the Indian constitution.
- **Pradhan Mantri PVTGs Development Mission:** Introduced in the Union Budget 2023-24 to improve the socio-economic status of PVTGs and bridge gaps in health, education, livelihoods, and basic

infrastructure.

ABOUT ARTICLE 370

- Article 370 in the Indian constitution gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, a region disputed by India, Pakistan and China.
- The **Temporary provisions** of the Article were drafted by **N Gopalaswami Ayyangar in 1949**.
- Using these Articles the Constituent Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir was empowered to recommend which articles of the Indian Constitution should apply to the state.
- **Through a Presidential order in 1954**, Article 35A stemmed from Article 370. Article 35A empowered the Jammu & Kashmir legislature to define the permanent residents of the state, and their special rights and privileges.
- **It allowed the state to have its own constitution, flag and autonomy over most matters except Defence, foreign affairs and communications.**
- It was based on the terms of the Instrument of Accession, which was signed by the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, Hari Singh, in 1947 to join India after an invasion by Pakistan.

HOW DID GOVERNMENT REPEAL ARTICLE 370?

- In the 2019 Presidential orders, Parliament brought a provision giving new meaning to **"constituent assembly of Jammu and Kashmir"**, to mean "Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir", and then assumed the powers of the Legislative Assembly through the President's rule to revoke Article 370.
- Concurrent resolutions were passed by both houses of the Parliament, the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, on 5th and 6th August 2019, respectively. These resolutions revoked the remaining provisions of Article 370 and replaced them with new provisions.
- The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019, **was passed by Parliament on 5th August 2019**. This act bifurcated the state of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories i.e. Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

CONCLUSION

- The Supreme Court has strengthened the spirit of ‘**Ek Bharath Shrestha Bharath**’ and also reminded the importance of unity and a collective dedication to good governance. The decision shows the court’s commitment to strengthening the fabric of our nation and reinforcing the values that define us as a society

SRI KRISHNA JANMABHOOMI CASE**GS II – JUDICIARY**

Context: Hindu petitioners assert that the mosque, constructed by Emperor Aurangzeb in 1670, was built over Lord Krishna’s birthplace in Mathura. The mosque is adjacent to the Krishna Janmasthan Temple, a significant pilgrimage site. The Allahabad High Court allowed an application for the inspection of the Shahi Idgah mosque complex, reigniting the Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi Shahi Idgah Masjid dispute.

HISTORY OF MATHURA KRISHNA JANMASTHAN SITE

- Mathura, a city in northern India, was a significant center of commerce and governance under the Mauryan Empire.
- Mathura was a major center for Buddhism and Jainism, with numerous stupas and monasteries.
- Mathura is the birthplace of Lord Krishna, with the 1st Vaishnava temple likely built in the 1st century CE. Alexander Cunningham, the first archaeologist of British India, believed the site originally contained destroyed Buddhist structures.
- The site was attacked by the Ghaznavid Empire in the early 11th century, leading to fire and pillage.
- The Keshavdev temple, built around 1150 CE, was demolished by Sikandar Lodhi in the 16th century.
- The decline of old religious centers led to the rise of a new devotional movement of Vaishnavism.
- The Mughal emperor Akbar supported the temples of different Vaishnavite sects in Mathura.
- Raja Veer Singh Deo’s temple was built in 1618 during the reign of Jahangir.
- The land where the temple once stood was auctioned in 1815 to a Hindu banker Raja Patnimal, who faced legal challenges. The land was sold to Jugal Kishore Birla in 1944, who formed the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Trust in 1951.

SUPREME COURT RULING

- The Mathura case is comparable to the Gyanvapi Mosque dispute in Varanasi, where a court-ordered survey led to the discovery of a structure claimed as a “shivling” by Hindus and a “fountain” by Muslims.
- Representatives of the UP Sunni Central Waqf Board and the mosque committee argue in the High Court that the mosque does not fall within the disputed 13.37 acres and dispute the location of Krishna’s birthplace. Challenging the Hindu Claims: They assert that the Hindu claims are based on speculation and lack documentary evidence. The Supreme Court declined to halt the Allahabad High Court’s order permitting the survey of Mathura Shahi Idgah complex near the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM PROTECTION UNDER THE CONSTITUTION

- The Preamble of the Constitution states that **India is a secular country**.
- Article 25 to 28 of Part-3 (**Fundamental Rights**) of the Constitution confers Right to freedom of religion.
- Article 25(1) of the Constitution guarantees the freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion.
- It is a right that guarantees a negative liberty which means that the state shall ensure that there is no interference or obstacle to exercise this freedom.
- However, the state can restrict the right for grounds of public order, decency, morality, health and other state interests. Article 26 talks about the freedom to manage religious affairs subject to **public order, morality and health**.
- Article 27 states that no person shall be compelled to pay any taxes for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religion.
- Article 28 talks about the freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

- The dispute is rooted deep in historical and religious significance which unfold through legal channels. These kinds of cases underscore the complexities of addressing historical claims, legal processes, and maintaining communal harmony in the context of religiously significant sites in India.

PARLIAMENT SECURITY BREACH**GS II – PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS**

Context: A significant security breach occurred in India's Lok Sabha on the 22nd anniversary of the 2001 terror attack, revealing critical security lapses. The breach highlights the need for thorough investigations, corrective measures, and strengthened security protocols to prevent recurring breaches and uphold the sanctity of parliamentary institutions. Breach of privilege refers to any violation of MPs' or Parliament's privileges, including casting reflections on them.

RULES FOR PARLIAMENT VISITORS

- Rule 386 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha governs the "**admission, withdrawal, and removal**" of visitors (referred to as "**strangers**" in parliamentary terms) during the sittings of the House.
- **Rule 387** grants the Speaker the power to withdraw "**strangers**" from any part of the House if deemed fit.
- Rule 387A, authorized by the Speaker, empowers a Secretariat officer to remove or take into custody any stranger within House precincts reserved for members.
- Members can apply for visitors' cards only for individuals well-known to them personally.
- For security reasons, visitors are mandated to carry photo identification along with the certification.
- Similar rules are in force for visitor entry into the Rajya Sabha.
- Members are advised to exercise utmost care, especially when facilitating the entry of individuals introduced by someone personally known to them.

Joint Parliamentary Committee on Security in Parliament Complex

- The Joint Parliamentary Committee on Security in Parliament Complex is a committee in the Indian Parliament responsible for overseeing and reviewing the security arrangements within the Parliament complex.
- This committee plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety and security of the Members of Parliament (MPs), parliamentary staff, and the overall functioning of the Parliament.
- Typically, the committee is composed of members from both the Lok Sabha (House of the People) and the Rajya Sabha (Council of States), reflecting a bipartisan approach to security oversight.
- The committee may make recommendations for the formulation of security policies and guidelines within the Parliament complex. This includes addressing issues related to access control, surveillance, emergency response, and coordination with relevant security agencies.
- This joint committee is headed by the Speaker of Lok Sabha.

2001 ATTACK ON THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT

- The 2001 attack on the **Indian Parliament was a terrorist attack** that took place on 13th December 2001, when a group of armed militants attacked the **Parliament of India in New Delhi**.
- The attackers belonged to the Pakistan-based militant organizations Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed.
- The attack resulted in the **death of security personnel** and government officials.
- The attack exposed the vulnerability of India's parliamentary democracy to external threats and prompted a major overhaul of its security arrangements.

PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGES

- Parliamentary privilege refers to rights and immunities enjoyed by Parliament as an institution and MPs in their individual capacity, without which they cannot discharge their functions as entrusted upon them by the Constitution.

Constitutional privileges

- Article 105 - Pertains to the powers, privileges, etc, of Parliament, its members and committees.
- Article 194 - Protects the privileges and powers of the houses of legislature, their members and

committees in the states.

Collective Privileges

- The ability to publish reports, debates, and proceedings, as well as the ability to prevent others from doing so.
- It can publish truthful reports of Parliamentary proceedings without the House's authorization under the freedom of the press.
- Make rules to govern its own procedure and commercial activity, as well as to adjudicate on such issues.
- Right to immediate notification of a member's arrest, custody, conviction, imprisonment, and release
- Initiate inquiries and compel a person's attendance
- The courts are not allowed to investigate a House's or its committees' proceedings
- Without the consent of the Presiding officer, no one (whether a member or an outsider) can be arrested, and no legal process (civil or criminal) can be served within the House's boundaries.

Individual Privileges

- During the session of legislature, from 40 days before the beginning to 40 days after the finish, no member may be arrested.
- Members have the right to free expression.
- No member of Parliament or its committees is accountable in any court for anything said or voted in Parliament or its committees.
- This independence is limited by the Constitution's provisions as well as the norms and standing orders that govern Parliament's functioning.
- They have the right to decline to give evidence and testify in court.

CONCLUSION

- The security breach at the Parliament complex is a solemn reminder that the safety and integrity of our democratic institutions cannot be taken for granted. It is crucial to invest in improving security measures and upgrading training programs for security personnel.

DEBT AND WELFARE

GS II – GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

GS III – ECONOMY

Context: In the recent elections held across four states, the political parties to attract the voters has promised schemes or freebies, these promises along with the welfare schemes will prove to be burden on the state exchequer.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WELFARE AND FREEBIES

- Freebies are goods and services given free without any charge to the users.
- Welfare schemes, on the other hand, are well thought-after plans that aim to benefit the target population and improve their standard of living and access to resources.

WELFARE	FREEBIES
They are generally aimed at benefiting the targeted population in the short term.	They are typically aimed at fulfilling the constitutional obligations (Directive Principles of State Policy) towards citizens.
They are often seen as a way of luring voters or bribing them with populist promises.	They are often seen as a way of promoting social justice, equity, and human development.
Some examples of freebies are free laptops, TVs, bicycles, electricity, water, etc.	Some examples of welfare schemes are public distribution system (PDS), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), mid-day meal scheme, etc.

HOW FREEBIES EFFECT ECONOMY

- Freebies undercut the basic framework of macroeconomic stability, the politics of freebies distorts expenditure priorities and outlays remain concentrated on subsidies of one kind or the other.
- Offering freebies, ultimately, has an impact on the public exchequer and most of the states of India do not have a robust financial health and often have very limited resources in terms of revenue.
- If states keep spending money for supposed political gains, their finances will go awry and fiscal profligacy would prevail.
- As per the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) rules the states can't borrow beyond their limits and any deviation has to be approved by the Centre and central bank.
- Therefore, while states have flexibility on how they choose to spend their money, they cannot in ordinary conditions exceed their deficit ceilings.

REGULARISATION OF FREEBIES

- The '**trickle down**' yielded some positive results but it also **widened inequality, diminished inclusive growth**, and was criticised by economists such as Nobel Laureate Joseph E. Stiglitz. We need to distinguish between the concept of merit goods and public goods.
- It's not about how cheap the freebies are but how expensive they are for the economy, life quality and social cohesion in the long run.
- Most of the centrally sponsored schemes are subjects which are classic subjects in the domain of the states, such as employment, food, education.
- The entry under **Article 282** of the Constitution has been used and misused for having all the centrally sponsored schemes.
- The **FRBM** acts of the Centre as well as States need to be amended to enforce a more complete disclosure of the liabilities on their exchequers.

INSTITUTIONAL CHECKS AGAINST THE FREEBIE CULTURE

- **Role of Opposition**- The first line of defence has to be the legislature, in particular the Opposition, whose responsibility it is to keep the Government in line.
- **CAG audit**- In practice, it has lost its teeth since audit reports necessarily come with a lag, by when political interest has typically shifted to other hot button issues.
- **Market**- It can signal the health of State finances by pricing the loans floated by different State governments differently, reflecting their debt sustainability.

CONCLUSION

- Freebies must be understood from an economic perspective and connected to taxpayers' money. Differences between subsidy and freebie are also essential since subsidies are justified and specially targeted benefits meant to meet specific demands. The freebies, on the other hand, are quite different. It can be understood well through this quote - "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

POST OFFICE AMMENDMENT BILL

GS II – POLITY AND CONSTITUTION

Context: The post office Bill, 2023 was is placed for consideration which replaces the Indian Post Office Act, 1898. As post office services are diversified beyond mail and post office network became the vehicle for citizen centric services.

PROVISIONS OF THE BILL

- Replacing the Indian Post Office Act of 1898.
- The Act grants the central government exclusive privilege of conveying letters by post and incidental services.
- Services provided by India Post include delivery of postal articles and money orders.
- Allows interception of an article transmitted through post on certain grounds.
- The Director General of Postal Services appointed, with powers to decide delivery time and

manner.

- The powers of examination removed, empowering an officer to deliver the article to the customs authority.
- The Act exempts the government from liability related to loss, mis-delivery, delay, or damage to a postal article.
- The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023 retains these exemptions.
- The Act specified various offences and penalties, which were removed by the Bill. Amounts not paid by a user will be recoverable as arrears of land revenue.

