



INSIGHTSIAS

SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION

INSTA CURRENT AFFAIRS

JULY 2021

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GENERAL STUDIES – 1

Topics: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

1. Swami Vivekananda:

Context:

Death Anniversary- 4th July.

About Swami Vivekananda:

- He was a true luminary, credited with enlightening the western world about Hinduism.
- He was an ardent **disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa** and a major force in the revival of Hinduism in India.
- He pushed for national integration in colonial India, and his famous speech remains as the one that he gave in Chicago in 1893 ([Parliament of the World Religions](#)).
- In 1984 the Government of India declared that 12 January, the birthday of Swami Vivekananda, will be celebrated as National Youth Day.



Early life- contributions:

1. Born in Kolkata on January 12, 1863 in Kolkata, Swami Vivekananda was known as Narendra Nath Datta in his pre-monastic life.
2. He is known to have introduced the Hindu philosophies of Yoga and Vedanta to the West.
3. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had called Vivekananda the “maker of modern India.”
4. In 1893, he took the name ‘Vivekananda’ after Maharaja Ajit Singh of the Khetri State requested him to do so.
5. He formed the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897 “to set in motion a machinery which will bring noblest ideas to the doorstep of even the poorest and the meanest.”
6. In 1899, he established the Belur Math, which became his permanent abode.
7. He preached ‘neo-Vedanta’, an interpretation of Hinduism through a Western lens, and believed in combining spirituality with material progress.

Books written by him:

‘Raja Yoga’, ‘Jnana Yoga’, ‘Karma Yoga’ are some of the books he wrote.

Insta Curious:

Did you know that so far, six international modern Parliaments of Religions have been hosted? [Read here,](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About 1893 Parliament of World's Religions.
2. Main participants.
3. Who represented Hinduism?
4. Headquarters of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions.
5. International modern Parliaments held so far.
6. Contributions of Swami Vivekananda to Hinduism.
7. About Ramakrishna Mission.

Mains Link:

How Swami Vivekananda became the ‘messenger of Indian wisdom’ to West. Discuss.

2. PRASHAD Scheme:

Context:

PRASHAD projects were recently inaugurated in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

- The inaugurated projects include a Tourist Facilitation Centre and operation of Cruise Boat from Assi Ghat to RajGhat.

What is PRASHAD scheme?

- It is also called as the ‘National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive’ (PRASHAD).
- It is a Central Sector Scheme fully financed by the Government of India.
- Launched by the Ministry of Tourism in the year 2014-15.
- Objective:** Integrated development of identified pilgrimage and heritage destinations.
- It includes infrastructure development such as entry points (Road, Rail and Water Transport), last mile connectivity, basic tourism facilities.

Insta Curious: [Do you know about UNWTO and India's participation?](#)

- Cities covered.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Key features of the scheme.
- Implementation.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of the scheme.

3. Adarsh Smarak Scheme:

Context:

Monuments at **Nagarjunakonda**, Budhhist remains at **Salihundam** and **Veerabhadra Temple** at Lepakshi are identified as ‘Adarsh Smarak’ in Andhra Pradesh for providing additional facilities.

About the Adarsh Smarak scheme:

- Launched in 2014 for providing improved visitor amenities, especially for the physically challenged.
- Implemented by the **Ministry of Culture**.
- The civic amenities are being augmented at the protected sites under the scheme.
- Archaeological Survey of India had identified 100 monuments as “Adarsh Smarak” for upgradation.

Objectives of the Scheme:

- To make the monument visitor friendly.
- To provide interpretation and audio-video centers.
- To make the monument accessible to differently-abled people.
- To implement Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

[Have a brief overview of 100 Adarsh Smarks here:](#)

Insta Curious:

Do you know about the International Council on Monuments and Sites and the Athens Charter of 1931? [Read Briefly](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- About the scheme.
- Objectives.
- Implementation.

- Sites selected under the scheme.

- About ASI.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of the scheme.

4. Historic Urban Landscape Project:

Context:

Madhya Pradesh has launched [UNESCO's 'Historic Urban Landscape'](#) project for Gwalior and Orchha cities of State.

- The development and management plan of these cities will be prepared by UNESCO.

- All aspects including history, culture, food, lifestyle, economic development, community development will be included in it.

These places will now be **jointly developed by UNESCO, Government of India and Madhya Pradesh** by focusing on their historical and cultural improvement.

Background:

Gwalior and Orchha in Madhya Pradesh were included in the list of UNESCO's world heritage cities under its urban landscape city programme in December 2020.

Gwalior:

- Gwalior was established in the 9th century and ruled by Gurjar Pratihar Rajvansh, Tomar, Baghel Kachvaha and Scindias.
- The memorabilia left by them are found in abundance in memorials, forts and palaces in the area.

Orchha:

- Orchha is popular for its temples and palaces and was the capital of the Bundela kingdom in the 16th century.
- The famous spots in the town are Raj Mahal, Jehangir Mahal, Ramraja Temple, Rai Praveen Mahal, and Laxminarayan Mandir.

About the 'Historic Urban Landscape' Approach:

It was adopted in 2011 at UNESCO's General Conference.

- UNESCO defines HUL approach as **an integrated approach towards managing heritage resources found within dynamic and evolving environments.**
- HUL acknowledges the interconnections within a city, which occur between the built and natural environments, the tangible and intangible values, as well as within the cultural and social practices of a community.
- The approach addresses the policy, governance and management concerns involving a variety of stakeholders, including local, national, regional, international, public and private actors in the urban development process.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About UNESCO's HUL programme.
2. Objectives.
3. Guidelines.

4. What is a World Heritage site?

5. Eligibility.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of UNESCO'S HUL Program.

5. Ramappa temple gets World Heritage tag:

Context:

The 13th century **Ramappa temple in Palampet, Telangana**, was recently declared as [a UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) by [the World Heritage Committee \(WHC\)](#).

Background:

- Earlier, [the International Council on Monuments and Sites \(ICOMOS\)](#) cited nine shortcomings at the site after an initial visit in 2019. Norway was the only country which opposed the move citing ICOMOS's conclusion.



About Ramappa temple:

- Built by Racherla Senapati Rudrayya, a general of Kakatiya king Ganapatideva, in the 13th century.
- The foundation is built with the “sandbox technique”, the flooring is granite and the pillars are basalt.

- The lower part of the temple is red sandstone while the white gopuram is built with light bricks that reportedly float on water.

What is sandbox technique?

The technique involves filling the pit — dug up for laying foundation — with a mixture of sand lime, jaggery (for binding) and karakkaya (black myrobalan fruit), before the buildings were constructed on these ‘sandboxes’.

- The sandbox in the foundation acts as a cushion in case of earthquakes.

World Heritage Committee:

The World Heritage Committee meets once a year, and consists of representatives from 21 of the States Parties to the Convention elected for terms up to six years.

- The Committee is responsible for the implementation of [the World Heritage Convention](#), allocates financial assistance from [the World Heritage Fund](#) and has the final say on whether a site is inscribed on the World Heritage List.
- It examines reports on the state of conservation of inscribed sites and decides on the inscription or removal of sites on the [List of World Heritage in Danger](#).

How is a world heritage site protected?

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity.

This is embodied in an international treaty called **the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage**, adopted by UNESCO in 1972.

Nomination process:

- A country must first list its significant cultural and natural sites into a document known as the Tentative List.
- Next, it can place sites selected from that list into a Nomination File, which is evaluated by the International Council on Monuments and Sites and the World Conservation Union.
- A country may not nominate sites that have not been first included on its Tentative List.
- These bodies then make their recommendations to the World Heritage Committee.

Insta Curious:

Do you know the sites that have been delisted from the World Heritage List so far? [Read Here](#):

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- About the World Heritage Site.
- Selection criteria.
- About WHC.
- About UNESCO.

- About ICOMOS.

- About Ramappa temple.

Mains Link:

Discuss the need for recognition of World Heritage sites.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G618Q9GCG.1&imageview=0>.

6. Harappan City Dholavira Gets World Heritage Tag:

Context:

[Dholavira](#) in Gujarat has got the tag of a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#).

- It is now the 40th treasure in India to be given UNESCO World Heritage tag.
- It is the first site of the ancient [Indus Valley Civilisation \(IVC\)](#) in India to get the tag.
- Other than India, Italy, Spain, Germany, China and France have 40 or more World Heritage Sites.



Image tweeted by @narendramodi

About Dholavira:

1. It is a Harappan-era city sprawled over 100 hectares on **Khadir**, one of the islands in the Rann of Kutch.
2. It dates from the 3rd to mid-2nd millennium BCE.
3. One of the five largest cities of the Indus Valley Civilisation, Dholavira is located about 250 km from **Bhuj**.
4. It has two seasonal streams, **Mansar and Manhar**.

Distinct features:

- After Mohen-jo-Daro, Ganweriwala and Harappa in Pakistan and Rakhigarhi in Haryana of India, **Dholavira is the fifth largest metropolis of IVC**.
- The site has a fortified citadel, a middle town and a lower town with walls made of sandstone or limestone instead of mud bricks in many other Harappan sites.
- It is known for its unique characteristics, such as its water management system, multi-layered defensive mechanisms, extensive use of stone in construction and special burial structures.
- During the excavations, artefacts made of copper, stone, jewellery of terracotta, gold and ivory have been found.
- Unlike graves at other IVC sites, no mortal remains of humans have been discovered at Dholavira.
- Remains of a copper smelter indicate Harappans, who lived in Dholavira, knew metallurgy.
- It was also a hub of manufacturing jewellery made of shells and semi-precious stones, like agate and used to export timber.

Decline:

- Its decline also coincided with the collapse of Mesopotamia, indicating the integration of economies.
- Harappans, who were maritime people, lost a huge market, affecting the local mining, manufacturing, marketing and export businesses once Mesopotamia fell.
- From 2000 BC, Dholavira entered a phase of severe aridity due to climate change and rivers like Saraswati drying up. Because of a drought-like situation, people started migrating toward the Ganges valley or towards south Gujarat and further beyond in Maharashtra.

Insta Curious:

Do you know the theme for World Heritage Day 2021? [Read Here](#)

2. About IVC.
3. Key features.
4. Town planning.
5. Artefacts recovered during excavations.
6. Their worship and style of living.
7. International trade.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Dholavira.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of world heritage sites and the need for their protection.

Topics: *Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present- significant events, personalities, issues.*

1. Tipu Sultan:

Context:

Mysore King **Tipu Sultan** is at the centre of controversy in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation over attempts to name a garden after him in Govandi, a suburb in Eastern Mumbai.

What's the controversy?

- A local corporator had suggested that a newly developed garden be named after Tipu Sultan as he was a “freedom fighter” and had fought against the British East India Company.
- The demand was accepted by the BMC administration in June and sent to the Market and Garden Committee for approval on July 15.
- The move, however, drew criticism from the opposition who claimed that **Tipu Sultan was an anti-Hindu leader and naming a garden after him would hurt religious sentiments of the community**.

Who was Tipu Sultan?

- He was a ruler of the Kingdom of Mysore and the eldest son of Sultan Hyder Ali of Mysore.
- In the wider national narrative, Tipu has so far been seen as a man of imagination and courage, a brilliant military strategist who, in a short reign of 17 years, mounted the most serious challenge the Company faced in India.

Contributions of Tipu Sultan:

1. Fought the first Anglo-Mysore War (1767-69) at the age of 17 and subsequently, against the Marathas and in the Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-84).
2. He fought Company forces four times during 1767-99 and was killed defending his capital Srirangapatnam in the Fourth Anglo Mysore War.
3. Tipu reorganised his army along European lines, using new technology, including what is considered the first war rocket.
4. **Devised a land revenue system** based on detailed surveys and classification, in which the tax was imposed directly on the peasant, and collected through salaried agents in cash, widening the state's resource base.
5. **Modernised agriculture**, gave tax breaks for developing wasteland, built irrigation infrastructure and repaired old dams, and promoted agricultural manufacturing and sericulture. Built a navy to support trade.
6. Commissioned a "state commercial corporation" to set up factories.

Why are there so many controversies surrounding him?

There are concerns raised against Tipu Sultan on nearly every historical figure, perspectives differ.

1. Haider and Tipu had strong territorial ambitions, and invaded and annexed territories outside Mysore. In doing so, they burnt down entire towns and villages, razed hundreds of temples and churches, and forcibly converted Hindus.
2. The historical record has Tipu boasting about having forced "infidels" to convert to Islam, and of having destroyed their places of worship.
3. The disagreement then, is between those who see the "Tiger of Mysore" as a bulwark against colonialism and a great son of Karnataka, and those who point to his destruction of temples and forced conversions of Hindus and Christians to accuse him of tyranny and fanaticism.

Insta Curious:

Did you know that the earliest mention of Mysore or Mahishur historically refers to the time of King Ashoka in 245 B.C? [Know about the Kingdoms who have ruled Mysore state:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Tipu Sultan.
2. Wars he fought.
3. Outcomes of those wars.

Mains Link:

Why is Tipu's name marred with controversies?
Discuss.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/bmc-govandi-garden-naming-tipu-sultan-controversy-bjp-shiv-sena-explained-7409324/lite/>.

2. Chandra Shekhar Azad:

Context:

His birth anniversary was celebrated on 23 July.

About Chandra Shekhar Azad:

- Born on July 23, 1906, at Bhavra, Alirajpur District in present-day Madhya Pradesh.
- He took part in **non-cooperation movement** when he was 15.
- After the suspension of the non-cooperation movement in 1922 by Gandhi, Azad joined **Hindustan Republican Association (HRA)**.

- HRA was later reorganised as the **Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA)** in 1928.
- Azad was involved in the **1925 Kakori Conspiracy**.
- He died at **Azad Park** in Allahabad on 27th February 1931.
- **Other cases Azad was involved in include** the 1926 attempt to blow up the viceroy's train, and the shooting of J P Saunders in 1928. Saunders was assassinated to avenge the death of Lala Lajpat Rai.

Why he is called “Azad”?

He was arrested because of his participation in the non-cooperation movement. When produced by the magistrate, he proudly announced his name as ‘Azad’, his father’s name as ‘Swatantrata’ and his place of dwelling as ‘Jail’. It was from then on that the name ‘Azad’ stuck to him.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Chandra Shekhar Azad.
2. His contributions to the Indian Freedom Movement.
3. Associations he was associated with.
4. About Kakori Conspiracy Case.

Topics: The Freedom Struggle – its various stages and important contributors /contributions from different parts of the country.

1. Plea to acquire papers of Bhagat Singh’s trial from Pakistan:

Context:

The Punjab government has been asked to take up the issue of acquiring files relating to **the court cases of Bhagat Singh** presently at the Punjab Archives in Anarkali tomb, Lahore in Pakistan.

Background:

Pakistan is preserving legacy of Bhagat Singh in a proper manner and is allowing even foreign scholars to consult these.

Bhagat Singh's trial and execution:

1. He executed on March 23, 1931 at the Lahore Central Jail along with Rajguru and Sukhdev.
2. The most significant part of Bhagat Singh's life is that spent in jail since his arrest on April 8, 1929 from the Central Assembly in Delhi, where **he and B.K. Dutt** offered themselves to be arrested after throwing harmless bombs in the Assembly to ‘make the deaf hear.’
3. They were first trialed in **the Delhi bomb case**. Both were convicted and transported for life.
4. He was also tried in **the Lahore conspiracy case**, related to the murder of Saunders.
5. He was also involved in a hunger strike demanding the status of political prisoners.



About Bhagat Singh:

Born in September, 1907.

Gandhi's influence: Initially, he supported Mahatma Gandhi and the Non-Cooperation Movement. However, when Gandhi withdrew the movement in the wake of the Chauri Chaura incident, Bhagat Singh turned to revolutionary nationalism.

Political ideology: His azaadi freedom was not limited to the expelling of the British; instead he desired azaadi from poverty, azaadi from untouchability, azaadi from communal strife, and azaadi from every form of discrimination and exploitation.

In 1923, Bhagat Singh joined the **National College, Lahore** which was founded and managed by Lala Lajpat Rai and Bhai Parmanand.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

About:

1. HRA.
2. HSRA.
3. Naujawan Bharat Sabha.

4. Kakori Conspiracy case.

5. Lahore Conspiracy case.

Mains Link:

A revolutionary and a socialist, the contribution of Bhagat Singh to the Independence Movement of India is immense. Discuss.

Link:<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/plea-to-acquire-papers-of-bhagat-singhs-trial-from-pakistan/article35540103.ece/amp/>.

Topics: Women and women related issues.

1. Protection Officers in addressing Domestic Violence:

Context:

The **National Commission for Women (NCW)** in collaboration with Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) has launched a Training Programme of **Protection Officers in addressing Domestic Violence**.

Aim:

The training aims to focus on the role of different stakeholders/service providers under the Act including police, legal aid services, health system, service providers, shelter services, one stop centres etc.

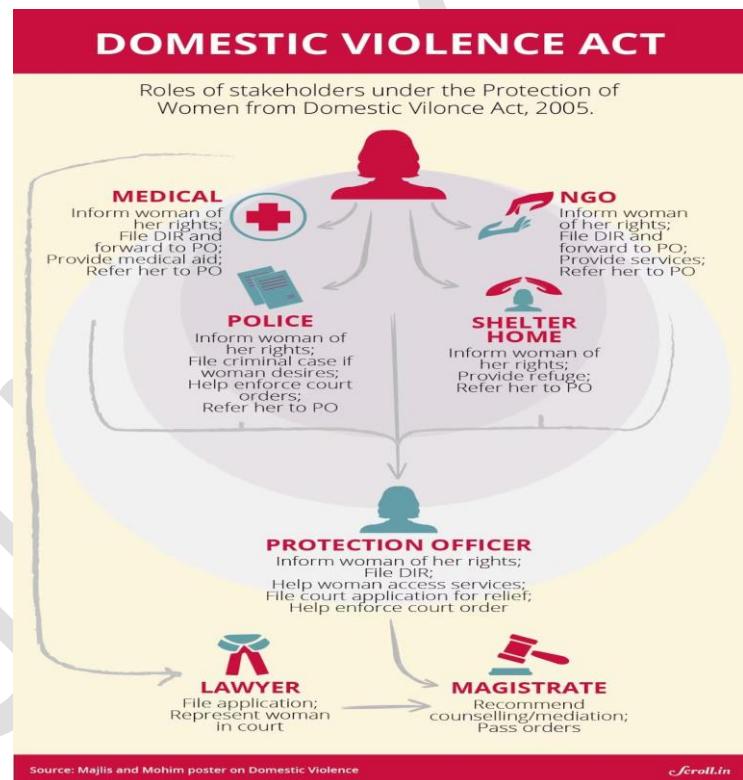
Who are protection Officers?

Under **the Domestic Violence Act**, **protection officers** are appointed. They act as a facilitator between the aggrieved woman and the court.

Functions: The Protection Officer aids the aggrieved woman in filing of complaints, and application before the Magistrate to obtain the necessary relief and also assists to obtain medical aid, legal aid, counselling, safe shelter and other required assistance.

Eligibility:

- According to the rules prescribed under the Act, **state governments must appoint at least one protection officer in the jurisdiction of every judicial magistrate**.
- Protection officers can be members of either government or non-governmental organisations, with at least three years of experience in the social sector, but they must preferably be women.



Challenges/problems with the functioning of Protection Officers:

The **Domestic Violence Act** may have been introduced 12 years ago, but the implementation of its provisions was not taken up uniformly across the country.

- In many states, protection officers were not appointed even years after the Act came into force.
- Today, everything from their qualifications to the nature of their appointments can differ from state to state.
- The number of POs [protection officers] also depends from state to state. Some have very few POs while other states have too many people given that responsibility.
- Under the Domestic Violence Act, protection officers are meant to be full-time workers, but Delhi is not the only state where this rule is flouted.
- In many states, existing government officials are burdened with the additional charge of being protection officers.
- Most people are not even aware of the existence of protection officers.
- Some protection officers are themselves not clear about the procedures under the law.

Insta Curious:

Do you know, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was the first human rights treaty specific to women? [CEDAW](#), however, doesn't address violence. [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the Domestic Violence Act.
2. Key Provisions.
3. Who are protection Officers?

4. Rights of Women Under the Act.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of Domestic Violence Act.

Topics: *Population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues.*

1. Freight Smart Cities:

Context:

Commerce Ministry's Logistics Division unveils plans for '**Freight Smart Cities**'.

- The objective is to improve the efficiency of urban freight and create an opportunity for reduction in the logistics costs.

Implementation:

- Under the initiative, **city-level logistics committees** would be formed.
- These committees would have related government departments and agencies at the local level, state and from the reected central ministries and agencies.
- These would also **include private sector** from the logistics services and also users of logistics services.
- These committees would co-create **City Logistics Plans** to implement performance improvement measures locally.

Need for:

- **Final-mile freight movement** in Indian cities is currently responsible for 50 per cent of total logistics costs in India's growing e-commerce supply chains.
- Improving city logistics would also enable **efficient freight movement** and bring down the logistics costs boosting all sectors of the economy.
- Besides, **Demand for urban freight is expected to grow by 140 per cent** over the next 10 years.

Cities being covered:

Ten cities will be identified on immediate basis. It is planned to expand the list to 75 cities in the next phase before scaling up throughout the country including all state capitals and cities that have more than one million population.

Insta Curious:

Have you heard of World Cities Day observed on 31st October every year? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the initiative.

2. Implementation.

3. Concerned ministry.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of the initiative.

2. Uttar Pradesh govt releases new population policy:

Context:

On World Population Day (11th July), Uttar Pradesh government announced a **new population policy for 2021-2030**.

- The new policy has provisions to give incentives to those who help in population control.

Highlights of the draft bill on population control:

The new policy aims at:

- Decreasing the total fertility rate from 2.7 to 2.1 by 2026 and 1.7 by 2030.
- Increase modern contraceptive prevalence rate from 31.7% to 45% by 2026 and 52% by 2030.
- Increase male methods of contraception use from 10.8% to 15.1% by 2026 and 16.4% by 2030.
- Decrease maternal mortality rate from 197 to 150 to 98, and infant mortality rate from 43 to 32 to 22, and under 5 infant mortality rate from 47 to 35 to 25.

Focus areas:

- To increase the accessibility of contraceptive measures issued under the Family Planning Programme and provide a proper system for safe abortion.
- To reduce the newborns' and maternal mortality rate.
- To provide for care of the elderly, and better management of education, health, and nutrition of adolescents between 11 to 19 years.

Incentives:

- Promotions, increments, concessions in housing schemes and others perks** to employees who adhere to population control norms, and have two or less children.
- Public servants who adopt the two-child norm will get **two additional increments during the entire service, maternity or as the case may be, paternity leave of 12 months**, with full salary and allowances and **three percent increase in the employer's contribution fund under the National Pension Scheme**.
- For those who are not government employees and still contribute towards keeping the population in check, will get benefits in like **rebates in taxes on water, housing, home loans etc.**
- If the parent of a child opts for **vasectomy**, he/she will be eligible for free medical facilities till the age of 20.

The Uttar Pradesh government plans to set up a **state population fund** to implement the measures.

Awareness creation:

- The draft bill also asks the state government to introduce population control as compulsory subject in all secondary schools.

Applicability:

- The provision of this legislation shall apply to a married couple where the boy is not less than 21 years of age and the girl is not less than 18.
- The policy will be voluntary - it will not be enforced upon anyone.

Need for these measures:

Overpopulation exerts strain on resources. It is therefore necessary and urgent that the provision of basic necessities of human life including affordable food, safe drinking water, decent housing, access to quality education, economic/livelihood opportunities, power/electricity for domestic consumption, and a secure living is accessible to all citizens.

Issues and concerns associated with the Bill:

- Experts have advised caution against any population policy that **puts women's health and well being at risk**.
- Given that the burden of contraception and family planning disproportionately falls on women, **it is likely that female sterilisation will increase further**.
- Stringent population control measures can potentially lead to an **increase in these practices and unsafe abortions** given the strong son-preference in India, as has been witnessed in a few states in the past.

Insta Curious: Do you know about UNFPA? [Read Here Briefly](#)

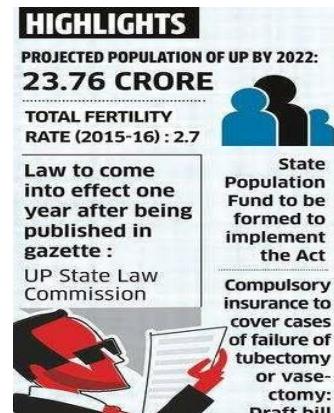
- Latest Census data.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Highlights of the Draft.

Mains Link: Discuss the concerns associated with UP's draft population policy.



Topics: Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.

1. Commission to examine the issue of Sub-categorization:

Context:

Cabinet approves Extension of term of the commission constituted under [Article 340](#) of the constitution to examine the issue of Sub-categorization within other Backward Classes in the Central List.

Background:

- [National Commission for Backward Classes \(NCBC\)](#) proposed the sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) back in 2015.
- In October 2017, President Ram Nath Kovind, in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 340 of the Constitution, appointed a commission to examine the issue of sub-categorisation of OBCs, chaired by retired Justice G. Rohini, to ensure social justice in an efficient manner by prioritising the Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs).

What is Article 340?

- It lays down conditions for the appointment of a Commission to investigate the conditions of the backward classes.
- The President may by order appoint a Commission consisting of such persons as he thinks fit to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes within the territory of India.

Constitutional basis:

1. Article 14 of the Constitution guarantees equality before the law. That means un-equals cannot be treated equally. Measures are required to be taken for the upliftment of un-equals to bring them on par with the advanced classes.
2. Article 16 (4) provides that the State can make any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens who, in the opinion of the state, are not adequately represented in the services under the State.

Need for sub- categorization:

Sub categorization of the OBCs will ensure that the more backward among the OBC communities can also access the benefits of reservation for educational institutions and government jobs.

- At present, there is no sub-categorisation and 27% reservation is a monolithic entity.

Insta Curious:

Did you know that Recommendation for OBC quota in central govt institutions was implemented in 1992 while education quota came into force in 2006? [Read about the whole movement here,](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Overview of Articles 340, 14, 15 and 16.
2. Head of the commission to examine the issue of sub-categorisation of OBCs.
3. President's power under Article 340.
4. Mandal Commission.

5. Powers to include or exclude communities from the central list of OBCs.
6. States powers to categorise OBCs.

Mains Link:

Discuss the need for sub- categorisation of OBCs.

Topics: Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc., geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water-bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.

1. What is the 'heat dome' causing record temperatures in parts of North America?

Context:

Parts of Canada and USA are reeling under severe heat wave caused due to a **heat dome**.

What Is A Heat Dome?

A heat dome occurs when the atmosphere traps hot ocean air like a lid or cap.

- The scorching heat is ensnared in what is called a heat dome.
- High-pressure circulation in the atmosphere acts like a dome or cap, trapping heat at the surface and favoring the formation of a heat wave.

Causes:

- This happens when strong, high-pressure atmospheric conditions combine with influences from [La Niña](#).
- This creates vast areas of sweltering heat that gets trapped under the high-pressure “dome”.
- The main cause is a strong change (or gradient) in ocean temperatures from west to east in the tropical Pacific Ocean.

How is it created?

1. In a process known as **convection**, the gradient causes more warm air, heated by the ocean surface.
2. This rises over the western Pacific, and decreases convection over the central and eastern Pacific.
3. As prevailing winds move the hot air east, the northern shifts of the jet stream trap the air.
4. Thus winds move it toward land, where it sinks, resulting in heat waves.

Impact of a heat dome:

1. Lead to a sudden rise in fatalities due to extreme heat like conditions.
2. Trapping of heat can also damage crops, dry out vegetation and result in droughts.
3. The heat wave will also lead to rise in energy demand, especially electricity, leading to pushing up rates.
4. Heat domes can also act as fuel to wildfires, which destroys a lot of land area in the US every year.
5. Heat dome also prevents clouds from forming, allowing for more radiation from the sun to hit the ground.

Insta Curious:

Similar to heat domes, cold-domes are formed in some parts of the world. [Know what causes their formation,](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About La Nina.
2. El Nino.
3. What is heat dome?

4. Causes.

5. Impact.

Mains Link:

Discuss the impacts of heat domes.

2. Discrete auroras on Mars:

Context:

The UAE's [Hope spacecraft](#), which is **orbiting Mars** since February this year, has captured images of glowing atmospheric lights known as **discrete auroras**.

Uniqueness of these auroras:

Unlike auroras **on Earth**, which are **seen only near the north and south poles**, **discrete auroras on Mars** are **seen all around the planet at night time**.

What causes an aurora on Earth?

1. Auroras are caused when **charged particles ejected from the Sun's surface — called the solar wind — enter the Earth's atmosphere**.
2. These particles are harmful, and our planet is protected by **the geomagnetic field**, which preserves life by shielding us from the solar wind.

- However, at the north and south poles, some of these solar wind particles are able to continuously stream down, and interact with different gases in the atmosphere to cause a display of light in the night sky.
- This display, known as an aurora, is seen from the Earth's high latitude regions (called the auroral oval), and is active all year round.

Aurora borealis and australis:

- In the northern part of our globe, the polar lights are called **aurora borealis or Northern Lights**.
- In the south, they are called **aurora australis or southern lights**, and are visible from high latitudes in Antarctica, Chile, Argentina, New Zealand and Australia.

How are Martian auroras different?

- Unlike Earth, which has a strong magnetic field, the Martian magnetic field has largely died out. This is because the molten iron at the interior of the planet— which produces magnetism— has cooled.
- However, the Martian crust, which hardened billions of years ago when the magnetic field still existed, retains some magnetism.
- So, in contrast with Earth, which acts like one single bar magnet, magnetism on Mars is unevenly distributed, with fields strewn across the planet and differing in direction and strength.
- These disjointed fields channel the solar wind to different parts of the Martian atmosphere, creating “discrete” auroras over the entire surface of the planet as charged particles interact with atoms and molecules in the sky— as they do on Earth.

Significance:

Studying Martian auroras is important for scientists, for it can offer clues as to why the Red Planet lost its magnetic field and thick atmosphere— among the essential requirements for sustaining life.

Insta Curious:

Why do auroras come in different colors and shapes? Read [this](#).

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- What are auroras?
- Types?
- How are they formed?
- Effects.
- What are Solar flares?

- What is Coronal Mass Ejection (CME)?

- Influence of solar flares on aurora formation.

Mains Link:

Discuss the mechanism behind the formation of Auroras.

3. How lightning strikes?

Context:

At least 30 people were killed in separate incidents of lightning in various parts of the country in the past 24 hours. This includes Rajasthan, UP and MP.

How common are deaths by lightning?

Deaths due to lightning have become frequent in the country. In July last year, 40 people were killed by lightning in Bihar in two separate incidents.

- As a whole, India sees 2,000-2,500 lightning deaths every year on average.
- Also, lightning is the biggest contributor to accidental deaths due to natural causes.

Challenges and concerns:

- Occurrences of lightning are not tracked in India, and there is simply not enough data for scientists to work with.
- Often, safety measures and precautions against lightning strikes do not receive as much publicity as other natural disasters such as earthquakes.

What is lightning?

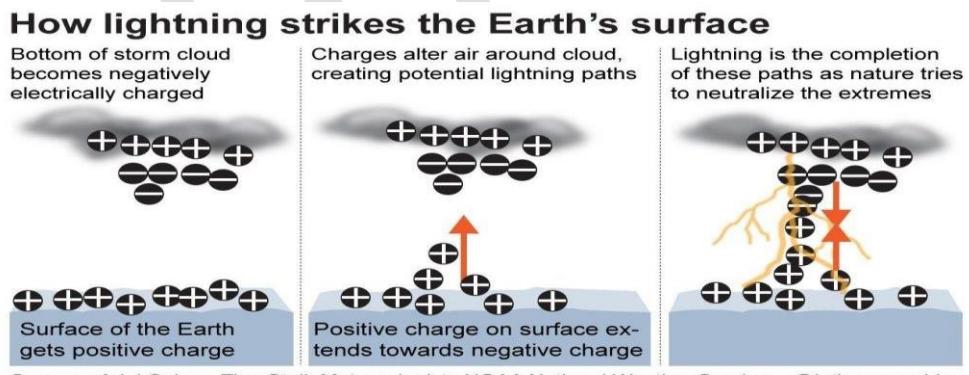
Lightning is a very rapid — and massive — discharge of electricity in the atmosphere, some of which is directed towards the Earth's surface.

How does it strike?

1. Electrical discharges are generated in giant moisture-bearing clouds that are 10-12 km tall. The base of these clouds typically lies within 1-2 km of the Earth's surface. Temperatures towards the top of these clouds are in the range of minus 35 to minus 45 degrees Celsius.
2. As water vapour moves upward in the cloud, the falling temperature causes it to condense. Heat is generated in the process, which pushes the molecules of water further up.
3. As they move to temperatures below zero degrees celsius, the water droplets change into small ice crystals. They continue to move up, gathering mass — until they are so heavy that they start to fall to Earth.
4. This leads to a system in which, simultaneously, smaller ice crystals are moving up and bigger crystals are coming down.
5. Collisions follow, and trigger the release of electrons — a process that is very similar to the generation of sparks of electricity. As the moving free electrons cause more collisions and more electrons, a chain reaction ensues.
6. This process results in a situation in which the top layer of the cloud gets positively charged, while the middle layer is negatively charged.
7. An enormous amount of heat is produced, and this leads to the heating of the air column between the two layers of the cloud. This heat gives the air column a reddish appearance during lightning. As the heated air column expands, it produces shock waves that result in thunder.

How does this current reach the Earth from the cloud?

1. While the Earth is a good conductor of electricity, it is electrically neutral. However, in comparison to the middle layer of the cloud, it becomes positively charged. As a result, about 15%-20% of the current gets directed towards the Earth as well. It is this flow of current that results in damage to life and property on Earth.



Insta Curious: [Do you think lightning only strikes the tallest object?](#)

4. Types of clouds.
5. Lightning strikes in India.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. How lightning strikes?
2. What are megaflashes?
3. Is earth a good conductor of electricity?