ISSUES WITH THE NEW BILL

- **High Government Control:** The provision allowing the interception and opening of parcels by the government may enhance control but also raise potential issues of privacy and misuse.
- **Loss of Exclusive Privileges:** The elimination of exclusive privileges for the central government in conveying letters and issuing postage stamps may impact traditional postal services.
- **Liability Concerns:** Shifting liability from the central government to the Post Office for its services may raise questions about accountability and responsibility.
- **Data Privacy and Security:** The expanded interception powers necessitate the establishment of robust data privacy and security measures to safeguard the personal information of postal service users.
- **Differing Legislation for Couriers:** The absence of similar legislation for courier firms raises concerns about regulatory disparities.

CONCLUSION

- The new Post Office Bill (2023) brings welcome flexibility and modernization to India's postal services. While it addresses some key issues and opens doors to innovation, challenges like differing legislation for courier firms remain. The move towards digital addressing promises clearer definitions and efficient mail delivery, potentially even paving the way for drone deliveries. With these changes, the postal service aims to adapt to the evolving needs of the people and the market while ensuring legality and security

SUSPENSION OF MPs

GS II – PARLIAMENT

Context: Ninety-five MPs from the Lok Sabha and 46 MPs from the Rajya Sabha have been suspended during the ongoing winter session of Parliament. This is the highest number of MPs suspended in a single session in the history of Parliament.

SUSPENSION OF MPs

- The general principle is that it is the role and duty of the Presiding Officer to maintain order so that the House can function smoothly.
- To ensure that proceedings are conducted in the proper manner, the Speaker/ Chairman is empowered to force a member to withdraw from the House.
- The maximum period of suspension is for the remainder of the session.
- **Suspended members cannot enter the chamber** or attend the meetings of the committees.
- He will not be eligible to give notice for discussion or submission.
- He loses the right to get a reply to his questions.

RULES OF PROCEDURE AND CONDUCT

- **Rule 373:** The Speaker can direct a member to withdraw immediately from the House if he finds the member's conduct disorderly. Members so ordered to withdraw shall do so forthwith and shall remain absent during the remainder of the day's sitting.
- **Rule 374:** The Speaker can name a member who disregards the authority of the Chair or abuses the rules

of the House by persistently and wilfully obstructing the business thereof, and the member so named will be suspended from the House for a period not exceeding the remainder of the session.

- **Rule 374A:** Rule 374A was incorporated in the Rule Book in December 2001. In case of gross violation or severe charges, on being named by the Speaker, the member stands automatically suspended from the service of the House for five consecutive sittings or the remainder of the session, whichever is less.
- **Rule 255 (Rajya Sabha):** Under Rule 255 of the General Rules of Procedure of the Rajya Sabha, the presiding officer of the House can invoke suspension of the Member of Parliament. The Chairman as per this rule can direct any member whose conduct in his opinion was not right or was disorderly.
- **Rule 256 (Rajya Sabha):** It provides for suspension of members.
- The Chairman can suspend a member from the service of the Council for a period not exceeding the remainder of the Session.

CONCLUSION

- It is difficult to deal with planned parliamentary offenses and deliberate disturbances for publicity or political reasons. So, opposition members should play a constructive role in Parliament and they should be allowed to put forward their views and express themselves in a dignified manner. There is a need to strike a balance between deliberate disruption and raising the important issue.

INDIA –OMAN RELATIONSHIP



GS II – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Context: Recently the Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tarik visited India, it marks a significant milestone as it is the first State visit by an Omani ruler in 26 years.

IMPORTANCE OF OMAN FOR INDIA

Historic Cooperation:

- The maritime trade routes established between the Sumerian civilisation and the Harappan civilisation in the Indus Valley highlight the great historical significance.
- Oman had links with the India through Gujarat, and with Tamilakam along the Malabar Coast.
- During and after the Cold War era, Oman was friendlier to India compared to the Arab World (which was supportive of Pakistan).

Geostrategic Aspect:

- Omani ports along the Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman being the entry point to the Persian Gulf and to the Gulf of Aden make Oman's location of **strategic importance to India.**

Economic Relations:

- Institutional mechanisms like Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) and Joint Business Council (JBC) oversee economic cooperation between India and Oman.

- India is the **2nd largest market** for Oman's crude oil exports for the year 2022 after China.
- India is also the **4th largest market for Oman's** non-oil exports for the year 2022 after UAE, US and Saudi Arabia and 2nd largest source of its import after UAE.

Defence Relations:

- The JMCC is the highest forum of engagement between India and Oman in the field of Defence.
- The JMCC is expected to meet annually, but could not be organized since 2018 when the meeting of the 9th JMCC was held in Oman.
- Army exercise: Al Najah
- Air Force exercise: Eastern Bridge
- Naval Exercise: Naseem Al Bahr

Indian Diaspora

- There are about 7 lakh Indians in Oman, of which about 4.8 lakh are workers and professionals. There are Indian families living in Oman for more than 150-200 years.

KEY TAKEAWAYS IN THE RECENT VISIT

- An MoU has been signed between **Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU)** and **National Centre for Financial Information (FNCI)** on cooperation in the **exchange of intelligence related to money laundering, associated predicate offences and terrorism financing.**
- India and Oman have agreed to enhance **cooperation on digital payment systems**, such as **RuPay and e-Dirham**, to facilitate trade and remittances between the two countries.
- Both have recognized the importance of ensuring food security and enhancing agricultural cooperation, especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Dhofar University and the **Indian Council For Cultural Relations (ICCR)** on establishment of the ICCR Chair of Indian Studies- Hindi Language.
- The vision document acknowledges the remarkable synergy between Oman Vision 2040 and India's development objectives, under '**Amrit Kaal**', affirming commitment to harnessing these complementarities for deepening the partnership between Oman and India.

CONCLUSION

- India is seeking deeper engagement and collaboration in West Asia, in which Oman can play an important role. This is because Oman is an integral part of important groupings in the region: the GCC, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the Arab League.

BIMSTEC

GS II – INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

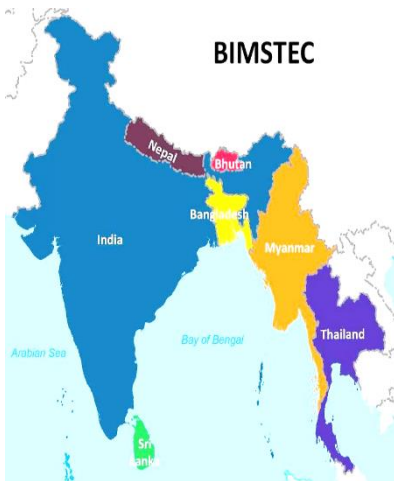
Context: The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is an international organization of seven South Asian and Southeast Asian nations, housing 1.73 billion people and having a combined gross domestic product of US\$4.4 trillion (2022). India recently seconded a senior diplomat to drive BIMSTEC as its 4th Secretary-General (SG).

ABOUT BIMSTEC

- BIMSTEC It is an economic bloc that came into being in June 1997 through the **Bangkok Declaration.**
- BIMSTEC was initially formed with four member states- Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand on June 6, 1997.
- Nepal became an observer state in 1998 and became full-time member of the bloc along with Bhutan in February 2004.
- Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan are current members.
- **Permanent Secretariat** is at Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Its aim is to counter the onslaught of globalisation by accelerating regional growth through mutual cooperation by utilising regional resources and **geographical advantages.**
- It is **sector-driven cooperative organisation** in which, initially, **6 sectors** had been included, Trade, Technology, Energy, Transport, **Tourism and Fisheries** As of now, BIMSTEC has 14 priority areas of cooperation.
- Among these priority areas, a member country chooses which of the **14 priority areas** it is willing to take lead.
- India is lead country for Transport & Communication, Tourism, Environment & Disaster Management, and Counter-Terrorism & Transnational Crime.

KEY CHALLENGES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH BIMSTEC

- BIMSTEC has not made significant progress despite bilateral tensions.
- Only four summits have been held in 20 years, despite plans for two summits every two years.
- India uses BIMSTEC when SAARC fails to work, while Thailand and Myanmar focus more on ASEAN.
- BIMSTEC's broad focus includes 14 areas: connectivity, public health, agriculture.
- Unfinished tasks and new challenges highlight the grouping's responsibilities. Despite connectivity expansion, legal instruments for coastal shipping, road transport, and intra-regional energy grid connection are still unfinished.



AT 6TH BIMSTEC SUMMIT

- 6th BIMSTEC summit under the **chairmanship of Thailand** will be held in 2024 with promising features like
 - Adoption of the **BIMSTEC Rules of Procedure**
 - Adoption of the **BIMSTEC Maritime Cooperation Agreement (BMCA)**
 - Launching of **BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030**

Importance of BIMSTEC

- Around 22% of the world's population live in the seven countries around the Bay of Bengal, with a combined GDP close to \$2.7 trillion.
- All seven countries have sustained average annual rates of growth between 3.4% and 7.5% from 2012 to 2016.
- A fourth of the world's traded goods across the bay every year.

MONEY LAUNDERING ACTS

GS II – GOVERNANCE

Context: What is Money Laundering?

Money laundering refers to the systematic process by which funds derived from illicit activities, commonly known as black money, are acquired and camouflaged to appear as legal funds, ultimately transforming into what is termed white money. This intricate process involves the movement of laundered funds through various channels and stages of conversion and transfer, strategically designed to legitimize the money and ultimately deposit it into a legally recognized institution, such as a bank.

KEY FEATURES OF PREVENTION OF MONEY LAUNDERING ACT (PMLA)

- It is an Act to prevent money laundering and to provide for the confiscation of property derived from or involved in money laundering.
- The Act was formulated for the following objectives:
 - Prevent money-laundering.
 - Combat/prevent channelising of money into illegal activities and economic crimes.
 - Provide for the confiscation of property derived from, or involved/used in, money laundering.
 - Provide for matters connected and incidental to the acts of money laundering.
- The **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** in the **Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance**, is responsible for investigating the offences of money laundering under the **PMLA**.
- **Financial Intelligence Unit – India (FIU-IND)**, under the **Department of Revenue** is the central national agency responsible for receiving, processing, analyzing, and disseminating information relating to suspect financial transactions.
- The scheduled offences are separately investigated by agencies mentioned under respective acts, for example, the local police, **CBI**, customs departments, **SEBI**, or any other investigative agency, as the case may be.
- Actions that can be initiated against the person involved in money laundering:
 - **Seizure/freezing** of property and records and attachment of property obtained with the proceeds of crime.
 - Any person who commits the offence of money laundering shall be punishable with **Rigorous imprisonment** for a minimum term of three years and this may extend up to seven years or Fine (without any limit).

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PMLA

- Bringing five types of activities under PMLA
 - Exchange between virtual digital assets (VDA) and fiat currencies
 - Exchange between one or more forms of VDA
 - Transfer of VDA
 - Safekeeping or administration of VDA or instruments enabling control over them
 - Participation in and provision of financial services related to an issuer's offer and sale of a VDA.
- Defining the term, **politically exposed person (PEP)**, as Individuals entrusted with prominent public

functions by a foreign country, including heads of states or governments, senior politicians, senior government or judicial or military officers, senior executives of state-owned corporations, and important political party officials.

- Every banking company or financial institution must register the details of clients on the DARPAN Portal of **Niti-Aayog**.
- The rules broaden the definition of a non-profit organization to now also include organizations that function for charitable purposes including relief to the poor, education or medical relief etc.

IMPACTS OF CHANGES IN PMLA

Impact on Crypto exchanges

- If activities related to exchange of VDAs are carried out for or on behalf of another person, it shall be regarded as an activity under PMLA
- The crypto-entities are required to verify the identity of clients and beneficial owners, and maintain records of transactions for 5 years from the date of transaction
- The crypto exchanges must maintain records of identity, files and correspondences of clients for 5 years

Impact on Foreign portfolio investors

- FPIs will have to rework the mechanism for maintenance of records because of the change in threshold for determining beneficial ownership.

ABOUT FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE

- FATF is an inter-governmental policy-making and standard-setting body dedicated to combating money laundering and terrorist financing.
- To establish international standards, and to develop and promote policies, both at national and international levels, to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism.
- It was established in 1989 during the G7 Summit in Paris to develop policies against money laundering.
- In 2001 its mandate expanded to include terrorism financing.
- FATF members include 39 countries, including the United States, India, China, Saudi Arabia, Britain, Germany, France, and the EU as such.
- India became a member of FATF in 2010.
- FATF has 2 types of lists:
 - **Black List:** Countries known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are put on the blacklist. These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities. The FATF revises the blacklist regularly, adding or deleting entries.
 - **Grey List:** Countries that are considered a safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering are put on the FATF grey list. This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.
- Three countries **North Korea, Iran, and Myanmar** are currently in **FATF's blacklist**.
- Consequences of being on the FATF blacklist:
 - No financial aid is given to them by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the European Union (EU).
 - They also face a number of international economic and financial restrictions and sanctions.