Mains Link:

Write a note on how lightning phenomenon.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-how-lightning-strikes-and-why-it-kills-7401198/lite/>.

4. Earth Overshoot Day, 2021:

Context:

[Earth Overshoot Day 2021](#) happened on **July 29**, almost a month earlier than the year before.

- It was pushed forward because emissions are on the rise and biodiversity loss is speeding up.

Who announces the date?

The date is announced annually by the [Global Footprint Network](#), the global organisation calling for urgent climate action and sustainable consumption.

What is it?

Each year, [Earth Overshoot Day](#) marks the date when we have used all the biological resources that the Earth can renew during the entire year.

- This means humanity has again used up all biological resources that our planet regenerates during the entire year by 29th July, 2021.

Why has it been observed one month earlier this year?

- We've already seen a 6.6% increase in our global [carbon footprint](#), while our global forest biocapacity decreased by 0.5% due to widespread deforestation in the Amazon rainforest.
- Deforestation had also increased by 12% in 2020, and estimates for 2021 suggest the figure will reach a 43% year-on-year increase.

What's the concern now?

- At our current rate, we're using around 1.7 Earths every single year. From now until the end of the year, we're operating on "ecological deficit spending".
- Our spending for 2021 is among some of the highest since we entered into the overshoot territory in the 1970s, based on UN data.

The concept of earth overshoot day:

The concept of Earth Overshoot Day was first conceived by [Andrew Simms](#) of the UK think tank New Economics Foundation, which partnered with Global Footprint Network in 2006 to launch the first global Earth Overshoot Day campaign.

How is it computed?

Earth Overshoot Day is computed by dividing the planet's bio capacity (the amount of ecological resources Earth is able to generate that year), by humanity's Ecological Footprint (humanity's demand for that year), and multiplying by 365, the number of days in a year.

What is Ecological Footprint?

It is a metric that comprehensively compares human demand on nature against nature's capacity to regenerate.

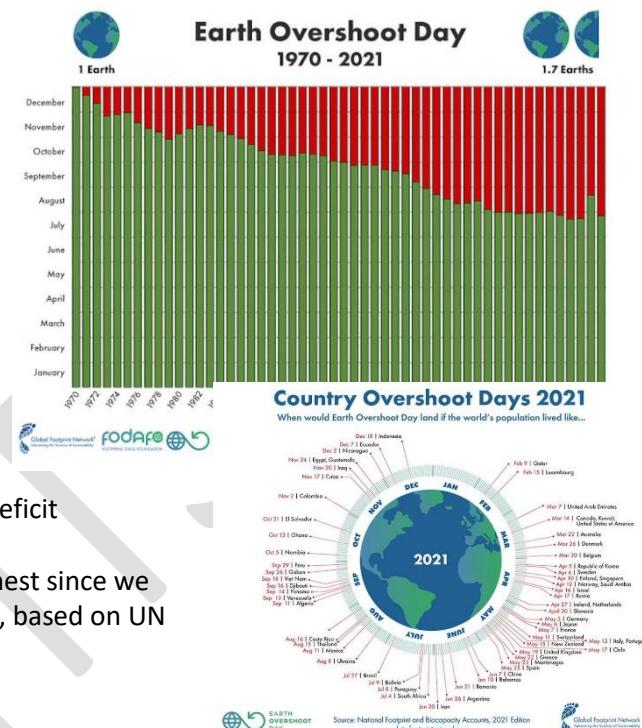
Insta Curious:

Have you heard of the term 'Carbon Handprint'? [Read Here Briefly](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- About the day.
- How is it calculated?
- Country-wise dates.



4. What is Ecological footprint?

Mains Link:

What is Ecological footprint? Why is it significant? Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES – 2

Topics: Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure; Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries.

1. Union vs Centre: Why DMK wants to use the ‘correct’ term for the government of India:

Context:

What is the accurate term to refer to the government of India that sits in New Delhi and forms, along with the states and local bodies, the Indian state?

- Popularly – and often even in official communication – the institution is called the “Central government”. Or even just the Centre for short.
- However, Tamil Nadu’s ruling party insists that the correct term is actually the “Union government”.

How did this controversy start?

Ever since the new DMK government assumed office on May 7, official statements and press releases have carried the Tamil term “**Ondriya Arasu**” to refer to the Union government. Earlier, the preferred term in state government communication seems to have been “**Maththiya Arasu**” or Central government.

- According to its leaders, the Constitution describes India as a “**Union of States**” and therefore the ideal reference to the Centre would be the “**Union Government**”.

What does the Constitution of India say?

The Indian Constitution constantly uses the word “Union” to describe the entire country as well as the government that administers it.

For example, [Article 53](#) reads, “the executive power of the Union shall be vested in the President”.

- This follows from [Article 1](#) itself: “India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States”.

Please note, **Central government is a term not used in the original Constitution** as passed by the Constituent Assembly.

Intent of Constituent Assembly:

Emphasis was on the consolidation and confluence of various provinces and territories to form a strong united country:

1. This is why on December 13, 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru introduced [the aims and objects of the Assembly](#) by resolving that India shall be a Union of territories willing to join the “Independent Sovereign Republic”.
2. B.R Ambedkar justified the usage of ‘Union of States’ saying that the Drafting Committee wanted to make it clear that **though India was to be a federation, it was not the result of an agreement and that therefore, no State has the right to secede from it**.

Union vs Centre- which is better?

1. ‘Centre’ or ‘Central government’ has a tendency of **centralising powers in one unit**.
2. The ‘Union government’ or the ‘Government of India’ has a **unifying effect** as the message sought to be given is that the government is of all.
3. According to Subash Kashyap, **using the term ‘Centre’ or ‘central government’ would mean state governments are subservient to it**.

So why are there two terms at all?

The term is a carryover from colonial times.

The term was directly and indirectly used in the **1773 Regulating Act and the 1919 Government of India Act**.

- It was only in **1935, when a new Government of India Act** proposed the term “Federation of India” was first used.
- The modern term “**Union**” was first officially used in **1946 by the Cabinet Mission Plan**, a British scheme to keep India united after transfer of power.

Significance of Tamil Nadu government's decision:

The Tamil Nadu government's decision to shun the usage of the term 'Central government' in its official communications and replace it with 'Union government' is a **major step towards regaining the consciousness of our Constitution**.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

Articles 1 and 53 of the Indian Constitution.

Overview of:

1. 1773 Regulating Act.
2. The 1919 Government of India Act.
3. Government of India Act 1935.

Mains Link: Though India was to be a federation, it was not the result of an agreement and that therefore, no State has the right to secede from it. Discuss.

2. President's Rule:

Context:

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a plea seeking directions to the Centre to impose **President's Rule in West Bengal over alleged incidents of post-poll violence in the state.**

Allegations:

1. During the violence, the government and administration remained silent spectators and no protection was provided to the victims by them.
2. No appropriate action was taken against the culprits, due to which the life, liberty, dignity of the women and children are in peril and the future of Hindu residents is in jeopardy.

Background:

The [National Human Rights Commission](#) on June 21 has already set up an eight-member committee headed by NHRC member Rajiv Jain in compliance with a Calcutta High Court direction to investigate incidents of post-poll violence in West Bengal.

What is President's Rule in the Indian context?

[Article 356 of the Constitution of India](#) gives the President of India power to suspend state government and impose President's rule of any state in the country "if he is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the government of the state cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution".

- It is also known as 'State Emergency' or 'Constitutional Emergency'.
- Upon the imposition of this rule, there would be no Council of Ministers.
- The state will fall under the direct control of the Union government, and the Governor will continue to head the proceedings, representing the President of India.

Parliamentary Approval and Duration:

- A proclamation imposing President's Rule must be approved by both the Houses of Parliament within two months from the date of its issue.
- The approval takes place through simple majority in either House, that is, a majority of the members of the House present and voting.
- Initially valid for six months, the President's Rule can be extended for a maximum period of three years with the approval of the Parliament, every six months.

Report of the Governor:

Under Article 356, President's Rule is imposed if the President, upon receipt of the report from the Governor of the State or otherwise, is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

Revocation:

A proclamation of President's Rule may be revoked by the President at any time by a subsequent proclamation.

Such a proclamation does not require parliamentary approval.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Imposition of President's Rule.
2. Related Provisions.
3. Report of Governor.
4. Parliamentary approval and duration.

5. Revocation.

6. What happens to the State legislature Under President's Rule.

Mains Link: What is President's Rule? Why it is controversial? Discuss.

3. Governors of States in India:

Context:

The President appoints new Governors for 8 states.

Governors of States in India (Article 152-162):

- A governor is a **nominal head of a state**, unlike the Chief Minister who is the real head of a state in India.
- According to the [7th Constitutional Amendment Act 1956](#), the same person can be the Governor of two or more states.
- The Governor of a State shall be **appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal**.

Removal:

The Governor shall hold office during the pleasure of the President.

- Can be terminated earlier by: Dismissal by the president, at whose pleasure the governor holds office or Resignation by the governor.
- There is **no provision of impeachment**, as it happens for the president.

Some discretionary powers are as follows:

1. Can dissolve the legislative assembly if the chief minister advises him to do following a vote of no confidence. Following which, it is up to the Governor what he/ she would like to do.
2. Can recommend the president about the failure of the constitutional machinery in the state.
3. Can reserve a bill passed by the state legislature for the president's assent.
4. Can appoint anybody as chief minister If there is no political party with a clear-cut majority in the assembly.
5. Determines the amount payable by the Government of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram to an autonomous Tribal District Council as royalty accruing from licenses for mineral exploration.
6. Can seek information from the chief minister with regard to the administrative and legislative matters of the state.

Problems with constitutional design:

1. The governor is merely appointed by the president on the advice of the Central government.
2. Unlike the president, a governor does not have a fixed term. He/she holds office at the pleasure of the ruling party in the centre.
3. Both the manner of the appointment and the uncertainty of tenure conspire to make the incumbent an object of the Central government in politically charged circumstances.

Insta Curious:

Do you know that if there is a dominion status, the administrative head is called only as a Governor General? Hence, from 15th Aug 1947 till India became Republic, the title used was 'Governor General', which became redundant on our 1st Republic day and changed to the 'President'.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Overview of Articles 163 and 174.

2. Is the Governor bound by the advice of the chief minister-led council of ministers when it comes to convening the assembly session?

3. Who appoints Chief Minister?
4. Discretionary powers of Governor.
5. Tenure of governor.

Mains Link: Write a note on the discretionary powers of a governor of state.

4. Delimitation in J&K:

Context:

The [Jammu and Kashmir Delimitation Commission](#) has said that it will base its final report on **the 2011 Census** and will also take into account the topography, difficult terrain, means of communication and convenience available for the ongoing delimitation exercise.

Delimitation exercise in J&K- a timeline:

1. The **first delimitation exercise**, carving out 25 assembly constituencies in the then state, was carried out by a Delimitation Committee in 1951.
2. **The first full-fledged Delimitation Commission** was formed in 1981 and it submitted its recommendations in 1995 on the basis of 1981 Census. Since then, there has been no delimitation.
3. In 2020, the Delimitation Commission was constituted to carry out the exercise on the basis of 2011 Census, with a mandate to add seven more seats to the Union Territory' and grant reservations to SC and ST communities.
4. Now, the total number of seats in Jammu and Kashmir will be raised to 90 from the previous 83. This is apart from 24 seats which have been reserved for areas of PoK and have to be kept vacant in the Assembly.

What is delimitation and why is it needed?

The **Delimitation Commission for Jammu and Kashmir** was constituted by the Centre on March 6 last year to redraw Lok Sabha and assembly constituencies of the union territory in accordance with the provisions of [the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019](#), which bifurcated the state into union territories of J&K and Ladakh.

What is Delimitation?

Delimitation literally means the process of fixing limits or boundaries of territorial constituencies in a state that has a legislative body.

Who carries out the exercise?

- Delimitation is undertaken by a highly powerful commission. They are formally known as [Delimitation Commission](#) or [Boundary Commission](#).
- These bodies are so powerful that **its orders have the force of law and they cannot be challenged before any court**.

Composition of the Commission:

According to the Delimitation Commission Act, 2002, **the Delimitation Commission will have three members**: a serving or retired judge of the Supreme Court as the chairperson, and the Chief Election Commissioner or Election Commissioner nominated by the CEC and the State Election Commissioner as ex-officio members.

Constitutional Provisions:

1. Under **Article 82**, the Parliament enacts a Delimitation Act after every Census.
2. Under **Article 170**, States also get divided into territorial constituencies as per Delimitation Act after every Census.

Insta Curious: Do you know what Gerrymandering is? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Previous delimitation commissions- powers and functions.
2. Composition of the commission.

3. Who can set up?
4. Are changes allowed in final orders?
5. Which are the constitution provisions related?

Mains Link: How and why delimitation of constituencies is carried out? Discuss.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G5G8OJSK8.1&imageview=0>.

5. What the Constitution says on Dismissal of govt employees?

Context:

Lt Governor Manoj Sinha has dismissed 11 Jammu and Kashmir government employees for alleged terror links under provisions of [Article 311\(2\)\(c\)](#) of the Constitution.

Constitutional provision:

Article 311 of the Constitution deals with '**Dismissal, removal or reduction in rank of persons employed in civil capacities under the Union or a State**'.

- **Article 311(2):** no civil servant can be "dismissed or removed or reduced in rank **except after an inquiry** in which he has been informed of the charges and given a reasonable opportunity of being heard in respect of those charges".
- **Article 311(2)(a):** The safeguard of an inquiry also does not apply in cases of conviction on a criminal charge.
- **Article 311(2)(b):** The safeguard of an inquiry also does not apply "where the authority is satisfied that for some reason, to be recorded by that authority in writing, it is not reasonably practicable to hold such inquiry".
- **Article 311(2)(c):** It also shall not apply "where **the President or the Governor, as the case may be, is satisfied that in the interest of the security of the State it is not expedient to hold such inquiry**".

Remedy available:

The only available remedy to terminated employees is **to challenge the government's decision in the High Court**.

Insta Curious: Do you know what the Doctrine of Pleasure is? [Read Here](#)

2. Safeguards available to civil servants under the constitution.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Article 311(2).

Mains Link: Write a note on safeguards provided to civil servants under the constitution.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/dismissal-of-jk-govt-employees-what-the-constitution-says-7405142/lite/>

6. Anti-defection law:

Context:

Lok Sabha Secretariat has issued notices to three MPs, after their parties petitioned Speaker Om Birla, seeking their disqualification under [the Anti-Defection Law](#).

- They have been asked to give their comments within 15 days of receipt of letters.

Anti-defection law:

- In 1985 **the Tenth Schedule**, popularly known as the anti-defection law, was added to the Constitution by **the 52nd Amendment Act**.
- The purpose of the Amendment was **to bring stability to governments** by deterring MPs and MLAs from changing their political parties on whose ticket they were elected.
- The penalty for shifting political loyalties is the loss of parliamentary membership and a bar on becoming a minister.

When can a member be disqualified?

If a member of a house belonging to a political party:

1. Voluntarily gives up the membership of his political party, or

2. Votes, or does not vote in the legislature, contrary to the directions of his political party. However, if the member has taken prior permission, or is condoned by the party within 15 days from such voting or abstention, the member shall not be disqualified.
3. If an independent candidate joins a political party after the election.
4. If a nominated member joins a party six months after he becomes a member of the legislature.

However, **Legislators may change their party without the risk of disqualification in certain circumstances.**

Exceptions:

1. The law allows a party to merge with or into another party provided that at least two-thirds of its legislators are in favour of the merger.
2. On being elected as the presiding officer of the House, if a member, voluntarily gives up the membership of his party or rejoins it after he ceases to hold that office, he won't be disqualified.

Decision of the Presiding Officer is subject to judicial review:

The law initially stated that the decision of the Presiding Officer is not subject to judicial review. This condition was struck down by the Supreme Court later, thereby allowing appeals against the Presiding Officer's decision in the High Court and Supreme Court.

- However, it held that **there may not be any judicial intervention until the Presiding Officer gives his order.**

Is there a time limit within which the Presiding Officer should decide?

- **There is no time limit as per the law within which the Presiding Officers should decide on a plea for disqualification.**

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Names of various committees and commissions with regard to Anti Defection law.
2. Committees vs Commissions.

Mains Link: Examine the provisions of Anti-defection law. Has this law largely failed to meet its objective? Discuss.

3. Decision of presiding officer vs Judicial review.
4. Merger vs Split of political parties.
5. Is anti-defection law applicable to the presiding officer?
6. Relevant Supreme Court cases and verdicts.

Link:<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/no-tice-issued-to-3-mps-under-anti-defection-law/article35351985.ece/amp/>.

7. Adjournment motion:

Context:

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) has decided to move **an adjournment motion** in the Lok Sabha against the government on **the three controversial farm laws**, over which it walked out of the NDA government.

- The **motion requires the signatures of 50 MPs to be admitted.**

Background:

The laws — the “Farmers’ Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, the “Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 and the “Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020” were cleared by Parliament last year and have seen sustained protests from farmers groups at the doorstep of Delhi.

- While the Central government has held several rounds of talks, these have been unsuccessful at breaking the logjam, as the government has firmly refused to take back the Acts.

About Adjournment Motion:

Adjournment motion is **introduced only in the Lok Sabha** to draw the attention of the House to a definite matter of urgent public importance.

- It involves an element of censure against the government, therefore Rajya Sabha is not permitted to make use of this device.

- It is regarded as an extraordinary device as it interrupts the normal business of the House. It needs the support of 50 members to be admitted.
- The discussion on this motion should last for not less than two hours and thirty minutes.

However, right to move a motion for an adjournment of the business of the House is subject to the following restrictions. i.e. It should:

1. Raise a matter which is definite, factual, urgent and of public importance.
2. Not cover more than one matter.
3. Be restricted to a specific matter of recent occurrence.
4. Not raise a question of privilege.
5. Not revive discussion on a matter that has been discussed in the same session.
6. Not deal with any matter that is under adjudication of court.
7. Not raise any question that can be raised on a distinct motion.

Insta Curious: Do you know the Differences between MOTIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND SHORT DURATION DISCUSSIONS? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is an adjournment motion?
2. Conditions for its passage.
3. Exceptions.

4. Where it can be introduced?

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of Adjournment Motion in Lok Sabha.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/akalis-to-move-adjournment-motion-in-lok-sabha-on-farm-laws/article35350410.ece/amp/>.

8. Part of Constitution inserted by 97th amendment quashed:

Context:

The Supreme Court on July 20 in a 2:1 majority verdict upheld the validity of [the 97th constitutional amendment](#) but struck down a part inserted by it which relates to the Constitution and working of cooperative societies.

The 97th constitutional amendment:

- It dealt with issues related to effective management of co-operative societies in the country.
- It was passed by Parliament in December 2011 and had come into effect from February 15, 2012.
- It amended Article 19(1)(c) to give protection to the cooperatives and inserted Article 43 B and Part IX B, relating to them.

Why a part of it has been struck down by the Court?

Upholding the Gujarat High Court's 2013 decision striking down certain provisions of the 97th constitutional amendment, the Supreme Court held that the Parliament cannot enact laws with regard to cooperative societies as it is a State subject.

Several intervenors have contended that the amendment made a direct in-road into the exclusive domain of states to enact laws with regard to cooperatives.

- However, the Centre has contended that the provision does not denude states of their power to enact laws with regard to cooperatives.

What was the rationale behind such move by the centre?

The Centre has stated that the amendment was enacted to bring uniformity in the management of cooperative societies and it did not take away the powers of states.

- But, the Supreme Court has now said that if the Centre wanted to achieve uniformity then the only way available was to take the recourse under Article 252 of the Constitution which deals with the power of Parliament to legislate for two or more states by consent.

What next?

- The subject of cooperative societies fell in the state list and “belongs wholly and exclusively to the State legislatures to legislate upon” and any change would require the ratification by at least one-half of the state legislatures as per **Article 368(2) of the Constitution**.
- Now, **Part IXB of the Constitution** of India is operative only in so far as it concerns **multi-State co-operative societies** both within the various States and in the Union territories of India.

Insta Curious: Do you know about the different cooperative societies? [Read Briefly](#)

3. Regulation.
4. Constitutional provisions.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What are cooperative societies?
2. Types.

Mains Link:

Discuss the impact of latest Supreme Court order on cooperative societies.

Link: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/supreme-court-in-majority-verdict-quashes-part-of-constitution-inserted-by-97th-amendment-on-cooperatives/article35419288.ece/amp/>.

9. Speedy trial a fundamental right: HC:

Context:

In the **Bhima Koregaon caste violence case**, highlighting the issue of undertrials, the Bombay High Court has said that “**speedy trial is a fundamental right**”.

What's the issue?

Charges are not framed in the case. Many witnesses are still being examined. They are languishing in jail without trial.

About the Constitutional Right to Speedy Trial:

- **The main aim of the Right to Speedy trial** is to inculcate Justice in the society.
- It was **first mentioned in that landmark document of English law, the Magna Carta**.
- In India, it is covered under **Article 21** which declares that “no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to the procedure laid by law.”

Evolution of the right to speedy trial:

1. **1978 Babu Singh v. State of UP:** The court remarked, "Our justice system even in grave cases, suffers from slow motion syndrome which is lethal to 'fair trial' whatever the ultimate decision. Speedy justice is a component of social justice since the community, as a whole, is concerned in the criminal being condignly and finally punished within a reasonable time and the innocent being absolved from the inordinate ordeal of criminal proceedings."
2. **Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar, 1979:** It formed the basis of the concept of the Speedy Trial. It was held that where under trial prisoners have been in jail for duration longer than prescribed, if convicted, their detention in jail is totally unjustified and in violation to fundamental rights under article 21.
3. **Kartar Singh v. State of Punjab 1994:** It was declared that the right to speedy trial is an essential part of fundamental right to life and liberty.

Factors For Pendency Of The Cases:

1. Delay in disposition of cases because of huge pendency.
2. Delay due to lawyers/ advocates.
3. Infrastructure issue: The Courts have no convenient building or physical facilities due to which it takes more time to dispose off a case.
4. Provision for adjournment.
5. Vacation of the court.
6. The Investigation agencies such as Police also play a role in Delay of cases.

Some measures which could prevent Delay could be:

1. Effective management of the courts.
2. Judges should be provided with proper training and vocations on a regular basis to improvise drafting, hearing and writing skills along with the skill of taking correct and fast judgment.
3. The ratio of judges to population should be increased which will help in disposal of cases very fast.
4. Cases must be assigned according to the specialized area of judges.
5. Arbitration should be done wherever possible and in particular small and petty cases arbitration should be made compulsory.
6. Nyaya Panchayats should be authorized to dispose off small and petty cases.
7. The procedure of Adjournment should be modified in a way so as it is reduced to a limit and fine should be imposed on the person who files application for an adjournment on flimsy grounds.
8. The technological development made by the human being in the field of science can be highly useful in realization of this objective.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Article 21.

2. About Article 32.

3. About the right to Speedy Justice.

4. What is Magna Carta?

Mains Link: Write a note on the right to Speedy Justice and its significance.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GMS8PLAJT.1&imageview=0>.

10. Independence of the Judiciary:

Context:

Recently the Supreme Court of India mentioned about **two “parallel systems” of justice** — one for the rich and the other for the poor.

- It was dealing with a case where the bail granted to the husband of a legislator in Madhya Pradesh.

What's the issue?

Madhya Pradesh High Court had granted the bail. The Supreme Court termed the grant of bail to a man with criminal antecedents who has been evading arrest a “grave error”.

What has the court said?

- India cannot have two parallel legal systems, one for the rich and the resourceful and those who wield political power and influence, and the other for the small men without resources and capabilities to obtain justice or fight injustice.
- The existence of a dual legal system will only chip away **the legitimacy of the law**.
- Independence of the judiciary is the independence of each and every judge. The case pointed to a **larger malaise of application of political pressure on trial judges**.

How the Constitution of India ensures the independence of the Judiciary?

1. **Security of Tenure:** Once appointed, the judges cannot be removed from the office except by an order of the President and that too on the ground of proven misbehavior and incapacity (Articles 124 and 217).
2. **The salaries and allowances of the judges** are fixed and are not subject to a vote of the legislature.
3. **Powers and Jurisdiction of Supreme Court:** Parliament can only add to the powers and jurisdiction of the Supreme Court but cannot curtail them.
4. **No discussion in the legislature of the state with respect to the conduct of any judge of the Supreme Court or of a High Court** in the discharge of his duties.
5. Both the Supreme Court and the High Court have **the power to punish any person for their contempt**.

Why is Judicial Independence needed?

- Judicial independence ensures public confidence as an institute of the last resort where justice will be served despite any opposition and influence.
- People place high credibility and trust in the judiciary to get justice in case of any kind of misconduct by the executive.
- The latter clause and confidence will be meaningless if executive interference is allowed into the process of judicial proceedings as well as judicial bias over the executive.

Insta Curious: Topic Related to Law and Judiciary: Do you know what Case Law is? Read Here.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Key Provisions related to the independence of Judiciary.
2. About 42 Amendment to the Constitution.

Mains Link:

Discuss the need for and significance of the independence of the judiciary.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GF48PVOF2.1&imageview=0>.

11. The 'Right to be Forgotten' in India:

Context:

Ashutosh Kaushik, a celebrity, has approached Delhi High Court seeking removal of his videos, photographs and articles from the internet. He has cited his "[Right to be Forgotten](#)".

What are his demands?

- Kaushik's plea mentions that the posts and videos on internet related to him have caused him psychological pain for diminutive acts, which were erroneously committed a decade ago.
- The plea also says that mistakes in his personal life becomes and remains in public knowledge for generations to come.

What is the 'Right to be Forgotten' in the Indian context?

- The Right to be Forgotten falls under the purview of **an individual's right to privacy**.
- In 2017, the **Right to Privacy was declared a fundamental right (under Article 21)** by the Supreme Court in its landmark verdict (Puttuswamy case).

What does the Personal Data Protection Bill say about this?

Right to privacy is also governed by the **Personal Data Protection Bill** that is yet to be passed by Parliament. The bill exclusively talks about the "**Right to be Forgotten**".

- Broadly, under the Right to be forgotten, users can de-link, limit, delete or correct the disclosure of their personal information held by data fiduciaries.

But, what are the issues associated with this provision in the Bill?

The main issue with the provision is that the sensitivity of the personal data and information cannot be determined independently by the person concerned, but will be overseen by **the Data Protection Authority (DPA)**.

- This means that while the draft bill gives some provisions under which a user can seek that his data be removed, but his or her rights are subject to authorisation by the Adjudicating Officer who works for the DPA.

Insta Curious:

Do you know that the EU's 2018 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) also provides for the "right to be forgotten"? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the Right to be forgotten.

2. What is right to privacy?

3. Highlights of Personal Data Protection Bill.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of the right to be forgotten.

Link:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/the-right-to-be-forgotten-india-explained-7418661/lite/>.

12. OCI Card Holders:

Context:

The Delhi High Court has said that **the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO)** cannot insist on the physical or virtual presence of both the spouses for processing **Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI)** card applications for one of them.

What's the issue?

The High Court's order came while asking the FRRO to accept the OCI card application of an Iranian woman, who has been living separately in Bengaluru after her relationship with her husband, an Indian citizen, turned sour.

Who are OCI cardholders?

- The Government of India launched the '**Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Scheme**' by making **amendments to the Citizenship Act, 1955 in 2005**.
- On 09 January 2015, the Government of India discontinued the PIO card and merged it with OCI card.

Eligibility:

The Government of India allows the following categories of foreign nationals to apply for OCI Card.

Exceptions:

Anyone who is applying for OCI card should hold a valid Passport of another country.

- Individuals who do not have citizenship of any other country are not eligible to gain an OCI status.
- Individuals whose parents or grandparents hold citizenship of Pakistan and Bangladesh are not eligible to apply.

Benefits for OCI cardholders:

1. Lifelong Visa to visit India multiple times. (special permission needed for research work in India).
2. No need to register with Foreigners Regional Registration Officer (FRRO) or Foreigners Registration Officer (FRO) for any length of stay.
3. Except for acquisition of agricultural and plantation properties, OCI card holders have similar facilities that are extended to NRIs in economic, financial and educational fields.
4. Same treatment as of NRIs in respect to Inter-country adoption of Indian children.
5. Also treated at par with NRIs regarding – entry fees for national monuments, practice of professions like doctors, dentists, nurses, advocates, architects, Chartered Accountants & Pharmacists.
6. At par with NRIs to participate in All India Pre-medical tests and such.
7. Treated at par with Indian citizens in matters of traffic in airfares in Indian domestic sectors.
8. Same entry fee as for Indians for entry into India's national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.
9. OCI booklet can be used as identification to avail services. An affidavit can be attached with local address as residential proof.

Eligible categories to apply for OCI Card	Is a Citizen of India at time of or after the Constitution came into effect i.e. 26 January 1950.
	Eligible to become citizen of India on 26 January 1950
	Belonged to a territory that became part of India after 15 August 1947
	Child or descendent of a person from any of the above mentioned categories
	A minor child of the persons belonging to any of the above.
	A minor child of whom either or both the parents are citizens of India.
	Foreign origin spouse of Citizen of India or of a person holding OCI status . - Marriage needs to be registered. - They are married for more than two years continuously before the date of application.

There are certain restrictions placed on OCI card holders:

1. Do not have the right to vote.
2. Do not have right to any public service/government jobs

3. Cannot hold offices of – Prime Minister, President, Vice -President, Judge of Supreme Court and High Court, member of Parliament or Member of state legislative assembly or council.
4. Cannot own agricultural property.

Insta Curious:

Who is an Expatriate? And what is Expat Tax? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Definition of Citizen.
2. POI vs OCI vs NRI.
3. Who can grant and revoke citizenship?

4. Dual citizenship in India.
5. Applicability of right to vote and contest in elections for OCI card holders.
6. Can OCI holders buy agricultural land?
7. Who cannot be issued OCI cards?

Mains Link: Who are overseas citizens of India? What are the benefits available for OCI card holders? Discuss.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GN48Q9GVO.1&imageview=0>.

Topics: *Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions.*

1. Recusal of judges:

Context:

The Calcutta high court has imposed a penalty of ₹5 lakh on West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee for seeking **recusal of Justice Kaushik Chanda** from her Nandigram election petition over the judge's alleged links with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The court said the amount paid in penalties by the West Bengal CM will be used for the families of lawyers affected by Covid-19.

- The judge, however, decided to step away from the case on his own personal discretion and released the case from his bench.

What is Judicial Disqualification or Recusal?

Judicial disqualification, referred to as recusal, is the act of abstaining from participation in an official action such as a legal proceeding due to a **conflict of interest** of the presiding court official or administrative officer.

Grounds for Recusal:

1. The judge is biased in favour of one party, or against another, or that a reasonable objective observer would think he might be.
2. Interest in the subject matter, or relationship with someone who is interested in it.
3. Background or experience, such as the judge's prior work as a lawyer.
4. Personal knowledge about the parties or the facts of the case.
5. Ex parte communications with lawyers or non-lawyers.
6. Rulings, comments or conduct.

Are there any laws in this regard?

There are no definite rules on recusals by Judges.

- However, In taking oath of office, judges, both of the Supreme Court and of the high courts, promise to perform their duties, to deliver justice, "without fear or favour, affection or ill-will".

What has the Supreme Court said on this?

1. In **Ranjit Thakur v Union of India (1987)**, the SC held that the test of the likelihood of bias is the reasonableness of the apprehension in the mind of the party. The judge needs to look at the mind of the party before him, and decide that he is biased or not.
2. Justice J. Chelameswar in his opinion in **Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association v. Union of India (2015)** held that "Where a judge has a pecuniary interest, no further inquiry as to whether there was a 'real danger' or 'reasonable suspicion' of bias is required to be undertaken".

InstaLinks:**Prelims Link:**

1. Grounds for Judicial Disqualification.

2. Who administers oath to Supreme Court and High Court judges?
3. Articles 127 and 128 of the Indian Constitution are related to?

Mains Link: Recusal has become a selective call of morality for Supreme Court judges. Discuss.

2. Conjugal rights before Supreme Court:

Context:

The Supreme Court is expected to begin hearing a fresh challenge to the provision allowing restitution of conjugal rights under [Hindu personal laws](#).

What are conjugal rights?

Section 9 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 deals with restitution of conjugal rights.

- Conjugal rights are rights created by marriage, i.e. right of the husband or the wife to the society of the other spouse.
- The law recognises these rights— both in personal laws dealing with marriage, divorce etc, and in criminal law requiring payment of maintenance and alimony to a spouse.

Section 9 of the Hindu Marriage Act recognises one aspect of conjugal rights — the right to consortium and protects it by allowing a spouse to move court to enforce the right.

How can these rights be enforced?

- When either the husband or the wife has, without reasonable excuse, withdrawn from the society of the other, the aggrieved party may apply, by petition to the district court.
- And the court, on being satisfied of the truth of the statements made in such petition and that there is no legal ground why the application should not be granted, may decree restitution of conjugal rights accordingly.
- Also, if a spouse refuses cohabitation, the other spouse can move the family court seeking a decree for cohabitation. If the order of the court is not complied with, the court can attach property. However, the decision can be appealed before a High Court and the Supreme Court.

Why has the law been challenged?

1. Main ground is that it is violative of the fundamental right to privacy.
2. It amounted to a “coercive act” on the part of the state, which violates one’s sexual and decisional autonomy, and right to privacy and dignity.
3. The provision disproportionately affects women. Women are often called back to marital homes under the provision, and given that marital rape is not a crime, leaves them susceptible to such coerced cohabitation.
4. Also in question is whether the state can have such a compelling interest in protecting the institution of marriage that it allows a legislation to enforce cohabitation of spouses.

Insta Curious:

Think! What does The Special Marriage Act, 1954 say about Conjugal rights?

InstaLinks:**Prelims Link:**

1. What are conjugal rights?
2. About Hindu Personal laws.

3. Section 9 of the Hindu Marriage Act.

Mains Link:

Discuss the issues associated with conjugal rights.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-conjugal-rights-before-supreme-court-7411007/lite/>.

3. Supreme Court seeks Centre's response on plea saying right to health has taken back seat:

Context:

A petition filed in the Supreme Court has said **fundamental right to health** had taken a back seat as patients were forced to choose between expensive private care and an “inadequate” public health sector, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The Supreme Court has asked the Centre to respond to the petition.

What are the demands by the petitioners?

They have asked for the proper implementation of the **Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act of 2010**, the **Clinical Establishment (Central Government) Rules of 2012** and the **Patients' Rights Charter**.

How has the "Right to Health" taken backseat during Covid times?

1. The **regulation of standards in clinical establishments** adopted as a national policy goal by the Government of India nearly two decades ago is yet to be effectively implemented across the country. This is a **denial of the right to a dignified life**.
2. Minimum healthcare is also assured under **Articles 21, 41 and 47 of the Constitution** and the international covenants. These rights were not available to the citizens because of inadequate public healthcare Infrastructure.
3. The “situation today is that more than 70% patient care is provided by the private sector and less than 30% patients use the public sector”.

What needs to be done?

There are reports of skyrocketing private hospital charges for COVID-19 treatment.

Therefore, a **grievance redressal mechanism** should be made available to patients at district, State and national levels.

- This mechanism would look into grievances of the patients at different levels.
- This would include denial of patients' rights by the hospitals/ clinics and failure to provide minimum care and facilities as provided under the **Clinical Establishments Act and Rules**.

Basis of Right to Health:

1. **Article 21 of the Constitution of India** guarantees a fundamental right to life & personal liberty. The right to health is inherent to a life with dignity.
2. **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)**: Articles 38, 39, 42, 43, & 47 put the obligation on the state in order to ensure the effective realization of the right to health.
3. The Supreme Court in **Paschim Bangal Khet Mazdoor Samity case (1996)** held that in a welfare state, the primary duty of the government is to secure the welfare of the people and moreover it is the obligation of the government to provide adequate medical facilities for its people.
4. India is also a signatory to the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)** by the United Nations that grants the **right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being to humans** including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.

Insta Curious: What does the WHO constitution define Health as? [Read Here](#)

2. Related constitutional provisions.
3. About the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).
4. Related Supreme Court Judgments.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Right to Health under the Indian Constitution.

Mains Link:

Discuss the relevance of the Right to Health today.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/ supreme-court-seeks-centres-response-on-plea-saying-right-to-health-has-taken-back-seat/article35556083.ece/amp/>.

Topics: Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

1. Bengal passes resolution to set up Council:

Context:

The West Bengal Assembly has passed a resolution to set up a **Legislative Council** with a two-thirds majority.

What are the Legislative Councils, and why are they important?

India has a **bicameral system** i.e., two Houses of Parliament. At the state level, the equivalent of the Lok Sabha is the Vidhan Sabha or Legislative Assembly; that of the Rajya Sabha is the Vidhan Parishad or Legislative Council.

How is a legislative council created?

Under **Article 169 of the constitution**, **Parliament may by law create or abolish the second chamber in a state** if the Legislative Assembly of that state passes a resolution to that effect by a special majority.

Strength of the house:

As per **article 171 clause (1) of the Indian Constitution**, the total number of members in the legislative council of a state **shall not exceed one third of the total number of the members in the legislative Assembly** of that state and **the total number of members in the legislative council of a state shall in no case be less than 40**.

How are members of the Council elected?

1. 1/3rd of members are elected by members of the Assembly.
2. 1/3rd by electorates consisting of members of municipalities, district boards and other local authorities in the state.
3. 1/12th by an electorate consisting of teachers.
4. 1/12th by registered graduates.
5. The remaining members are nominated by the Governor from among those who have distinguished themselves in literature, science, art, the cooperative movement, and social service.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Legislative Council- creation and abolition.
2. Role of state governments.
3. Composition.
4. Powers.
5. Comparison with Legislative Assembly.
6. States having legislative councils.

Mains Link:

Discuss the need for having a state legislative council.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GAB8O93ER.1&imageview=0>

2. Ministry of Cooperation:

Context:

A new '**Ministry of Cooperation**' has been created for strengthening the cooperative movement in the country.

Roles/Functions of the new ministry:

1. Provide a separate administrative, legal and policy framework for strengthening the cooperative movement in the country.
2. Help deepen cooperatives as a "true people-based movement reaching up to the grassroots".
3. Streamline processes for ease of doing business' for cooperatives and enable development of multi-state cooperatives (MSCS).

What are cooperative societies?

- A cooperative is an **autonomous association** of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically controlled.

- The need for profitability is balanced by the needs of the members and the wider interest of the community.

Provisions of Indian Constitution related to Cooperatives:

- The **Constitution (97th Amendment) Act, 2011** added a new **Part IXB** right after Part IXA (Municipals) regarding the cooperatives working in India.
- The word “cooperatives” was added after “unions and associations” in **Art. 19(1)(c) under Part III of the Constitution**. This enables all the citizens to form cooperatives by giving it the status of fundamental right of citizens.
- A new **Article 43B** was added in the Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV) regarding the “promotion of cooperative societies”.

Support from the government:

- The Government of India enacted the **Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act in 2002** and **National Policy for Cooperatives** was also formulated in 2002 to provide support for promotion and development of cooperatives as autonomous, independent and democratic organizations so that they can play their due role in the socio-economic development of the country.

Insta Curious:

[Did you know that the United Nations General Assembly has declared 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives?](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- About Cooperative societies.
- Types.
- Roles and functions.

4. Constitutional provisions.

Mains Link:

Write a note on the history of cooperative movement in India.

3. Monsoon session of Parliament:

Context:

The monsoon [session of Parliament](#) has begun.

- The last session of Parliament was curtailed and ended **sine die** on March 25 and **under the Constitutional norms, the next session has to be held within six months**. This period ends on September 14.

What the Constitution says?

- [Article 85](#) requires that there should not be a gap of more than six months between two sessions of Parliament.
- Please note, **the Constitution does not specify when or for how many days Parliament should meet**.
- The maximum gap between two sessions of Parliament cannot be more than six months. That means **the Parliament should meet at least twice a year**.
- A ‘session’ of Parliament is the period between the first sitting of a House and its prorogation.

Who shall convene a session?

- In practice, the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs, comprising senior ministers, decides on the dates for parliament’s sitting and it is then conveyed to the president.
- So, the executive, headed by the prime minister, which steers the business to be taken up by parliament will have the power to advise the president to summon the legislature.

Why is a Parliamentary Session important?

- Law-making is dependent on when Parliament meets.
- Also, a thorough scrutiny of the government’s functioning and deliberation on national issues can only take place when the two Houses are in session.
- Predictability in the functioning of Parliament is key to a well-functioning democracy.

Insta Curious:

Do you know the difference in powers of Speaker and Chairman with regards to suspension of Members of the House? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Who can Summon the Parliament?
2. Article 85.
3. Sessions of the Parliament.
4. For how many days in a year the Parliament has to meet?

5. Who chairs the joint sitting of the Parliament?

Mains Link: Why is a Parliamentary Session important? Discuss.

4. Privileges and immunity no shield for criminal acts in House, says Supreme Court:

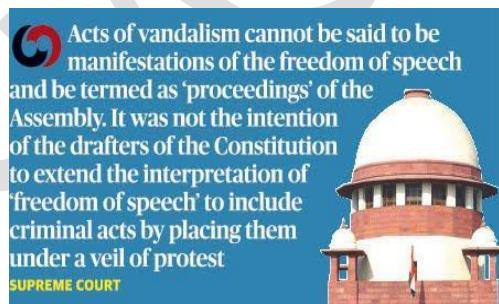
Context:

The Supreme Court has held that lawmakers cannot indulge in criminal acts on the Parliament or Assembly floors and then take cover behind [the right to free speech](#).

What's the case?

Kerala government has appealed to withdraw prosecution of top Left Democratic Front (LDF) leaders accused of vandalism and wanton destruction of public property on the Assembly floor during a Budget speech in 2015.

- These leaders had claimed parliamentary privilege, arguing that the incident occurred inside the Assembly hall. They claimed immunity from criminal prosecution.



Observations made by the Court:

1. Acts of vandalism cannot be said to be manifestations of [freedom of speech](#) and be termed as 'proceedings' of the Assembly.
2. It was not the intention of the drafters of the Constitution to extend the interpretation of '**freedom of speech' to include criminal acts by placing them under a veil of protest**'.
3. Legislators cannot unleash violence, run riot in Parliament or a Legislative Assembly and then claim [parliamentary privilege and immunity](#) from criminal prosecution.
4. Boundaries of lawful behaviour apply to all, including MLAs who hold responsible elected office in the Legislative Assembly.

True essence of Privileges as per the court:

1. The purpose of bestowing privileges and immunities to elected members of the legislature was **to enable them to perform their "essential functions" without hindrance, fear or favour**.
2. The 'essential' function of the House is **collective deliberation and decision-making**.
3. These privileges are **not a mark of status which makes legislators stand on an unequal pedestal**.

What are Parliamentary Privileges?

Parliamentary Privileges are certain rights and immunities enjoyed by members of Parliament, **individually and collectively**, so that they can "effectively discharge their functions".

1. **Article 105 of the Constitution expressly mentions two privileges**, that is, freedom of speech in Parliament and right of publication of its proceedings.
2. **Apart from the privileges as specified in the Constitution**, the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, provides for freedom from arrest and detention of members under civil process during the continuance of the meeting of the House or of a committee thereof and forty days before its commencement and forty days after its conclusion.

Motion against breaches:

When any of these rights and immunities are disregarded, the offence is called a breach of privilege and is punishable under law of Parliament.

- A notice is moved in the form of a motion by any member of either House against those being held guilty of breach of privilege.

Role of the Speaker/Rajya Sabha (RS) Chairperson:

The Speaker/RS chairperson is the first level of scrutiny of a privilege motion.

The Speaker/Chair can decide on the privilege motion himself or herself or refer it to the privileges committee of Parliament.

- If the Speaker/Chair gives consent under relevant rules, the member concerned is given an opportunity to make a short statement.

Applicability:

1. The Constitution also extends the parliamentary privileges to those persons who are entitled to speak and take part in the proceedings of a House of Parliament or any of its committees. These include the Attorney General of India.
2. The parliamentary privileges do not extend to the President who is also an integral part of the Parliament. Article 361 of the Constitution provides for privileges for the President.

Insta Curious:

Read the curious case of Origin of Parliamentary Privileges. [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Which provisions of the Constitution protect the privileges of the legislature?
2. What is the procedure to be followed in cases of alleged breach of the legislature's privilege?
3. Composition and functions of Privileges Committees in Parliament and State Legislatures.
4. What is the punishment for an individual who is found guilty of breaching the legislature's privilege?
5. Can the Courts intervene in matters involving breach of privileges of state legislatures?

Mains Link:

What do you understand about legislative privileges? Discuss the problem of legislative privileges as seen in India from time to time.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GSU8QLKO.1&imageview=0>.

Topics: Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

1. Appointment and removal of Chief Minister:

Context:

With the six-month window for him to get elected to the Assembly closing and increasing uncertainties, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat has resigned.

What are the issues?

The [Election Commission \(EC\)](#) was yet to take a call on holding bypolls for vacant Assembly seats, which would have given Mr. Rawat a way to carry on as Chief Minister.

- As per the Constitution, he had six months, till September 10, to become a member of the Uttarakhand Assembly in order to continue in the post.

[Representation of the People Act, 1951](#), mandates that a byelection for any vacancy should be held within six months of that vacancy arising, provided the remainder of the term is not less than one year or the EC and the Centre do not certify that holding the bypoll in that time frame is difficult.

- The term of current assembly elected in 2017 will expire on 23 March 2022- General elections in the State are less than a year away.

Appointment of CM:

The Chief Minister is **appointed by the governor**.

- **Art. 164 of the Constitution** provides that there shall be a Council of Ministers with the Chief Minister at its head to aid and advise the governor.

Who can be a Chief Minister?

After general election to the State Legislative Assembly, the party or coalition group which secures majority in this House, elects its leader and communicates his name to the Governor. The Governor then formally appoints him as the Chief Minister and asks him to form his Council of Ministers.

- When no party gets a clear majority in the State Legislative Assembly, the Governor normally asks the leader of the single largest party to form the government.

Tenure:

Theoretically, the Chief Minister holds office during the pleasure of the Governor. However, in actual practice the Chief Minister remains in office so long as he continues to be the leader of the majority in the State Legislative Assembly.

- The Governor can dismiss him in case he loses his majority support.
- The State Legislative Assembly can also remove him by passing a vote of no-confidence against him.

Powers and Functions of the Chief Minister:

- To Aid and Advice the Governor.
- The Chief Minister is at the Head of the Council of Ministers.
- He is the Leader of the House.
- He has to communicate to the Governor all the decisions of the council of ministers relating to the administration of the states.
- All the policies are announced by him on the floor of the house.
- He recommends dissolution of legislative assembly to the Governor.
- He advises the Governor regarding summoning, proroguing the sessions of State Legislative Assembly from time to time.

Insta Curious:

Did you know that Section 11 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, allows the Election Commission to reduce or remove disqualification “for reasons to be recorded”? Know more about this [here](#).

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Who can be a Chief Minister?
2. Role of Governor in appointing a Chief Minister.
3. Council of Ministers.

4. Powers.

5. Functions.

6. Tenure.

Mains Link: Discuss the roles and functions of a Chief Minister.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/explained-why-tirath-singh-rawat-had-to-resign-as-uttarakhand-chief-minister/article35114578.ece/amp/>.

2. Electing a Speaker, Deputy Speaker:

Context:

Maharashtra has been without a Speaker since February. The sessions are now presided by Deputy Speaker.

- Even Lok Sabha and several state Assemblies are without a Deputy Speaker.

How they are elected?

Article 93 for Lok Sabha and **Article 178** for state Assemblies state that these Houses “shall, as soon as may be”, choose two of its members to be Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

- In Lok Sabha and state legislatures, the President/Governor sets a date for the election of the Speaker, and it is the Speaker who decides the date for the election of the Deputy Speaker.
- The legislators of the respective Houses vote to elect one among themselves to these offices.

Their roles and functions:

1. The Speaker is “the principal spokesman of the House, he represents its collective voice and is its sole representative to the outside world”.
2. The Speaker presides over the House proceedings and joint sittings of the two Houses of Parliament.
3. It is the Speaker’s decision that determines whether a Bill is a Money Bill and therefore outside of the purview of the other House.
4. Usually, the Speaker comes from the ruling party. In the case of the Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha, the position has varied over the years.
5. The constitution has tried to ensure the independence of Speaker by charging his salary on the consolidated Fund of India and the same is not subject to vote of Parliament.
6. While debating or during general discussion on a bill, the members of the parliament have to address only to the Speaker.

States which have specified time-frame for holding the election:

The Constitution neither sets a time limit nor specifies the process for these elections. **It leaves it to the legislatures to decide how to hold these elections.**

For example, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh specify a time-frame.

In Haryana:

1. The election of the Speaker has to take place as soon as possible after the election. And then the Deputy Speaker is to be elected within seven more days.
2. The rules also specify that if a vacancy in these offices happens subsequently, then the election for these should occur within seven days of the legislature’s next session.

In Uttar Pradesh:

1. There is a 15-day limit for an election to the Speaker’s post if it falls vacant during the term of the Assembly.
2. In the case of the Deputy Speaker, the date for the first election is to be decided by the Speaker, and 30 days is given for filling subsequent vacancies.

Insta Curious:

Do you know the first recorded use of the term ‘speaker’ was in 1377 though a title with similar meaning ‘parlour’ or ‘prolocutor’ was used from 1258?

[Know more about Speaker's roles and functions here,](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Election of Speaker.
2. Functions.
3. Powers.
4. Removal.

5. Grounds for removal.

6. Committees he is associated with.

Mains Link: Discuss the roles and functions of the Speaker.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-electing-a-speaker-deputy-speaker-7399970/lite/>.

3. Director of Inquiry for Lokpal:

Context:

More than two years after the Lokpal came into being, the Centre is yet to appoint a **director of inquiry**.

Who is a director of inquiry?

According to [the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013:](#)

- There shall be a director of inquiry, not below the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India.

- He/she shall be appointed by the Central government for conducting preliminary inquiries referred to the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) by the Lokpal.

What's the issue?

- Though Director of Inquiry has not been appointed by Govt. of India, cases are being received in the commission for conducting preliminary inquiries.
- Forty-one cases have been received for preliminary inquiry as of March 2021.

Highlights of the Lokpal Act of 2013:

1. The Act allows setting up of anti-corruption ombudsman called Lokpal at the Centre and Lokayukta at the State-level.
2. The Lokpal will consist of a chairperson and a maximum of eight members.
3. The Lokpal will cover all categories of public servants, including the Prime Minister. But the armed forces do not come under the ambit of Lokpal.
4. The Act also incorporates provisions for attachment and confiscation of property acquired by corrupt means, even while the prosecution is pending.
5. The States will have to institute Lokayukta within one year of the commencement of the Act.
6. The Act also ensures that public servants who act as whistleblowers are protected.

Powers:

1. The Lokpal will have the power of superintendence and direction over any investigation agency including CBI for cases referred to them by the ombudsman.
2. As per the Act, the Lokpal can summon or question any public servant if there exists a prima facie case against the person, even before an investigation agency (such as vigilance or CBI) has begun the probe. Any officer of the CBI investigating a case referred to it by the Lokpal, shall not be transferred without the approval of the Lokpal.
3. An investigation must be completed within six months. However, the Lokpal or Lokayukta may allow extensions of six months at a time provided the reasons for the need of such extensions are given in writing.
4. Special courts will be instituted to conduct trials on cases referred by Lokpal.

Insta Curious:

[Read Briefly about the origin of the concept of Ombudsman](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Lokpal.
2. Powers.
3. Functions.
4. Selection.
5. Overview of the Lokpal Act of 2013.

Mains Link:

Comment on the changes made to Lokpal Act and its delay in operationalisation.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/lokpal-yet-to-get-director-of-inquiry/article35398195.ece/amp/>.

Topics: Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

1. Solicitor General:

Context:

A delegation of Trinamool Congress (TMC) MPs recently met President Ram Nath Kovind and sought the removal of Tushar Mehta as **the Solicitor General of India**, on the grounds of “**criminal misconduct**” and “**gross impropriety**” following his meeting with BJP MLA Suvendu Adhikari.

What's the issue?

Suvendu Adhikari is an accused in the **2016 Narada tapes case**, and Mr. Mehta is representing the CBI in the Supreme Court and the Calcutta High Court in the agency's probe against senior TMC leaders in the matter.

- Experts say such a meeting, between one of the highest serving law officers of India, the Solicitor General, who is also appointed as the Special Public Prosecutor for the CBI and an accused person being investigated by the same agency, raises extremely serious doubts of impropriety.
- Also, Such meetings make a mockery of the criminal justice system and would only serve to destroy the common man's faith in the judiciary.

Solicitor General- Key facts:

1. Solicitor General is the second highest law officer in the country.
2. He is subordinate to the Attorney General of India, the highest law officer and works under him.
3. He also advises the government in legal matters.
4. Solicitor general is appointed for period of three years by Appointment Committee of Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister.

Duties:

1. To give advice to the Government of India upon such legal matters, and to perform such other duties of a legal character, as may from time to time, be referred or assigned to him by the Government of India.
2. To appear, whenever required, in the Supreme Court or in any High Court on behalf of the Government of India in cases (including suits, writ petitions, appeal and other proceedings) in which the Government of India is concerned as a party or is otherwise interested.
3. To represent the Government of India in any reference made by the President to the Supreme Court under Article 143 of the Constitution.

Insta Curious:

Do you know which law governs Solicitor General and Additional Solicitor Generals' office? Read [this](#).

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Solicitor General.
2. Duties and functions.
3. Appointment and removal.

4. Attorney general vs solicitor general.

Mains Link: Discuss the roles and functions of attorney general of India.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/trinamool-congress-demands-removal-of-tushar-mehta-as-solicitor-general-mps-to-meet-president-ram-nath-kovind/article35143191.ece/amp/>.

2. Central Information Commission (CIC):

Context:

The Supreme Court has directed the Central government to place on record the latest information on the appointment of **Information Commissioners**, vacancies and pendency of cases in [the Central Information Commission \(CIC\)](#).

What's the issue?

A plea has sought directions to the government authorities for implementing the top court's directions in the 2019 judgment.

By its 2019 order:

1. The apex court had passed a slew of directions to the Central and State governments to fill vacancies across Central and State Information Commissions in a transparent and timely manner.
2. The court had given three months to the Centre to fill the vacancies that existed in the CIC.

Central Information Commission:

Established by the Central Government in 2005, under the provisions of **the Right to Information Act (2005)**.

Members: The Commission consists of a Chief Information Commissioner and not more than ten Information Commissioners.

Appointment: They are appointed by the President on the recommendation of a committee consisting of the Prime Minister as Chairperson, the leader of the single largest Opposition party in the Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister.

Tenure: The Chief Information Commissioner and an Information Commissioner shall hold office for such term as prescribed by the Central Government or until they attain the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.

- They are not eligible for reappointment.

Power and Functions of CIC:

1. It is the duty of the Commission to receive and inquire into a complaint from any person regarding information requested under RTI, 2005.
2. The Commission can order an inquiry into any matter if there are reasonable grounds (suo-moto power).
3. While inquiring, the Commission has the powers of a civil court in respect of summoning, requiring documents etc.

Insta Curious: [Do you know the Right to Information Act in India and UK Freedom of Information Act came into force the same year - 2005?](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the RTI Act.
2. Powers and functions of CIC and IC.

3. Appointment and removal.

Mains Link: Highlight the need for reforms of the Central Information Commission.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GQB8OCCJ1.1&imageview=0>.

3. Jurisdiction of Krishna & Godavari River Management Boards:

Context:

Government Issues two Gazette Notifications for [**Jurisdiction of Krishna & Godavari River Management Boards.**](#)

- The notifications provide the required authority and power to the two Boards in terms of administration, regulation, operation and maintenance of listed projects in **Godavari and Krishna rivers** in the two States.

Background:

The Constitution of **the Godavari and Krishna River Management Boards** and the constitution of **an Apex Council** for the supervision of the functioning of these Boards, is laid down in [**the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act 2014 \(APRA\).**](#)

- The two River Management Boards were constituted by the central government under the provisions of this act.

Inter-State River Water Disputes:

[**Article 262 of the Constitution**](#) provides for the adjudication of inter-state water disputes.

- Under this, **Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint** with respect to the use, distribution and control of waters of any inter-state river and river valley.
- Parliament may also provide that **neither the Supreme Court nor any other court is to exercise jurisdiction in respect of any such dispute or complaint.**

The Parliament has enacted the two laws:

1. The River Boards Act (1956):

It provides for the establishment of river boards by the Central government for the regulation and development of inter-state river and river valleys.

- A River Board is established on the request of state governments concerned to advise them.

2. The Inter-State Water Disputes Act (1956):

It empowers the Central government to set up an ad hoc tribunal for the adjudication of a dispute between two or more states in relation to the waters of an inter-state river or river valley.

- The decision of the tribunal is final and binding on the parties to the dispute.
- Neither the Supreme Court nor any other court is to have jurisdiction in respect of any water dispute which may be referred to such a tribunal under this Act.

Insta Curious:

About International Transboundary Waters: [Do you know about the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes?](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Tributaries of Krishna.
2. Tributaries of Godavari.
3. East vs West flowing rivers of India.
4. Interstate river water disputes- key provisions.

5. Krishna and Godavari River Management Boards- formation, functions and orders.

Mains Link: Write a note on Inter-State Water Disputes Act (1956).

4. The Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952:

Context:

The West Bengal government has set up a [Commission of Inquiry \(Lokur Commission\)](#), under the 1952 Act, to look into the alleged surveillance of phones using the Pegasus spyware developed by the Israeli cyber-intelligence company NSO Group.

- The Commission will look into the alleged breach of privacy of several individuals.

Who can set up such commissions?

While **both central and state governments can set up such Commissions of Inquiry**, states are restricted by subject matters that they are empowered to legislate upon.

- If the central government set up the commission first, then states cannot set up a parallel commission on the same subject matter without the approval of the Centre.
- But if a state has appointed a Commission, then the Centre can appoint another on the same subject if it is of the opinion that the scope of the inquiry should be extended to two or more states.

What are its powers?

Under The Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952, a Commission set up by the government shall have **the powers of a civil court**, while trying a suit under **the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908**.

- This means that the Commission has powers to summon and enforce the attendance of any person from any part of India and examine her on oath, and receive evidence.
- It can order requisition of any public record or copy from any court or office.

What kind of subjects can a Commission probe?

Commissions set up by the central government can make an inquiry into any matter relatable to any of the entries in [List I \(Union List\) or List II \(State List\) or List III \(Concurrent List\)](#) in the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution, while Commissions set up by state governments can look into entries in List II or List III.

Pegasus inquiry commission matter is related to:

- The West Bengal government has cited **public order and police entries**. While these subjects are in the State List, an argument could also be made that **the subject matter of the inquiry essentially falls under the Central List**.
- Also, **Entry 31 of the Union List** deals with posts and telegraphs, telephones, wireless, broadcasting and other like forms of communication.

What value does such a Commission's report have?

- The findings of such commissions are normally tabled in the Assembly or Parliament, depending on who constituted it.
- However, the government is not bound to make the report public. The findings are not binding on the executive either, but can be relied upon by courts as evidence.

Insta Curious: Do you know What Social Engineering is in the context of Information Security? Know some terms of Types of social engineering attacks. [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About 7th schedule.
2. About Lokur Commission.

3. Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952.

4. Powers of Centre and the states under the act.

Mains Link: Discuss the issues associated with the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952.

Topics: *Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

1. BharatNet project:

Context:

Union Cabinet has accorded approval for the revised implementation strategy of **BharatNet** through **Public-Private Partnership (PPP)** mode in 16 States of the country.

The strategy includes:

1. The government will provide Rs 19,041 crore as **viability gap funding** for the project.
2. BharatNet will now **extend up to all inhabited villages beyond the gram panchayats (GPs)** in the said states.
3. It includes creation, upgradation, operation, maintenance and utilisation of BharatNet by the concessionaire who will be selected by a competitive international bidding process.

Significance:

1. The PPP model will leverage private sector efficiency for operation, maintenance, utilisation and revenue generation, and is expected to result in a faster rollout of BharatNet.
2. Extension of reach of BharatNet to all inhabited villages with reliable, quality, high speed broadband will enable better access of e-services offered by various central and state government agencies.
3. It will also enable online education, telemedicine, skill development, e-commerce and other applications of broadband.

About BharatNet:

1. BharatNet Project was originally launched in 2011 as **the National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN)** and renamed as Bharat-Net in 2015.
2. It seeks **to provide connectivity to 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs)** through optical fibre.
3. It is a flagship mission **implemented by Bharat Broadband Network Ltd. (BBNL)**.
4. The objective is **to facilitate the delivery of e-governance, e-health, e-education, e-banking, Internet and other services to rural India.**

The larger vision of the project is:

- To establish a highly scalable network infrastructure accessible on a non-discriminatory basis.
- To provide on demand, affordable broadband connectivity of 2 Mbps to 20 Mbps for all households and on demand capacity to all institutions.
- To realise the vision of Digital India, in partnership with States and the private sector.

Implementation:

The project is a **Centre-State collaborative project**, with the States contributing free Rights of Way for establishing the Optical Fibre Network.

The entire project is being funded by **Universal service Obligation Fund (USOF)**, which was set up for improving telecom services in rural and remote areas of the country.

Insta Curious: Do you know what Dark Fibre is? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About BharatNet.
2. Objectives and implementation.

3. About USOF.

4. About BBNL.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of BharatNet Project.

2. Draft anti-trafficking Bill:

Context:

The Ministry of Women and Child Welfare has invited suggestions and comments for its **Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2021**.

Highlights of the Bill:

1. **The bill proposes stringent punishments** for offenders, including hefty fines and seizing of their properties.
2. The Bill also extends beyond the protection of women and children as victims to now **include transgenders as well as any person who may be a victim of trafficking**.
3. The draft also does away with the provision that a victim necessarily needs to be transported from one place to another to be defined as a victim.
4. **Exploitation has been defined to include**, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation including pornography, any act of physical exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or forced removal of organs etc.

Applicability- The law will extend to:

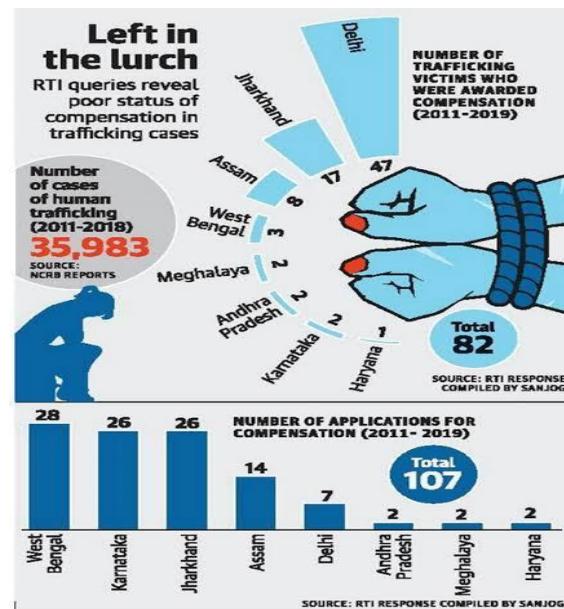
1. All citizens inside as well as outside India.
2. Persons on any ship or aircraft registered in India wherever it may be or carrying Indian citizens wherever they may be.
3. A foreign national or a stateless person who has his or her residence in India at the time of commission of offence under this Act.
4. Every offence of trafficking in persons with cross-border implications.
5. Defence personnel and government servants, doctors and paramedical staff or anyone in a position of authority.

What are the constitutional & legislative provisions related to Trafficking in India?

1. Trafficking in Human Beings or Persons is prohibited under the Constitution of India under **Article 23 (1)**.
2. The **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA)** is the premier legislation for prevention of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.
3. **Criminal Law (amendment) Act 2013** has come into force wherein **Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code has been substituted with Section 370 and 370A IPC** which provide for comprehensive measures to counter the menace of human trafficking.

Trafficking in Persons report 2021:

1. According to the **Trafficking in Persons report 2021, released by the US State Department**, the Covid-19



- pandemic has resulted in an increase in vulnerability to human trafficking and interrupted existing anti-traffic efforts.
- While India did not meet the minimum standards to eliminate trafficking, the government was making significant efforts, although these were inadequate, especially when it came to bonded labour.

Insta Curious: Do you know about the Blue Heart Campaign by the UN? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Section 370 and 370A of the IPC are related to?
- Article 23(1) of the constitution.

- Blue Heart campaign of the UN is related to?
- Who are first responders?
- About World Day Against Trafficking in Persons.

Mains Link:

What are the constitutional & legislative provisions related to Trafficking in India? Discuss.

3. The draft Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill 2021:

Context:

The Standing Committee on Information and Technology has conveyed its discontent to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on the “super censorship” clause introduced in [the draft Cinematograph \(Amendment\) Bill 2021](#).

Cause of concern:

In the draft, there is a provision which allows the government to order recertification for a film already certified by [the Central Board of Film Certification \(CBFC\)](#).

- The government says the clause would only be invoked if the content of a film impinged on security and integrity of the nation.

Issues now are:

- When there were existing penal provisions to deal with such a situation, did the Ministry felt it necessary to incorporate this in the Bill.
- Why should this power to adjudicate be vested with a bureaucrat?
- Besides, a Supreme Court order passed in 2000 says that the government could not exercise revisional powers on films already certified by the CBFC.

Key Provisions in the draft bill:

- Age-based certification:** It seeks to introduce age-based categorisation and classification. It proposes to divide the existing categories (U, U/A and A) into further age-based groups: U/A 7+, U/A 13+ and U/A 16+.
- Provision against piracy:** At present, there are no enabling provisions to check film piracy. Violation shall be punishable with imprisonment and fine.
- Eternal certificate:** It proposes to certify films for perpetuity. Currently a certificate issued by the CBFC is valid only for 10 years.

Other Concerns associated:

- Various groups or individuals often object to a film just before the release, but after the certification process. with the implementation of the proposed new rules, films could be held up longer for re-certification based on random objections, even if it is already certified by the cbfc.

What does the government say on this?

The government cites the “reasonable restrictions” placed by **the constitution in Article 19 of the constitution** to justify exercising its powers to act as a super-censor for films about which it receives complaints – even if the CBFC, which is the official body empowered to implement the Act, finds those film do not trigger those restrictions.

Insta Curious:

Do you know that Censorship was born in India in 1918 with the enactment of the Censorship Act. The 1918 Act gave the district magistrate the power to issue licences to exhibitors, and the government to appoint inspectors to examine and certify films as "suitable for public exhibition". [Read more about this,](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal (FCAT).
2. About CBFC.

3. The Cinematograph Act of 1952.

4. New amendments.

Mains Link: Discuss the Concerns associated with the recent amendments.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GAB8O93FD.1&imageview=0>.

4. Fresh plea filed in HC on same-sex marriage:

Context:

The Delhi High Court has issued notice to the Union government on a fresh petition seeking legal recognition to all same-sex, queer or non-heterosexual marriages under [the Foreign Marriage Act](#) and [the Special Marriage Act](#).

What's the issue?

- A plea has been filed by a married same-sex couple, where one of them is an **Overseas Citizen of India (OCI)** card holder and his partner a U.S. citizen. The spouse is applying for OCI status but fears that his application for OCI status as well as the request for apostilization of the marriage certification – a requirement in the application process – will not be accepted.

What are the demands now?