TELECOM LAW UPGRADES FOR A DIGITAL AUTHORITARIAN STATE

GS II – GOVERNANCE

Context: The recently passed Telecom Bill, has been criticized for, emphasizing its nationalistic undertones, potential authoritarian features, and the failure to address the digital divide effectively. It questions the rushed parliamentary process and highlights concerns about corporate favoritism, symbolized by the renaming of the Universal Services Obligation Fund.

KEY PROVISIONS OF TELECOMMUNICATION BILL 2023

- Requires central government authorization for services, network establishment, and radio equipment.
- Spectrum allocated by auction, **except for national security, disaster management, and public broadcasting**.
- Provisions for **satellite Internet providers** and U.S.-based companies.
- **Temporary government possession of telecom infrastructure during public emergencies**.

- Prescription of standards and assessments for telecom equipment, infrastructure, networks, and services.
- Measures to protect **users include prior consent, Do Not Disturb registers**, and reporting mechanisms.
- Removal of OTT services and apps from telecommunication services definition.

ISSUES WITH THE BILL

- Renaming of the **Universal Services Obligation Fund (USOF)** as the “**Digital Bharat Nidhi**, The mere change in name does little to address the challenges of a persisting digital divide that have recently become worse.
- Allocation of satellite spectrum without the need for auctions. This is likely to benefit the market entry of select private firms
- State control is present throughout the Telecom Act:
 - For instance, “**licensing**” has been changed to “authorization” while making it more severe.
 - Definitional vagueness of “telecommunication” and “telecommunication services” that will include “**transmission of any messages**”
 - This will allow the Union government to **license Over-The-Top (OTT)** messaging applications such as WhatsApp or email services such as Gmail.
 - This will be used alongside other regulations to break the security and confidentiality by using encryption-based messaging.
- Interception and surveillance powers, or Internet shutdowns, language from the Telegraph Bill has been plagiarized without safeguards. Insertions, when present, such as a fresh provision on “national security”, expand the ability of the Union government to use, prescribe standards, suspend and take over any telecommunication service.
- To ensure the web of a surveillance state is complete, the law requires any telecommunications service provider that may include WhatsApp or Signal, to identify the user by “**any verifiable biometric based identification as may be prescribed**”.
- A standard “**kartavya kaal**” clause has been added in which there is a legal penalty of ₹25,000 for providing “any false particulars, suppressing any material information”, and, “fail to share information as required by this Act”.

STATUS OF THE TELECOM SECTOR IN INDIA?

- The Telecom industry in India is the **second largest in the world** with a subscriber base of 1.179 Billion as of August 2023 (wireless + wireline subscribers).
- It is also the **4th largest sector in terms of FDI inflows**, contributing 6% of total FDI inflow.
- India has an overall density of **84.69%**. Tele-density denotes the number of telephones per 100 population, and is an important indicator of telecom penetration.
- The average monthly data consumption per wireless data subscriber has also increased to 17.36 GB in March 2023 from 61.66 MB in March 2014.

CONCLUSION

- The Telecom Bill is criticized for maintaining colonial architecture, vague definitions, and potential threats to privacy. The rushed passage of the bill without addressing raised concerns reflects an unconstitutional concentration of power. The bill should be advocate for a thorough review of the Telecom Bill by a Standing Committee to address concerns. The provisions of the bill should encourage transparency, public participation, and safeguards to protect individual rights in telecommunications legislation.

GOOD GOVERNANCE DAY

GS II – GOVERNANCE

Context: Every year since 2014, December 25 is celebrated as Good Governance Day as it marks the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The day is celebrated to make sure that the country's residents are treated fairly by the government, and they receive the advantages of various government services.

WHAT IS GOVERNANCE?

- The concept of “governance” is not new. It is as old as human civilization.
- It is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not

implemented).

- Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance.

EIGHT PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

1. **Participation:** People should be able to voice their own opinions through legitimate immediate organizations or representatives. Participation also implies freedom of association and expression.
2. **Rule of Law:** Legal framework should be enforced impartially, especially on human rights laws. Without rule of law, politics will follow the principle of matsya nyaya i.e. the law of fish which means the strong will prevail over the weak.
3. **Consensus Oriented:** Consensus oriented decision-making ensures that even if everyone does not achieve what they want to the fullest, a common minimum can be achieved by everyone which will not be detrimental to anyone. It mediates differing interests to meet the broad consensus on the best interests of a community.
4. **Equity and Inclusiveness:** Good governance assures an equitable society. People should have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.
5. **Effectiveness and Efficiency:** Processes and institutions should be able to produce results that meet the needs of their community. Resources of the community should be used effectively for the maximum output.
6. **Accountability:** Good governance aims towards betterment of people, and this cannot take place without the government being accountable to the people. Governmental institutions, private sectors, and civil society organizations should be held accountable to the public and institutional stakeholders.
7. **Transparency:** Information should be accessible to the public and should be understandable and monitored. It also means free media and access to information.
8. **Responsiveness:** Institutions and processes should serve all stakeholders in a reasonable period of time.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

Revamped e-HRMS 2.0 Portal:

- It will provide the services like, Transfers (Rotation/Mutual), Deputation, APAR, IPR, iGOT Training, Vigilance Status, Deputation Opportunities, Service Book and other basic HR Services like Leave, Tour, Reimbursements etc., in a digital mode to the employees
- The revamped e-HRMS 2.0 is **the first digital system in Govt. of India to provide end-to-end HR Services.**
- Presently, no other Government Service Cadre System in India is as advanced in its reach and applications, as the revamped e-HRMS 2.0.
- With the launch of this system, **DoP&T will be moving towards total digitization of HR Services.**
- It will save several thousand man-hours and tons of printing paper.
- This will also go a long way in improving employee satisfaction, promoting ease of doing/processing HR work and enhancing productivity and transparency in administrative functioning.

iGoTKarmayogi Portal:

- Launch of Mobile Application of **iGoTKarmayogi Portal** by Karmayogi Bharat (SPV) will aim at creating professional, well-trained and future-ready civil service for India.

Revamped Probity Portal

- For Government Employees will demand the right attitude towards public service with 'integrity' and 'probity'.
- The compilation of 78 Master Circulars is expected to promote ease and convenience and help the user Departments expeditiously dispose of their HR issues.

CONCLUSION

- Achieving good governance requires a concerted effort from governments, civil society, and the international community. Reforms in legal frameworks, institutional strengthening, and promoting a culture of accountability and transparency are essential for overcoming the obstacles and fostering good governance

CONSTITUTIONAL SECULARISM

GS II – INDIAN CONSTITUTION

ABOUT SECULARISM

- Secularism is an ideology that emphasizes the separation of religion and the state and the neutrality of the government with respect to religious beliefs.
- It has broadly two meanings:
 - Separation of religion from the state i.e. Dharm Nirpekshata.
 - Equal respect to all religions by state i.e. Sarva Dharma Samabhava.
- The Indian constitution aims for a secular state where all religions are treated equally

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS PERTAINING TO SECULARISM IN INDIA

- **Article 14-** It provides equality before the law and equal protection of laws to all.
- **Article 16 (1)-** It guarantees equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters of public employment and reiterates that there would be no discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, and residence.
- **Article 25-** It provides 'Freedom of Conscience', that is, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice, and propagate religion.
- **Article 26-** Every religious group or individual has the right to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes and to manage its own affairs in matters of religion.
- **Article 27-** It provides that the state shall not compel any citizen to pay any taxes for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religion or religious institution.
- **Article 28-** It allows educational institutions maintained by different religious groups to impart religious instruction.
- **Articles 29 and 30-** They provide cultural and educational rights to minorities.
- **Article 51A Fundamental Duties-** It obliges all the citizens to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood and to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture.
- **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976-** The word secular was inserted in the Preamble. It stated that 'secular' means a republic in which there is equal respect for all religions.

JUDICIARY ON INDIAN SECULARISM

- **Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973):** The Supreme Court held that secularism was a part of the basic structure of the Constitution.
- **Bommai v Union of India (1994):** The Supreme Court elaborated on the meaning of secularism. The Court said that secularism means equal treatment of all religions.

THREATS TO SECULARISM

- **Communal Politics-** Mobilisation of votes on grounds of primordial identities like religion, caste and ethnicity, have put Indian secularism in danger.
- **Social Prejudices:** Deep-seated social prejudices and stereotypes based on religious identities can contribute to discrimination and social divisions. Overcoming these prejudices is crucial for fostering a truly secular society.
- **Rise of Hindu Nationalism:** It resulted into mob lynching on mere suspicion of slaughtering cows and consuming beef. In addition with this, forced closure of slaughterhouses, campaigns against 'love jihad', reconversion or ghar- wapsi (Muslims being forced to convert to Hinduism), etc. reinforces communal tendencies in society.
- **Islamic state:** The establishment of an Islamic State based on sharia law is promoted by Islamic fundamentalism or revivalism, which is directly at odds with ideas of a secular and democratic state.

SECULARISM IN INDIAN HISTORY

- Indian culture is a blend of spiritual traditions and social movements.
- Emperor Ashoka declared the state would not persecute any religious denomination.
- The pursuit of religious tolerance persisted even after the arrival of Jainism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity.
- Sufi and Bhakti traditions in medieval India fostered peaceful community links.
- Major luminaries of these movements included Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, Baba Farid, Sant Kabir Das,

Guru Nanak Dev, Saint Tukaram, and Mira Bai.

- Akbar's rule in medieval India was marked by religious tolerance and freedom of worship.
- The Indian liberation movement strengthened secularism despite the British divide-and-rule policy.
- Liberals in the early stages of the Indian freedom movement adopted a secular political philosophy.
- Pandit Moti Lal Nehru's 1928 constitution drafted provisions on secularism. Gandhiji's secularism was founded on the brotherhood of religious communities and respect for truth pursuit.

CONCLUSION

- The Allahabad High Court has ruled that a set of suits filed in 1991 for a declaration that a part of the site of the Gyanvapi Mosque in Varanasi as the property of Lord Vishweshwar is not barred by Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, hence providing indirect means to convert a mosque into a temple. The judiciary should not be seen as legitimizing recurring, communally motivated attempts to change the status of places of worship. Such an approach may only end up driving modern society into a revanchist mindset seeking to avenge medieval depredations.

CHILD NUTRITION

GS II – HEALTH

Context: High levels of child undernutrition have been a persistent problem in India. It is well recognised that the determinants of undernutrition are multiple, and include food intake, dietary diversity, health, sanitation, women's status and the over-arching context of poverty. India, like most other countries, uses the globally accepted World Health Organization (WHO) Growth Standards to measure malnutrition. However, there is an emergent debate on a number of issues related to the use of these growth standards in India.

WHO STANDARDS INCLUDE

1. **Exclusive Breastfeeding:** WHO recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, meaning that infants receive only breast milk without any additional food or drink. Breastfeeding is encouraged up to two years or more, along with appropriate complementary feeding.
2. **Complementary Feeding:** Introducing complementary foods is a gradual process that begins around six months of age. WHO provides guidelines on the introduction of diverse, nutrient-rich complementary foods while continuing breastfeeding.
3. **Nutrient Requirements:** WHO outlines the essential nutrients required for proper growth and development in infants and young children. This includes information on macronutrients (such as protein, fats, and carbohydrates) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals).
4. **Prevention of Malnutrition:** WHO works to prevent malnutrition in all its forms, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and overweight/obesity. This involves addressing factors such as food security, access to nutritious foods, and public health interventions.
5. **Monitoring and Assessment:** WHO provides guidelines for monitoring and assessing the nutritional status of children, including the use of growth charts and other indicators to track growth and development.

MULTICENTRE GROWTH REFERENCE STUDY

- The WHO standards are based on a **Multicentre Growth Reference Study (MGRS)** that was conducted in six countries between 1997 and 2003 (Brazil, Ghana, India, Norway, Oman and the United States).
- The purpose was to determine the pattern of growth (from birth to five years) of children who did not face any known deficiencies in their environments.
- The MGRS took a prescriptive approach, with the specific aim of setting growth 'standards' (how children ought to grow, provided they have a healthy environment) and not growth 'references' (how children of the reference group grow).

ISSUES WITH THE MEASUREMENTS OF CHILD NUTRITION

- WHO standards overestimated Under Nutrition due to sample size in India.
- Maternal height significantly influences children's genetic growth potential.
- Low maternal heights reflect intergenerational poverty and poor status, indicating a deficient environment.
- Gene pools shift with socio-economic development, as seen in Japan's increasing average heights. High

standards can lead to misdiagnosis and potential overfeeding, increasing overweight and obesity.

DATA ON CHILD NUTRITION

According to UN

- Globally, 37 million children under the age of five are overweight, a rise of about 4 million since 2000. India's overweight percentage was 2.8%, up from 2.2% in 2012.