1. **The Citizenship Act, 1955**, does not distinguish between heterosexual, same-sex or queer spouses. Therefore a person married to an Overseas Citizen of India, whose marriage is registered and subsisting for two years, should be declared eligible to apply as a spouse for an OCI card.
2. The petition has also prayed for a direction in the nature of prohibition to the Consulate General of India, New York, restraining it from declaring a spouse of an OCI applying for an OCI card to be ineligible for the same merely, on the ground that they are in a same-sex marriage or queer (non-heterosexual) marriage.
3. On the subject of **the Foreign Marriage Act**, the plea asks for a direction in the that to the extent the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969 excludes same-sex marriages or queer marriages, it be declared to be in violation of **Articles 14, and 21** of the Constitution of India.
4. A similar prayer is made in respect of **the Special Marriage Act, 1954**, stating that "to the extent that the Act excludes same-sex marriages or queer marriages, it violates Articles 14, 15, 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India".

Current scenario in India:

1. The acceptance of the institution of marriage between two individuals of the same gender is **neither recognized nor accepted in any uncodified personal laws or any codified statutory laws**".
2. The centre had also said that contrary to the popular view that homosexuality was legalized by the Supreme Court in the case of **Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India**, the court had "**only made a limited declaration to decriminalize a particular human behavior, which was a penal offence under S.377 IPC.**"
3. Observations in '**Puttaswamy Judgment (Privacy Case)**' and '**'Navtej Johar' case (Section 377 was declared unconstitutional)**' do not confer a fundamental right to seek recognition of same-sex marriages.

What is the Special Marriage Act of 1954?

The SMA is a law which **allows solemnization of marriages without going through any religious customs or rituals**.

- People from different castes or religions or states get married under SMA in which marriage is solemnized by way of registration.
- The prime purpose of the Act was to address Inter-religious marriages and to establish marriage as a secular institution bereft of all religious formalities, which required registration alone.

The SMA prescribes an elaborate procedure to get the marriage registered. It includes:

1. One of the parties to the marriage has to give a notice of the intended marriage to the marriage officer of the district where at least one of the parties to the marriage has resided for at least 30 days immediately prior to the date on which such notice is given.
2. Such notice is then entered in the marriage notice book and the marriage officer publishes a notice of marriage at some conspicuous place in his office.
3. The notice of marriage published by the marriage officer includes details of the parties like names, date of birth, age, occupation, parents' names and details, address, pin code, identity information, phone number etc.
4. Anybody can then raise objections to the marriage on various grounds provided under the Act. If no objection is raised within the 30 day period, then marriage can be solemnized. If objections are raised, then the marriage officer has to inquire into the objections after which he will decide whether or not to solemnize the marriage.

What are the Criticisms?

1. Vulnerable to coercive tactics by family.
2. Intrusion of privacy.
3. Pushes for religious conversion.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Objectives of the Special Marriage Act.
2. Key provisions- Sections 5 and 6.
3. Key requirements under the Act for the registration of marriage.
4. Details published by the marriage officer.
5. Overview of Articles 14 and 21 of the constitution.

Mains Link: What are the controversial provisions in the Special Marriage Act of 1954? Why does the law need a review? Discuss.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GJ28O92GG.1&imageview=0>.

5. Journalist moves SC against sedition law:

Context:



Senior journalist Sashi Kumar has moved the Supreme Court saying the sedition law is being applied by the government against journalists, activists, filmmakers and civil society in a “**politicised fashion**”.

What's the concern?

The sedition law has been indiscriminately used against critics, journalists, social media users, activists and citizens for airing their grievances about the governments COVID-19 management, or even for seeking help to gain medical access, equipment, drugs and oxygen cylinders, especially during the second wave of the pandemic.

What is sedition?

Section 124A of the IPC states, "Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the government established by law in shall be punished with imprisonment for life, to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added, or with fine."

Need for a proper definition?

The sedition law has been in controversy for far too long. Often the governments are criticized for using the law — **Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)** — against vocal critics of their policies.

- Therefore, this Section is seen as a restriction of individuals' freedom of expression and falls short of the provisions of reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech under **Article 19 of the Constitution**. The law has been in debate ever since it was brought into force by the colonial British rulers in 1860s. Several top freedom movement leaders including **Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru** were booked under the sedition law.
 1. Mahatma Gandhi described it as the “prince among the political sections of the Indian Penal Code designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen.”
 2. Nehru had described it as “highly objectionable and obnoxious” which “should have no place in any body of laws that we might pass”. Nehru said, “The sooner we get rid of it the better.”

Relevant Supreme Court judgements:

1. The Kedar Nath Singh vs State of Bihar case (1962):

While dealing with offences under Section 124A of the IPC, a five-judge Supreme Court constitutional bench had, in the **Kedar Nath Singh vs State of Bihar case (1962)**, laid down some guiding principles.

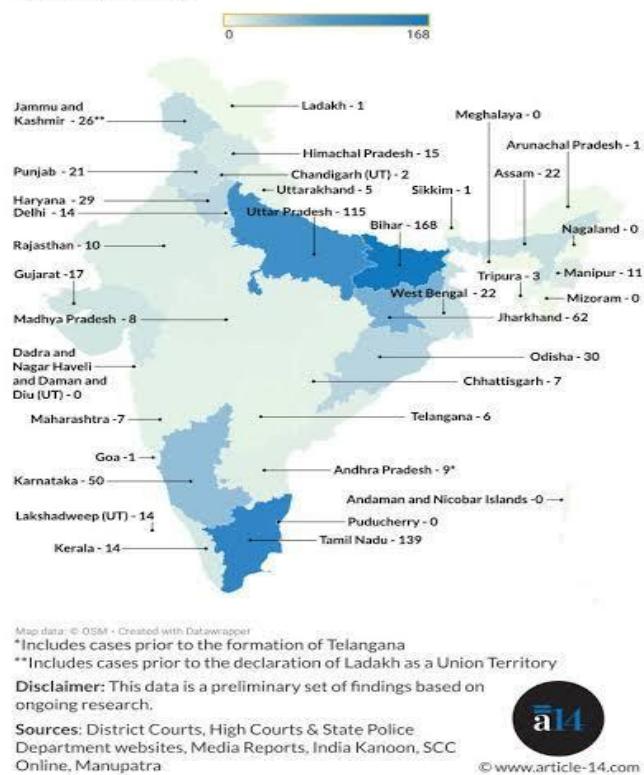
- The court ruled that comments-however strongly worded-expressing disapprobation of the actions of the government without causing public disorder by acts of violence would not be penal.

2. The Balwant Singh vs State of Punjab (1995) case:

In this case, the Supreme Court had clarified that merely shouting slogans, in this case Khalistan Zindabad, does not amount to sedition. Evidently, the sedition law is being both misunderstood and misused to muzzle dissent.

Insta Curious: Think! For a seditious conspiracy charge to be effected, Should a crime be actually attempted?

Sedition Nation (2010-2020)
Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code punishes sedition with imprisonment that can extend to life.



InstaLinks:**Prelims Link:**

1. Where is sedition defined?
2. Section 124A of the IPC is related to?
3. Section 153 of the IPC is related to?

4. Relevant Supreme Court judgments.

5. Article 19 of the Indian Constitution.

Mains Link: Discuss the issues associated with the imposition of Sedition law in India.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G5G80JR0S.1&imageview=0>.

6. Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary:

Context:

The Union Government has approved continuation of [**the Centrally Sponsored Scheme \(CSS\) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary**](#) for further five years to 2026.

- The entire cost of the scheme will be Rs 9000 crore out of which the Centre will contribute Rs 5357 crore including Rs 50 crore for the implementation of **the Gram Nyayalayas Scheme** as a part of [**the National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms**](#).

About the CSS for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary:

- It has been in operation since 1993-94.
- The Central Government through this scheme augments the resources of the State Governments for construction of court buildings and residential quarters for Judicial Officers (JO) in all the States / UTs.

Significance/benefits of the scheme:

- This will help in improving the overall functioning and performance of the Judiciary.
- Continued assistance to the Gram Nyayalayas will also give impetus to providing speedy, substantial and affordable justice to the common man at his door step.

What are Gram Nyayalayas?

Gram Nyayalayas or village courts are established under **the Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008** for speedy and easy access to the justice system in the rural areas of India.

- The Act came into force from 2nd October 2009.

Jurisdiction:

- A Gram Nyayalaya has jurisdiction over an area specified by a notification by the State Government in consultation with the respective High Court.
- The Court can function as a mobile court at any place within the jurisdiction of such Gram Nyayalaya, after giving wide publicity to that regard.
- They have both civil and criminal jurisdiction over the offences.
- Gram Nyayalayas has been given power to accept certain evidences which would otherwise not be acceptable under Indian Evidence Act.

Composition:

The Gram Nyayalayas are presided over by a **Nyayadhikari**, who will have the same power, enjoy same salary and benefits of a Judicial Magistrate of First Class. Such Nyayadhikari are to be appointed by the State Government in consultation with the respective High Court.

Insta Curious: Do you know the differences between Conciliation and Mediation? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:**Prelims Link:**

1. About Gram Nyayalayas.
2. Jurisdiction.
3. Composition.
4. Powers.

5. About the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of Gram Nyayalayas Act.

7. Drop cases filed under Section 66A: Centre:

Context:

The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has asked the States and Union Territories to immediately withdraw the cases registered under the repealed-[Section 66A of the Information Technology Act](#).

- This comes after the Supreme Court recently expressed shock that it was being invoked even six years after the apex court had struck it down.

What's the issue?

Even after 7 years of the law being struck down, as of March 2021, a total of 745 cases are still pending and active before the district courts in 11 states, wherein the accused persons are being prosecuted for offences under Section 66A of the IT Act.

Background:

Section 66A had been dubbed as “draconian” for it allowed the arrest of several innocent persons, igniting a public outcry for its scrapping. This had led to the **Supreme Court striking it down as unconstitutional in March, 2015** in [Shreya Singhal v. Union of India](#).

Why SC struck down section 66A?

The SC had noted that Section 66A arbitrarily, excessively and disproportionately invades the right of free speech, under **article 19(1) (a) of the Constitution**, and upsets the balance between such right and the reasonable restrictions that may be imposed on such right and the definition of offences under the provision was open-ended and undefined.

- The court also said that the provision used expressions “completely open-ended and undefined” and every expression used was “nebulous” in meaning.
- What may be offensive to one may not be offensive to another.
- What may cause annoyance or inconvenience to one may not cause annoyance or inconvenience to another.
- Even the expression ‘persistently’ is completely imprecise.

What is Section 66A all about?

Section 66A defines the punishment for sending “offensive” messages through a computer or any other communication device like a mobile phone or a tablet. A conviction can fetch a maximum of three years in jail and a fine.

Insta Curious: Do you know what is Section 153A and 505 of IPC? (Related sections -could be used in substantiations) [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the Section 66A of the IT Act.
2. Implementation.

3. Exceptions.

4. Why was it struck down by the Supreme Court?

Mains Link: Critically discuss why the Supreme Court of India held the Section 66A of the Information Technology (IT) Act unconstitutional? Examine the constitutional and commercial implications of this judgement.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/immediately-withdraw-cases-registered-under-repealed-section-66a-mha-to-states-uts/article35324426.ece/amp/>.

8. Draft anti-trafficking Bill:

Context:

The [Trafficking in Persons \(Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation\) Bill, 2021](#), is likely to be tabled in the upcoming monsoon session of Parliament.

Highlights of the Bill:

1. The bill proposes stringent punishments for offenders, including hefty fines and seizing of their properties.
2. The Bill also extends beyond the protection of women and children as victims to now include **transgenders as well as any person who may be a victim of trafficking**.
3. The draft also does away with the provision that a victim necessarily needs to be transported from one place to another to be defined as a victim.
4. **Exploitation has been defined to include**, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation including pornography, any act of physical exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or forced removal of organs etc.

Applicability- The law will extend to:

1. All citizens inside as well as outside India.
2. Persons on any ship or aircraft registered in India wherever it may be or carrying Indian citizens wherever they may be.
3. A foreign national or a stateless person who has his or her residence in India at the time of commission of offence under this Act.
4. Every offence of trafficking in persons with cross-border implications.
5. Defence personnel and government servants, doctors and paramedical staff or anyone in a position of authority.

What are the constitutional & legislative provisions related to Trafficking in India?

1. Trafficking in Human Beings or Persons is prohibited under the Constitution of India under **Article 23 (1)**.
2. The **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA)** is the premier legislation for prevention of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.
3. **Criminal Law (amendment) Act 2013** has come into force wherein **Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code has been substituted with Section 370 and 370A IPC** which provide for comprehensive measures to counter the menace of human trafficking.

Insta Curious: Do you know what UN.GIFT is? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Section 370 and 370A of the IPC are related to?
2. Article 23(1) of the constitution.

3. Blue Heart campaign of the UN is related to?
4. Who are first responders?
5. About World Day Against Trafficking in Persons.

Mains Link: What are the constitutional & legislative provisions related to Trafficking in India? Discuss.

9. Mekedatu dam project:

Context:

The Centre has given its assurance that Karnataka will not be allowed to carry out any construction on [the Mekedatu dam project](#) on the Cauvery river until its Detailed Project Report (DPR) is approved by [the Cauvery Water Management Authority \(CWMA\)](#).

Background:

Also, there are differences between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu over the proposed project.

Where is it located?

Mekedatu, meaning goat's leap, is a deep gorge situated at the confluence of the rivers Cauvery and its tributary Arkavathi.

Issues surrounding Mekedatu project:

The project aims to store and supply water for drinking purposes for the Bengaluru city. Around **400 megawatts (MW)** of power is also proposed to be generated through the project.

- However, **Tamil Nadu** objected saying that the project would affect the flow of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu also argues that **the project is against the final order of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT)** in which the SC held that no state can claim exclusive ownership or assert rights to deprive other states of the waters of inter-state rivers.

Cauvery River:

Origin: River rises on Brahmagiri Hill of the Western Ghats in south-western Karnataka state.

The river basin covers three states and a Union Territory:

Tamil Nadu, 43,868 square kilometres, Karnataka, 34,273 square kilometres I, Kerala, 2,866 square kilometres and Puducherry.

Key tributaries: Hemavati, Lakshmantirtha, Kabini, Amaravati, Noyil, and Bhavani rivers.

Falls along the way: Upon entering Tamil Nadu, the Kaveri continues through a series of twisted wild gorges until it reaches Hogenakal Falls.

Dams: There the Mettur Dam was constructed for irrigation and hydel power in Tamil Nadu.

Mekedatu project

Conceived in early 2000 as a hydroelectricity project

Proposed as a balancing reservoir in 2013

Cabinet clears the project in February 2017

Project involves construction of a balancing reservoir at Mekedatu, near Kanakapura, in Ramanagaram district

Located about 100 km from Bengaluru

Estimated cost (in 2017) ₹ 5,912 crore

The reservoir will have impounding capacity of 66 tmcft

Proposed to produce 400 MW of power and supply drinking water to Bengaluru and Ramanagaram districts



A file photo of the Cauvery at Mekedatu near Kanakapura.

Conditions laid down by the CWC

While the CWC has in principle allowed Karnataka to take up the DPR for the project, it has imposed some conditions. They include:

1. Karnataka to consider points raised by Tamil Nadu. View of other co-basin States to be taken into consideration so that inter-State issues can be resolved amicably
2. Acceptance of the project by Cauvery Water Management Authority is a prerequisite for consideration of the DPR by the Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Water Resources
3. The DPR has to be prepared in due consultation with the Central Electricity Authority and the Central Water Commission
4. The cost of preparing the DPR to be borne by Karnataka

Insta Curious:

Do you know the Projects on Dakshina Pinakini and the issues?

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Tributaries of Cauvery.
2. Basin states.
3. Important falls and dams across the river.

4. Where is Mekedatu?

5. What is the project related to?
6. Beneficiaries of the project.

Mains Link: Write a note on the Mekedatu project.

10. J&K to grant domicile certificates to non-local spouses:

Context:

In exercise of the powers conferred by [Article 309 of the Constitution of India](#) and the **J&K Civil Service (Decentralisation and recruitment) Act, 2010**, the J&K administration has rolled out the process to issue **domicile certificates to the spouses of erstwhile State subjects who have a domicile certificate**.

- This will allow husbands of women married outside to acquire the documents for the first time.

Background:

Prior to August 5, 2019, when the Centre ended J&K's special constitutional position, husbands of local women married outside J&K had no right to buy property or apply for jobs in J&K.

Amended domicile certificate rules:

- The J&K administration, in May 2020, notified [the J&K grant of domicile certificate procedure rules 2020](#).
- Under the amended rules, eligible non-locals can also apply for the certificate.
- Also, **domicile certificates were made a basic eligibility condition for appointment to any post under the Union Territory of J&K**.

- Any officer not able to issue the certificate would be penalised ₹50,000. The amount would be recovered from his salary.

Insta Curious: Do you know about RPC (Ranbir Penal Code)? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Articles 370 and 35A.

- Who are domiciles as per the new definition?
- Overflow J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019.
- Power to issue domicile certificates.
- Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization (Adaption of state laws) order, 2020.

Mains Link: Discuss the implications of amended Jammu and Kashmir Domicile rules.

Link: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/jk-to-grant-domicile-certificates-to-non-local-spouses/article35440074.ece/amp/>.

11. Centre extends 'Stand Up India Scheme' to 2025:

Context:

The Government of India has extended the duration of '[Stand Up India Scheme](#)' up to the year 2025.

Performance of the scheme:

- Banks have sanctioned Rs 26,204 crore to about 1,16,266 beneficiaries under the Scheme in the last five years.
- The scheme has benefited more than 93,094 women entrepreneurs.

About the 'Stand Up India Scheme':

- Launched in 2016.
- It seeks to promote entrepreneurship at the grass-root level of economic empowerment and job creation.
- The offices of SIDBI and NABARD shall be designated Stand-Up Connect Centres (SUCC).
- Loans under the scheme are available for only Greenfield projects.

The objective of the scheme is:

To facilitate loans from Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) of value between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 crore to at least one **SC or ST borrower and one woman borrower** per bank branch for setting up green field enterprises in manufacturing, service or trading sector.

Insta Curious: Do you know about Startup India Seed Fund Scheme? [Reference](#):

- Eligibility.
- Benefits.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Key features of the scheme.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of the scheme.

12. Stay on Arunachal order on ban on work permits for unvaccinated persons:

Context:

The Gauhati High Court has stayed a notification by the Arunachal Pradesh government that said **temporary permits to enter the state for work could be issued to only those who had been vaccinated against Covid-19.**

What was the order?

An order of the Arunachal Pradesh government issued on June 30 said that while [Inner Line Permits \(ILPs\)](#) needed to enter the state will remain suspended, temporary permits "for developmental works in both public and private sector" may be issued "provided such persons are vaccinated for Covid-19."

Why has it been stayed by the Court?

- The notification discriminated between vaccinated and unvaccinated persons and violated **Articles 14, 19 (1) (d) & 21 of the Constitution.**
- Such a classification between vaccinated and unvaccinated persons was **not based on “intelligible differentia” nor did it have “a rational relation/nexus to the object sought to be achieved by such classification**, namely, containment and further spread of Covid-19 pandemic.”

What is an ILP?

It is a document required by non-natives to visit or stay in a state that is protected under the ILP system.

At present, four Northeastern states are covered, namely, **Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland**. Inner line permit is also mandatory for entering into **Lakshadweep**.

- Both the duration of stay and the areas allowed to be accessed for any non-native are determined by the ILP.
- The ILP is issued by the concerned state government and can be availed both by applying online or in person.

An ILP is **only valid for domestic tourists**.

Rationale behind:

The Inner Line Permit is an extension of **the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act 1873**.

After the British occupied the Northeast, the colonisers started exploiting the region and its resources for economic benefits.

- They first started tea plantations and oil industries in Brahmaputra Valley.
- The indigenous tribes living in the hill areas would regularly conduct raids into the plains to loot and plunder, marauding the tea gardens, oil rigs and trading posts set up by the British East India Company.
- It was in this context that the BEFR 1873 was promulgated.



Insta Curious: Do you know the differences between an ILP and a Protected Area Permit (PAP)? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims link: Since ILP is frequently in News, concentrate on:

1. Map based questions involving North-Eastern states.
2. NE state and their international neighbours.

Mains link: Analyse the issue of imposition of the ILP system in India's northeastern states and the dilemma this system has posed to the Indian government.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/coronavirus-gauhati-high-court-stays-arunachal-pradesh-order-to-restrict-temporary-entry-permits-to-the-vaccinated/article35440360.ece/amp/>.

13. Essential Defence Services Bill:

Context:

The Bill was recently introduced by the Parliament.

- It is aimed at preventing the staff of the government-owned ordnance factories from going on a strike.

Highlights of the Bill:

1. It is meant to “provide for the maintenance of essential defence services so as **to secure the security of nation and the life and property of public at large and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto**”.
2. The Bill empowers the government to declare services mentioned in it as **essential defence services**.
3. It also **prohibits strike and lockouts in “any industrial establishment or unit engaged in essential defence services”**.

Latest changes:

The Ordnance Factory Board was directly under the Department of Defence Production and worked as an arm of the government. But, in June the government announced its corporatisation.

- As per this plan, 41 factories ammunition and other equipment to the armed forces will become part of seven government owned corporate entities.
- The government has claimed that the move is aimed at improving the efficiency and accountability of these factories.
- However, following this, many federations announced the launch of indefinite strikes.
- This was countered by the Essential Defence Services Ordinance which was promulgated on June 30.

Who will it affect?

It has a direct bearing on around 70,000 employees of the 41 ordnance factories around the country, who are unhappy with the corporatisation of OFB, fearing that it will impact their service and retirement conditions.

Need for:

The ordnance factories form an integrated base for indigenous production of defence hardware and equipment, with the primary objective of self reliance in equipping the armed forces with state of the art battlefield equipment.

- Therefore, there is a need to provide for the maintenance of essential defence services so as to secure the security of nation and the life and property of public at large and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Insta Curious:

Do you know the differences between privatisation and corporatisation? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is OFB?
2. Highlights of the Bill.

Mains Link:

Discuss the concerns associated with the corporatisation of OFB.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/what-is-the-essential-defence-services-bill-and-what-is-its-objective-7418398/lite/>.

14. PLI Scheme for Specialty Steel:

Context:

Union Cabinet approves Production-linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Specialty Steel.

Highlights and significance of the scheme:

- The duration of the scheme is from 2023-24 to 2027-28 (five years).
- It aims to boost the production of high-grade specialty steel in the country.
- There are 3 slabs of PLI incentives under the scheme. The lowest being 4% and the highest is 12%, which has been provided for electrical steel (CRGO).
- It has a budgetary outlay of ₹6322 crores.
- It is expected to bring in investment of approximately ₹40,000 crores and capacity addition of 25 MT for specialty steel.
- The scheme is expected to give employment to about 5,25,000 people of which 68,000 will be direct employment.

Coverage:

The five categories of specialty steel that have been chosen in the PLI Scheme are: Coated/Plated Steel Products, High Strength/Wear-resistant Steel, Specialty Rails, Alloy Steel Products, and Steel wires, and Electrical Steel.

What is Specialty Steel?

Specialty steel is value-added steel wherein normal finished steel is worked upon by way of coating, plating, heat treatment, etc. to convert it into high-value-added steel.

- This steel can be used in various strategic applications like Defense, Space, Power, apart from the automobile sector, specialized capital goods among others.

Why was Speciality Steel chosen for the PLI Scheme?

- It is because out of the production of 102 million tonnes of steel in India in 2020-21, only 18 million tonnes of value-added steel/specialty steel was produced in the country.
- Apart from this, out of 6.7 million tonnes of imports in 2020-21, about 4 million tonnes import was of specialty steel alone resulting in Forex expenditure of Rs.30,000 crores.

Hence, by becoming Atma Nirbhar in producing specialty steel, India will move up the steel value chain and come at par with advanced steel-making countries like Korea and Japan.

Insta Curious:

Do you know the differences between carbon steel and alloy steel? [Reference:](#)

Do you know What Curie Point is? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is speciality steel?
2. Applications.
3. Significance.

4. About the scheme.

5. Eligibility.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of the scheme.

15. Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakaram (PMJVK):

Context:

The Ministry of Minority Affairs is implementing the [Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakaram \(PMJVK\)](#), in the identified Minority Concentration Areas (MCAs) of the country.

About the PMJVK:

The erstwhile Multi-sectoral Development Programme (MsDP) has been restructured and renamed as Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram for effective implementation since 2018.

- It seeks to provide better socio-economic infrastructure facilities to the minority communities.

Special focus by earmarking funds:

1. 80% of the resources under the PMJVK would be earmarked for projects related to education, health and skill development.
2. 33 to 40% of resources under the PMJVK would be specifically allocated for women centric projects.

Beneficiaries of PMJVK:

- As far as PMJVK is concerned, the communities notified as [minority](#) communities under Section 2 (c) of the [National Commission for Minorities](#) Act, 1992 would be taken as Minority Communities.
- At present 6 (six) communities namely Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis) and Jains have been notified as Minority Communities.

Insta Curious:

1. Do you know that the term "Minority" is not defined in the Indian Constitution? However, the Constitution recognises religious and linguistic minorities. What are the key Provisions in this regard? [Reference:](#)

2. Who are Minorities under International Law? [Read Briefly](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Key features of the scheme.
2. Beneficiaries.

3. Eligibility.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of the scheme.

16. PM-CARES funds to help all orphaned children during pandemic:

Context:

The Supreme Court has made an oral observation that the welfare schemes for orphans, such as the one announced under the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund(PM CARES Fund), should cover all children who became orphans during COVID-19, and not just those who got orphaned due to COVID.

What's the issue?

The Supreme Court's suo motu case is dealing with children who became orphans after the onset of COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020.

- In its observations, it has said that it was not asking to extend the scheme under the PM CARES to all orphans but was highlighting the need to protect all orphans who became so during the pandemic.

Need for:

The Court has pointed out that India is a signatory to [the Convention on the Rights of Child](#) and therefore the State has an obligation to take care of orphans.

Background:

On May 28, the Court had directed the Union and States to identify children who have become orphans post March, 2020, whether it be due to the pandemic or otherwise, and upload their information in the 'Bal Swaraj' portal of [National Commission for Protection of Child Rights](#).

- The bench has also passed directions to control illegal adoption of such orphans.

Why is the welfare of orphans the need of hour?

Over 75,000 children have been orphaned, abandoned or have lost a parent during the COVID pandemic, and many of them may become victims of human trafficking rackets or descend into crime.

As per report by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR):

1. 6,855 children have been orphaned between April 1, 2020 and July 23, 2021.
2. 68,218 children lost one of their parents during the pandemic months till July 23 this year. Another 247 children were abandoned across the country.

What needs to be done to help these children?

1. The State governments may work out a mechanism for continuing the education of orphaned children in the existing schools.
2. Eligible children who have either not enrolled or dropped out of schools should be enrolled in schools.
3. Authorities should reach out to the guardians of these orphans and gauge whether they really can afford to have these children and if they require financial help.
4. Increase the government sponsorship limits for these children under the various existing schemes.
5. Proper implementation of the existing schemes.

About the Convention on the Rights of Child:

- It is an international agreement that is legally binding on the members.
- The CRC was adopted by the United Nations in 1989. It entered into force in 1990 after receiving the minimum of 20 ratifications.
- It recognises a child as every human being under 18 years old.
- It sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities.

What are the 4 core principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

1. Non-discrimination.
2. Right to life, survival and development.
3. Best interests of the child.
4. Respect for the child's views.

Insta Curious: Do you know about the SAMARTH Initiative? [Read Here](#)

2. About NCPNR.

3. Bal Swaraj.

4. Procedure for adoption in India.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Mains Link: Highlight the issues associated with the orphans during the times of Covid. Discuss the need for their protection and state's intervention.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/can-pm-cares-funds-be-extended-to-all-orphaned-during-pandemic-asks-sc/article35562319.ece/amp/>.

17. Factoring Regulation (Amendment) Bill 2020:

Context:

The [Bill](#) was recently passed by the Lok Sabha. The Bill seeks to widen the scope of entities that can engage in factoring business.

What is factoring?

Factoring is a transaction where an entity (like [MSMEs](#)) ‘sells’ its receivables (dues from a customer) to a third party (a ‘factor’ like a bank or NBFC) for immediate funds (partial or full).

- Currently, seven non-bank finance companies called NBFC factors do the majority of the factoring through the principal business condition.

Key Provisions:

1. The Bill has done away with threshold for NBFCs to get into the factoring business.
2. It widens the **scope of financiers and to permit other non banking finance companies** also to undertake factoring business and participate on the **Trade Receivables Discounting System** platform for discounting the invoices of micro, small and medium enterprises.
3. It reduces the time period for registration of invoice and satisfaction of charge upon it, in order to avoid possibility of dual financing.
4. It empowers the **Reserve Bank of India to make regulations with respect to factoring business.**

Significance:

1. Allowing non-NBFC factors and other entities to undertake factoring is expected to increase the supply of funds available to small businesses.
2. This may result in bringing down the cost of funds and enable greater access to the credit-starved small businesses, ensuring timely payments against their receivables.
3. Steps like integration with GSTN, mandatory listing of the government dues and direct filing of charges will improve the operational efficiency and acceptability of the platforms among the financiers.

Insta Curious: Do you know the difference between factoring and forfaiting? [Reference:](#)

18. How resolution ‘pre-packs’ for MSMEs can speed up insolvency cases?

Context:

[The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code \(Amendment\) Bill, 2021](#) was recently passed by Lok Sabha. It has proposed ‘**pre-packs**’ as an insolvency resolution mechanism for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

- A **sub-committee of the Insolvency Law Committee (ILC)** had recommended a pre-pack framework within the basic structure of [the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code \(IBC\), 2016](#).

What are ‘pre-packs’?

- A pre-pack is **an agreement for the resolution of the debt of a distressed company through an agreement between secured creditors and investors instead of a public bidding process.**
- This system of insolvency proceedings has become an increasingly popular mechanism for insolvency resolution in the UK and Europe over the past decade.

In India's case, such a system will require that financial creditors agree on terms with potential investors and seek approval of the resolution plan from **the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).**

1. The approval of at least 66 percent of financial creditors that are unrelated to the corporate debtor would be required before a resolution plan is submitted to the NCLT.
2. The NCLTs will be required to either accept or reject an application for a pre-pack insolvency proceeding before considering a petition for the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP).
3. The pre-pack is limited to a maximum of 120 days with only 90 days available to stakeholders to bring a resolution plan for approval before the NCLT.

What is the need for pre-packs?

Slow progress in the resolution of distressed companies has been one of the key issues raised by creditors regarding the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) under the IBC.

- At the end of March 2021, 79 per cent of the 1,723 ongoing insolvency resolution proceedings had crossed the 270-day threshold.
- A major reason for the delays is the prolonged litigation by erstwhile promoters and potential bidders.

Insta Curious:

Do you know the differences between insolvency and bankruptcy? Reference: [here](#).

Do you know about Keep & Pay? [Read Here \(Topic related to Bankruptcy\)](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is insolvency and bankruptcy?
2. Various institutions established under the IBC code.
3. NCLT- composition and functions.

4. What are debt recovery tribunals?
5. Sections 7, 9 and 10 of IBC.
6. Threshold for invoking insolvency under IBC.
7. Composition of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board.

Mains Link: Discuss how suspension of initiation of fresh insolvency proceedings will help shield companies impacted by the outbreak of Covid-19.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-pre-packaged-insolvency-resolution-process-of-msmes-7426810/lite/>.

19. The General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 2021:

Context:

The Bill which was introduced in Lok Sabha recently would pave the way for **the government to divest its stake in general insurance firms.**

- Opposition members have however strongly objected to it and called for its withdrawal.

Key Provisions:

1. It proposes amending **the General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Act, 1972** to remove the requirement for the Centre to hold at least 51 percent of equity in an insurer.
2. Another provision ensures that **the 1972 Act stops applying to insurers** on and from the date the Centre ceases to have control over them.
3. The Bill also makes a director, who is not a whole-time director, liable only for acts of omission or commission committed with his knowledge and connivance by the insurer.

Rationale behind these changes:

While India's insurance sector has been growing dynamically in recent years, its share in the global insurance market remains abysmally low. The Bill aims to provide for greater private participation in the public sector insurance companies.

Criticisms/concerns:

1. This may lead to total privatisation of general insurance companies.
2. With this, the government will also lose money by way of dividend in the proportion of shares being offered.

Challenges in the Insurance sector:

1. Low penetration and density rates.
2. Inadequate investment in insurance products.
3. The dominant position and deteriorating financial health of public-sector players.

Important changes witnessed by the insurance sector over the years include:

1. Nationalisation of life (LIC Act 1956) and non-life sectors (GIC Act 1972).
2. Constitution of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) in 1999.
3. Opening up of the sector to both private and foreign players in 2000.
4. Increase in the foreign investment caps.

Insta Curious:

Have you heard of Hindusthan Insurance Society? Who founded it? Reference: read [this](#).

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the Bill.
2. Key Provisions.

3. Comparison with the old law.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of the bill.

Topics: Development processes and the development industry- the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.

1. Indian Labour Conference (ILC):

Context:

The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh has asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to convene the [Indian Labour Conference \(ILC\)](#).

- The most recent session of ILC was held in 2015, at the earliest.

Need for convening ILC:

- The ILC is “required to uphold the noble tradition of tripartism in the country”.
- India also has a legal obligation to do so since the Parliament has ratified Convention No. 144 of the ILO related to strengthening the tripartite mechanism.

About ILC:

- The Indian Labour Conference (ILC) is the apex level tripartite consultative committee in the Ministry of Labour & Employment to advise the Government on the issues concerning working class of the country.
- All the 12 Central Trade Union Organisations, Central Organisations of employers, all State Governments and Union Territories and Central Ministries/Departments concerned with the agenda items, are the members of the ILC.
- The first meeting of the Indian Labour Conference (then called Tripartite National Labour Conference) was held in 1942 and so far a total of 46 Sessions have been held.

Significance:

Indian Labour Conference discusses and deliberates on significant issues aimed at improving the welfare of the workers. Notable contributions have been emanated by this forum including the Minimum wage fixing methodology and standing orders for employment.

Insta Curious: [What are the 8 fundamental or core conventions of the International Labour Organisation? Out of these 8 What conventions have been ratified by India?](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About ILC.
2. Participants.

3. About ILO.

4. Important ILO conventions.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of ILC.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GPP8PLFUI.1&imageview=0>.

Topics: *Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes.*

1. Review implementation of forest rights:

Context:

The ministry of environment (MoEFCC) and ministry of tribal affairs (MoTA) have jointly issued a circular to chief secretaries of all states, giving the responsibility of implementing [the Forest Rights Act 2006](#) to state governments.

- The circular asks states to undertake a review of the implementation of the Act and intimate the Government of India about any clarifications that are needed to smoothen the process.

Areas of concern:

1. Despite a considerable lapse of time since it came into force, the process of recognition of **the rights of forest dwellers** is yet to be completed.
2. Operationalisation of **section 5 of the Act** is also an area of concern. Section 5 deals with the duties of recognised forest dwellers such as, protecting wildlife, forest and biodiversity; ensuring that catchments area, water sources and other ecological sensitive areas are adequately protected etc.
3. **Section 3(1) (i) of the Act** provides for rights to protect, regenerate, conserve or manage any **community forest resource** but there is lax implementation of the provision.

About the Forest Rights Act:

The Act passed in 2006 grants legal recognition to the rights of traditional forest dwelling communities.



Forest Rights Act

Enacted in 2006, the Forest Rights Act came into effect in 2008. Considered a landmark piece of legislation as it attempts to correct historical injustices against forest dwellers in the colonial era and in independent India, it recognises forest dwellers' individual rights over their land and a village's rights to manage and conserve the forest.

Individual Forest Rights: Any person belonging to a scheduled tribe can claim rights to live in and cultivate up to 4 ha if he occupied it and depended on it as of December 13, 2005. A non-tribal, in addition, will have to prove his family's residence in the vicinity of the forest for 75 years prior to December 2005.

Community Forest Rights: The Act recognises the rights of a gram sabha over forest land within the village boundaries or seasonal use of landscape for pastoral communities. This allows the villagers to own and collect, use and dispose of minor forest produce besides timber, including the right to use grazing land and water bodies and the right to protect and regenerate any community resource, among others.

Rights under the Act:

Title rights - i.e. ownership - to land that is being farmed by tribals or forest dwellers as on 13 December 2005, subject to a maximum of 4 hectares; ownership is only for land that is actually being cultivated by the concerned family as on that date, meaning that no new lands are granted.

Use rights - to minor forest produce (also including ownership), to grazing areas, to pastoralist routes, etc.

Relief and development rights - to rehabilitation in case of illegal eviction or forced displacement; and to basic amenities, subject to restrictions for forest protection.

Forest management rights - to protect forests and wildlife.

Eligibility criteria:

According to Section 2(c) of Forest Rights Act (FRA), to qualify as **Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribe (FDST)** and be **eligible for recognition of rights under FRA**, three conditions must be satisfied by the applicant/s, who could be "members or community":

1. Must be a Scheduled Tribe in the area where the right is claimed; and
2. Primarily resided in forest or forests land prior to 13-12-2005; and
3. Depend on the forest or forests land for bonafide livelihood needs.

And to qualify as **Other Traditional Forest Dweller (OTFD)** and be eligible for recognition of rights under FRA, two conditions need to be fulfilled:

1. Primarily resided in forest or forests land for three generations (75 years) prior to 13-12-2005.
2. Depend on the forest or forests land for bonafide livelihood needs.

Process of recognition of rights:

1. The gram sabha, or village assembly, will initially pass a resolution recommending whose rights to which resources should be recognised.
2. This resolution is then screened and approved at the level of the sub-division (or taluka) and subsequently at the district level.

The screening committees consist of three government officials (Forest, Revenue and Tribal Welfare departments) and three elected members of the local body at that level. These committees also hear appeals.

Insta Curious: Do you know about Critical Wildlife Habitats which are defined under the Forest Rights Act, 2006? Read [this](#).

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Who can include or exclude areas under 5th Schedule?
2. What are scheduled areas?
3. Forest Rights Act- key provisions.
4. Rights under this Act.
5. Eligibility Criteria.
6. Role of Gram Sabha in recognizing these rights
7. What are Critical Wildlife Habitats?

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GJ28O92II.1&imageview=0>.

2. Tele-Law programme:

Context:

Recently, the Justice Department commemorated the milestone of crossing 9 lakh beneficiaries under its Tele-Law programme through [Common Service Centres](#).

About Tele- Law Programme:

Launched by the Ministry of Law and Justice in collaboration with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in 2017 to address cases at pre-litigation stage.

- It is a service that uses video conferencing facilities and telephone services to connect lawyers to litigants who need legal advice.
- The concept of Tele-Law is to facilitate delivery of legal advice through a panel of lawyers stationed at the state Legal Services Authorities (SALSA) and CSC.
- This service aims to reach out to the needy, especially the marginalized and disadvantaged.

Benefits/significance:

1. Tele Law service enables anyone to seek legal advice without wasting precious time and money.
2. The service is free for those who are eligible for free legal Aid as mentioned under Section 12 of the Legal Services Authority Act, 1987. For all others a nominal fee is charged.
3. This initiative is in line with Sustainable Development Goal-16, which seeks to "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels".

Insta Curious:

Do you know, 'Nyaya Deep', the official newsletter of NALSA is promoting a healthy working relationship between legal services functionaries throughout the country and is proving immensely useful for exchange of views and sharing of ideas.? [Read Here briefly](#) (This can be a good example for your GS2 answers)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About NALSA.

2. About CSCs.

3. What is the Tele Law Programme?

What are lok Adalats?

3. SMILE Scheme:

Context:

The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** has formulated this scheme for Support for Marginalized Individuals.

About the scheme:

- "SMILE stands for Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise".
- **Focus of the scheme is** on rehabilitation, provision of medical facilities, counseling, basic documentation, education, skill development, economic linkages etc.
- It **includes sub scheme** - 'Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of Begging'.
- The scheme would be implemented with the support of State/UT Governments/Local Urban Bodies, Voluntary Organizations, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), institutions and others.

Beggars In India:

1. According to the Census 2011 total number of beggars in India is 4,13,670 (including 2,21,673 males and 1,91,997 females) and the number has increased from the last census.
2. West Bengal tops the chart followed by Uttar Pradesh and Bihar at number two and three respectively. Lakshadweep merely has two vagrants according to the 2011 census.
3. Among the union territories, New Delhi had the largest number of beggars 2,187 followed by 121 in Chandigarh.
4. Among the northeastern states, Assam topped the chart with 22,116 beggars, while Mizoram ranked low with 53 beggars.

Insta Curious: [Read about The Persons in Destitution \(Protection, Care and Rehabilitation\) Model Bill, 2016](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Key Provisions of the Bombay Prevention of Beggary Act, 1959.
2. About Article 19(1)(a).

3. Directives Principles of State Policy related key facts.
4. Rights under Article 21.

Mains Link:

Discuss why begging should be decriminalized.

4. PM CARES For Children- Empowerment of COVID Affected Children:

Context:

The Ministry of Women and Child Development launches web-based portal pmcaresforchildren.in to facilitate submission of applications, identification of children eligible to receive support under [the 'PM CARES for Children' scheme](#).

About the Scheme:

The scheme has been **launched for support & empowerment of Covid affected children**.

Eligibility: All children who have lost both parents or surviving parent or legal guardian/adoptive parents due to Covid 19 will be supported under the scheme.

Features of the scheme:

- Fixed Deposit in the name of the child:** A corpus of Rs. 10 lakh will be allocated to each of these children from the PM CARES fund. This corpus will be used to give a monthly stipend from 18 years of their age, for the next five years and on reaching the age of 23 years, he or she will get the corpus amount as one lump-sum for personal and professional use.
- School Education: For children under 10 years:** Admission will be given in the nearest Kendriya Vidyalaya or in a private school as a day scholar.
- School Education: for children between 11-18 years:** The child will be given admission in any Central Government residential school such as Sainik School, Navodaya Vidyalaya etc.
- Support for Higher Education:** The child will be assisted in obtaining an education loan for Professional courses / Higher Education in India as per the existing Education Loan norms.
- Health Insurance:** All children will be enrolled as a beneficiary under Ayushman Bharat Scheme (PM-JAY) with a health insurance cover of Rs 5 lakhs.

Need for these measures:

- As India battles a raging second wave, cases of children losing their parents to Covid-19 are also mounting.
- Also the apprehension of **child trafficking** in the garb of adoption has increased.
- Child Marriages** have also increased in the Covid-19 induced lockdown.

Insta Curious: How PMNRF is different from PM CARES? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- What is a public account?
- Who administers PM CARES fund?
- Which organisations are exempted from the ambit of RTI act?
- What is Consolidated fund of India?
- What is a charitable trust?
- PM CARES For Children- Empowerment of COVID Affected Children- eligibility and benefits.

Mains Link:

Discuss why PM CARES fund should be brought within the ambit of RTI act?

5. What is Telangana Dalit Bandhu scheme, and why has it drawn criticism?

Context:

Dalit Bandhu is the latest flagship programme of the **Telangana government** envisioned as a **welfare scheme for empowering Dalit families**.

What is the Telangana Dalit Bandhu scheme?

- Dalit Bandhu enables entrepreneurship among Dalits through a direct benefit transfer of Rs 10 lakh per family.
- This is going to be the biggest cash transfer scheme in the country.
- To promote Dalit entrepreneurship, the government has decided to start a **system of reservation for Dalits in sectors where the government issues licences**. This includes wine shops, medical shops, fertiliser shops, rice mills, etc.

Dalit Security Fund:

- Apart from monetary assistance, the government plans to create a corpus called the Dalit Security Fund permanently to support the beneficiary in the event of any adversities.
- This fund will be managed by the district collector concerned, along with a committee of beneficiaries.

Why has the Dalit Bandhu scheme faced criticism?

The intentions and rationale behind the scheme are being questioned. The government has also faced criticisms for failing to uphold existing legislation and schemes for the protection and empowerment of Dalits.

Insta Curious: How the word 'Dalit' traces its Origin in Gandhi and Ambedkar's Poona Pact? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Key features of the scheme.
2. Eligibility.

3. Benefits.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of the scheme.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/telangana-dalita-bandhu-scheme-explained-7426220/lite/>.

6. Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana:

Context:

The government has said that under the schemes implemented by the **Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (DA&FW)** at least 30 percent of the expenditure allocated for agricultural schemes is being incurred for women to bring them into mainstream agriculture. This mainly includes [Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana](#).

About Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana:

- It was started in 2011.
- The “Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana” (MKSP) is a sub component of the [Deendayal Antodaya Yojana-NRLM \(DAY-NRLM\)](#).
- It seeks to improve the present status of women in Agriculture, and to enhance the opportunities available to empower her.
- MKSP **recognizes the identity of “Mahila” as “Kisan”** and strives to build the capacity of women in the domain of agro-ecologically sustainable practices.
- Upto 60% (90% for North Eastern States) of the funding support for such projects is provided by the government.

The focus of MKSP is on:

Capacitating smallholders to adopt sustainable climate resilient agro-ecology and eventually create a pool of skilled community professionals.

Need for feminization of agriculture:

Most of the women-headed households are not able to access extension services, farmers support institutions and production assets like seed, water, credit, subsidy etc. As agricultural workers, women are paid lower wages than men.

Insta Curious: Did you know that the International Day of Rural Women is celebrated on October 15 every year? What are its objectives and historical significance? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Key features of the scheme.

2. Implementation.

3. Benefits.

Mains Link: Discuss the problems faced by women farmers in India. Also discuss how those problems could be solved.

Topics: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

1. NIPUN Bharat Programme:

Context:

Union Education Minister launches NIPUN Bharat Programme.

About the Programme:

- NIPUN stands for the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy.
- The Programme is an initiative of the Ministry of Education.
- It will be implemented by the Department of School Education and Literacy.
- **Target:** It has been envisioned for ensuring that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational literacy and numeracy by the end of Grade 3, by 2026-27.
- It will cover the learning needs of children in the age group of 3 to 9 years.

Implementation:

A five-tier implementation mechanism will be set up at the National- State- District- Block- School level in all States and UTs, under the aegis of the centrally sponsored scheme of [Samagra Shiksha](#).

Focus areas:

1. The mission focuses on different domains of development like physical and motor development, socio-emotional development, literacy and numeracy development, cognitive development, life skills etc. for Holistic development of the child.
2. It is envisaged to support and encourage students, along with their schools, teachers, parents, and communities, in every way possible, to help realise the true potential of children and propel the country to new heights.

Key components and expected outcomes of NIPUN Bharat Mission:

1. Foundational skills enable to keep children in class thereby reducing the dropouts and improve transition rate from primary to upper primary and secondary stages.
2. Activity based learning and a conducive learning environment will improve the quality of education.
3. Innovative pedagogies such as toy-based and experiential learning will be used in classroom transactions thereby making learning a joyful and engaging activity.
4. Intensive capacity building of teachers will make them empowered and provide greater autonomy for choosing the pedagogy.

Insta Curious: [Do you know Sustainable Development Goals related to education?](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the programme.
2. Key features.

3. Implementation.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of the programme.

2. China is certified malaria-free by WHO:

Context:

Following a 70-year effort, China has been awarded a malaria-free certification from WHO – a notable feat for a country that reported 30 million cases of the disease annually in the 1940s.

- China is the first country in the [WHO Western Pacific Region](#) to be awarded a malaria-free certification in more than 3 decades.
- Other countries in the region that have achieved this status include Australia (1981), Singapore (1982) and Brunei Darussalam (1987).
- Globally, 40 countries and territories have been granted a malaria-free certification from WHO – including, most recently, El Salvador (2021), Algeria (2019).

Keys to success- steps taken by China:

1. China provides a basic public health service package for its residents free of charge. As part of this package, all people in China have access to affordable services for the diagnosis and treatment of malaria, regardless of legal or financial status.
2. Effective multi-sector collaboration was also key to success. In 2010, 13 ministries in China – including those representing health, education, finance, research and science, development etc – joined forces to end malaria nationwide.

- “1-3-7” strategy: The “1” signifies the one-day deadline for health facilities to report a malaria diagnosis; by the end of day 3, health authorities are required to confirm a case and determine the risk of spread; and, within 7 days, appropriate measures must be taken to prevent further spread of the disease.

WHO malaria-free certification:

- WHO grants the certification when a country has demonstrated that the chain of indigenous malaria transmission by **Anopheles mosquitoes** has been interrupted nationwide **for at least the past three consecutive years**.
- A country must also demonstrate **the capacity to prevent the re-establishment of transmission**.
- The final decision on awarding a malaria-free certification** rests with the WHO Director-General, based on a recommendation by the independent **Malaria Elimination Certification Panel (MECP)**.

Key findings of the WHO World Malaria Report 2020:

- India has made considerable progress in reducing its malaria burden.
- India is the only high endemic country which has reported a decline of 17.6% in 2019 as compared to 2018.

Insta Curious: Do you know that through its DAMaN initiative, Odisha has emerged as an inspiration in the global fight against malaria? What is this initiative all about? [Read here,](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Difference and examples of various diseases caused by Virus and Bacteria.
- Malaria- causes and treatment.
- About WHO Certification process.

- Overview of WHO World Malaria Report 2020.

Mains Link: Discuss India's efforts targeted at Malaria control.

3. Kappa And Lambda- Newest Sars-CoV-2 Variants:

Context:

Kappa and Lambda variants have been labelled as **Variants of Interest (VoI)** by WHO.

Concerns for India:

- Kappa was first detected in India and more than 3,500 of the close to 30,000 cumulative samples submitted by the country to [the GISAID initiative](#) are of this variant.
- In the last 60 days, the Kappa variant has made up 3 per cent of all samples submitted by India. **India, in fact, leads the GISAID table for Kappa submissions and is followed by the UK, US, Canada, etc.**

What is Lambda?

Lambda is the newest VoI identified by the UN health agency. It was first identified in Peru in December last year and has so far been detected in samples from about 26 countries shared with GISAID. The highest number of samples submitted is from Chile followed by the US. Peru is third on the list.

What is a Variant of Interest?

- This means that the genetic changes involved are predicted or known to affect transmissibility, disease severity, or immune escape.
- It is also an acknowledgement of the fact that the variant has caused significant community transmission in multiple countries and population groups.

Variant of Concern:

A variant for which there is evidence of an increase in transmissibility, more severe disease (e.g., increased hospitalizations or deaths), significant reduction in neutralization by antibodies generated during previous infection or vaccination, reduced effectiveness of treatments or vaccines, or diagnostic detection failures.

Insta Curious:

[Did you know that GISAID is a public platform started by the WHO in 2008 for countries to share genome sequences? Know more about it.](#)

Do you know about INSACOG? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is Genome Sequencing?
2. How does it work?

3. RNA vs DNA.

4. What are genes?

5. What are VOI and VOC?

Mains Link: What is genome sequencing? How does it help prevent the spread of COVID 19?

4. African swine fever:

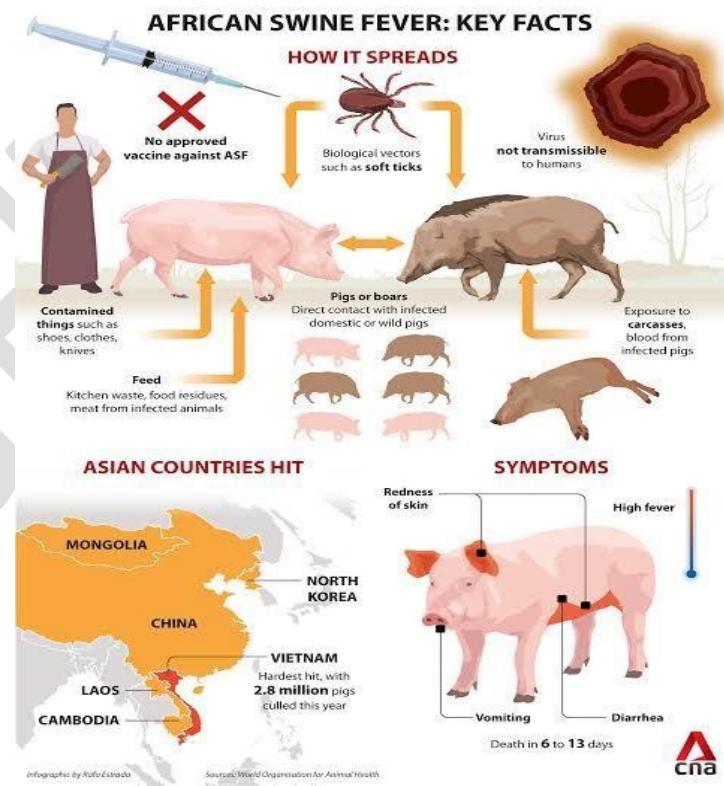
Context:

Small farms in Asia are the worst hit by the [African Swine Fever](#) outbreak. Why?

1. Pig farms remain dominantly an affair of small-scale farmers.
2. In many countries, including India, 70 per cent of the pig farms are owned by small-scale farmers.
3. In China, almost 98 per cent of the total pork production is by small-scale farmers who have fewer than 100 pigs each.

Impact in India:

- African swine fever, a century-old disease that infects pigs and wild boars with a near 100 per cent fatality rate, has claimed a third of the world's pigs since 2018.
- Its latest victim is India, where cases have been reported since May 2020 but have exploded in the past couple of months.
- Estimates show that ASF has caused a 50 per cent shortage in northeastern states' pork production.



About African Swine Fever (ASF):

- ASF is a **highly contagious and fatal animal disease** that infects domestic and wild pigs, typically resulting in an acute form of hemorrhagic fever.
- It was **first detected in Africa in the 1920s**.
- The mortality is close to 100 per cent, and since the fever has no cure, the only way to stop it spreading is by culling the animals.
- As of now, **there is no approved vaccine**, which is also a reason why animals are culled to prevent the spread of infection.

Insta Curious: Do you know that ASF is a disease listed in the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Terrestrial Animal Health Code? [Read this.](#)

Do you know that WTO **Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures** "recognises the OIE as the international standard setting organisation for animal health and zoonotic diseases?"

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Can swine fever affect humans?

2. Is it a viral disease?

3. Where was it first discovered?

4. Which countries have been affected by this in 2020?
5. Is there any vaccine available against this?

Mains Link: Write a note African Swine Fever, symptoms and its spread.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.downtoearth.org.in/news/food/amp/african-swine-fever-ripple-effect-across-the-world-77851>

5. Zika Virus:

Context:

Alarmed by cases of Zika virus in neighbouring Kerala, Karnataka has issued guidelines to prevent the spread of the disease in the state.

How does the Zika virus spread?

- The Zika virus is predominantly transmitted by infected mosquitoes from the **Aedes genus**, mainly **Aedes aegypti**. The Aedes mosquitoes also spread dengue, chikungunya and yellow fever. They usually bite during the daytime, mostly during the early morning or later afternoon.
- Apart from the mosquitoes, an **infected person can also spread the virus**. This virus can be transmitted from a pregnant woman to the fetus, through sexual contact, transfusion of blood and blood products, and organ transplantation.

The virus was **first identified in Uganda**

in 1947 in monkeys. It was later identified in humans in 1952 in Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

What are the symptoms of the Zika virus?

While the symptoms of the Zika virus are mild, in case it gets worse, immediate medical attention is advised. Generally, the symptoms include fever, rash, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, malaise, or headache. It lasts for about two to seven days. Most infected people do not develop any symptoms.

What is the treatment?

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Zika virus has no treatment or vaccine. WHO advises the consumption of a lot of fluids along with pain and fever medicines for a speedy recovery.

Insta Curious: Do you know that the World Health Organization (WHO) has formed a high-level expert panel 'One Health' to study the emergence and spread of zoonotic diseases? What is "One Health"? [Read this](#),

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Zika.

2. Spread.

3. Symptoms.

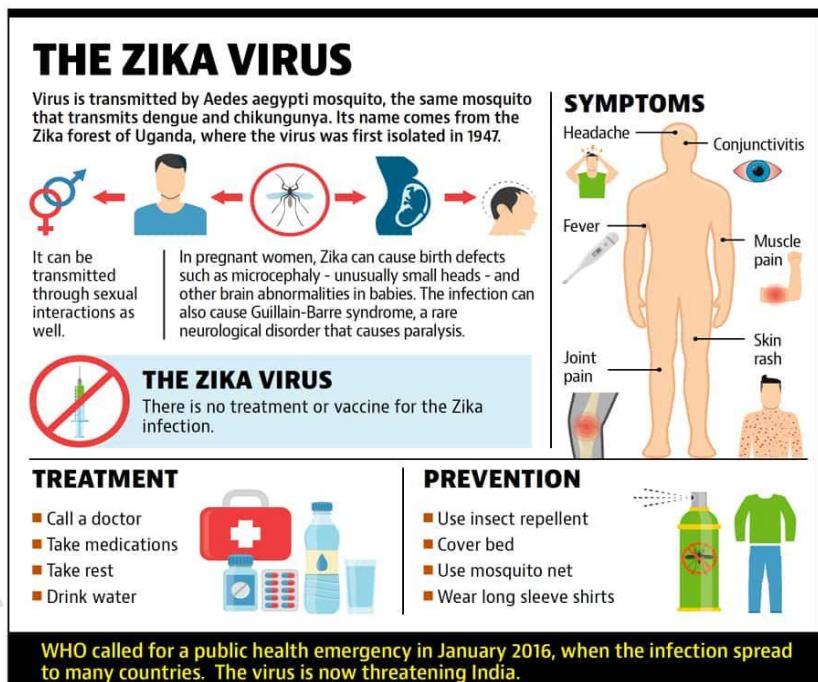
4. Prevention.

6. What is the Monkey B virus?

Context:

China has reported the first human infection case with [Monkey B virus \(BV\)](#).

About Monkey B Virus:



- First identified in 1932, the virus is learnt to have infected only 50 people till 2020, of which 21 died.
- It is an alphaherpesvirus enzootic in macaques of the genus Macaca.
- B virus is the only identified old-world-monkey herpesvirus that displays severe pathogenicity in humans.
- Currently, there are no vaccines that can protect against B virus infection.

Transmission:

The infection can be transmitted via direct contact and exchange of bodily secretions of monkeys.

Symptoms:

- Initially there are flu-like symptoms such as fever and chills, muscle ache, fatigue and headache.
- Following this, an infected person may develop small blisters in the wound or area on the body that came in contact with the monkey.
- Some other symptoms of the infection include shortness of breath, nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain and hiccups.
- As the disease progresses, the virus spreads to and causes inflammation (swelling) of the brain and spinal cord, leading to neurologic and inflammatory symptoms such as pain, numbness, itching near the wound site; issues with muscle coordination.

Insta Curious: Do you know the differences between viruses and viroids? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the virus.
2. Transmission.
3. Symptoms.
4. Treatment.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-what-is-monkey-b-virus-that-caused-first-human-death-in-china-7412280/lite/>.

7. What is H5N1 avian influenza?

Context:

India has recorded first death due to **H5N1 avian influenza** this year.

What is bird flu?

- Also called avian influenza.
- It is a disease caused by avian influenza **Type A viruses found naturally in wild birds worldwide.**
- The virus **can infect domestic poultry** and there have been reports of H5N1 infection among pigs, cats, and even tigers in Thailand zoos.
- Symptoms have ranged from mild to severe influenza-like illness.

Classification:

Avian Influenza type A viruses are **classified based on two proteins on their surfaces – Hemagglutinin (HA) and Neuraminidase (NA).**

- There are about 18 HA subtypes and 11 NA subtypes.
- Several combinations of these two proteins are possible e.g., H5N1, H7N2, H9N6, H17N10, etc.

Spread:

- There have been reports of avian and swine influenza infections in humans.
- The infection is deadly as it has a high mortality rate of about 60%.
- The most common route of virus transmission is direct contact. They can also be affected if they come in contact with contaminated surfaces or air near the infected poultry.

Insta Curious:

India was declared free from Avian Influenza (H5N1) in 2019. The status will last only till another outbreak is reported. Know when and how a country is declared free from Avian Influenza? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Bird Flu.
2. Transmission.
3. Types.

4. Symptoms.

Mains Link: Discuss the impact of Bird Flu outbreak on Indian Economy.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-what-is-h5n1-avian-influenza-its-symptoms-and-how-fatal-can-it-be-7415702/lite/>.

8. Academic Bank of Credit:

Context:

Academic Bank of Credit (ABC), proposed under the [National Education Policy \(NEP\) 2020](#), will be unveiled.

What is the Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)?

Set-up by the [University Grants Commission \(UGC\)](#).

- Under the ABC, students will be given multiple entry and exit options.
- This enables students to leave a degree or course and get a corresponding certification and rejoin studies after a certain time and be able to start from where they had left.
- It will also provide students with the flexibility to move between institutes while pursuing one degree or leave a course.

MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCES IS NOW MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

FOR SCHOOLS From 10+2 to 5+3+3+4: Current 10+2 structure in which policy covered schooling from Class 1 to 10 (age 6-16) and then Class 11-12 (age 16-18) gives way to 5 years of foundational education, 3 of preparatory, 3 of middle & 4 years of secondary schooling Multi-Stream: Flexibility to choose subjects across streams; all subjects to be offered at two levels of proficiency Diluted Board: Board exams to test only core competencies; could become modular (object and subjective) and will be offered twice a year Multilingual: 3-language policy to continue with preference for local language medium of instruction till class 8 Bag-Less Days: School students to have 10 bag-less days in a year during which they are exposed to a vocation of choice (i.e. informal internship)	FOR COLLEGES SAT-Like College Test: National Testing Agency to conduct common college entrance exam twice a year 4-Year Bachelor: 4-year multi-disciplinary bachelor's programme to be preferred; mid-term dropouts to be given credit with option to complete degree after a break No Affiliation: Over next 15 years colleges will be given graded autonomy to give degrees, affiliation with universities to end, so would deemed university status Fee Cap: Proposal to cap fee charged by private institutions of higher learning Going Glocal: Top-rated global universities to be facilitated to come to India, top Indian institutions to be encouraged to go global
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How does it work?



ABC will keep records of the academic credits of a student. It will not accept any credit course document directly from the students for any course they might be pursuing, but only from higher education institutes, who will have to make deposits in students' accounts.

Benefits:

ABC will help in credit verification, credit accumulation, credit transfer and redemption of students, and promotion of the students.

[Know more about the National Education Policy here:](#)

Insta Curious: ABC has been drafted on the lines of the National Academic Depository. What is the National Academic Depository? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

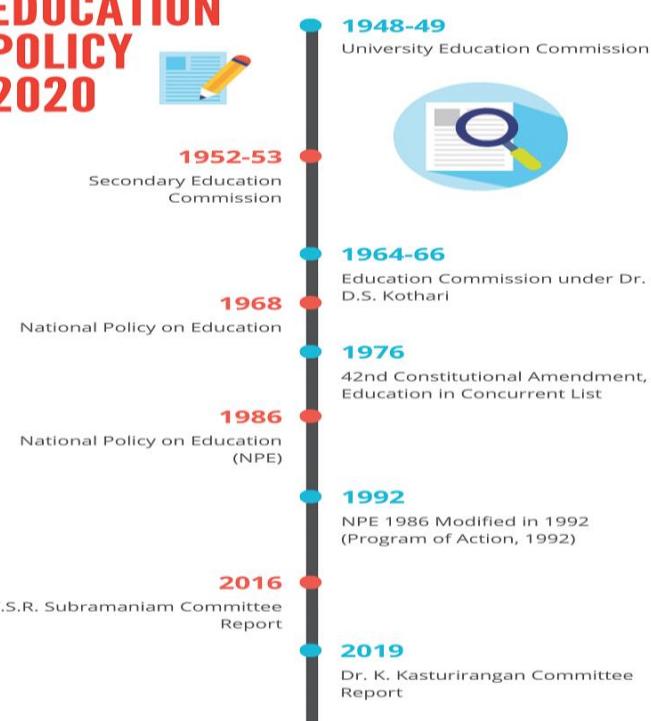
1. About NEP.
2. What is ABC?
3. Features.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of ABC.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 aims to make major transformational reforms in the education sector in India. Here's a quick look at its evolution so far.



NEP 2020: CONSULTATION PROCESS

- Online on www.MyGov.in (Jan-Oct 2015)
- Nearly 2.5 lakhs Gram Panchayats, 6600 Blocks, 6000 ULBs, 676 Districts (May-Oct 2015)
- Draft NEP, 2019 Summary in 22 languages/Audio Book
- Education Dialogue with MPs (AP, Kerala, Telangana, TN, Puducherry, Karnataka & Odisha)
- Special Meeting of CABE (Sep 2019)
- Parliamentary Standing Committee on HRD (Nov 2019)

9. Delta variant as contagious as chicken pox:

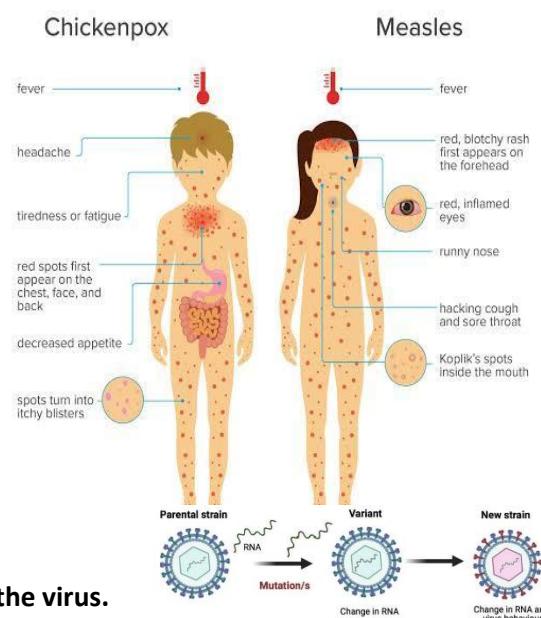
Context:

The [US Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) has revealed that:

- The [Delta variant](#) of the coronavirus spreads as easily as [chickenpox](#) with a transmission rate up to nine times more than the original strain.
- Breakthrough cases in vaccinated individuals may be as transmissible as unvaccinated cases.
- Infection with the Delta variant produces virus amounts in the airways that are tenfold higher than what is seen in people infected with the Alpha variant, which is also highly contagious.

[MEDICALNEWS TODAY](#)

Chickenpox vs. Measles



What is a Virus Variant?

Variants of a virus **have one or more mutations** that differentiate it from the other variants that are in circulation. While most mutations are deleterious for the virus, some make it easier for the virus to survive.

- The SARS-CoV-2 (Corona) virus is evolving fast because of the scale at which it has infected people around the world. High levels of circulation mean it is easier for the virus to change as it is able to replicate faster.

What is a mutation?

- A mutation means a **change in the genetic sequence of the virus**.

- In the case of SARS-CoV-2, which is an **Ribonucleic acid (RNA) virus**, a mutation means a change in the sequence in which its molecules are arranged.
- A mutation in an RNA virus often happens when the virus makes a mistake while it is making copies of itself.

What is Delta Variant?

The Delta variant (B.1.617.2) was first detected in India. The variant contains multiple mutations in the spike protein.