According to NFHS-5

- Meghalaya has the highest number of stunted children (46.5%), followed by Bihar (42.9%).
- Maharashtra has 25.6% wasted children (weight for height), the highest followed by Gujarat (25.1%).
- Jharkhand has the highest percentage of women (26%), between 15 and 49 years, who have a below-normal Body Mass Index (BMI).
- Overall Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) has increased substantially from 54% to 67% in the country.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

- **POSHAN Abhiyaan:** The government of India has launched the National Nutrition Mission (NNM) or POSHAN Abhiyaan to ensure a “Malnutrition Free India” by 2022.
- **Anemia Mukh Bharat Abhiyan:** Launched in 2018, the mission aims at accelerating the annual rate of decline of anaemia from one to three percentage points.
- **Mid-day Meal (MDM) scheme:** It aims to improve nutritional levels among school children which also has a direct and positive impact on enrolment, retention and attendance in schools.
- **The National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:** It aims to ensure food and nutrition security for the most vulnerable through its associated schemes and programmes, making access to food a legal right.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):** Rs.6,000 is transferred directly to the bank accounts of pregnant women for availing better facilities for their delivery.
- **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme:** It was launched in 1975 and the scheme aims at providing food, preschool education, primary healthcare, immunization, health check-up and referral services to children under 6 years of age and their mothers.

CONCLUSION

- There are also many gaps to fill in the more distal determinants of stunting, mainly, livelihoods and poverty, access to education and women's empowerment. These goals are inextricably linked to the overall development of the country, with equitable distribution of resources. In light of these discussions, the Indian Council of Medical Research has constituted a committee to revise the growth references for India. Yet, while acquiring newer, and more precise information on child growth is a welcome move, considering our high aspirations of reaching development to every last person by 2047.

COLOMBO SECURITY CONCLAVE

GS II – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Context: Recently, India's National Security Adviser (NSA), took part in the 6th NSA meeting of the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) which agreed upon a road map for the year 2024.

ABOUT COLOMBO SECURITY CONCLAVE

- The CSC, was formed in 2011 as a trilateral maritime security grouping of India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. It welcomed Mauritius as a fourth member at the fifth meeting of national security advisers.
- Bangladesh and Seychelles attended as observers and have been invited to join the group.
- The fifth meeting of national security advisers of the CSC identified key areas of cooperation to enhance and strengthen regional security in the following five pillars:
 - Maritime Safety and Security
 - Countering Terrorism and Radicalization
 - Combating Trafficking and Transnational Organized Crime
 - Cyber Security, Protection of Critical Infrastructure and Technology
 - Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
- CSC is being seen as India's outreach to the **Indian Ocean to underline regional co-operation** and shared security objectives.

- India has a large **coastline of nearly 7500 Km** along with islands of strategic chokepoints. **This makes maritime security a priority for the country**, in which CSC plays a vital role.
- The grouping is also in line with India's vision of **"SAGAR: Security and Growth for all in the Region"** and **India being a member of QUAD grouping**.
- The coming together of the 6 Indian Ocean region countries indicate the development of sub-regionalism on a common maritime and security platform and is significant in a wider global context as well.

CHANGING DYNAMICS OF CSC

- **Disruption-** It started in 2011 but it came to a standstill after 2014 due to rising tensions between India and the Maldives which led to the suspension of meetings between 2014 and 2020.
- **Revival-** In 2020, India pushed for the revival and thus it was rebranded as Colombo Security Conclave. India also expressed interest in expanding the CSC to the Seychelles and Bangladesh who are currently observer nations.
- **Reason for revival-** It is due to increasing importance of Indian Ocean in an evolving multipolar world today, with extra-regional powers competing to make inroads in the region. It is partially linked to the increased Chinese presence in Indian Ocean along with its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects. China has established a base in Djibouti and controls Sri Lanka's Hambantota port.
- **Space for India's leadership-** It offers India an opportunity to institutionalize its role, shape the regional security architecture, and better address the existing and emerging threats. India plays as the 1st responder in the IOR, be it to avert coups or to offer humanitarian and economic assistance during COVID-19 and multi-faceted crises.

About IORA:

- A tripartite forum for promoting cooperation among Government, Business, and Academia.
- Based on Open Regionalism principles for economic cooperation, trade facilitation, investment, promotion, and social development.
- Members include India, Australia, Iran, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, South Africa, Mozambique, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Singapore, Mauritius, Madagascar, UAE, Yemen, Seychelles, Somalia, Comoros, and Oman.

CONCLUSION

- The CSC stands as a pivotal forum promoting enhanced security cooperation in the Indian Ocean region. While it has made strides in addressing diverse security challenges, overcoming challenges related to its structure and coordination with other regional bodies will be crucial for its sustained effectiveness and success.

PAPER 3

DOLLARISATION

GS III – ECONOMY

Context: The recent winner of Argentina's presidential election, Javier Milei, has drawn attention for his plan to replace the country's currency "Peso" with the dollar.

Dollarization refers to the widespread use of a foreign currency, particularly the United States dollar, in a country as an official or unofficial medium of exchange alongside or instead of the domestic currency.

REASONS FOR DOLLARIZATION

- **Hyperinflation:** High, unstable local currency values can lead to preference for stable foreign currency.
- **Economic Stability:** Foreign currency provides economic stability and confidence, especially in countries with currency devaluation history.
- **Trade and Investment:** Facilitates international trade and attracts foreign investment with familiar, stable currency.

CHALLENGES WITH DOLLARISATION

- **Loss of Monetary Policy Control:** Dollarized countries lose control over domestic monetary policy, limiting economic responses and control over inflation and unemployment.
- **Vulnerability to External Shocks:** Dollarized economies become susceptible to foreign currency fluctuations, impacting import costs and local industry competitiveness.
- **Limited Seigniorage Revenue:** Dollarized countries lose seigniorage revenue, benefiting from the U.S. dollar.
- **Reduced Flexibility in Economic Policies:** Dollarization may limit fiscal policy flexibility, making it challenging to adjust spending and taxation in response to economic challenges.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DOLLARISATION

- **Economic Stability:** Lowers inflation rates and stabilizes prices due to less devaluation and volatility.
- **Facilitation of International Trade:** Simplifies international trade transactions, reducing transaction costs and facilitating cross-border trade.
- **Reduced Exchange Rate Risks:** Mitigates exchange rate fluctuations, preventing depreciation of currency affecting asset or liability value.
- **Avoidance of Currency Crises:** Prevents currency crises from speculative attacks on local currency, providing protection against currency speculation.

ECUADOR MODEL OF DOLLARISATION

- Promoted price stability, reducing inflation from **over 100% in 2000 to 4%**.
- Declined interest rates, making credit more affordable and encouraging investment.
- Implemented fiscal discipline, **limiting government spending** and improving credit rating.
- Utilized oil revenues to increase social spending and **reduce poverty and inequality**.

DE-DOLLARISATION

- Reduction of US dollar reliance in global economy.
- Gained prominence due to **US-China trade war**, COVID-19, digital currency rise, and global economic multipolarity.
- Can increase monetary autonomy, diversify currency reserves, challenge US influence.
- India's roadmap for internationalizing rupee to increase trade and investment ties.

CONCLUSION

- The significance of dollarization can be complex and multifaceted, impacting various aspects of the economy and financial system. The challenges associated with dollarization can vary based on the specific circumstances of each country. While some nations may benefit from the stability provided by a foreign currency, they also face trade-offs and risks that need to be carefully managed. protection against currency speculation.

MODERN WARFARE

GS III – SECURITY

Context: "Modern warfare" generally refers to the conduct of armed conflict using contemporary tactics, technologies, and strategies. Modern warfare involves a range of elements, from conventional military forces to asymmetric warfare, cyber warfare, and information warfare. It's important to note that the nature of modern warfare is dynamic, and the landscape may have evolved since then.

NEED OF MODERN WARFARE

- **Technological Advancements:** The rise of advanced military technologies like precision-guided munitions, cyber capabilities, and unmanned systems necessitates adaptation of warfare strategies.
- **Changing Threats:** The rise of non-state actors and terrorist organizations necessitates unconventional warfare tactics.
- **Information Warfare:** Strategies need to control narratives, counter disinformation, and manage perceptions.
- **Global Threats:** Issues like terrorism, organized crime, and pandemics require international cooperation.
- **Dynamic War Nature:** New technologies like hypersonic weapons, AI, and space capabilities need to be integrated into warfare strategies.

LIMITATION OF MODERN WARFARE

- **High cost:** Requires significant resources for development, maintenance, and operation.
- **Inaccuracy:** Unreliable and can fail in harsh environments.
- **Vulnerability:** Dependent on external agencies that can be disrupted or hacked.
- **Ethical and Moral Concerns:** Potential for civilian casualties, privacy violations, and moral implications.
- **Humanitarian Impact:** Severe consequences, including displacement of civilian populations, infrastructure damage, and aid delivery challenges.
- **Unconventional Threats:** Technology cannot counter low-tech or unconventional methods exploiting conventional forces' vulnerabilities.
- **Cybersecurity Challenges:** Susceptibility to cyber threats, disrupting military operations, and undermining national security.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HYBRID WARFARE

- Involves disinformation, economic manipulation, proxies, insurgencies, diplomatic pressure, and military actions.
- Targets areas with high vulnerability for maximum damage with minimal effort.
- Involves non-state actors in subversive roles to exonerate themselves if detected.

RECENT UAGE

- Hybrid Warfare Techniques in Israel-Lebanon War (2006). **Hezbollah used guerilla warfare**, innovative technology, and information campaigning.
- Russia deployed hybrid warfare techniques against Ukraine in Crimea annexation, including disinformation, economic manipulation, proxies, insurgencies, and diplomatic pressure in 2014
- China's People's Liberation Army advocated for a shift in violence from military to political, economic, and technological.
- Zhenhua Data Information Technology Co. Limited monitors over 10,000 Indian individuals and organizations globally.

CONCLUSION

- Adapting to modern warfare involves continuous research, development, and investment in military capabilities. Nations aim to build armed forces that are agile, technologically advanced, and capable of responding to diverse and dynamic security challenges. It's essential to strike a balance between maintaining a credible defense and promoting stability on the global stage.

UTTARAKHAND TUNNEL RESCUE MISSION

GS III – DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Context: The Uttarakhand Tunnel Rescue mission has been the longest rescue operation conducted in India. 41 workers were trapped inside the collapsed Silkyara tunnel for almost 17 days. It was a test of grit and perseverance, for men on both sides of the 57 metres of debris, as the rescue operation suffered one setback after another. Finally, the mission ended in a success with the safe evacuation of all 41 workers.

SEQUENCE OF ATTEMPTS OF THE UTTARAKHAND TUNNEL RESCUE MISSION

1. Heavy earth-moving machines failed to remove rubble.
2. Auger drilling machine was operationalized, but continued to break down due to debris from collapsed tunnel roof.
3. Five additional plans were proposed, including vertical drilling, horizontal tunnel, drifting, and tunnel opening from Barkot end.
4. The Auger machine failed, leaving 10 meters of rubble to be cleared.
5. Rat-hole miners were tasked with the task, working 27 hours in confined spaces.
6. The rescue operation ended with personnel from the National Disaster Relief Force, with state counterparts providing support.

LESSONS DERIVED FROM THE TUNNEL RESCUE MISSION

- Adaptation of marginalized workers in disaster management.
- Incorporation of indigenous expertise in disaster management.
- Emphasis on migrant's plight post-pandemic.
- Refocus on environmental risks of unneeded infrastructure in Himalayan ecology.
- Effective inter-agency coordination by NDRF, ONGC, armed forces, and state agencies.

SIMILAR CAMPAIGNS TAKEN PLACE IN ABROAD

Thai Cave Expedition and Chile Mine Operation

- Wild Boars football team stuck in Tham Luang Cave in Thailand due to rainwaterlogging.
- 90 divers deployed in a two-week operation, resulting in the death of former Thailand Navy SEAL Saman Kunan.
- San Jose gold and copper mine collapsed in 2010, trapping 33 workers about 2000 feet below the ground.
- After 17 days, food, water, and medicine were sent to the trapped workers.
- All workers were taken out of the tunnel on October 13.
- Nine workers trapped in Cucreek Mining Inc. mine in Pennsylvania, USA, were pulled out after 77 hours using a 22-inch-wide iron ring.

WAY FORWARD TO ENSURE SAFE TUNNEL CONSTRUCTION

- **Geotechnical Investigation:** Understanding soil and rock conditions for support system design and stability.
- **Risk Assessment:** Identifying potential hazards and risks, including geological, environmental, and operational risks.
- **Professional Design and Engineering:** Employing experienced tunnel designers and engineers for considerations like ground stability, water ingress, and seismic factors.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Regularly updating emergency response plans and conducting drills for personnel familiarity.
- **Quality Control and Inspection:** Establishing stringent quality control measures and regular inspections.

HIDDEN COST OF AGRI-FOOD SYSTEM

GS III – AGRICULTURE

Context: In a report published by United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), showed the hidden costs of our global agri-food systems which has passed the mark of \$10 trillion. In middle-income countries like India, these costs constitute nearly 11% of the GDP, which manifests as higher poverty, environmental harm, and health related impacts, including undernourishment and unhealthy dietary patterns.