Insta Curious:

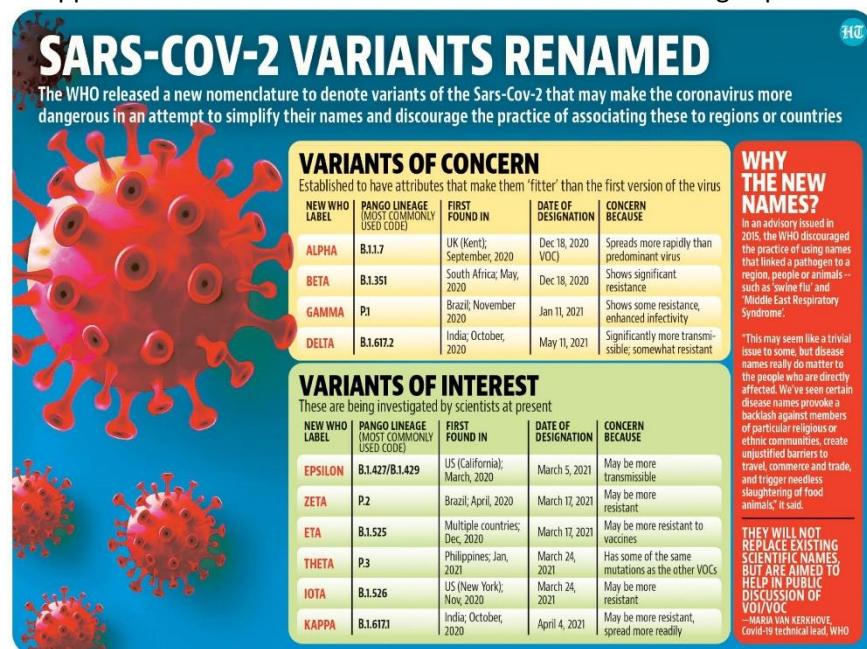
Delta Variant is classified as a Variant of Concern (VOC)? How is such classification made? Who does it?

Reference:

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- What is Covid 19?
- What is mutation?
- What is mRNA?
- What is RT- PCR test?
- What is genome sequencing?



Mains Link: Discuss the concerns associated with mutations of Covid- 19 virus.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GEP8QRSPV3.1&imageview=0>.

Topics: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

1. China, Pak. outline ‘joint action’ to align Afghanistan strategies:

Context:

China and Pakistan have announced to closely cooperate and work together in Afghanistan amid the changing situation in the country.

Background:

Both China and Pakistan are most directly affected by the situation in Afghanistan” as its neighbours and it is “necessary for both sides to strengthen cooperation to cope with the change.

They have outlined a five-point joint plan on working in Afghanistan. This includes:

- Avoid the expansion of war and prevent Afghanistan from falling into a full-scale civil war.
- Promote the intra-Afghan negotiations between Kabul and the Taliban and establish “a broad and inclusive political structure”.
- Resolutely combat terrorist forces.
- Promote cooperation among Afghanistan’s neighbours” and “explore the construction of a platform for cooperation among them”.
- Closely work on international fora on the Afghan issue.

Background:

Many countries criticise the hasty U.S. withdrawal of troops for having neither fulfilled the purpose of fighting terrorism nor brought peace to Afghanistan but created a new security black hole.

What happened in Afghanistan so far?

A month after 9/11 attacks, the US launched airstrikes against Afghanistan (**Operation Enduring Freedom**).

After the attacks, the NATO coalition troops declared war on Afghanistan.

- The US dislodged the Taliban regime and established a transitional government in Afghanistan.

- Now, in July 2020, the US troops departed from the biggest airbase in Afghanistan after the 20-year-long war, effectively ending their military operations in the country.

What next for India?

- India's **Afghan policy** is at a major crossroads; to safeguard its civilian assets there as well as to stay relevant in the unfolding 'great game' in and around Afghanistan, India must fundamentally reset its Afghanistan policy.
- India must, in its own national interest, begin '**open talks**' with the **Taliban** before it is too late. The time for hesitant, half-embarrassed backchannel parleys is over.
- If India is not proactive in Afghanistan at least now, late as it is, **Russia, Iran, Pakistan and China will emerge as the shapers of Afghanistan's political and geopolitical destiny**, which for sure will be detrimental to Indian interests.

Insta Curious: [Do you know what Operation Highroad is?](#)

1. About India Afghan projects.

2. About INSTC.

3. India to Afghanistan- available ways.

Mains Link: Discuss the impact of US withdrawal on India- Afghan relations.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GN48Q9B69.1&imageview=0>.

2. China's wolf warrior approach:

Context:

China's assertive new diplomatic approach in the Xi Jinping era has come to be dubbed "wolf warrior diplomacy", marked by a muscular posture in pursuing China's interests.

What is Wolf Warrior Diplomacy or approach?

- "Wolf-warrior diplomacy," named after famous Chinese movies, describes offensives by Chinese diplomat to defend China's national interests, often in confrontational ways.
- It reinforces a presumed transition of Chinese diplomacy from conservative, passive, and low-key to assertive, proactive, and high-profile.

Instances:

In last one year the Chinese foreign ministry has taken an increasingly strident tone against the United States, India, Australia, and other countries.

- In April last year, Chinese coastguard ship allegedly sank a Vietnamese fishing trawler near the Paracel Islands. When Vietnam protested, the Chinese foreign ministry responded by saying Vietnam's claims to the area are "illegal."
- Then, China announced the naming of 80 islands, reefs, seamounts, shoals, and ridges in the South China Sea, triggering angry protests from other claimants.
- China also tried to enter India at various places.

Why is China resorting to wolf-warrior diplomacy?

Soaring Nationalism: Since 2010, when China's GDP overtook Japan's as the world's second largest, the Chinese have become more confident and China's foreign policy has become more assertive.

China as a great power: The latest diplomatic offensive is also part of the official effort to project China as a great power leading the global fight against the COVID-19. China's image suffered during the crisis due to its bungled handling of the outbreak at the early stage.

With the assertive and ambitious **Belt and Road Initiative and Maritime Silk Road**, China has consolidated its influence over the Indian neighbours as almost all the neighbour sans Bhutan have shown the keen interests in joining.

How successful has this approach been on the whole?

1. The wolf-warrior diplomacy is already hurting China's foreign policy, since it has generated pushback, such as Australia's calls for an independent probe into the coronavirus' origins.
2. China's soft power is weak globally; a belligerent approach will further damage China's global image.
3. Wolf warrior tactics, combined with great military assertiveness on the China-India border, has ended up pushing India much closer to the U.S., and alienating a billion plus-person economy.

Insta Curious: Do you know about China, The Middle Kingdom? [Read Here](#)

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GN48Q9B6D.1&imageview=0>.

3. Why India Can't Bank on the International North-South Transport Corridor?

Context:

India might be compelled to recalibrate its strategy if plans for a [Pakistan-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan \(PAKAFUZ\) railway](#) make its [International North-South Transport Corridor \(INSTC\)](#) redundant with respect to its Central Asian outreach efforts.

What's the issue?

PAKAFUZ proposal is a proposed 573km railway project that will link Uzbekistan's capital Tashkent through Afghanistan capital Kabul and Pakistan's northern city of Peshawar.

- This is expected to affect India as it was planning to expand its influence in Afghanistan through [Iran's Chabahar port](#).
- The biggest worry for India now is that **Afghanistan will now be much less reliant on the INSTC for access to the Indian Ocean** due to its decision to participate in PAKAFUZ (which will essentially function as the northern branch of CPEC that can be described as N-CPEC).
- This will result in India being less able to "balance" Chinese influence in Central Asia, thereby compelling a further recalibration of its relevant strategy.

What lies ahead for India?

1. Instead of concentrating on Central Asia, India would arguably do better devoting much more time, attention, and efforts to expanding its reach across the **the Afro-Eurasian Rimland** of the Indo-Pacific where it has much more opportunities than in the Eurasian Heartland.
2. Israel shared its transregional connectivity plans- the "**Trans-Arabian Corridor**" (**TAC**) with India back in December 2019. India should reconsider this.
3. The seemingly forgotten **joint Indo-Japanese Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC)** from a few years back could be revived.
4. India is already proceeding apace with respect to Russia via the **Vladivostok-Chennai Maritime Corridor (VCMC)** that Prime Minister Modi and President Putin announced during the former's trip to the Far Eastern Russian city as the latter's guest of honor for the **2019 Eastern Economic Forum**.



About INSTC:

It is a **7,200-km-long multi-mode network of ship, rail, and road route** for moving freight.

Regions involved: India, Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe.

Significance of the corridor:

1. Conceived well before China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), INSTC will not only help cut down on costs and time taken for transfer of goods from India to Russia and Europe via Iran but also provide an alternative connectivity initiative to countries in the Eurasian region.
2. This will also synchronize with [the Ashgabat agreement](#), a Multimodal transport agreement signed by India, Oman, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, for creating an international transport and transit corridor facilitating transportation of goods between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf.



Insta Curious: Do you know about the Asian Highway Network (AH), also known as the Great Asian Highway? How is it different from the Asian Land Transport Infrastructure Development (ALTID) project? [Reference](#):

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About INSTC.
2. Countries covered.

3. Important cities.

4. Key ports.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of INSTC.

Topics: *Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.*

1. Istanbul Convention on violence against women:

Context:

Turkey quits [Istanbul Convention on Violence Against Women](#).

Background:

On November 24, 2011, Turkey became the first country to ratify the Istanbul convention and, on March 8, 2012, it incorporated the Istanbul Convention into domestic law.

Why its withdrawal is being criticised?

Turkey has received severe criticism from various quarters and has led to protests across the country.

1. The country has withdrawn from the convention despite the alarmingly high rates of violence and femicide in the country.
2. The country ranks 133 out of 156 countries in [the Global Gender Gap report 2021](#).
3. According to **UN women data**, 38 per cent of women in Turkey face violence from a partner in their lifetime.
4. The Turkish government does not maintain any official records on femicides.

What are the reasons for Turkey's withdrawal?

- It said the convention demeans traditional family structure, promotes divorces and encourages acceptance of LGBTQ in the society.
- Besides, it said, it has enough local laws to protect women's rights.

Concerns:

1. The move comes at a time when domestic violence against women and girls has intensified across the world amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. People are also concerned that now even basic rights and protections of the Turkish women will come under threat.

What is the Istanbul Convention?

It is also called as the **Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence**.

The treaty is **the world's first binding instrument** to prevent and tackle violence against women.

- It is **the most comprehensive legal framework that exists to tackle violence against women and girls**, covering domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, female genital mutilation (FGM), so-called honour-based violence, and forced marriage.

When a government ratifies the Convention, **they are legally bound to follow it**.

- The convention was adopted by **the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers** on 7 April 2011.
- The Convention sets minimum standards for governments to meet when tackling violence against women.

Insta Curious:

[Do you know the first UN conference on Women was held in 1975 and from that year Women's Days is being celebrated?](#)

[Do you know what Zionism is?](#) (Zionism controversy during final conference of the United Nations Decade for Women in 1985 in Nairobi, Kenya.) Read Briefly

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Istanbul- location.
2. Istanbul convention is related to?
3. When was it signed?
4. First country to sign the convention?

5. Recently, which country decided to exit the convention?
6. What is Council of Europe?

Mains Link: Write a note on Istanbul convention.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/istanbul-convention-erdogan-violence-against-women-7386272/lite/>.

Topics: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

1. US Child Soldiers Prevention Act (CSPA):

Context:

US adds Pakistan, along with 14 other countries, to the list of the **Child Soldiers Prevention Act**.

- The list identifies foreign governments with government-supported armed groups that recruit or use child soldiers and subjects them to certain restrictions.
- Other countries which have been added to the annual TIP list of the US State Department are Turkey, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen.

About the Child Soldiers Prevention Act, 2008:

- It identifies foreign governments having government-supported armed groups that recruit or use child soldiers.
- The Act requires publication in the annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report a list of foreign governments that have recruited or used child soldiers during the previous year.
- Designation under this act could result in restrictions on certain security assistance and commercial licensing of military equipment.

Who is a child soldier?

1. The term child soldier means any person under 18 years of age who takes a direct part in hostilities or who has been compulsorily recruited into governmental armed forces, police, or other security forces.
2. It also means any person under 15 years of age who has been voluntarily recruited into governmental armed forces, police, or other security forces or any person under 18 years of age who has been recruited or used in hostilities by armed forces distinct from the armed forces of a state.

3. It also includes any such person who is serving in any capacity, including in a support role, such as a cook, porter, messenger, medic, guard or sex slave.

How are countries identified?

The determination to include a government in the CSPA list is informed by a range of sources, including first-hand observation by the US government personnel and research and credible reporting from various UN entities, international organisations, local and international NGOs, and international and domestic media outlets.

Insta Curious:

Do you know that according to Rome statute, “conscripting and enlisting children under the age of fifteen years into armed forces or using them to participate actively in hostilities” is a war crime? [Read Here Briefly](#) (directly search for child soldiers)

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-us-has-put-pakistan-turkey-on-child-soldier-recruiter-list-what-does-it-mean-7387555/lite/>.

2. Indemnity issues hold up U.S. vaccine donation:

Context:

Vaccine donations from the US are being held up by regulatory issues over indemnity.

Background:

The U.S. announced the donation of 80 million doses of American-made COVID-19 vaccines to dozens of countries including India.

What is an indemnity clause?

In simple terms, **indemnity means security against a loss or other financial stress.**

- In legal terms, it means a contractual obligation of one party to compensate another party due to the acts of the former.
- The clause is commonly used in insurance contracts.

In the case of India, if the government gives an indemnity to foreign vaccine makers to roll out their vaccine in the country, **the government, and not the vaccine maker, would be liable to compensate any citizen who claims to have side effects after taking the vaccine jab.**

Are there any exceptions to indemnification?

There are a number of common exceptions to indemnification.

An indemnification provision may exclude indemnification for claims or losses that result from the indemnified party's:

1. Negligence or gross negligence.
2. Improper use of the products.
3. Bad faith failure to comply with its obligations in the agreement.

Insta Curious: Did you know that The WHO has launched a no fault compensation programme for Covid-19 vaccines through the Covax alliance? [Read here,](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is indemnity clause?
2. Where it is often used?
3. Benefits of the clause.

4. Important Vaccines being imported into India.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of the Indemnity clause.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GQB8OCCJL.1&imageview=0>.

3. Authorised Economic Operators Programme:

Context:

The [Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs \(CBIC\)](#) has inaugurated the online filing of Authorised Economic Operators (AEO).

- The new version (V 2.0) of the web application is designed to ensure continuous real-time and digital monitoring of physically filed applications for timely intervention and expedience.

Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Programme:

- AEO is a programme under the aegis of the **World Customs Organization (WCO) SAFE Framework of Standards to secure and facilitate Global Trade**.
- The programme aims to **enhance international supply chain security and facilitate movement of legitimate goods**.
- AEO is a **voluntary compliance programme**.

How it works?

Under this programme, an entity engaged in international trade is approved by Customs as compliant with supply chain security standards and granted AEO status & certain benefits.

- **Benefits of AEO status include** expedited clearance times, fewer examinations, improved security and communication between supply chain partners.

SAFE Framework:

In June 2005 the WCO Council adopted **the Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade (SAFE Framework)** that would act as a deterrent to international terrorism, to secure revenue collections and to promote trade facilitation worldwide.

- It prescribes baseline standards that have been tested and are working well around the globe.

Insta Curious:

Did you know that Central Revenues Control Laboratory gets recognised as a Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL) of the World Customs Organisation for Asia-Pacific Region? [Read more about this,](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About SAFE Framework.
2. About WCO.
3. AEO Programme.

4. Key features.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of the AEO Programme.

4. What is the 'right to repair' movement?

What is it?

It is **the right of consumers to be able to repair their own electronics and other products**.

The goal of the movement is to get companies to make spare parts, tools and information on how to repair devices available to customers and repair shops to increase the lifespan of products and to keep them from ending up in landfills.

- The movement traces its roots back to the very dawn of the computer era in the 1950s.

Why did this movement start? What was the motive behind this?

Electronic manufacturers are encouraging a culture of '**planned obsolescence**' — which means that devices are designed specifically to last a limited amount of time and to be replaced.

- This leads to immense **pressure on the environment and wasted natural resources**.
- Also, consumers, more often than not, are left at the mercy of manufacturers who make repairs inaccessible for most, by dictating who can fix your device and making it an inordinately expensive affair.

Benefits of the Right to Repair:

Boost business for small repair shops, which are an important part of local economies.

'Right to repair' laws by various countries:

In recent years, countries around the world have been attempting to pass effective 'right to repair' laws.

1. **US** President Joe Biden has signed an executive order calling on the Federal Trade Commission to curb restrictions imposed by manufacturers that limit consumers' ability to repair their gadgets on their own terms.
2. **The UK** introduced **right-to-repair rules** that should make it much easier to buy and repair daily-use gadgets such as TVs and washing machines.

Who is opposing?

The movement has faced tremendous resistance from tech giants such as Apple and Microsoft over the years.

- Their argument is that opening up their intellectual property to third party repair services or amateur repairers could lead to exploitation and impact the safety and security of their devices.
- They also argue that such initiatives threaten data security and cyber security.

Insta Curious: [Do you know about the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative \(MPPI\)? \(An initiative which proposes reuse, refurbishing, material recovery, recycling and disposal options and environmentally friendly actions.\)](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the campaign.
2. E waste rules in India.
3. International conventions over e waste management.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-what-is-the-right-to-repair-movement-7400287/lite/>.

5. India's Afghan investment:

Context:

India is concerned because of the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan.

After the exit of US and NATO forces, Taliban is capturing many parts of the nation.

India is worried because:

1. It may have no role to play in that country, and in the worst case scenario, not even a diplomatic presence.
2. That would be a reversal of nearly 20 years of rebuilding a relationship that goes back centuries.
3. The Taliban's possible triumph also threatens \$3 billion worth of Indian investment in various projects — dams, roads, trade infrastructure.

India's assistance to Afghanistan:

No part of Afghanistan today is untouched by the 400-plus projects that India has undertaken in all 34 of Afghanistan's provinces.

1. **The 2011 India-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership Agreement** recommitted Indian assistance to help rebuild Afghanistan's infrastructure and institutions; education and technical assistance for capacity-building in many areas.
2. **SALMA DAM:** The 42MW Salma Dam in Herat province. The hydropower and irrigation project, completed against many odds and inaugurated in 2016, is known as **the Afghan-India Friendship Dam**.
3. **ZARANJ-DELARAM HIGHWAY:** The other high-profile project was the 218-km Zaranj-Delaram highway built by the Border Roads Organisation. Zaranj is located close to Afghanistan's border with Iran. The \$150-million highway goes along **the Khash Rud river** to Delaram to the northeast of Zaranj.
4. **PARLIAMENT:** The Afghan Parliament in Kabul was built by India at \$90 million. It was opened in 2015; Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the building.
5. **STOR PALACE:** In 2016, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the restored Stor Palace in Kabul, originally built in the late 19th century, and which was the setting for the 1919 Rawalpindi Agreement by which Afghanistan became an independent country.

6. India pledged \$1 million for another **Aga Khan heritage project**, the restoration of the Bala Hissar Fort south of Kabul, whose origins go back to the 6th century. Bala Hissar went on to become a significant Mughal fort, parts of it were rebuilt by Jahangir, and it was used as a residence by Shah Jahan.
7. Despite the denial of an overland route by Pakistan, **India-Afghanistan trade** has grown with the establishment in 2017 of an air freight corridor. In 2019-20, bilateral trade crossed \$1.3 billion.

Why is Afghanistan important for India?

- Afghanistan is vital to India's strategic interests in the region.
- It is also perhaps the only SAARC nation whose people have much affection for India.

Insta Curious:

Do you know about Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Freedom's Sentinel? [Read Briefly](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Overview of Indian projects in Afghanistan.
2. Location of these projects.

Mains Link: Discuss why a stable political situation in Afghanistan is significant for India.

Link:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-indias-afghan-investment-7406795/>.

6. US counters China's sea claims:

Context:

In the backdrop of China's growing assertiveness in the hotly contested waters, the US has said that Beijing's expansive **claims in the South China Sea** have "no basis in international law".

What's the issue?

Beijing has overlapping territorial claims with several Southeast Asian states in the South China Sea.

- China claims almost all of the resource-rich sea, through which trillions of dollars in shipping trade passes annually, with competing claims from **Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam**.
- Beijing has also been accused of deploying a range of military hardware, including anti-ship missiles and surface-to-air missiles there, and ignored a [2016 international tribunal decision](#) that declared its historical claim over most of the waters to be without basis.

Recent incidents:

- Hundreds of Chinese boats were spotted inside the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone.
- Chinese military aircraft appeared off Malaysia's coast.

US - China relations:

The U.S.-China relationship has deteriorated over a range of issues from cybersecurity and tech supremacy to human rights in Hong Kong and Xinjiang. The US sees China as the pre-eminent challenge.

Where is the South China Sea?

- The South China Sea is **an arm of western Pacific Ocean in Southeast Asia**.
- It is south of China, east & south of Vietnam, west of the Philippines and north of the island of Borneo.
- It is **connected by Taiwan Strait** with the East China Sea and by **Luzon Strait** with the Philippine Sea.
- **Bordering states & territories:** the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China (Taiwan), the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam.

Strategic Importance:

- This sea holds tremendous strategic importance for its location as it is the connecting link between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean (**Strait of Malacca**).
- According to [the United Nations Conference on Trade And Development \(UNCTAD\)](#) one-third of the global shipping passes through it, carrying trillions of trade which makes it a significant geopolitical water body.

Contesting Claims Over Islands:

- **The Paracel Islands** are claimed by China, Taiwan and Vietnam.
- **The Spratly Islands** are claimed by China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Brunei and Philippines.
- **The Scarborough Shoal** is claimed by the Philippines, China and Taiwan.

Since 2010, China has been converting uninhabited islets into artificial islets to bring it under [UNCLOS](#) (For example, Haven Reef, Johnson South Reef and Fiery Cross Reef).



Insta Curious:

Did you know that the yellow sea is one of four seas named after common colour terms? Which are the other seas?

Do you know the meaning of the phrase 'The Seven Seas'? [Read Here](#)

Have you given a thought about how seas are names and their associated problems? [Read Briefly](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Countries involved in the dispute.
2. What is nine dash line?
3. Disputed islands and their locations?
4. Important straits, passes and seas in the region.

5. What is UNCLOS?

6. Locate Taiwan strait and Luzon Strait.

Mains Link: Write a note on South China Sea dispute.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/international/chinas-sea-claims-have-no-basis-says-us/article35570625.ece/amp/>.

7. Israeli war crimes apparent in Gaza assault, says HRW:

Context:

[Human Rights Watch](#) investigation has revealed that **Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups** carried out attacks during the May 2021 fighting in **the Gaza Strip and Israel** that violated the laws of war and apparently amount to war crimes.

- Such attacks, it said, violate “**the prohibition against deliberate or indiscriminate attacks against civilians.**”

Background:

In May 2021, three Israeli strikes killed 62 Palestinian civilians where there were no evident military targets in the vicinity. Palestinian armed groups also committed unlawful attacks, launching more than 4,360 unguided rockets and mortars toward Israeli population centers, violating the prohibition against deliberate or indiscriminate attacks against civilians.

What do international laws say on war Crimes?

1. Under international humanitarian law, or the laws of war, warring parties may target only military objectives.
2. They must take all feasible precautions to minimize harm to civilians, including by providing effective advance warnings of attacks.
3. Deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian objects are prohibited.
4. The laws of war also prohibit indiscriminate attacks, which include attacks that do not distinguish between civilians and military targets or do not target a military objective.
5. Attacks in which the expected harm to civilians and civilian property is disproportionate to the anticipated military gain are also prohibited.

- Individuals who commit serious violations of the laws of war with criminal intent – that is, deliberately or recklessly– are responsible for war crimes.

What happened? How has the recent war unfolded?

The war erupted on May 10 after Hamas fired a barrage of rockets toward Jerusalem in support of Palestinian protests against Israel's heavy-handed policing of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, built on a contested site sacred to Jews and Muslims, and the threatened eviction of dozens of Palestinian families by Jewish settlers in a nearby neighborhood.

- During the fighting, Hamas fired over 4,000 rockets and mortars toward Israel, while Israel has said it struck over 1,000 targets it says were linked to Gaza militants.



About Human Rights Watch:

Founded in 1978, it is an international non-governmental organization, **headquartered in New York City**, that conducts research and advocacy on human rights.

- The group pressures governments, policy makers, companies, and individual human rights abusers to denounce abuse and respect human rights, and the group often works on behalf of refugees, children, migrants, and political prisoners.

Insta Curious: Do you know what Universal Jurisdiction is? [Read Here](#)

- Golan heights.
- Who are Hamas?
- What is Al-Nakba?
- About the conflict.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Where is the west bank?
- Gaza strip.

Mains Link: Suggest solutions to end the long standing Israel- Palestine conflict.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/international/israeli-war-crimes-apparent-in-gaza-assault-says-hrw/article35570509.ece/amp/>.

Topics: Important International institutions, agencies and fora, their structure, mandate.

1. UN Peacekeeping:

Context:

The 193 member states of the United Nations have thus far failed to agree on a **peacekeeping budget** for the year beginning July 1, which could lead to "a freeze on all missions" should a deal not soon materialize.

- The roadblock stems from China and African countries making multiple last-minute requests.

What's the issue?

The budget for the UN's global peacekeeping operations -- about 20 missions worldwide, with nearly 100,000 **Blue Helmets** mobilized -- amounts to about \$6.5 billion and covers a 12-month period starting each year on July 1.

- This year, the member nations have failed to agree on the budget.

Implications:

- The risk is that for a while until a decision on budgets is reached by the **General Assembly**, missions will find themselves under strict constraints, to only spend on measures to protect our personnel.
- Curtailment of operations would limit the ability of the missions to implement their mandate, including, for example, supporting host countries on Covid response, protecting civilians, among others.

How UN Peacekeeping operations are funded?

- While decisions about establishing, maintaining or expanding a peacekeeping operation are taken by the Security Council, the financing of [UN Peacekeeping operations](#) is the collective responsibility of all UN Member States.
- Every Member State is legally obligated to pay their respective share** towards peacekeeping. This is in accordance with the provisions of [Article 17 of the Charter of the United Nations](#).

The top 5 providers of assessed contributions to United Nations Peacekeeping operations for 2020-2021 are:

- United States (27.89%).
- China (15.21%).
- Japan (8.56%).
- Germany (6.09%).
- United Kingdom (5.79%).

What is peacekeeping? It's significance?

- United Nations Peacekeeping is a joint effort between the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support.
- Every peacekeeping mission is authorized by the Security Council.

Composition:

- UN peacekeepers (often referred to as **Blue Berets or Blue Helmets** because of their light blue berets or helmets) can include soldiers, police officers, and civilian personnel.
- Peacekeeping forces are contributed by member states on a voluntary basis.
- Civilian staff of peace operations are international civil servants, recruited and deployed by the UN Secretariat.

UN Peacekeeping is guided by three basic principles:

- Consent of the parties.
- Impartiality.
- Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate.

Insta Curious:

Did you know that In 2007, India became the first country to deploy an all-women contingent to a UN peacekeeping mission? [Know about the current 13 peacekeeping operations.](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Who funds peacekeeping operations?
- Role of UNSC.
- Composition of Peacekeepers?
- Why peacekeepers are called as Blue Helmets?

- Guiding principles of UN peacekeeping.
- Ongoing peacekeeping missions.

Mains Link:

Write a note on UN Peacekeeping and its significance.

2. OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework tax deal:

Context:

India has joined the [G20-OECD inclusive framework deal](#) that seeks to reform international tax rules and ensure that multinational enterprises pay their fair share wherever they operate.

- 130 countries and jurisdictions, representing more than 90% of global GDP, have signed the deal.

Two pillars of framework:

- Dealing with transnational and digital companies.** This pillar ensures that large multinational enterprises, including digital companies, pay tax where they operate and earn profits.
- Dealing with low-tax jurisdictions to address cross-border profit shifting and treaty shopping.** This pillar seeks to put a floor under competition among countries through a global minimum corporate tax rate, currently proposed at 15%.

Expected outcomes:

If implemented, countries such as the Netherlands and Luxembourg that offer lower tax rates, and so-called tax havens such as Bahamas or British Virgin Islands, could lose their sheen.

Impact/implications on India:

India will have to roll back the equalisation levy that it imposes on companies such as Google, Amazon and Facebook when the global tax regime is implemented.



A Global Tax Deal
130 countries/jurisdictions join OCED-G20 tax agreement
TWO-PILLAR DEAL

- Fairer distribution of MNC profits and local taxing rights
- Corporate tax floor rate, proposed at 15%

IMPACT ON EQUALISATION LEVY

Equalisation levy imposed by India will have to be rolled back
India will need to evaluate tax under new regime against equalisation collections
Finmin has called for meaningful and sustainable revenue to local market

What is Equalisation levy?

- In 2016, India imposed an equalisation levy of 6% on online advertisement services provided by non-residents. This was applicable to Google and other foreign online advertising service providers.
- The government expanded its scope from April 1, 2020, by imposing a 2% equalisation levy on digital transactions by foreign entities operating in India or having access to the local market.

What is BEPS?

Base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) refers to tax planning strategies used by multinational enterprises that exploit gaps and mismatches in tax rules to avoid paying tax.

- Developing countries' higher reliance on corporate income tax means they suffer from BEPS disproportionately.
- BEPS practices cost countries USD 100-240 billion in lost revenue annually.

Insta Curious:

1. Have you heard of Country-by-Country (CbC) Report? [Read this to understand](#),
2. Do you know what paradise papers are? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. OECD- objectives, composition and overview of geographical location of members.
2. OECD vs WEF.

3. Difference between signing and ratification.
4. What is BEPS?

Mains Link: What are Country-by-Country (CbC) Report? Discuss their significance.

3. WHO pre-qualification, or Emergency Use Listing (EUL):

Context:

A [WHO pre-qualification, or Emergency Use Listing \(EUL\)](#), is necessary for a vaccine company to supply vaccines to global facilities such as COVAX or international procurement.

- So far, eight vaccines have got an EUL from the WHO.
- WHO will also take a decision on including Bharat Biotech's Covaxin in its list shortly.

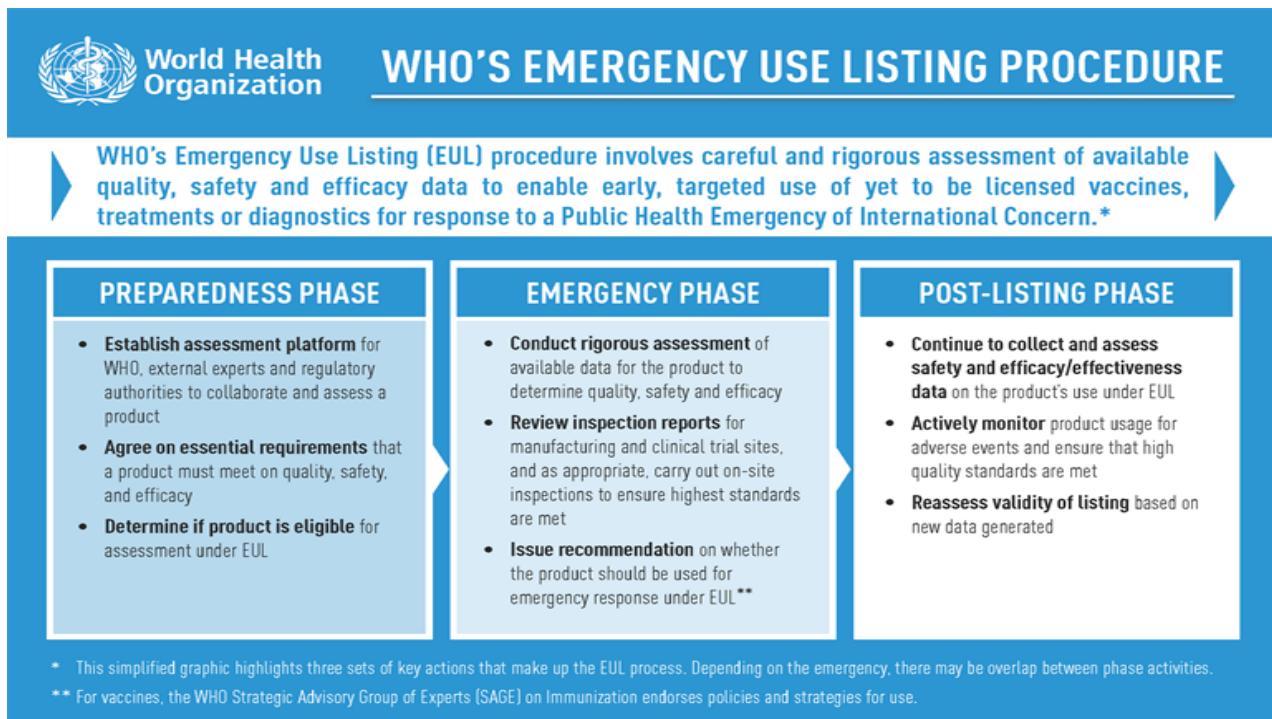
About WHO's Emergency Use List (EUL):

The WHO Emergency Use Listing Procedure (EUL) is a risk-based procedure for assessing and listing unlicensed vaccines, therapeutics and in vitro diagnostics with the ultimate aim of expediting the availability of these products to people affected by a public health emergency.

To be eligible, the following criteria must be met:

1. The disease for which the product is intended is serious or immediately life threatening, has the potential of causing an outbreak, epidemic or pandemic and it is reasonable to consider the product for an EUL assessment, e.g., there are no licensed products for the indication or for a critical subpopulation (e.g., children).

- Existing products have not been successful in eradicating the disease or preventing outbreaks (in the case of vaccines and medicines).
- The product is manufactured in compliance with current Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) in the case of medicines and vaccines and under a functional Quality Management System (QMS) in the case of IVDs.
- The applicant undertakes to complete the development of the product (validation and verification of the product in the case of IVDs) and apply for WHO prequalification once the product is licensed.



Insta Curious: [Do you know the differences between Vaccination and Immunisation?](#)

- About WHO EUL.
- Benefits.
- Eligibility.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- European Union- Composition and objectives.

Mains Link: Write a note on WHO's EUL.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G5G8OJ096.1&imageview=0>.

4. Why is Cairn going after Indian assets?

Context:

Britain's **Cairn Energy Plc** has secured an order from a French court authorising the freezing of 20 Indian government properties in Paris valued at over 20 million euros.

- This is the first court order secured against India to enforce a \$1.2-billion arbitration award that Cairn Energy had won against the Indian government in the retrospective tax dispute.