IMPACTS OF INTENSIVE AGRICULTURE

Green Revolution Impact on India's Agriculture

- Improvement in agricultural productivity in the last five decades.
- Promotion of mono-cropping systems and chemical intensive farming practices.
- Focus on high yielding varieties of paddy and wheat, constituting over 70% of India's production.
- Negative ecological consequences, including excessive groundwater extraction.
- Undermining of seed sovereignty and dismantling of Indigenous knowledge systems.
- Privatisation and deregulation of agricultural inputs increasing indebtedness among farmers.
- Food Corporation of India's procurement policy favoring rice and wheat.
- Other water-intensive cash crops flourishing under policies favoring investments in dams and canal

irrigation.

CROP DIVERSIFICATION

- Addressing Systemic Issues through Local Farm Diversification
- Diversified multicropping systems can revitalize degraded land and soil.
- Intercropping with legumes, pulses, oilseeds, trees, shrubs, and livestock provides cash provisions from commercial crops, food, and fodder production.
- Offers ecosystem services like nitrogen fixation and pest traps, supporting local biodiversity.
- While causing some productivity loss, it preserves natural capital and provides nutritional security.

HOW CAN FARMERS TRANSITION?

- Transitioning to Non-Pesticide Farming
- Systematic transition from chemical-intensive to non-pesticide management.
- Natural farming practices can reduce input costs.
- Income diversification through value addition, including livestock and poultry.
- Visual representation: 70% commercial crops, 20% food and fodder, 10% environmental services.

DATA ABOUT FARMING

- Agriculture in India has increasingly become unviable the average monthly household income of a farming household sits at ₹10,816.
- In 2013, In 2013, the debt to asset ratio of a farmer's household in India was 630% higher than in 1992.
- Under the National Food Security Act 2013, 65% of households (around 800 million people) in India are legally assured a right to food at subsidised rates through the Public Distribution System and welfare programmes such as the Integrated Child Development Services and the MidDay Meal Scheme.
- The area under the cultivation of coarse grains dropped by 20% between 1966-67 and 2017-18, whereas the area under the rice and wheat increased by nearly 20% and 56% respectively.

CONCLUSION

- Addressing challenges related to local seeds, institutional arrangements for market access, drudgery, and the need for farm labour is crucial when envisioning a transition. Scaling up the practices requires collaboration among institutions, policymakers and social groups to articulate economic incentives for farmers to shift from high-input monoculture to diversified cropping.

STEADY INTEREST RATES

GS III – ECONOMY

Context: The RBI's recent monetary policy decision maintains a cautious stance, driven by concerns over persistent food inflation and global central banks signalling higher interest rates. Despite a positive economic outlook, challenges include incomplete transmission of past rate hikes and potential risks from interconnectedness between banks and non-banks.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MPC MEETING

- RBI unanimously maintains policy repo rate at 6.5% for economic growth and inflation control.
- Real GDP growth forecast for 2023-24 remains at 6.5%, average CPI inflation forecast for FY24 at 5.4%.
- RBI Governor warns of stress contagion due to increasing interconnectedness between banks and non-banks.

REASONS FOR STEADY INTEREST RATE

- **Economic Conditions:** Changes in economic conditions may make a steady interest rate inappropriate.
- **Inflation Concerns:** If inflation exceeds the central bank's target, interest rates may be increased to control it.
- **Unemployment Levels:** High unemployment may prompt lower interest rates to stimulate borrowing and spending.
- **Global Economic Factors:** Changes in global economic conditions may require adjustments to interest rates.
- **Long-Term Sustainability:** The MPC may need to consider the long-term sustainability of the interest rate policy to avoid asset bubbles or economic imbalances.

MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE

- **Established in 2016** through the Monetary Policy Framework Agreement between RBI and India.
- Comprises **six members who decide the key policy interest rate** and monetary policy stance.
- The policy interest rate, also known as the repo rate, is the rate RBI lends to commercial banks for short-term purposes.
- The monetary policy stance is the direction the MPC intends to move the policy rate in the future.
- Meetings are held at least four times a year, usually two weeks before the end of each quarter.
- The MPC reviews macroeconomic and financial developments and decides on the policy rate and stance by majority vote.
- Decisions and rationale are published in a resolution statement, along with a summary of deliberations and individual votes.

CONCLUSION

- The MPC has played a crucial role in maintaining macroeconomic stability in India since its inception. It has also demonstrated its flexibility and responsiveness in dealing with unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The MPC will continue to strive for achieving its mandate of price stability while supporting growth in a dynamic and evolving economy.

FINANCIAL STABILITY REPORT'S REPORT ON CRYPTO-ASSET INTERMEDIARIES

GS III – ECONOMIC

Context: The Financial Stability Board (FSB) published a report addressing the regulation of multi-function crypto-asset intermediaries (MCIs) and the need for enhanced cross-border cooperation.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT RELEASED BY FSB

Cross-Border Cooperation and Information Sharing

- The FSB emphasizes the need for enhanced cross-border cooperation and information sharing among local authorities to regulate and address gaps in the operations of multi-function crypto-asset intermediaries (MCIs) on a global scale.
- The report highlights potential risks associated with MCIs, especially those that combine different activities within the platform. It specifically references the collapse of FTX in November 2022 as an example of such risks.
- Traditional Financial Landscape

CONCERNS RELATED TO MCI'S AS PER FSB'S REPORT

- **Transparency:** The report observes that most MCIs are generally not transparent about their corporate structure. The disclosed information is generally part of their business, specific to a jurisdiction.
- **Anti-Competitive Behavior:** The high concentration of services in one place is making things difficult for new competitors to enter the market. The anti-competitive behavior is making the system vulnerable.
- **Crypto-Friendly Banks:** The shutting down of banks friendly to crypto assets highlights the widespread risk of having a significant concentration of deposits tied to business relying on crypto assets.
- **Crypto currencies and Fiat currencies:** MCI rely on banks and payment providers for transaction services, including converting between crypto currencies.

Financial Stability Board (FSB)

- The Financial Stability Board (FSB) is an international body established in 2009 by the G20 nations.
- It monitors and makes recommendations about the global financial system, aiming to promote financial stability.
- Key Functions of the FSB:
 - It helps to ensure the resilience of the global financial system by identifying and addressing vulnerabilities.
 - It facilitates cooperation between national and international financial authorities to promote

consistent and effective regulation.

- It plays a key role in developing and promoting global standards for financial regulation, such as the Basel III capital adequacy framework.
- It conducts research and analysis on financial stability issues to inform its policy recommendations.
- The FSB is governed by a Steering Committee, composed of senior representatives from member countries and international organizations.
- India is an active Member of the FSB having three seats in its Plenary represented by Secretary of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Chairperson of Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

AN ANTI-TERROR LAW AND ITS INTERFERENCE WITH LIBERTY

GS III – INTERNAL SECURITY

Context: Recently Jammu and Kashmir High Court in a verdict questions the broad interpretation of terrorism under UAPA, rejecting its use for defamation. It emphasizes judicial scrutiny in upholding personal liberty and calls for legal reforms and accountability, urging a just way forward.

OBSERVATION OF THE HIGH COURT

- Treating defamation allegations as terrorism creates a new category of offence.
- Highlights importance of judicial prudence in enforcing anti-terror laws.
- Critiques procedural aspects of UAPA, particularly **Section 43-D (5)**.
- Argues that the section prevents easy release of actual threat persons, not individuals without direct link to the act.

ABOUT UAPA

- Aims to prevent unlawful activities and associations.
- Strengthened in 2004 to align with international standards.
- Section 43-D (5) embargoes courts from bailing if police materials prove accusations as 'prime facie true'.
- Section 18 punishes conspiracy and acts preparatory to terrorist acts.
- Section 13 covers activities advocating, abets, advises, or incites unlawful activity.
- Courts granted additional powers for property attachment or forfeiture.
- Amendments made to match "**Financial Action Task Force**" guidelines.

IN THE LOK SABHA

NATIONAL INVESTIGATION AGENCY AMENDMENT BILL, 2019

Empowers NIA to probe terror attacks targeting Indians, Indian interests on foreign soil

Allows NIA to probe cyber-crimes and cases of human trafficking

Allow the Centre and states to designate sessions courts as special court for trial



UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

UAPA Bill empowers NIA DG to approve seizure/attachment of property in case

Inspector of NIA can investigate offences under chapter IV and VI

PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Increase NHRC members from two to three, one of which will be a woman

A retired Supreme Court judge could also be considered as chairperson

OTHER ANTI TERROR LAWS IN INDIA

TADA:

- Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1987, defined "terrorist act" and "disruptive activities" and restricted bail.
- Provided enhanced power to detain suspects and attach properties.
- Made "confessions given to a police officer" admissible as evidence.
- Separate courts established to hear cases under TADA.

POTA:

- Prevented Terrorism Act, 2002, introduced after 1999 IC-814 hijack and 2001 Parliament attack.
- Detained suspects for up to 180 days by a special court.
- Made fundraising for terrorism a "terrorist act."
- Included a separate chapter dealing with terrorist organizations.
- Union government mandated to maintain a list of **terrorist organizations**.

organizations.

- Repealed in 2004 due to gross misuse by some state governments.

WAY FORWARD

- **Legal Reforms:** The legal system should consider reforms addressing compensations for wrongful arrests and enhancing state accountability.
- **Upholding Constitutional Principles:** Courts must continue upholding constitutional principles, ensuring a commitment to accountability in state actions.

COP28: CCS AND CDR

GS III – ENVIRONMENT

Context: The draft decisions taken at COP28 at Dubai have referred to the abatement and removal of carbon emissions using carbon capture and storage (CCS) and carbon-dioxide removal (CDR) technologies.

ABOUT CCS (Carbon Capture and Storage)

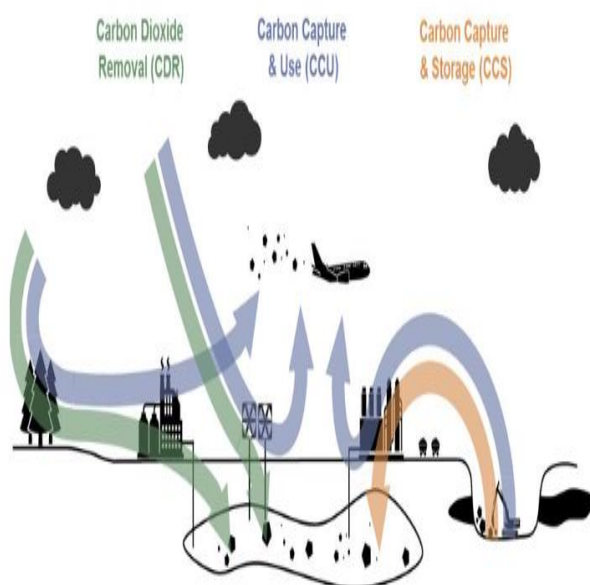
- CCS refers to technologies that can capture Carbon Dioxide at the source of emissions before it is released into the atmosphere.
- These sources include the fossil fuel industry (where coal, oil and gas are combusted to generate power) and industrial processes like steel and cement production.
- It is a three-step process, involving:
 - Capturing the CO₂ produced
 - Transporting the captured CO₂
 - Storing it deep underground

ABOUT CDR (Carbon-Dioxide Removal)

- Utilizes technologies and practices to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere.
- Captures CO₂ and stores it in various environments for years.
- Can be natural (afforestation or reforestation) or technology-based (direct air capture).
- Examples include enhanced rock weathering and BECCS (Bioenergy with carbon capture and storage).

CONCERNS AND IMPLICATIONS OF CCS AND CDR

- Large-scale CDR methods require significant land, raising equity, biodiversity, and food security issues.
- CDR projects in the Global South could infringe on indigenous land rights and compete with agricultural land use. Cost and responsibility of implementing CDR at scale raise questions about who should bear these burdens.



effective climate action.

- CCS hasn't demonstrated feasibility at large scale despite decades of development.

UNABATED FOSSIL FUELS

- Abated means attempts to decrease the release of polluting substances to an acceptable level.
- According to IPCC, unabated fossil fuels are those “without interventions that substantially reduce GHG emissions. It means doing nothing to reduce the carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases that are released from the burning of coal, oil, and natural gas.
- At COP28, the term “unabated fossil fuels” has come to mean the combustion of these fuels without using CCS technologies to capture their emissions.

CONCLUSION

- The next decade is pivotal in determining the viability and scalability of CDR methods. While CCS and CDR offer potential solutions for emission reduction, their implementation must be carefully managed to avoid unintended consequences and ensure equitable and

GRASSROOT DEMOCRACY AS A BULWARK AGAINST MAOIST

GS III – INTERNAL SECURITY

Context: Grassroots democracy can potentially act as a bulwark against the influence of Maoists or any other extremist ideologies in several ways. It's important to note that the effectiveness of grassroots democracy depends on various factors, including the specific context and the implementation of democratic processes.

HOW GRASSROOT DEMOCRACY IS DETERRENT TO MAOISM?

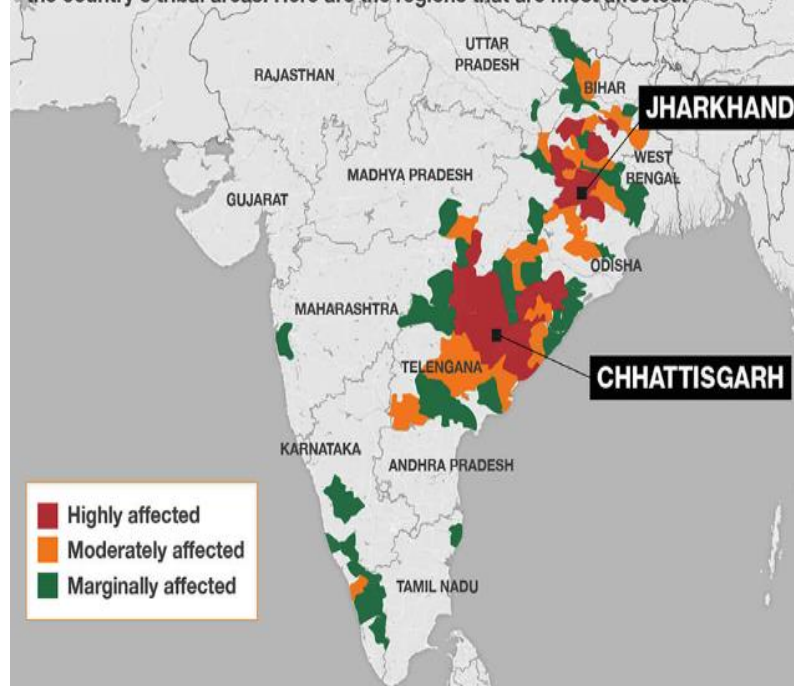
- **Promotes Inclusive Decision-Making:** Allows diverse voices to be heard, reducing feelings of marginalization and alienation.
- **Empowers Local Governance:** Decentralized governance structures empower local communities to manage their affairs.
- **Encourages Social Cohesion:** Promotes strong social ties, reducing the appeal of radical ideologies.
- **Prioritizes Economic Development:** Prioritizes projects addressing poverty and unemployment, reducing the appeal of radical movements.
- **Supports Educational Initiatives:** Promotes critical thinking and awareness of political and social issues.
- **Facilitates Conflict Resolution:** Facilitates local conflict resolution mechanisms to prevent exploitation of local tensions by extremist groups.
- **Reinforces Rule of Law:** Promotes accountable and transparent governance at the local level.
- **Fosters Community Policing:** Contributes to community policing efforts, preventing parallel justice systems by extremist groups.

MAOIST ISSUE IN RECENT ELECTIONS OF CHHATTISGARH

- Elections in these Maoist strongholds, designated as Schedule Five areas, have historically been marred by violence, often influenced by Maoist boycott calls. This year's elections followed a similar pattern in this context.
- Commencing with the data provided by the media, voter turnout in Maoist-affected regions such as Bijapur and Kanta reportedly reached an extremely low range of 3% to 4%.
- Interpreting this dismal participation could be seen as indicative of an underlying reality, depending on our willingness to recognize it.

A map of India's Maoist conflict

A crackdown on Maoist rebels has led to a rise in the number of casualties in the country's tribal areas. Here are the regions that are most affected.



ABOUT THE PANCHAYATS (EXTENSION TO SCHEDULED AREAS) ACT (PESA)

- Enacted in 1996, the PESA Act extends Part IX of the Constitution relating to Panchayats to Scheduled Areas.
- Ten states (Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Telangana) have identified Fifth Schedule areas.
- Recognizes tribal communities' right to govern themselves using their own self-government systems and traditional rights over natural resources.
- Despite its passage, no comprehensive policy directives have been issued by relevant state governments.
- The Act aims to empower gram Sabhas as the primary authority governing tribal communities' socio-economic lives.
- Some state governments have only partially implemented the Act, exploiting the gap for their hidden agendas.

CONCLUSION

- The effectiveness of grassroots democracy in countering Maoist influence depends on various factors, including the level of political engagement, the presence of supportive institutions, and the overall socio-economic conditions. Additionally, addressing the root causes of discontent, such as poverty, inequality, and lack of opportunities, is essential for sustainable and long-term success in preventing the spread of extremist ideologies.

WHAT DOES COP-28 MEAN FOR CITIES?

GS III – ENVIRONMENT

Context: The 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference or Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC, more commonly referred to as COP28, is the 28th United Nations Climate Change conference, being held at Expo City, Dubai. The COP conferences are intended for governments to agree on policies to limit global temperature rises and adapt to impacts associated with climate change.

SIGNIFICANCE OF CITIES IN CLIMATE ACTION

- Urbanization is a significant factor in climate action, with 55% of the global population being urban by 2050.
- Urban areas consume 75% of primary energy and contribute to 70% of CO₂ emissions.
- Addressing urban issues is crucial for achieving Paris commitments.
- COP-28 includes a ministerial meeting on urbanization and climate change, emphasizing inclusive decision-making.
- City representatives advocate for multi-level green deal governance and revising energy and climate action regulations.
- European city groups advocate for direct actions in cities, emphasizing the role of subnational governments in global climate negotiations.

GLOBAL SOUTH

- The cities of the Global South are far more vulnerable than their western counterparts.
- In countries like India, 40% of the urban population resides in slums, highlighting the need for radical shifts in urban processes. Pollution, economic disparities, and health issues further underscore the challenges.
- A proposed climate atlas for Global South cities, mapping and identifying hotspots, is suggested. Financial support from existing architectures, including COP outcomes, is deemed necessary for progress.
- Despite challenges, some cities, like Chennai, take proactive steps. Chennai aims to achieve zero emissions by 2050, surpassing the national target of 2070. Ambitious initiatives highlight cities' leadership in climate action.

CONCLUSION

- While COP-28 might be critiqued as underwhelming, it elevates the critical discourse on recognizing the interconnectedness of climate action, social justice, and the pivotal role of urban areas. The event underscores the need for acknowledging vulnerabilities, ensuring city representation in climate plans, and securing global support, particularly for cities in the Global South, to effectively address the challenges of climate change.

INDIA'S DEFENCE BUDGET AND THE POINT OF DETERRENCE

GS III – SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Context: To have India's Defence Budget and national security goals examined through the prism of electoral imperatives would be unprofessional. With India in election mode and sops being showered on the electorate, the allocation for Defence in Budget 2024-25, which starts getting planned now, could take a hit. This could impact India's deterrence posture, which Defence preparedness is all about.

DEFENCE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS (2023-24)

- Union Budget allocates Rs 5.94 lakh crore for Defence, a 13% increase from the previous year.
- Non-Salary revenue outlay for Armed Forces rises by 44% to Rs 90,000 crore.
- Rs 1.38 lakh crore allocated to Defence Pensions.

- Capital outlay for modernization and infrastructure development rises to Rs 1.62 lakh crore, a 57% rise since 2019-20.
- Capital Budget for BRO boosts 43% to Rs 5,000 crore for border infrastructure strengthening.
- 9% increase in DRDO allocation to Rs 23,264 crore.
- iDEX boosts with Rs 116 crore, fostering innovation in Defence Industrial ecosystem.
- Defence Pension Budget rises 15.5% to Rs 1,38,205 crore.

Strategic Imperatives and Deterrence:

- Defence budgeting creates a credible deterrent against potential adversaries.
 - Deterrence in national security involves convincing adversaries that costs of aggression outweigh potential gains.
 - Challenges in the Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) program include depleted squadron strength.
 - Effective deterrence relies on military's capability to inflict unacceptable damage and respond decisively.
 - India needs to calibrate its defence budget to maintain credible deterrence, investing in technology, intelligence, and a responsive military force.
 - Strategic imperatives include both conventional and nuclear deterrence, balancing aggression and regional stability.
- India remains the world's largest arms importer, accounting for 11% of global arms imports from 2018-2022.
 - Russia remains India's largest arms supplier, but its share has decreased from 64% to 45%.
 - France emerges as the second-largest supplier, followed by the U.S. at 11%.
 - Tensions with Pakistan and China drive India's arms import demand.
 - Drop in arms imports due to slow procurement process and diversification efforts.
 - India becomes the third-largest arms supplier to Myanmar, accounting for 14% of its imports.

CONCLUSION

- India's Defence budgeting is a complex and multifaceted process that requires a delicate balance between addressing immediate security concerns and investing in long-term strategic capabilities. The adequacy of the Defence budget, its efficient allocation, and the pursuit of strategic imperatives for deterrence is central to ensuring the nation's security in an ever-evolving global landscape.

GLOBAL GOAL ON ADAPTATION

GS III – ENVIRONMENT

Context: Guided by the Paris Agreement on Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), the efforts put in at COP26 and COP27 were what culminated in the adoption of the framework for GGA at COP28. The material progress on the implementation of the GGA requires that future climate change negotiations should show more urgency in treating adaptation on a par with mitigation as the world is witnessing extreme weather events, with devastating consequences.

GLOBAL GOAL ON ADAPTATION

- The Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) was established under the Paris Agreement to enhance climate change adaptation by increasing awareness of and funding towards countries' adaptation needs in the context of the 1.5/2°C goal of the Paris Agreement.
- However, unlike the clear 1.5°C target for global mitigation, adaptation is primarily a local activity and as such, a global target has been challenging to establish.
- At COP26, Parties established the 2022-2023 Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh (GlaSS) Work Programme on the Global Goal on Adaptation to define the key elements of the goal, including the methodologies, indicators, metrics, and data sources to support the assessment of overall adaptation progress.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES OF GGA

- **Diverse Stakeholders and Interests:** Global goals involve governments, NGOs, businesses, and local communities. National conditions and adequate support are key influencing factors.
- **Resource Allocation:** Adequate funding and resources are crucial for global adaptation goals. Estimated

annual budget for this is \$71 billion from now to 2030.

- **Data and Monitoring:** Accurate, up-to-date data is crucial for effective adaptation. Global data collection and monitoring can be logistically challenging.
- **Policy Coordination:** Alignment and coordination among national policies are required for effective adaptation.
- **Capacity Building:** Many countries lack the capacity to plan and implement adaptation measures.
- **Community Engagement:** Successful adaptation requires active participation of diverse communities.
- **Technology Transfer:** Limited access to appropriate technologies for adaptation, especially for developing countries.

MITIGATION Vs ADAPTATION

- Mitigation and adaptation are strategies for addressing climatic change.
- Mitigation focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions to prevent temperature increase.
- Adaptation involves species altering their body and behavior to suit their natural environment.
- Climate financing favors mitigation, with a 95:5 split between the two.
- Mitigation projects generate global benefits, while adaptation benefits are local.
- Low-cost mitigation options are available in developing countries.

CONCLUSION

- Mitigation and Adaptation both have issues in the processes, but mitigation is seen as a better option. However, Mitigation is expensive, hence executing the plans requires a lot of investment. Another fact is that the best mitigation efforts enshrined in the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) of the Parties to the Paris Agreement are not in sight of restricting global average temperature below 1.5° C as compared to pre-industrial levels. They would rather nudge the world towards the 2.8° C point by the end of the century.

SAFETY AND CYBERSECURITY

GS III – SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Context: WHAT IS CYBER CRIME?

- Cybercrime may be defined as “Any unlawful act where computer or communication device or computer network is used to commit or facilitate the commission of a crime”.
- Cybercrime can be carried out by individuals or organizations, some are organized, use advanced techniques and are highly technically skilled.
- Country witnessed a rise of 24% in cybercrimes registered in 2022 compared to 2021, as per the latest data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).
- 'Police' and 'Public Order' are State subjects as per the 7th Schedule of the Constitution of India. Hence States and UTs are responsible for cybercrime prevention, detection etc. The Central Government supplements the initiatives of the States/UTs through advisories and financial assistance under various schemes.

CHALLENGES RELATED TO CYBER SECURITY IN INDIA

- **Lack of Separate Procedural Code:** No separate code for investigating cyber or computer-related offenses.
- **Trans-National Nature of Cyber Attacks:** Most cybercrimes are transnational, making evidence collection from foreign territories difficult.
- **Expanding Digital Ecosystem:** Digitalization and online transactions make India a breeding ground for potential hackers and cyber-criminals.
- **Limited Expertise and Authority:** Offenses related to crypto-currency remain under-reported due to limited capacity to solve such crimes.
- **Lack of Cybersecurity Awareness:** Many individuals and businesses in India are not fully aware of cybersecurity risks and preventive measures.

MEASURES TO BE TAKEN

- Government and private sector to convene after significant cyber incidents for analysis and improvement

recommendations.

- Adoption of zero-trust architecture and standardized response playbook.
- Execution of plan for network defense and modernization.
- Government's responsibility to inform, protect, and remediate cyber incidents.