Why is Cairn going after Indian assets?

In December 2020, a three-member **international arbitral tribunal** at [the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Netherlands](#) ruled unanimously that the **Indian government was "in breach of the guarantee of fair and equitable treatment"**, and against **the India-UK Bilateral Investment Treaty**, and that the breach caused a loss to the British energy company and ordered compensation of \$1.2 billion.

- The Indian government is yet to accept the arbitration award. Cairn Energy is going after Indian assets overseas to recover the compensation.

What are India's options going forward?

While it is the first one to succeed for Cairn, **the French court order boosts its chances in other jurisdictions.**

- The assets will be tangled in legal dispute and **India will join a list of countries that includes Pakistan, Afghanistan whose assets were seized abroad.**
- Unless it can be proved that the arbitration awards against India are mala fide in the appeals, **the award can be enforced in foreign jurisdictions.** However, a settlement between the two parties cannot be ruled out.

What's the case?

- Cairn had challenged the Indian government seeking taxes over an internal business reorganisation using **the 2012 retrospective tax law**, under the UK-India Bilateral Investment Treaty.
- In 2014, the Indian tax department had demanded Rs 10,247 crore in taxes.
- In 2015, Cairn Energy Plc commenced international arbitration proceedings against the Indian government.

Permanent Court of Arbitration:

1. It was **established in 1899** and is **headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands.**
2. It is an intergovernmental organization dedicated to serve the international community in the field of dispute resolution and to facilitate arbitration and other forms of dispute resolution between States.
3. **All decisions, called "awards" are binding on all the parties in the dispute and have to be carried out without delay.**

Insta Curious: How arbitration, mediation and conciliation are different from each other? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is Arbitration?
2. Recent Amendments.
3. About the International Court of Arbitration.

4. About the Arbitration Council of India.
5. Appointment of arbitrators under the 1996 Act.
6. Permanent Court of Arbitration-composition, functions and members.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act.

5. UNESCO world heritage sites:

Context:

- UNESCO has voted to remove Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City from its world heritage list.
- The waterfront was stripped off of its status by the committee because of "irreversible loss of attributes conveying the outstanding universal value of the property".

What is a World Heritage site?

- A World Heritage site is classified as a **natural or man-made area or a structure that is of international importance, and a space which requires special protection.**
- These sites are officially recognised by the UN and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, also known as UNESCO.
- UNESCO believes that the sites classified as World Heritage are important for humanity, and they hold cultural and physical significance.
- They are protected under a international treaty called [**the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage**](#), adopted by UNESCO in 1972.

A taxing journey

A timeline of the conflict

January 2014: Income Tax Department seeks information from Cairn Energy about group reorganisation done in 2006

March 2015: Cairn Energy receives draft assessment order from I-T Department, citing **retrospective legislation to seek ₹10,247 crore** in taxes. Cairn reacts by filing a notice of dispute

May 2018: Pending arbitration proceedings, I-T Department begins selling Cairn shares to recover tax dues

2018: Three-member international arbitration tribunal concludes hearings in tax dispute

December 23, 2020: Cairn Energy wins arbitration

Key facts:

1. The list is maintained by the **international World Heritage Programme** administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, composed of 21 UNESCO member states which are elected by the General Assembly.
2. Each World Heritage Site remains part of the legal territory of the state wherein the site is located and UNESCO considers it in the interest of the international community to preserve each site.
3. To be selected, a World Heritage Site must be an already classified landmark, unique in some respect as a geographically and historically identifiable place having special cultural or physical significance.

Types:

1. **Cultural heritage sites** include historic buildings and town sites, important archaeological sites, and works of monumental sculpture or painting.
2. **Natural heritage sites** are restricted to natural areas.
3. **Mixed heritage sites** contain elements of both natural and cultural significance.

Insta Curious:

Did you know that recently [the Great Barrier Reef](#) was recommended to be added to a list of “in danger” World Heritage Sites? What are “in danger” World Heritage Sites? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:**Prelims Link:**

1. Who declares a site as world heritage site?
2. What is endangered list?
3. What is tentative list?
4. WHS in India and their locations?

6. Cabinet approves multilateral MoU signed by IFSCA:

Context:

The Cabinet has approved a multilateral MoU signed between the [International Financial Services Centres Authority \(IFSCA\)](#), [International Organization of Securities Commissions \(IOSCO\)](#), and [International Association of Insurance Supervisors \(IAIS\)](#).

Background:

In 2002 IOSCO adopted a **multilateral memorandum of understanding (IOSCO MMoU) designed to facilitate crossborder enforcement and exchange of information** among the international community of securities regulators.

- Then in 2005 IOSCO MMoU became the benchmark for international cooperation among securities regulators.

About IOSCO:

- Formed in 1983, it is an association of organizations that regulate the world's securities and futures markets.
- Members are typically primary securities and/or futures regulators in a national jurisdiction or the main financial regulator from each country.
- Headquarters: Madrid, Spain.

Its mandate is to:

1. Develop, implement, and promote high standards of regulation to enhance investor protection and reduce systemic risk.
2. Share information with exchanges and assist them with technical and operational issues.
3. Establish standards toward monitoring global investment transactions across borders and markets.

About the International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS):

- It is a **voluntary membership** organization of insurance supervisors from over 190 jurisdictions, constituting 97% of the world's insurance premiums.
- It is the international standards-setting body for the insurance sector.

- It was established in 1994 and operates as a verein, a type of non-profit organisation under Swiss Civil Law.
- The IAIS is hosted by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS).

Insta Curious: Do you know what inclusive insurance is? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- What are IFSCs?
- Can they be set up in SEZs?

- India's first IFSC.
- Services they provide?
- Limitations.
- About IOSCO.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of international financial services centres.

7. Arctic Science Ministerial:

Context:

Information regarding India's participation in the 3rd [Arctic Science Ministerial \(ASM3\)](#) was recently given in Parliament by the Government.

- It was jointly organised by Iceland and Japan and is the first Ministerial meeting held in Asia.

The theme for this year is 'Knowledge for a Sustainable Arctic'.

Background:

- The first two meetings—ASM1 and ASM2—were held in the USA in 2016 and Germany in 2018, respectively.
- The meetings are designed to provide opportunities to various stakeholders to enhance collective understanding of the Arctic region, emphasize and engage in constant monitoring, and strengthen observations.

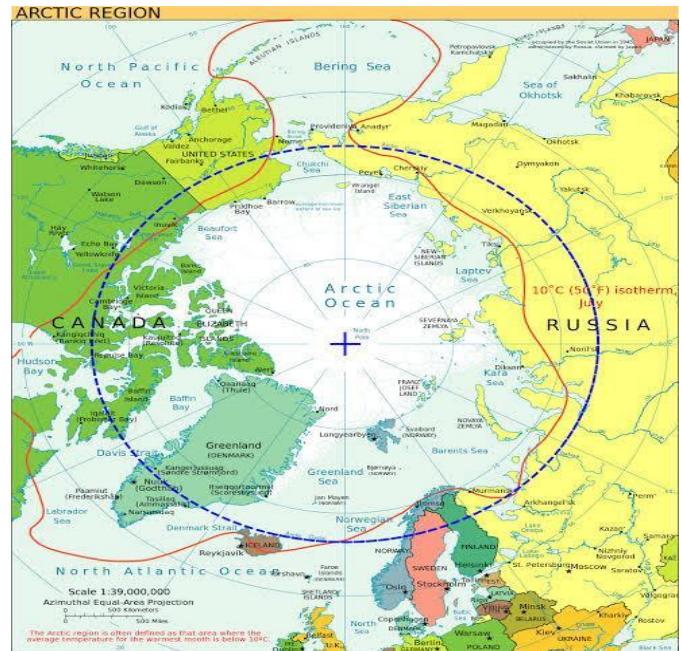
Need for international collaboration and cooperation in maintaining the Arctic region:

Arctic warming and its ice melt are global concerns as they play a pivotal role in regulating climate, sea levels, and maintaining biodiversity. Moreover, there is growing evidence of connection between the Arctic and the Indian Ocean (which modulates the Indian monsoon).

Hence, improving the understanding of physical processes and quantifying the impact of Arctic ice melt on the Indian summer monsoon is very important.

India and the Arctic:

- India's engagement with the Arctic dates back to 1920 with the signing of the **Svalbard Treaty in Paris**.
- Since July 2008, India has had a **permanent research station in the Arctic called Himadri at NyAlesund, Svalbard Area in Norway**.
- It has also deployed a multi-sensor moored observatory called [IndARC](#) in the Kongsfjorden fjord since July 2014.



India's contributions further in Arctic:

- The country would deploy open ocean mooring in the Arctic for long-term monitoring of upper ocean variables and marine meteorological parameters.
- The launch of [NISAR \(NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar\)](#) satellite mission, in collaboration with the USA, is underway. NISAR aims to conduct

global measurements of the cause and consequences of land surface changes using advanced radar imaging.

- India's contributions to the Sustained Arctic Observational Network (SAON) are continuing.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About ASM- objectives and meetings.
2. About SAON.
3. What is NISER?
4. About the Arctic Council.
5. About NCPOR.

6. What is IndARC?

7. About India's permanent research station in the Arctic.

Mains Link: Discuss the strategic significance of Arctic region.



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GENERAL STUDIES – 3

Topics: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

1. RBI unveils retail direct scheme:

Context:

The scheme was recently launched by the RBI.

- Under the scheme, **retail investors** will be allowed to open **retail direct gilt accounts (RDG) directly with RBI**.

How it operates/works?

A dedicated online portal will provide registered users access to primary issuance of government securities and to **Negotiated Dealing System-Order Matching system (NDS-OM)**. (NDS-OM refers to RBI's screen-based electronic order matching system for trading in government securities in the secondary market).

- There will be no charge on account opening and its management.

Objectives of the scheme:

To improve the accessibility of government securities.

Significance of the scheme:

The scheme is a one-stop solution to facilitate investment in government securities (G-secs) **by individual investors**.

Types of investments available for the users:

- Government of India Treasury Bills.
- Government of India dated securities.

- Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGB).

- State Development Loans (SDLs).

Things you should know:

- What are gilt accounts?
- Who are retail investors?
- What are G-secs?

What is a Gilt Account?

A Gilt Account can be compared with a bank account, except that the account is debited or credited with treasury bills or government securities instead of money. In other words, it's an account for holding government securities.

Who is a retail investor?

A retail investor is someone who buys and sells equity shares, commodity contracts, mutual funds, or exchange traded funds (ETFs) through traditional or online brokerage firms or other types of investment accounts.

What are G- Secs?

<https://www.insightsonindia.com/2021/02/06/what-are-govt-securities-3/>.

Insta Curious: Do you know what Fine Paper is?

[Read Here](#)

- Powers of the Centre and states to issue these instruments.

- Role of RBI.

- Factors which affect the prices of these securities.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- What are G-Secs?
- Short and long term securities.

Mains Link: What are G-Secs? Why are they significant? Discuss.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/g-secs-rbi-unveils-retail-direct-scheme/article35288944.ece/amp/>.

2. Global Survey of 143 economies on Digital Trade Facilitation:

Context:

The United Nation's Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific's (UNESCAP) has released its latest **Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation**.

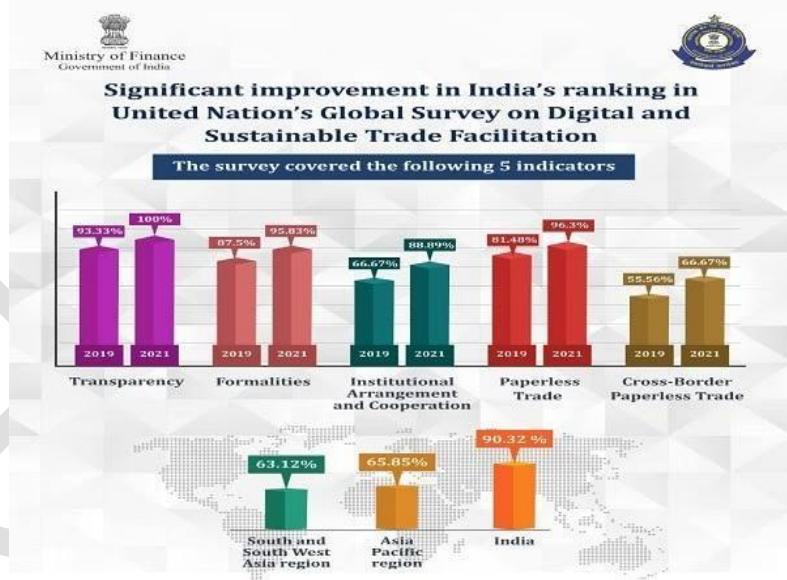
- It is done every two years and aims to review the progress of trade facilitation reforms in their respective member states.
- The survey has been carried out since 2015 jointly by the five United Nations Regional Commissions (UNRCs) — ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA.
- The 2021 survey includes an assessment of 58 trade facilitation measures covered by **the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement**.

India's performance:

1. India has scored 90.32 percent compared to the 78.49 percent in 2019.
2. India's scores on five key indicators: Transparency: 100%; Formalities: 95.83%; Institutional Arrangement and Cooperation: 88.89%; Paperless Trade: 96.3%; Cross-Border Paperless Trade: 66.67%.
3. India's overall score is higher than many OECD countries, EU region average.
4. India is also the best performing country when compared to South and South West Asia region (63.12%) and Asia Pacific region (65.85%).

The Government of India has implemented various measures bringing technological intervention to bring transparency in the day to day administration. These include:

1. **AEBAS**- Aadhar Enabled Biometric Attendance enables real time and flawless monitoring of employee attendance thereby ensuring punctuality among employee.
2. **e-Office** aims to usher in more efficient, effective and transparent inter-government and intra-government transactions and processes. It enhances transparency, assure data security and data.
3. **GeM**: Government e-Market (GeM) provided rich listing products for individual categories of Goods Services, transparent and ease of buying and user-friendly dash board for buying and monitoring supplies and payment.



Insta Curious:

Do you know what Complementary Currency is? [Read Here](#)

[Do you know the exact difference between International Commerce and International Trade?](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the survey.
2. Parameters.
3. Performance of India.

4. Performance of other countries.

Mains Link: Discuss about the performance of India in the latest survey.

Topics: Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing.

1. Crop Insurance Week:

Context:

Government has launched the **Crop Insurance Awareness Campaign** for [Fasal Bima Yojana](#) during the **Crop Insurance Week** (being observed from July 1 to 7).

Performance of PMFBY:

1. Till date, the scheme has insured over 29.16 crore farmer applications (5.5 crore farmer applications on year-on-year basis).
2. Over the period of 5 years, more than 8.3 crore farmer applications have benefited from the scheme.
3. Moreover, Rs.95,000 crores claims have been paid as against Rs. 20,000 crore farmers share.

About Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana:

- It is in line with the **One Nation – One Scheme theme**- It replaced National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS).
- Launched in 2016.
- **Coverage:** All food & oilseed crops and annual commercial/horticultural crops for which past yield data is available.
- **Premium:** The prescribed premium is 2% to be paid by farmers for all Kharif crops and 1.5% for all rabi crops. In the case of annual commercial and horticultural crops, the premium is 5%.

Objectives:

1. To provide **insurance coverage and financial support to the farmers** in the event of failure of any of the notified crops as a result of natural calamities, pests & diseases.
2. To **stabilise the income of farmers** to ensure their continuance in farming.
3. To encourage farmers to **adopt innovative and modern agricultural practices**.
4. To **ensure flow of credit** to the agriculture sector.

Coverage:

The Scheme covers all Food & Oilseeds crops and Annual Commercial/Horticultural Crops for which past yield data is available and for which requisite number of Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs) are being conducted under General Crop Estimation Survey (GCES).

PMFBY to PMFBY 2.0 (overhauled PMFBY):

Completely Voluntary: It has been decided to make enrolment 100% voluntary for all farmers from 2020 Kharif.

Limit to Central Subsidy: The Cabinet has decided to cap the Centre's premium subsidy under these schemes for premium rates up to 30% for unirrigated areas/crops and 25% for irrigated areas/crops.

More Flexibility to States: The government has given the flexibility to states/UTs to implement PMFBY and given them the option to select any number of additional risk covers/features like prevented sowing, localised calamity, mid-season adversity, and post-harvest losses.

Penalising the Pendency: In the revamped PMFBY, a provision has been incorporated wherein if states don't release their share before March 31 for the Kharif season and September 30 for rabi, they would not be allowed to participate in the scheme in subsequent seasons.

Investing in ICE Activities: Insurance companies have to now spend 0.5% of the total premium collected on information, education and communication (IEC) activities.

Insta Curious: Have you heard of INSURED by IFAD? [Read Here](#)

3. Eligibility.
4. PMFBY 2.0.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Key features of PMFBY.
2. Benefits.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of PMFBY 2.0.

2. Anti-Methanogenic Feed Supplement: Harit Dhara:

Context:

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed an anti-Methanogenic feed supplement 'Harit Dhara' (HD).

Significance of this supplement:

- This supplement can cut down cattle methane emissions by 17-20% and can also result in higher milk production.

What is Harit Dhara?

It has been made from **tannin-rich plant-based sources**. Tropical plants containing tannins, bitter and astringent chemical compounds, are known to suppress or **remove protozoa from the rumen**.

Benefits:

1. **It decreases the population of protozoa microbes in the rumen**, responsible for hydrogen production and making it available to the archaea (structure similar to bacteria) for reduction of CO₂ to methane.
2. **Fermentation** after using this supplement will help produce more **propionic acid**, which provides more energy for lactose (milk sugar) production and body weight gain.
3. **Reduces methane production**: An average lactating cow or buffalo in India emits around 200 litres of methane per day, while it is 85-95 litres for young growing heifers and 20-25 litres for adult sheep. Feeding Harit Dhara can reduce these by a fifth.

How and why is methane produced in cattle?

Methane is produced by animals having rumen.

1. **Rumen** is the first of the four stomachs where the cattle eat plant material, cellulose, fibre, starch and sugars. These get fermented or broken down by microorganisms prior to further digestion and nutrient absorption.
2. **Carbohydrate fermentation leads to production of CO₂ and hydrogen. These are used by microbes (Archaea) present in the rumen to produce methane.**

What are the Concerns/ why do we need to limit methane emissions from cattle?

Methane's global warming potential 25 times of carbon dioxide (CO₂) over 100 years, makes it a **more potent greenhouse gas**.

The **2019 Livestock Census** showed India's cattle population at 193.46 million, along with 109.85 million buffaloes, 148.88 million goats and 74.26 million sheep.

1. Belching cattle, buffaloes, sheep and goats in India emit an estimated 9.25 million tonnes (mt) to 14.2 mt of methane annually, out of a global total of 90 mt-plus from livestock.
2. Being largely fed on agricultural residues i.e wheat/paddy straw and maize, sorghum or bajra stover – **ruminants in India tend to produce 50-100% higher methane than their industrialised country counterparts** that are given more easily fermentable/digestible concentrates, silages and green fodder.

Insta Curious: Do you know about Coalbed methane and how it is extracted from coal?

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is methane? How is it produced?
2. What is methane hydrate?
3. Coalbed methane vs Shale gas.
4. What is coalification?

5. Greenhouse gases emitted during CBM extraction?

Mains Link: Discuss steps taken by India to reduce methane emissions.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/indianexpress.com/article/india/feed-developed-by-icar-also-increases-weight-milk-production-feed-supplement-reduces-methane-emissions-by-livestock-7389140/lite/>.

3. Agriculture Infrastructure Fund:

Context:

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to the various modifications in the Central Sector Scheme of Financing Facility under '[Agriculture Infrastructure Fund](#)'.

Latest modifications:

1. **Eligibility has now been extended** to State Agencies/APMCs, National & State Federations of Cooperatives, Federations of Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs) and Federations of Self Help Groups (SHGs).
2. For APMCs, interest subvention for a loan upto Rs. 2 crore will be provided for each project of different infrastructure types e.g. cold storage, sorting, grading and assaying units, silos, etc within the same market yard.
3. **The power has been delegated to Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare** to make necessary changes with regard to addition or deletion of beneficiary.
4. The period of financial facility has been extended from 4 to 6 years upto 2025-26 and overall period of the scheme has been extended from 10 to 13 upto 2032-33.

About the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund:

- It is a medium - long term debt financing facility for investment in viable projects for **post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets through interest subvention and credit guarantee**.
- Under the scheme, Rs. 1 Lakh Crore will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans with interest subvention of 3% per annum and credit guarantee coverage under CGTMSE for loans up to Rs. 2 Crores.

Eligible beneficiaries include:

Farmers, Marketing Cooperative Societies, Joint Liability Groups (JLG), Multipurpose Cooperative Societies, Agri-entrepreneurs, Start-ups, and Central/State agency or Local Body sponsored Public-Private Partnership Projects.

Interest subvention:

All loans under this financing facility will have interest subvention of 3% per annum up to a limit of Rs. 2 crore. This subvention will be available for a maximum period of seven years.

Credit guarantee:

- Credit guarantee coverage will be available for eligible borrowers from this financing facility under Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) scheme for a loan up to Rs. 2 crore.
- The fee for this coverage will be paid by the Government.
- In case of FPOs the credit guarantee may be availed from the facility created under FPO promotion scheme of Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DACPW).

Management of the fund:

- It will be managed and monitored through an online Management Information System (MIS) platform.
- The National, State and District level Monitoring Committees will be set up to ensure real-time monitoring and effective feed-back.

Insta Curious: Do you know what Garnishment is? (General Economy Term) [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the Fund.
2. What are FPOs?
3. What are Cooperatives? Constitutional provisions.

4. About CGTMSE.
5. Central sector vs Centrally sponsored schemes.
6. Core vs core of core schemes.

4. Special Livestock Sector Package:

Context:

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved implementation of a **special livestock sector package (Rs. 9,800 crore)**.

- The aim is to boost growth in the livestock sector and thereby make animal husbandry more remunerative to farmers engaged in Animal Husbandry Sector.
- It includes the share of investments by State Governments, State Cooperatives, Financial institutions, External funding agencies and other stakeholders.

Details:

The package has been designed by **revising and realigning various components of the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying' Schemes for the next five years**, starting 2021-22.

All the schemes of the Department will be merged into three broad categories as:

1. **Development Programmes:** It includes Rashtriya Gokul Mission, National Programme for Dairy Development (NPDD), National Livestock Mission (NLM) and Livestock Census and Integrated Sample Survey (LC & ISS) as sub-schemes.
2. **Disease Control Programme:** It is renamed as Livestock Health and Disease Control (LH & DC) which includes the present Livestock Health and Disease Control (LH & DC) scheme and National Animal Disease Control Programme (NADCP).
3. **Infrastructure Development Fund:** The Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development fund (AHIDF) and the Dairy Infrastructure Development Fund (DIDF) are merged and the present scheme for support to Dairy Cooperatives and Farmer Producer Organizations engaged in Dairy activities is also included in this third category.

Significance of the Sector:

- A large number of farmers depend upon animal husbandry for their livelihood. It supports the livelihood of almost 55% of the rural population.
- Also, India is the highest livestock owner of the world.
- As per the 20th Livestock Census, the total Livestock population is 535.78 million in the country showing an increase of 4.6% over Livestock Census-2012.

Insta Curious: Do you know about Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog? What are its functions? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Key features of the schemes mentioned above.
2. Dairy sector in India.

3. Overview of livestock census.
4. Latest merger of schemes.

Mains Link: Discuss the potential of India's dairy sector.

5. Food Systems Summit:

Context:

It is taking place in Rome.

- The Pre-Summit of the UN Food Systems Summit will set the stage for the culminating global event in September.

Background:

Originally announced on 16 October 2019 by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, the UN Food Systems Summit, including a Pre-Summit, was conceived following conversations with the joint leadership of the three Rome-based United Nations agencies – [the Food and Agriculture Organization](#), [the International Fund for Agricultural Development](#) and [the World Food Programme](#) – at the High-level Political Forum in July 2019.

About the Summit:

- The Food Systems Summit is convened as part of the **Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030**.

- The Summit will launch bold new actions to deliver progress on all 17 SDGs, each of which relies to some degree on **healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems**.
- Guided by five Action Tracks, the Summit will bring together key players from the worlds of science, business, policy, healthcare and academia, as well as farmers.

Why food systems?

The term “**food system**” refers to the constellation of activities involved in producing, processing, transporting and consuming food.

- Food systems touch every aspect of human existence.
- The health of our food systems profoundly affects the health of our bodies, as well as the health of our environment, our economies and our cultures.
- When they function well, food systems have the power to bring us together as families, communities and nations.

Concerns/Challenges:

- Too many of the world’s food systems are fragile, unexamined and vulnerable to collapse, as millions of people around the globe have experienced first-hand during the COVID-19 crisis.
- When our food systems fail, the resulting disorder threatens our education, health and economy, as well as human rights, peace and security. As in so many cases, those who are already poor or marginalized are the most vulnerable.

Insta Curious: Do you know the difference between Hunger and Food insecurity? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the Summit.

2. Objectives.

3. What are food systems?

4. What are SDGs?

Topics: *Food processing and related industries in India- scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management.*

1. Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay Unnat Krishi Shiksha Yojana (PDDUUKSY):

Context:

So far, 108 training programmes have been organised across 24 states/UTs under the scheme.

About PDDUUKSY:

- The scheme was launched in 2016 to develop human resources in organic farming, natural farming and cow based economy for environmental sustenance and soil health.
- Implemented by the Education wing of the [Indian Council of Agricultural Research \(ICAR\)](#).

Objectives:

1. To build skilled Human Resource at village level who are relevant for development organic farming and sustainable agriculture.
2. Provide rural India with technical support in the field of Organic Farming or Natural Farming or Rural Economy or Sustainable Agriculture.
3. To extend other activities of this Yojana at village level through their established centres.

The designated Centers may select the farmers for this initiative, subject to the conditions that:

1. The farmers must be assessed in terms of their interest in organic farming, natural farming and cow-based economy prior to their selection.
2. Priority must be attached to the farmers who are currently practising organic farming, natural farming or cow-based economy.
3. Farmers of all communities must be given fair representation.
4. The selection shouldn’t involve any gender discrimination.

Significance of the Cow-Based Economy:

India's traditions and practices, at least some of them, holds greater value than what was thought in the dawn of its modern state; and so is the case with the way the nation has always treated its cows.

- This domestic animal has been an integral part of rural India since the days of yore.
- With respect to agriculture, Indian cow breeds are proven to possess genetic capacity that produces better quality milk.
- The milk so produced contains a higher level of **CLA (Conjugated Linoleic Acid)** which is anti-carcinogenic.
- Apart from that, **cow urine** can be used as a bio-fertilizer and post repellent which helps in increasing crop production with reduced costs.

Given these facets, the government considers cow farms among its major focal areas.

Insta Curious: Do you know about Fukuoka's Natural Farming? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Key features of the scheme.
2. Eligibility.

3. Benefits.

Mains Link: What is cow based economy? Discuss the significance of such economies.

Topics: *Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.*

1. Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme for better operations & financial sustainability of all DISCOMs:

Context:

The scheme was recently approved by the Union Cabinet.

Highlights of the scheme:

1. It is a reforms-based and results-linked scheme.
2. It seeks to improve the operational efficiencies and financial sustainability of all DISCOMs/Power Departments excluding Private Sector DISCOMs.
3. The scheme envisages the provision of conditional financial assistance to DISCOMs for strengthening supply infrastructure.
4. The assistance will be based on meeting pre-qualifying criteria as well as upon the achievement of basic minimum benchmarks by the DISCOM.
5. The scheme involves a compulsory smart metering ecosystem across the distribution sector—starting from electricity feeders to the consumer level, including in about 250 million households.
6. Scheme also focuses on funding for feeder segregation for unsegregated feeders.
7. The Scheme has a major focus on improving electricity supply for the farmers and for providing daytime electricity to them through solarization of agricultural feeders.

Implementation:

- Existing power sector reforms schemes such as [Integrated Power Development Scheme](#), [Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana](#), and [Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana](#) will be merged into this umbrella program.
- Each state would have its own action plan for implementation of the scheme rather than a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.
- Nodal agencies for the scheme's implementation are **Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) Limited** and Power Finance Corporation (PFC).

Objectives of the scheme:

1. Reduction of average aggregate technical and commercial loss to pan-India levels of 12-15% by 2024-25.
2. Narrow the deficit between the cost of electricity and the price at which it is supplied to zero by 2024-25.
3. Developing institutional capabilities for modern DISCOMs.

- Improvement in the quality, reliability, and affordability of power supply to consumers through a financially sustainable and operationally efficient distribution sector.

InstaCurious:

Do you know what Energy Mix is? [Read Here](#)

Do you know what net-zero is? [Read Here](#)

- About DDGJY.

- About IPDS.

- Features of Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- About REC.

Mains Link: Write a note on power sector reforms in India.

2. NTPC REL to set up India's first green Hydrogen Mobility project in Ladakh:

Context:

NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd (NTPC REL) will set up the country's first green Hydrogen Mobility project in Ladakh.

- NTPC REL is a 100 per cent subsidiary of NTPC.

What is green hydrogen?

Hydrogen when produced by electrolysis using renewable energy is known as Green Hydrogen which has **no carbon footprint**.

- The hydrogen that is in use today is produced using fossil fuels, which is the primary source.
- Organic materials such as fossil fuels and biomass are used for releasing hydrogen through chemical processes.

Significance of Green Hydrogen:

- Green hydrogen energy is vital for India to meet its [Nationally Determined Contribution \(INDC\)](#) Targets and ensure regional and national energy security, access and availability.
- Green Hydrogen can act as an energy storage option, which would be essential to meet intermittencies (of renewable energy) in the future.
- In terms of mobility, for long distance mobilisations for either urban freight movement within cities and states or for passengers, Green Hydrogen can be used in railways, large ships, buses or trucks, etc.

Applications of green hydrogen:

- Green Chemicals like ammonia and methanol can directly be utilized in existing applications like fertilizers, mobility, power, chemicals, shipping etc.
- Green Hydrogen blending up to 10% may be adopted in CGD networks to gain widespread acceptance.

Benefits:

- It is a clean-burning molecule, which can decarbonize a range of sectors including iron and steel, chemicals, and transportation.
- Renewable energy that cannot be stored or used by the grid can be channelled to produce hydrogen.

What are the steps the Indian government has taken in the production of green hydrogen?

- During the budget speech in February 2021, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the launch of the **Hydrogen Energy Mission** to produce hydrogen from renewable sources.
- In the same month, state-owned Indian Oil Corporation signed an agreement with Greenstat Norway for setting up a **Centre of Excellence on Hydrogen (CoE-H)**. It will promote R&D projects for the production of green and blue hydrogen between Norwegian and Indian R&D institutions/universities.
- Recently, India and the US have set up a task force under the aegis of the **Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP)** to mobilise finance and speed up green energy development.

Insta Curious: Hydrogen fuel can be produced through several methods. [Read about a few here,](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Green Hydrogen.
2. How is it produced?
3. Applications.
4. Benefits.

5. About the Hydrogen Energy Mission.

Mains Link: Discuss the benefits of Green Hydrogen.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/business/ntpc-rel-to-set-up-indias-first-green-hydrogen-mobility-project-in-ladakh/article35294294.ece/amp/>.

3. Scheme for promotion of flagging of merchant ships in India:

Context:

The scheme was approved by the cabinet recently.

Highlights of the scheme:

1. The scheme seeks to provide Rs.1624 crore over five years as a subsidy to Indian Shipping companies in global tenders floated by Ministries and CPSEs for import of government cargo.
2. The budgetary support would be provided directly to the Ministry/Department concerned.
3. The subsidy support would be extended only to those ships which have bagged the award after the implementation of the scheme.
4. Flexibility in the allocation of funds for expenditure from one year to another and within the various Ministries/Departments of the scheme.
5. Ships older than 20 years would not be eligible for any subsidy.

Significance of the scheme:

1. **Potential to generate employment:** Increase in Indian fleet will provide direct employment to Indian seafarers since Indian ships are required to employ only Indian seafarers.
2. Cadets wishing to become seafarers are required to obtain on-board training on ships. **Indian ships will therefore provide training slots for young Indian cadet boys and girls.**
3. This shall enhance **the share of Indian seafarers in global shipping**, and thus Indian supply of Seafarers to the world will increase manifold.
4. The increase in Indian fleet will also **generate indirect employment in development of ancillary industries** such as shipbuilding, ship repair, recruitment, banking, etc. and contribute to the Indian GDP.

Need for these measures:

Despite having a 7,500 km long coastline, a significant national EXIM trade that is steadily growing on an annual basis, a policy of 100% FDI in shipping since 1997 and Indian shipping industry and **India's national fleet is proportionately small when compared with its global counterparts.**

- Currently the Indian fleet comprises a meagre 1.2% of the world fleet in terms of capacity.
- The share of Indian ships in the carriage of India's EXIM trade has drastically declined from 40.7% in 1987-88 to about 7.8% in 2018-19.
- This has led to an increase in foreign exchange outgo on account of freight bill payments to foreign shipping companies.

Insta Curious: [Do you know about the Hong Kong Convention for Ship Recycling?](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Key features of the scheme.
2. Benefits and eligibility.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of the scheme.

4. UDAN scheme:

Context:

The government has announced new flights under [the UDAN scheme](#) to connect small cities with the metros.

- The flights utilises less used airports in the country and seeks to offer affordable flights to the people of the country.

Background:

The Centre plans to operationalise 100 unserved and underserved airports and start at least 1,000 air routes under a regional connectivity scheme called **UDAN scheme (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik)**.

About UDAN Scheme:

- The scheme is aimed at enhancing connectivity to remote and regional areas of the country and making air travel affordable.
- It is a key component of Centre's [National Civil Aviation Policy](#) led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and launched in June 2016.
- Under the scheme, nearly half of the seats in Udan flights are offered at subsidised fares, and the participating carriers are provided a certain amount of **viability gap funding (VGF)** - an amount shared between the Centre and the concerned states.
- The scheme will be **jointly funded by the central government and state governments**.
- The scheme will run for 10 years and can be extended thereafter.