Government Initiatives

- Provides early-stage cyber forensic assistance to State/UT Police Investigating Officers.
- Utilizes 'CyTrain' portal for online courses on cyber crime.
- Adheres to National Cyber Security Policy (NCSP) for a secure cyberspace.
- Enhances law enforcement agencies' capabilities to prevent and investigate cybercrimes.
- Provides a National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal for public reporting of cyber crimes, with a focus on women and children.
- Protects critical information infrastructure from cyber threats.
- Detects and removes malware-infected systems.
- Responds to and mitigates cybersecurity incidents.
- Implements the IT Act, 2000 for comprehensive cybercrime legislation.

CONCLUSION

- The recent report about availability of Indians data on a dark web cannot be dismissed. The government should ensure that prevention, detention, assessment and remediation of cyber incidents a top priority. It should also recognise the importance of digital infrastructure as essential to national and economic security of the population.

THE MISSING INDUSTRIAL POLICY

GS III – ECONOMY

Context: The Make in India campaign launched in 2015 is a very different policy package from the dogma of self-sufficiency that India embraced in the 1970s. Make In India (MII) does not, by any stretch, bring back dirigisme recollections of the license raj, self-sufficiency, import-substituting industrialization, and the like. It is vastly dissimilar, although fears have been raised about the manner in which MII is being implemented in some sectors, particularly by raising tariff duties to provide protection to encourage the setting up of domestic industry

OBJECTIVES OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT

- To maintain a sustained growth in productivity;
- To enhance gainful employment;
- To achieve optimal utilisation of human resources;
- To attain international competitiveness; and
- To transform India into a major partner and player in the global arena.

EVOLUTION OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY IN INDIA

Industrial Policy Resolutions in India: 1948-1991

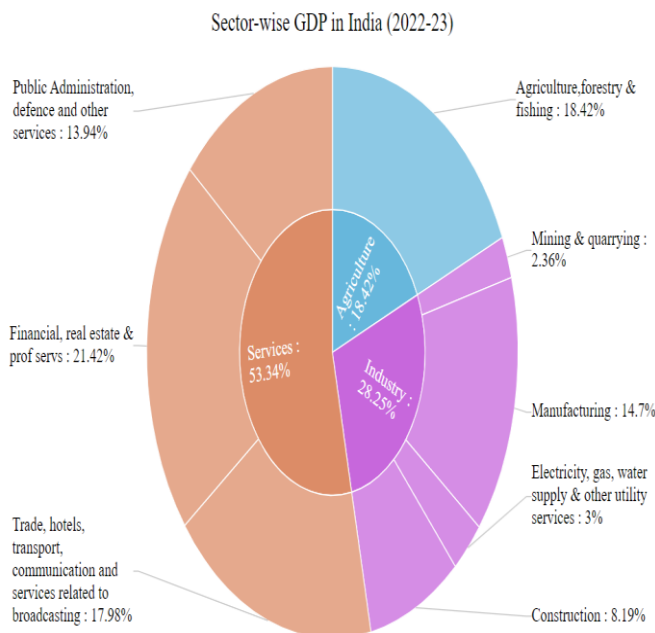
- State-led industrialization emphasized on socialistic society.
- State control hindered private sector growth.
- Mahalanobis Strategy of the 2nd Five-Year Plan emphasized public sector expansion.
- Separation of ownership and management in private industries discouraged monopolies.
- Large and growing cooperative sector built.
- Barriers to private industries lowered productivity.
- Industrial Policy, 1977 emphasized small-scale industries and prescribed areas for large-scale industries.
- Policy failed to restrict big companies from producing ordinary items.
- Industrial Policy, 1980 introduced liberalization measures, promoting capital-intensive path.
- New Industrial Policy, 1991 introduced industrial de-licensing, deregulation, dereservation, reforms, and MRTP Act abolition.
- Foreign Investment Policy facilitated foreign investment at the cost of domestic companies.

Features of Recent Industrial Policy

- Reduced sectors reserved for public sector, but retained public sector in core areas like arms, ammunition, atomic energy, mineral oils, rail transport, and mining.
- Only 4 industries require industrial licenses: Electronic aerospace and defence equipment, specified hazardous chemicals, industrial explosives, and tobacco cigarettes.
- First industrial policy allowing foreign companies to have majority stake in India, up to 51% FDI in 47 high priority industries, and 74% for export trading houses.
- Amendment of MRTP Act to remove asset threshold limits for MRTP companies and dominant undertakings.

CONCLUSION

- Make in India and Startup India campaigns have improved the business environment in the nation. However, difficulties with lending, labor rules that result in high unit labor costs, political involvement, and other regulatory burdens remain obstacles to business expansion. Over 99% of India’s 63 Million Micro, Small and Medium enterprises (MSMEs) are in the unorganized sector with very little flexibility for productive job creation. The hand-to-mouth existence is not recipe for jobs or scale. A new Industrial Policy is required to strengthen the nation’s manufacturing sector. The government should feel the necessity to unveil a new Industrial Policy that would serve as a guide for all commercial firms in the nation.



SHIPPING INDUSTRY IN INDIA

GS III – ECONOMY

Context: The Ports & Shipping industry in India is growing rapidly and contributing to economic progress. The ports sector in India is being driven by high growth in external trade. In FY22, all key ports in India handled 650.52 million tonnes (MT) of cargo traffic.

SUMMARY ON THE INDIAN SHIPPING INDUSTRY

- The Ministry of Shipping, a branch of the Indian Government, formulates and administers shipping rules and regulations.
- The industry includes shipbuilding, ship-repair, major ports, national waterways, and inland water transport.
- The first ship building factory in India was established in Vishakhapattanam in 1941.
- Major ship building centers include Kolkata, Goa, Mumbai, and Kochi.
- The Kochi Dockyard, developed in collaboration with Japan, is the largest and most recent in the country.
- India ranks 17th globally in Gross Registered Tonnages (GRT).
- The Shipping Corporation of India Ltd. (SCI) was established in 1961 and conferred 'Navratna' status in 2009.
- The Indian Maritime University (IMU) was established in 2008 in Chennai.

INDIA'S INITIATIVES RELATED TO THE SHIPPING SECTOR

National Centre of Excellence in Green Port & Shipping (NoCEGPS)

- India’s first NoCEGPS is a collaboration between the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) and the Energy and Resources Institute. It is in Gurugram, Haryana.
- The centre is aimed at playing a crucial role in achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (14) to sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems from pollution, conservation, and

sustainable use of ocean-based resources.

- NCoEGPS will act as a technological arm of MoPSW for providing the needed support on Policy, Research and Cooperation on Green Shipping areas for Ports, DG Shipping, CSL and other institutions under the umbrella of MoPSW.

Green Tug Transition Programme

- The Green Tug Transition Programme will start with 'Green Hybrid Tugs' powered by Green Hybrid Propulsion systems and subsequently adopting non-fossil fuel solutions like Methanol, Ammonia, and Hydrogen.
- The target is to have the initial Green Tugs working in all major ports by 2025, and 50% of all Tugs converted into Green Tugs by 2030.

PM Gati Shakti:

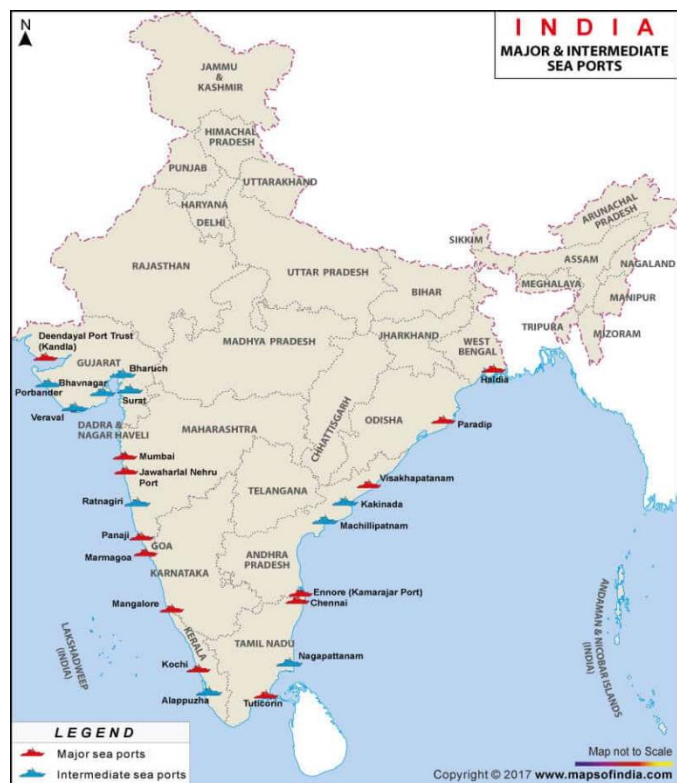
- The development of green logistics supply chains in the country has already accelerated through the PM Gati Shakti - National Master Plan for Multi-Modal Connectivity along with the Green Ports initiative.
- The ports aim to reduce carbon emissions per ton of cargo handled by 30% by 2030.

The Green Voyage 2050 Project:

- It is a partnership project between the Government of Norway and International Maritime Organization (IMO) launched in May 2019 aiming to transform the shipping industry towards a lower carbon future.

DATA ON PORTS AND SHIPPING INDUSTRY IN INDIA

- 95% of India's trading is done via maritime transport, with 70% by value.
- India has 12 major ports and 205 notified minor and intermediate ports.
- India is one of the top 5 ship recycling countries, holding a 30% global share.
- Mumbai Port is India's largest port by size.
- Tamil Nadu has the highest number of major ports.
- Krishnapatnam Port is the deepest in India.
- India is the sixteenth-largest maritime country globally.
- Government supports ports sector, allowing 100% FDI.
- FY22 merchandise exports reached US\$ 417.8 billion, a 40% increase from the previous year.



CONCLUSION

- With private players venturing in an area dominated by large public sector facilities, India had shipyards that were beginning to give hope that they may well build ships competitively for the global market. Boosting ship owning, chartering, financing and building would not only push India to the center of the global maritime industry but also enhance its international trade presence.

DISASTER RELIEF FUND

GS III – Disaster Management Overview

National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF)

- Established by the Indian government to finance relief and rehabilitation efforts during major disasters.

- Aims to provide timely and effective financial assistance to states and union territories in the event of severe calamities.
- Funds Allocation for 2022-23: ₹1,209 crore for Chhattisgarh, Meghalaya, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh.
- Funds Allocation for 2023-24: ₹4,984 crore for Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Tripura.
- Allocation Based on 15th Finance Commission Recommendations: Over ₹1,28,000 crore for SDRF.

State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF)

- Founded by the Indian government to assist states in managing and responding to various types of disasters.
- Aims to provide financial support for relief, response, and mitigation activities during natural or man-made disasters.
- Primary purpose: Support states in undertaking immediate relief measures in the wake of a disaster.
- Usage: Used for various disaster-related activities including rescue and relief operations, emergency medical care, restoration and repair of damaged infrastructure, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities post-disaster, support for state-level emergency response agencies, and capacity building and training programs for disaster management personnel.

National Disaster Management Force (NDMA)

- Renamed National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) as National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) in 2005.
- Initially comprised of 8 Battalions, now 15 with each Battalion comprising 1149 personnel.
 - Aims to create a safer, more disaster-resilient India through comprehensive, proactive, multi-disaster, technology-driven disaster management plan.

CONCLUSION

- India's proactive availability of its National Disaster Response Force and pre-positioning in threatening situations have significantly reduced damage from natural disasters. The government also strengthens disaster management and preparedness through international cooperation, with numerous MoUs with countries like Tajikistan, Mongolia, Bangladesh, Italy, Japan, SCO, Germany, SAARC, Russia, and Switzerland.



Practice Questions



Q1) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

The Central Water Commission (CWC) is chaired by a Chairman who also serves as the Government of India's Ex-Officio Secretary.

Statement-II :

It is under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect**
- Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct

Q2) Consider the following pairs:

NATIONAL PARKS	STATE
Tadoba National Park	Maharashtra
Bannerghatta National Park	Tamil Nadu
Blackbuck National Park	Chattisgarh

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- Only one**
- Only two
- All three
- None

Q3) With reference to Gangetic Dolphins, consider the following statements:

- They are among the oldest creatures in the world along with some species of turtles, crocodiles, and sharks.
- The Gangetic Dolphins are generally blind.
- They emit an ultrasonic sound that reaches the prey.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 2 only
- 1, 2 and 3 only**

c. 1 and 3 only

d. 2 only

Q4) Consider the following pairs:

Cyclone	Type
Nivar	Tropical cyclone
Hamoon	Temperate cyclone
Michaung	Tropical cyclone

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- Only one
- Only two**
- All three
- None

Q5) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

Asteroid Apophis is named after the Egyptian god of chaos.

Statement-II :

It is estimated to be about 1,100 feet (340 meters) across.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I**
- Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect
- Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct

Q6) With reference to Hemochromatosis, consider the following statements:

- Phlebotomy is the standard treatment.
- Hereditary hemochromatosis is the least common type.
- Memory fog is one of its symptoms.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 2 only
- 1, 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only**
- 3 only

Q7) Consider the following pairs:

MISSIONS	YEAR
Chandrayaan I	2008.

Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM)	2017
ASTROSAT	2001

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. None

Q8) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

International Day of Persons with Disabilities is observed every year on 3rd December.

Statement-II :

The annual observance of this day began in 1992.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- a. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- b. **Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I**
- c. Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect
- d. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct

Q9) With reference to Farlowichnus rapidus, consider the following statements:

1. It was a small omnivorous animal.
2. It lived in the desert.
3. It was 60-90 cm (2-3 feet) tall.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only
- c. **2 and 3 only**
- d. 2 only

Q10) Consider the following pairs:

AWARD	ESTABLISHED IN
Bharat Ratna	1979
Saraswati Samman	1991
Jnanpith award	1961

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. Only one
- b. **Only two**
- c. All three
- d. None

Q11) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

The Emmy Awards, initially conceptualized in 1948, made their debut on January 25, 1959.

Statement-II :

The International Academy of Television Arts & Sciences is responsible for the International Emmys.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- a. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- b. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- c. Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect
- d. **Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct**

Q12) With reference to the, consider the following statements:

1. It was established in 1875.
2. It is under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
3. Its Headquarters are in Mumbai.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 2 only
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only
- c. **1 and 2 only**
- d. 3 only

Q13) Consider the following pairs:

DISEASE	CAUSED BY
Plague	Yersinia pestis
Pneumonia	Streptococcus pneumoniae
Tetanus	Clostridium tetani

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. **All three**
- d. None

Q14) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

Parkinson's disease is a progressive disorder that affects the nervous system and the parts of the body controlled by the nerves.

Statement-II :

The risk of developing it increases with age.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I**
- Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect
- Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct

Q15) With reference to ISRO, consider the following statements:

- It launched Chandrayaan-2 in 2005.
- It launched Chandrayaan-3 in 2023.
- It launched the Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM) or the Mangalyaan in 2012.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 2 only**
- 1, 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 3 only

Q16) Consider the following pairs:

Dance	State
Bharatnatyam	Andhra Pradesh
Kuchipudi	Tamil Nadu
Mohiniyattam	Kerala

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- Only one**
- Only two
- All three
- None

Q17) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

The term deepfake originated in 2017.

Statement-II :

India has a comprehensive legal framework dedicated to regulating deepfakes.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect**
- Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct

Q18) With reference to the Electoral bonds, consider the following statements:

- It is purchased by Indian citizens or entities established in India.
- It can be bought individually only.
- It is valid for 25 calendar days from the date of issue.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only**
- 1, 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 only

Q19) Consider the following pairs:

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	HQ
United Nations Environment Programme	Nairobi
World Wide Fund for Nature	Sweeden
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	New York

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- Only one**
- Only two
- All three
- None

Q20) Consider the following pairs:

Disease	Caused by
Anthrax	Bacillus anthracis
Peptic ulcers	Helicobacter pylori
Plague	Yersinia pestis

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- Only one
- Only two
- All three**
- None

Q21) With reference to sovereign green bonds consider the following statements:

- The proceeds of the sovereign green bond are utilized for projects classified as environmentally sustainable.
- These are issued with a shorter maturity period.
- The first green bond was issued in 2002.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only**
- 1, 2 and 3 only
- 2 and 3 only

d. 3 only

Q22) With reference to the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita Bill 2023, consider the following statements:

1. It also deals with public nuisance, prevention of offences and maintenance of wife, child and parents.
2. It allows the statement of the accused to be recorded through video-conferencing.
3. It allows a police officer to use handcuffs while arresting a person if he is a repeat offender who escaped from custody.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 2 only
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only**
- c. and 3 only
- d. 3 only

Q23) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

The Financial Stability Board (FSB) was established in 2005.

Statement-II :

The board includes all G20 major economies.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- a. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- b. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- c. Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect
- d. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct**

Q24) Consider the following pairs:

ISRO MISSION	YEAR
EOS-04	2005
AstroSat	2015
Mangalyaan	2011

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two**
- c. All three
- d. None

Q25) Consider the following pairs:

DISEASE	CAUSED BY
Chickenpox	Varicella-zoster virus

Meningoencephalitis	Naegleria fowleri
Anthrax	Bacillus anthracis

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All three**
- d. None

Q26) With reference to the Telecommunications Bill, 2023 , consider the following statements:

1. It states that prior authorization will be needed from the state government for providing telecom services, establishing, operating, maintaining, or expanding telecom networks, and possessing radio equipment.
2. The existing licenses will not remain valid .
3. It states that spectrum will only be assigned through auction, except for specified uses like national security.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 3 only**
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only
- c. and 3 only
- d. 2 only

Q27) With reference to the VINBAX-2023, consider the following statements:

1. Exercise VINBAX was instituted in 2014.
2. The first edition was conducted in Vietnam.
3. It is an annual training event conducted alternatively in India and Vietnam.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 3 only**
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 2 only

Q28) Consider the following pairs:

SPECIES	IUCN STATUS
African Savannah Elephant	Endangered
Pygmy Hog	Vulnerable
Jenkin’s Andaman Spiny Shrew	Critically Endangered

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two**
- c. All three

d. None

Q29) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

Halley's Comet is officially called 1P/Halley.

Statement-II :

It was the first comet ever predicted to return.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- a. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- b. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I**
- c. Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect
- d. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct

Q30) With reference to the Kavach system, consider the following statements:

- 1. It has been indigenously developed.
- 2. KAVACH will be the world's cheapest automatic train collision protection system.
- 3. The First successful trial was between Gullaguda–Chitgidda Railway stations of South Central Railway in 2020.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 2 only**
- d. 2 only

Q31) Consider the following pairs:

VOLCANO	COUNTRY
Mt. Mauna Loa	USA
Mount Yasur	Egypt
Mount Etna	Italy

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two**
- c. All three
- d. None

Q32) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

The Indian tent turtle is native to India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

Statement-II :

It is under Appendix I of CITES.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- a. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- b. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- c. Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect**
- d. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct

Q33) With reference to Mount Marapi, consider the following statements:

- 1. It is a stratovolcano.
- 2. It is located near the centre of the island of Java and Indonesia's cultural capital, Yogyakarta.
- 3. Merapi is the oldest volcano in southern Java.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 2 only**
- d. 3 only

Q34) Consider the following pairs:

ORGANIZATIONS	HQ
OPEC	New York
World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)	Geneva, Switzerland
WTO	Switzerland

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. Only one**
- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. None

Q35) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has headquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Statement-II :

It is the world's largest organization.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- a. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- b. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- c. Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect**
- d. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct

Q36) With reference to the Endotheliotropic herpesvirus subtypes (EEHV) , consider the following statements:

1. EEHV spreads primarily through contact with infected bodily fluids like saliva, blood, or urine.
2. Presently, there's no specific antiviral treatment for EEHV-HD.
3. It comprises several subtypes, with EEHV1A is most common.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only**
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 3 only

Q37) Consider the following pairs:

OPERATIONS	YEAR
Operation Polo	1979
Operation Meghdoot	1984
Operation Vijay	1961

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two**
- c. All three
- d. None

Q38)With reference to the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), consider the following statements:

1. It is headquartered at GIFT City, in Varanasi.
2. It is not a statutory body.
3. Its members, are appointed by the central government.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 3 only**
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 2 only

Q39) With reference to the Election Commission of India, consider the following statements:

1. It does not grant recognition to political parties.
2. It allots election symbols to them along with settling disputes related to it.
3. It is not a permanent and independent body.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 2 only**
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1 only

Q40) Consider the following pairs:

ORGANIZATION	HQ
SEBI	Kolkata
NCRB	New Delhi
NIA	Pune

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. Only one**
- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. None

Q41) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

Khelo India Para Games were held in New Delhi.

Statement-II :

It was organized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- a. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- b. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I**
- c. Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect
- d. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct

Q42) With reference to Anthrobots, consider the following statements:

1. These are tiny living robots created from human cells.
2. They have potential uses in the field of regenerative medicine.
3. They possess self-assembling capabilities.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 3 only
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only**
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 2 only

Q43) Consider the following pairs:

MISSIONS	AGENCY
MARS ODYSSEY	ESA
NEW HORIZON	NASA
SHUKRAYAAN	ISRO

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. Only one

- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. None

Q44) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

Guru Teg Bahadur was the ninth of ten Gurus of the Sikh religion.

Statement-II :

He was the oldest Guru in Sikhism.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- a. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- b. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- c. **Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect**
- d. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct

Q45) With reference to the Voyager 1, consider the following statements:

1. It is the oldest human-made spacecraft in history.
2. It was launched from Cape Canaveral, Fla. / Launch Complex 41.
3. It was launched to fly by Jupiter and Neptune.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 2 only
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only
- c. **1 and 2 only**
- d. 3 only

Q46) Consider the following pairs:

REPORTS	ORGANIZATION
Global Financial System Report	Bank for International Settlements (BIS)
Universal Health Coverage Index	World Bank
The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)	Organisation for Economic Development (OECD)

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. **All three**
- d. None

Q47) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

Tamil Nadu has retained the top slot in the logistics ease across different states (LEADS) 2023 rankings.

Statement-II :

This was the 6th edition of the LEADS Reports.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- a. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- b. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- c. **Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect**
- d. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct

Q48) With reference to the Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana, consider the following statements:

1. The training is provided free of cost to the candidates.
2. There is a provision for providing employment under this scheme.
3. Candidates, who have passed class X and are aged between 18 and 35 are eligible to apply.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 2 only
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only
- c. **1 and 3 only**
- d. 3 only

Q49) Consider the following pairs:

TIGER RESERVE	STATE
Kanha Tiger Reserve	Madhya Pradesh
Melghat Tiger Reserve	Chhattisgarh
Indravati Tiger Reserve	Maharashtra

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. **Only one**
- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. None

Q50) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

In 1990, Valmiki National Park was established.

Statement-II :

It is the only tiger reserve in Bihar.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- a. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- b. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I**
- c. Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect
- d. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct

Q51) With reference to Karrar Combat Drones, consider the following statements:

- 1. This missile was developed by the USA.
- 2. It was initially introduced in 2020.
- 3. It is capable of day and night operation.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 2 only
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only**
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 3 only**

Q52) Consider the following pairs:

SPECIES	IUCN STATUS
Pygmy Hog	Critically Endangered
Large Rock Rat or Elvira Rat	Vulnerable
Namdapha Flying Squirrel	Critically Endangered

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two**
- c. All three
- d. None

Q53) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

A chit fund is not a legal entity.

Statement-II :

It doesn't fall under the jurisdiction of the RBI.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- a. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- b. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- c. Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect
- d. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct**

Q54) With reference to the Yogmaya Temple , consider the following statements:

- 1. It was built between 1806 and 1837.
- 2. It was constructed by Lala Sidhu Mal.
- 3. The goddess Yogmaya, believed to be the sister of Lord Krishna and an incarnation of Durga.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 2 only
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only**
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 3 only

Q55) Consider the following pairs:

SEA	Ocean
Andaman Sea	Pacific Ocean
East China Sea	Indian Ocean
Sea of Okhotsk	Atlantic Ocean

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. None**

Q56) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

Atal Bihari Vajpayee was awarded **Bharat Ratna in 2015.**

Statement-II :

He was also awarded **Padma Vibhushan in 2002.**

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- a. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- b. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- c. Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect**
- d. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct

Q57) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

Pantoea Tagorei is named after Debendranath Tagore.

Statement-II :

It can help revive degraded lands .

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- a. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I

- b. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I

- c. Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect

Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct

Q58) Consider the following pairs:

TRIBES	STATE
Konda	Himachal Pradesh
Chakma	Tripura
Dhodia	Goa

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. **Only one**
 b. Only two
 c. All three
 d. None

Q59) Consider the following pairs:

WARSHIP	PROJECT
INS Kolkata	Project 15A
INS Udaygiri	Project 15 B
INS Himgiri	Project 17A

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. **Only one**
 b. Only two
 c. All three
 d. None

Q65) Consider the following statements

Statement-I :

Noma is a severe gangrenous disease of the mouth and face with a mortality rate of approximately 90 per cent.

Statement-II :

It mainly affects children aged 12-16 years old.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- a. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
 b. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
 c. **Statement-I is correct but Statement II is incorrect**
 d. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement II is correct

Q60) With reference to the watsonx.ai, consider the following statements:

1. It will help users monitor the Earth from space.
2. It is an Artificial Intelligence tool built by NASA only.
3. It is an end-to-end toolkit encompassing both data and AI governance.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 2 only
 b. 1, 2 and 3 only
 c. **1 and 3 only**
 d. only

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