UDAN 4.0:

- The 4th round of UDAN was launched in December 2019 with a special focus on North-Eastern Regions, Hilly States, and Islands.
- The airports that had already been developed by Airports Authority of India (AAI) are given higher priority for the award of VGF (Viability Gap Funding) under the Scheme.
- Under UDAN 4, the operation of helicopters and seaplanes is also been incorporated.

Insta Curious: The 5/20 norm was brought in 2004. But, the 2016 National Civil Aviation Policy replaced it with 0/20. Why? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- When was UDAN scheme launched?
- Implementation and funding of the scheme.
- Overview of the National Civil Aviation Policy.

- Under the scheme, who provides Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to subsidise the airfare?
- Role of state governments under the scheme.

Mains Link: Discuss the performance of UDAN scheme.

5. India's Self Reliance for Renewable Energy Manufacturing:

Context:

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) had recently organised a conference on "Aatmairbhar Bharat - Self Reliance for Renewable Energy Manufacturing".

How India emerged as a world leader in the Energy Transition?

- India had one of the fastest rates of growth of Renewable Energy capacity in the world.
- It had pledged in [COP-21](#) in Paris that by 2030; 40% of its power generation capacity will be from non-fossil fuel sources.
- It has set a target of 450 GW of Renewable Energy capacity by 2030.
- It had achieved universal access by connecting every village and every hamlet under [Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana Scheme](#) and connecting every household under [Saubhagya Scheme](#). It was the fastest and the largest expansion of access in the world.
- India has already touched 200 GW of demand even when the effects of COVID-19 were still there.
- India will also emerge as a leader in **Green Hydrogen and Green Ammonia**.

Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana Scheme:

The erstwhile Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY) scheme for village electrification and providing electricity distribution infrastructure in the rural areas has been subsumed in the DDUGJY scheme.

Objectives:

1. To provide electrification to all villages.
2. Feeder separation to ensure sufficient power to farmers and regular supply to other consumers.
3. Improvement of Sub-transmission and distribution network to improve the quality and reliability of the supply.
4. Metering to reduce the losses.

Nodal agency for implementation: Rural Electrification Corporation Limited (REC).

Saubhagya scheme:

- Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (PM Saubhagya) was launched in September 2017 with a target to electrify all households by December 2018.
- This target was moved forward to March 31, 2019, and eventually the Centre declared that all 'willing' homes have been provided with electricity connections.

Insta Curious: Do you know what Green Ammonia is? [Read Here](#)

3. About DDUGY.
4. About Green Hydrogen.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the Saubhagya Scheme.
2. About REC.

Mains Link: Discuss India's achievements in Renewable Energy Sector.

6. Inland Vessels Bill:

Context:

The government has introduced [the Inland Vessels Bill, 2021](#), in Lok Sabha.

Key features of the Bill:

1. It provides for a **unified law for the entire country**, instead of separate rules framed by the States.
2. **The certificate of registration** granted under the proposed law will be deemed to be valid in all States and Union Territories, and there will be no need to seek separate permissions from the States.
3. The Bill provides for a **central data base** for recording the details of vessel, vessel registration, crew on an electronic portal.
4. **It requires all mechanically propelled vessels to be mandatorily registered.** All non-mechanically propelled vessels will also have to be enrolled at district, taluk or panchayat or village level.

Inland Water Transport (IWT) in India:

1. India has about 14,500 km of navigable waterways which comprise of rivers, canals, backwaters, creeks, etc.
2. IWT is a fuel-efficient and environment-friendly mode.
3. As per [the National Waterways Act 2016](#), 111 waterways have been declared as National Waterways (NWs).
4. The **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)** is implementing [the Jal Marg Vikas Project \(JMVP\)](#) at an estimated cost of ₹5369.18 crores for capacity augmentation of navigation on the Haldia-Varanasi stretch of Ganga (part of NW-1) with the technical and financial assistance of the World Bank.

InstaCurious: Do you know what Global Commons is? [Read Here Briefly](#)

3. About JMVP.
4. About IWAI.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Important waterways.
2. Their locations.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of National Waterways.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GF48PVOEE.1&imageview=0>.

7. 'Marine Aids to Navigation Bill 2021':

Context:

The Parliament has passed the [Marine Aids to Navigation Bill 2021](#), which will repeal the **Lighthouse Act, 1927**, an over nine-decade-old law governing the traditional navigation aid, i.e. lighthouses.

Highlights of the Bill:

Application: The Bill applies to the whole of India including various maritime zones including territorial waters, continental shelf, and exclusive economic zone.

The Bill provides that the central government will appoint the **Director General of Aids to Navigation**. The Director General will advise the central government on matters related to aids to navigation, among others. The central government may appoint a **Central Advisory Committee (CAC)** consisting of persons representing the interests affected by the Bill, or having special knowledge of the sector.

The government may consult the CAC on matters including: (i) establishment of aids to navigation, (ii) additions, alteration, or removal of, any such aids, (iii) cost of any proposal relating to such aids, or (iv) appointment of any sub-committee.

The central government will be responsible for the development, maintenance, and management of all general aids to navigation and vessel traffic services.

The Bill provides that **no person shall be allowed to operate on any aid to navigation (including any ancillary activities), or any vessel traffic service in any place unless he holds a valid training certificate**.

Dispute redressal: Any dispute related to the marine aids to navigation dues, expenses, or costs, will be heard and determined by a civil court having jurisdiction at the place where the dispute arose.

Need for a new law on this:

The need for enactment of a new Act is necessitated to provide an appropriate statutory framework which reflects the modern role of marine aids to navigation and to be in compliance with India's obligations under International Conventions.

Benefits of the new law:

1. Improved Legal Framework for Matters related to Aids to Navigation & Vessel Traffic Services.
2. Enhanced safety and efficiency of shipping.
3. Skill development through Training and Certification.
4. Marking of "Wreck" in general waters to identify sunken / stranded vessels for safe and efficient navigation.
5. Development of Lighthouses for the purpose of education, culture and tourism, which would tap the tourism potential of coastal regions and contribute to their economy.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Overview of the Bill.

2. About the Lighthouse Act, 1927.

3. Rules and regulations related to Shipping in International waters.

8. Inland Vessels Bill:

Context:

Lok Sabha has passed [the Inland Vessels Bill, 2021](#).

Key features of the Bill:

1. It provides for a **unified law for the entire country**, instead of separate rules framed by the States.
2. **The certificate of registration** granted under the proposed law will be deemed to be valid in all States and Union Territories, and there will be no need to seek separate permissions from the States.
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- IWT is a fuel-efficient and environment-friendly mode.
- As per [the National Waterways Act 2016](#), 111 waterways have been declared as National Waterways (NWs).
- The **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)** is implementing [the Jal Marg Vikas Project \(JMVP\)](#) at an estimated cost of ₹5369.18 crores for capacity augmentation of navigation on the Haldia-Varanasi stretch of Ganga (part of NW-1) with the technical and financial assistance of the World Bank.

InstaLinks:

- About IWAI.

Prelims Link:

- Important waterways.
- Their locations.
- About JMVP.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of National Waterways.

9. AERA Amendment Bill, 2021:

Context:

The Lok Sabha passed the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (AERA) Amendment Bill, 2021 and seeks to amend [the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India Act, 2008](#).

Background:

The 2008 Act established the [Airport Economic Regulatory Authority \(AERA\)](#). AERA regulates tariffs and other charges (such as airport development fees) for aeronautical services rendered at major airports in India.

What are the new provisions?

- The 2008 Act designates an airport as a major airport if it has annual passenger traffic of at least 35 lakh. As per the Bill, **the central government may also designate any airport as a major airport by a notification.**
- It will allow **AERA to regulate tariff and other charges** for aeronautical services for not just major airports with annual passenger traffic of more than 35 lakh, but also a group of airports.
- Profitable Clubbing:** The government will be able to **club profitable and non-profitable airports** as a combination/package to bidders to make it a viable combination for investment under PPP (Public-Private Partnership) mode.

Need for reforms:

- Typically, airports run the risk of becoming a monopoly because cities usually have one civilian airport which controls all aeronautical services in that area.
- To ensure that private airport operators do not misuse their monopoly**, the need for an independent tariff regulator in the airport sector was felt.

Benefits of the new legislation:

- Helps in improving and expanding the air connectivity to relatively remote areas expediting the UDAN regional connectivity scheme.
- Encourages the development of smaller airports.

InstaLinks:

- About AAI.

Prelims Link:

- Highlights of the Bill.
- Powers of the Central Government.
- About AERA.

Mains Link: Discuss the need for and significance of the Bill.

10. Strategic petroleum reserves (SPR) programme:

Context:

Two more commercial-cum-strategic facilities at **Chandikhol and Padur** of 6.5 MM storage capacity to be established under **phase-2 of SPR Programme. M**

Background:

Under **Phase I of strategic petroleum reserves (SPR) programme**, Government of India, through its Special Purpose Vehicle, [Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserve Limited \(ISPRL\)](#), has established petroleum storage facilities with total capacity of 5.33 Million Metric Tonnes (MMT) at 3 locations, namely (i) Vishakhapatnam (ii) Mangaluru and (iii) Padur.

About the SPR Programme:

Strategic petroleum reserves are **huge stockpiles of crude oil** to deal with any crude oil-related crisis like the risk of supply disruption from natural disasters, war or other calamities.

- The petroleum reserves are **strategic in nature and the crude oil stored in these reserves will be used during an oil shortage event, as and when declared so by the Government of India.**
- The construction of the Strategic Crude Oil Storage facilities is being managed by **Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL)**, a Special Purpose Vehicle, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Oil Industry Development Board (OIDB) under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.

Need for strategic oil reserves:

1. In 1990, as the Gulf war engulfed West Asia, India was in the throes of a major energy crisis. By all accounts India's oil reserves at the time were adequate for only three days. While India managed to avert the crisis then, the threat of energy disruption continues to present a real danger even today.
2. To address energy insecurity, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government mooted the concept of strategic petroleum reserves in 1998. Today, with Indian Consumption increasing, the case for creating such reserves grows stronger.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About SPR Programme.
2. Locations.
3. Implementation.

Mains Link: To address energy insecurity, the government of India had mooted the concept of strategic petroleum reserves in 1998. At present the demand for the same is growing stronger with each passing day. Discuss why such reserve is needed.

Topics: *Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.*

1. After Singapore, Bhutan adopts India's BHIM-UPI:

Context:

Bhutan has become **the first country to adopt India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) standards** for its quick response (QR) code. It is also **the second country after Singapore to have BHIM-UPI acceptance at merchant locations.**

- Bhutan will also become **the only country to both issue and accept RuPay cards as well as accept BHIM-UPI.**

What is BHIM?

Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) is India's digital payment application (app) that works through UPI, a system that powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application.

- Developed by [National Payments Corporation of India \(NPCI\)](#).
- Allows real time fund transfer.
- Launched in December, 2016.

What is UPI?

Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is an instant real-time payment system, allowing users to transfer money on a real-time basis, across multiple bank accounts without revealing details of one's bank account to the other party.

The BHIM app has **three levels of authentication**:

1. For one, the app binds with a device's ID and mobile number.
2. Second, a user needs to sync whichever bank account (UPI or non-UPI enabled) in order to conduct the transaction.
3. Third, when a user sets up the app they are asked to create a pin which is needed to log into the app. The UPI pin, which a user creates with their bank account is needed to go through with the transaction.

Insta Curious: Do you know what a Bank Wire is? Also know the Difference between Bank Wire and Wire Transfer.[Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Who controls ATMs in the country?
2. What is UPI?
3. What is National Automated Clearing House (NACH)?
4. What is National Financial Switch?

Three levels of authentication in BHIM

2. What is UV-C technology?

Context:

Ultraviolet-C or UV-C Disinfection Technology will soon be installed in Parliament for the "mitigation of airborne transmission of SARS-COV-2".

About the UV-C air duct disinfection system:

1. Developed by **CSIR-CSIO (Central Scientific Instruments Organisation)**.
2. The system is designed to fit into any existing air-ducts and the virucidal dosages using UV-C intensity and residence time can be optimised according to the existing space.
3. The virus is deactivated in any aerosol particles by the calibrated levels of UV-C light.
4. It can be used in auditoriums, malls, educational Institutions, AC buses, and in railways.

What is UV radiation?

UV radiation is the portion of the Electromagnetic spectrum between X-rays and visible light.

The most common form of UV radiation is sunlight, which produces three main types of UV rays:

1. UVA.
2. UVB.
3. UVC.

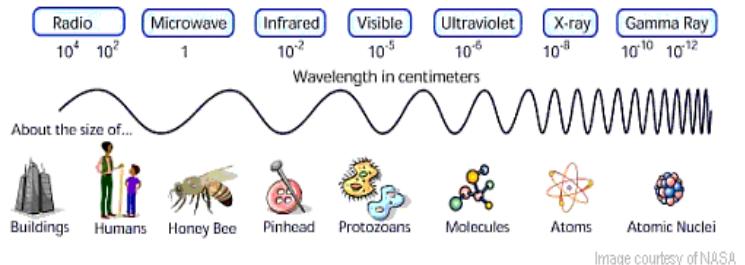


Image courtesy of NASA

Key facts:

- **UVA rays have the longest wavelengths**, followed by UVB, and UVC rays which have the shortest wavelengths.
- While UVA and UVB rays are transmitted through the atmosphere, **all UVC and some UVB rays are absorbed by the Earth's ozone layer**. So, most of the UV rays you come in contact with are UVA with a small amount of UVB.

How is it being used?

UV radiations are normally used to kill microorganisms.

- Particularly, **UV-C, also known as Ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI)** is a disinfection method that uses short-wavelength ultraviolet light to kill or inactivate microorganisms by destroying their

- nucleic acids and disrupting their DNA, leaving them unable to perform vital cellular functions and stops their replication.
- UVGI is used in a variety of applications, such as food, air, and water disinfection.

Is it safe for humans?

Researchers noted that the device was specifically developed to disinfect non-living things. Therefore, UV-C radiation used in this device could be harmful to the skin and eyes of the living beings.

Insta Curious: Are all lamps that produce UVC radiation the same? What are the different types of lamps that can produce UVC radiation? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Overview of electromagnetic spectrum.
- About UV Rays.
- Types.
- Features.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-what-is-uv-c-technology-and-how-does-it-work-on-coronavirus-7404573/lite/>.

Topics: Awareness in space.

1. Gaganyaan:

Context:

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is planning to launch **the first uncrewed mission** in December, as part of **the human spaceflight programme ‘Gaganyaan’**. It is facing challenges due to the adverse impact of the COVID-19-induced lockdowns that has disrupted hardware delivery schedules.

- As part of the mandate of Gaganyaan, two uncrewed flights are planned to test the end-to-end capacity for the manned mission.

When was it announced?

- Formal announcement of the Gaganyaan programme was made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his Independence Day address on August 15, 2018.
- The initial target was to launch the human spaceflight before the 75th anniversary of India’s independence on August 15, 2022.

Objectives:

The objective of the Gaganyaan programme is to demonstrate the capability to send humans to low earth orbit on board an Indian launch vehicle and bring them back to earth safely.

Preparation and launch:

- Four Indian astronaut-candidates have already undergone generic space flight training in Russia as part of the Gaganyaan programme.
- ISRO’s heavy-lift launcher [GSLV Mk III](#) has been identified for the mission.

Relevance of a Manned Space Mission for India:

Boost to industries: The Indian industry will find large opportunities through participation in the highly demanding Space missions. Gaganyaan Mission is expected to source nearly 60% of its equipment from the Indian private sector.

Employment: According to the ISRO chief, the Gaganyaan mission would create 15,000 new employment opportunities, 13,000 of them in private industry and the space organisation would need an additional manpower of 900.

Spurs research and development: It will thrust significant research in areas such as materials processing, astrobiology, resources mining, planetary chemistry, planetary orbital calculus and many other areas.

Motivation: Human space flight will provide that inspiration to the youth and also the national public mainstream. It would inspire the young generation into notable achievements and enable them to play their legitimate role in challenging future activities.

Prestige: India could potentially become the fourth country to launch a human space mission. The Gaganyaan will not only bring about prestige to the nation but also establish India's role as a key player in the space industry.

Insta Curious: Do you know about the Mir Space Station? [Read Here](#) (Read Briefly)

3. About GSLV.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Gaganyaan.
2. Objectives.

Mains Link: Why is Gaganyaan mission significant for India? Discuss.

Link: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/first-uncrewed-mission-of-gaganyaan-in-december-its-race-against-time-for-isro-now/article35013256.ece/amp/>.

2. "Unity 22" mission:

Context:

"Unity 22" will be Virgin Galactic's next **rocket-powered test flight of its SpaceShip- VSS Unity**.

About the mission:

As part of the mission, the crew will be flying to **the edge of space** on July 11 on board the 'Unity' rocket ship developed by Virgin Galactic.

This will be the 22nd mission for **VSS Unity**.

- This will be **Virgin Galactic's fourth crewed spaceflight**.
- It will also be **the first to carry a full crew of two pilots and four mission specialists in the cabin**, including Virgin Group Founder Richard Branson, who will be testing out the private astronaut experience.

Objectives of the mission:

- Unity 22 will focus on testing the cabin and customer experience.

Currently, two additional test flights remain before the Virgin Galactic plans to commence commercial service in 2022.

Significance for India:

Sirisha Bandla, an astronaut born in India, will be a part of the crew.

- This is significant as she will be **the third woman of Indian origin to go to space after Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams**.
- **Rakesh Sharma** is another Indian who went into space prior to Bandla.

Uniqueness of VSS Unity Spaceship:

Virgin Galactic's suborbital spacecraft are **air-launched from beneath a carrier aircraft 'White Knight Two'**. The space vehicle can climb to an altitude of around 90 kilometres, enough to give passengers a few minutes of weightlessness and a view of Earth's curvature from the edge of space.

Insta Curious:

1. Have you heard of New Shepard, a rocket system meant to take tourists to space? [Read about this mission,](#)
2. What altitude is considered the Edge of Space? Where is Karman Line? Read [this](#) to understand better.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the mission.
2. Objectives.

3. Similar missions.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of the mission.

3. Latest findings by NASA's Cassini spacecraft:

Context:

NASA's Cassini spacecraft has made the following discoveries in **the moons of Saturn** by flying through their plumes:

1. Titan has **methane** in its atmosphere.
2. Enceladus has **a liquid ocean** with erupting plumes of gas and water.

Researchers have concluded that there may be unknown **methane-producing processes** on Enceladus that await discovery.

Methane-producing organisms on Earth:

- Most of the methane on Earth has a **biological origin**. Microorganisms called **methanogens** are capable of generating methane as a **metabolic byproduct**. They do not require oxygen to live and are widely distributed in nature.
- **Methanogens** are found in swamps, dead organic matter, and even in the human gut. They are known to survive in high temperatures and simulation studies have shown that they can live in Martian conditions.

How else can methane be produced on Enceladus?

1. Methane could be formed by the **chemical breakdown of organic matter present in Enceladus' core**.
2. **Hydrothermal processes** could help the formation of carbon dioxide and methane.

About Cassini Mission:

- Launched in 1997.
- The mission is a cooperation between NASA, the European Space Agency and the Italian Space Agency.
- This was the **first landing ever accomplished in the outer Solar System**.
- Cassini is the **fourth space probe to visit Saturn and the first to enter orbit**.
- Its design includes a **Saturn orbiter and a lander for the moon Titan. The lander, called Huygens**, landed on Titan in 2005.

Objectives of the mission:

1. Determine the three-dimensional structure and dynamic behavior of the rings of Saturn.
2. Determine the composition of the satellite surfaces and the geological history of each object.
3. Determine the nature and origin of the dark material on Iapetus's leading hemisphere.
4. Measure the three-dimensional structure and dynamic behavior of the magnetosphere.
5. Study the dynamic behavior of Saturn's atmosphere at cloud level.
6. Study the time variability of Titan's clouds and hazes.
7. Characterize Titan's surface on a regional scale.

Insta Curious: NASA's Voyager 2 is the second spacecraft to enter interstellar space after Voyager 1? Where Does Interstellar Space Begin? [Read this.](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the mission.
2. Objectives.
3. Saturn- key facts.
4. Saturn moons.
5. About methane.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/plumes-on-enceladus-possibility-of-life-on-saturns-moon-explained-7395434/lite/>.

4. VSS Unity spaceship's suborbital flight:

Context:

VSS Unity spaceship, with six people onboard, recently took off from New Mexico and reached an altitude of 85 km from Earth before returning. Such a trip is called a “**suborbital flight**”.

What's suborbital?

Satellites need to reach a threshold speed in order to orbit Earth. If an object travels at **a horizontal speed of about 28,000 km/hr or more**, it goes into orbit once it is above the atmosphere.

- At such speed, a satellite prevents itself from accelerating toward the Earth due to gravity.
- Such a trip allows space travellers to experience a few minutes of "weightlessness".

Significance of such experiments:

1. Suborbital flights are helpful for microgravity research.
2. They would be far less expensive than carrying experiments and people to the International Space Station.
3. Suborbital flights could also be an alternative to parabolic flights in aeroplanes that space agencies currently use to simulate zero gravity.

About the Unity 22 mission:

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This was the 22nd mission for **VSS Unity**.

- This was **Virgin Galactic's fourth crewed spaceflight**.
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Insta Curious:

1. What altitude is considered the Edge of Space? Where is the Karman Line? Read [this](#) to understand better.
2. Did you know that 90 percent of Earth's gravity reaches the space station? But then, why do objects still float in orbit? [Read this](#),

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the mission.
2. Objectives.

3. Similar missions.

4. What is suborbital?

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of the mission.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-fast-enough-to-reach-space-not-stay-there-7400009/lite/>.

5. NASA's VIPER Mission:

Context:

NASA has announced that it will launch its **Volatiles Investigating Polar Exploration Rover, or VIPER**, in 2023.

- NASA is undertaking the mission to understand if it is possible for human life to sustain there, by using locally available resources.

About the mission:

- VIPER is a mobile robot.
- It is the first resource mapping mission on any other celestial body.
- NASA's Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS) will be providing the launch vehicle and lander for what's going to be a 100-day mission.

Objectives of the mission:

1. To explore the Moon's South Pole region.
2. Help create lunar resource maps.
3. Evaluate the concentration of water as well as other potential resources on its surface.

Significance of the mission:

VIPER's findings will inform "future landing sites under the Artemis program by helping to determine locations where water and other resources can be harvested" to sustain humans over extended stays.

Insta Curious:

Do you know about NASA's Artemis programme which seeks to establish a sustainable human presence on the surface of the Moon by 2028? [Reference:](#)

6. Hubble telescope:

Context:

NASA was able to successfully switch to a backup computer on the **Hubble observatory** following weeks of computer problems.



About the Hubble Space Telescope:

1. The Hubble Space Telescope is a large telescope in space. NASA launched Hubble in 1990.
2. It was built by the United States space agency NASA, with contributions from the European Space Agency.
3. Hubble is the only telescope designed to be serviced in space by astronauts.
4. Expanding the frontiers of the visible Universe, the Hubble Space Telescope looks deep into space with cameras that can see across the entire optical spectrum from infrared to ultraviolet.
5. The **Hubble Space Telescope makes one orbit around Earth every 95 minutes.**

Achievements:

1. It has helped in discovering the moons around Pluto.
2. Evidence regarding the existence of black holes has emerged based on the observations through Hubble.
3. The birth of stars through turbulent clouds of gas and dust have also been observed.
4. The hubble telescope made observations of six galaxies merging together.
5. On February 11, 2021, the Hubble made observations of small concentrations of black holes.

Insta Curious: [Do you know the basic working of Optical Telescopes, Long wavelength Telescopes and Short Wavelength Telescopes?](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the Hubble Space Telescope.
2. About James Webb Telescope.

3. What is a black hole?

Mains Link: Write a note on the achievements of Hubble Telescope.

7. China's Zhurong Mars rover:

Context:

China's [Zhurong rover](#) has driven for 509 meters on the surface of Mars so far.

- The Zhurong rover has been working on the red planet for 63 Martian days. A Martian day is roughly 40 minutes longer than a day on Earth.

Background:

- China's [Tianwen-1 mission](#), consisting of an orbiter, a lander, and a rover, was launched on July 23, 2020.
- The lander carrying the rover landed in the southern part of Utopia Planitia, a vast plain on the northern hemisphere of Mars, on May 15 this year.

There are five core science objectives of the rover:

1. Create a geological map of Mars.
2. Explore the characteristics of the Martian soil and potentially locate water-ice deposits.
3. Analyze the surface material composition.
4. Investigate the Martian atmosphere and climate at the surface.
5. Understand the electromagnetic and gravitational fields of the planet.

Significance Tianwen-1 mission:

1. Firstly, with the successful landing, China became the third nation to achieve a successful soft landing on Mars after the Soviet Union and the United States.
2. Secondly, with the successful deployment of the rover on Mars, China becomes the only second country after the US to send a rover to the surface of Mars.
3. Thirdly, China has also become the 1st country to carry out an orbiting, landing, and roving operation during its first mission to Mars.

Other Mars Missions:

1. NASA's Perseverance Rover.
2. UAE's Hope Mars Mission (UAE's first-ever interplanetary mission).
3. India's Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM) or Mangalyaan.

Insta Curious: Did you know that the USSR in 1971 became the first country to carry out a Mars landing?

[Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

3. India's Mars mission.

Prelims Link:

1. Objectives of the mission.
2. Others Mars missions.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of the mission.

8. NASA's new spacecraft NEA Scout:

Context:

NEA Scout is one of several payloads that will hitch a ride on [Artemis I](#), which is expected to be launched in November.

What is Artemis I?

- It is an **uncrewed testflight of the Orion spacecraft and SLS rocket**.
- Under the Artemis programme, NASA has aimed to **land the first woman on the Moon in 2024** and also **establish sustainable lunar exploration programs by 2030**.

What is NEA Scout?

- NEA stands for **Near-Earth Asteroid**.
- NEA Scout is a small spacecraft, about the size of a big shoebox.
- Its main mission is **to fly by and collect data from a near-Earth asteroid**.
- It will also be **America's first interplanetary mission using a special solar sail propulsion**.

How will it use sunlight to sail?

- The CubeSat will use stainless steel alloy booms to deploy an aluminum-coated plastic film sail – thinner than a human hair and about the size of a racquetball court.
- The large-area sail will generate thrust by reflecting sunlight.
- Energetic particles of sunlight, called photons, bounce off the solar sail to give it a gentle yet constant push.
- Over time, this constant thrust can accelerate the spacecraft to very high speeds, allowing it to navigate through space and catch up to its target asteroid.

Significance of the mission:

- NEA Scout will begin an approximate two-year journey to fly by a near-Earth asteroid.
- Once it reaches its destination, the spacecraft will capture images of the asteroid which scientists will then study to further our understanding of these small but important solar system neighbors.
- Understanding their properties could help us develop strategies for reducing the potential damage caused in the event of an impact.

Insta Curious: Have you heard of NASA's solar sail mission, Solar Cruiser? What are solar sails and how do they work? Reference: [nasa](#).

InstaLinks:

3. About Artemis' mission.

Prelims Link:

1. About the mission.
2. Objectives.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of the mission.

9. What is the New Shepard rocket system?

Context:

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos back on earth after 10-min flight to space on [Blue Origin's New Shepard spacecraft](#).

- He was accompanied by brother Mark Bezos, Wally Funk, and 18-year-old passenger Oliver Daemen.

Significance of the mission:

The astronauts experienced three to four minutes of zero-g and travelled above **the Kármán Line, the internationally-recognised boundary of space**.

What is New Shepard, the rocket system?

- It is a rocket system **meant to take tourists to space successfully**.
- The system is built by **Blue Origin**.
- New Shepard has been named after astronaut **Alan Shephard, the first American to go to space**.
- It **offers flights to space over 100 km above the Earth** and accommodation for payloads.
- The system is a fully reusable, vertical takeoff and vertical landing space vehicle.

Scientific objectives of the mission:

It is a rocket system that has been designed to take astronauts and research payloads past **the Karman line** – the internationally recognised boundary of space.

- The idea is to provide easier and more cost-effective access to space meant for purposes such as academic research, corporate technology development and entrepreneurial ventures among others.

Insta Curious: Have you heard about Armstrong Line? Where does it begin? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About New Shepherd Rocket system.
2. Objectives.
3. Significance.
4. What is Karman Line?

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of space tourism.

10. NASA solves mystery of Jupiter's X-Ray Auroras:

Context:

Jupiter has **Auroras** near both its poles which emit X-rays. However, scientists were puzzled about the reason behind these X-Ray emissions.

- Now, combining data from [Juno mission](#) and European Space Agency's [XMM-Newton mission](#), NASA has solved this puzzle.

What's the reason behind this phenomenon?

Auroras are caused by **ions crashing into Jupiter's atmosphere**. These ions are 'surfing' the electromagnetic waves in Jupiter's magnetic field to enter the planet's atmosphere.

About Juno:

Juno was launched in 2011 on a mission to study Jupiter's composition and evolution. It's **the first spacecraft to orbit Jupiter since Galileo**.

- Juno's primary goal is to reveal the story of Jupiter's formation and evolution.

XMM-Newton mission:

Also known as **the High Throughput X-ray Spectroscopy Mission and the X-ray Multi-Mirror Mission**, it is an X-ray space observatory launched by the European Space Agency in December 1999.

- It is part of ESA's [Horizon 2000 programme](#).
- The spacecraft is tasked with investigating **interstellar X-ray sources**, performing narrow- and broad-range spectroscopy, and performing the first simultaneous imaging of objects in both **X-ray and optical (visible and ultraviolet) wavelengths**.

Insta Curious: Do you know what Halos, Sundogs and Sun Pillars are? [Read Here](#)

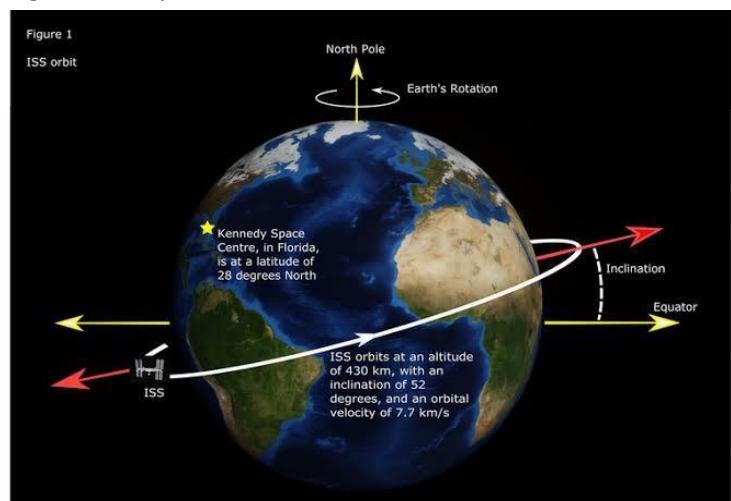
11. What is Nauka, the module Russia is sending to the ISS?

Context:

Nauka was launched from the **Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan** on July 21 using a Proton rocket. It is scheduled to be integrated with the ISS on July 29.

What is **Nauka**?

- Nauka, meaning "science" in Russian, is **the biggest space laboratory Russia has launched to date**.
- It will replace **Pirs**, a Russian module on the International Space Station (ISS) used as a docking port for spacecraft and as a door for cosmonauts to go out on spacewalks.
- Now, Nauka will serve as the country's main research facility on the space station.
- Nauka is 42 feet long and weighs 20 tonnes.
- It is also bringing to the ISS another oxygen generator, a spare bed, another toilet, and a robotic cargo crane built by the European Space Agency (ESA).
- On the ISS, **Nauka will be attached to the critical Zvezda module**, which provides all of the space station's life support systems and serves as the



structural and functional centre of the Russian Orbital Segment (ROS) — the Russian part of ISS.

What is the International Space Station?

- A space station is essentially a large spacecraft that remains in low-earth orbit for extended periods of time.
- The ISS has been in space since 1998.
- It is a result of cooperation between the five participating space agencies that run it: NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), JAXA (Japan), ESA (Europe), and CSA (Canada).
- The ISS circles the Earth in roughly 93 minutes, completing 15.5 orbits per day.
- The ISS serves as a microgravity and space environment research laboratory in which scientific experiments are conducted in astrobiology, astronomy, meteorology, physics, and other fields.

Insta Curious:

Did you know ISS is the ninth space station to be inhabited by crews, following the Soviet and later Russian Salyut, Almaz, and Mir stations as well as Skylab from the US. [Read here,](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the ISS.
2. Countries involved.
3. Objectives.

4. Previous space stations.
5. Other space stations.

Mains Link: Write a note on the International Space Station.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/nauka-international-space-station-russia-explained-7424109/lite/>.

12. EOS-03:

Context:

The [Indian Space Research Organisation](#) (ISRO) is scheduled to launch the geo-imaging satellite for earth observation EOS-03 in the third quarter of 2021.

- EOS-03 It is an earth observation satellite.
- Last year, ISRO launched EOS-01 which is nothing but another [Radar Imaging Satellite \(RISAT\)](#) that will work together with **RISAT-2B and RISAT-2BR1**.

Applications:

- It would enable near real-time monitoring of natural disasters like floods and cyclones.
- It is capable of imaging the whole country four-five times daily.
- It would also enable monitoring of water bodies, crops, vegetation condition, forest cover changes.

Advantages of radar imaging over optical instruments:

Radar imaging is unaffected by weather, cloud or fog, or the lack of sunlight. It can produce high-quality images in all conditions and at all times.

Other earth observation satellites launched by ISRO include:

RESOURCESAT- 2, 2A, CARTOSAT-1, 2, 2A, 2B, RISAT-1 and 2, OCEANSAT-2, Megha-Tropiques, SARAL and SCATSAT-1, INSAT-3DR, 3D, etc.

Insta Curious: Do you know the difference between Laser RADAR and LIDAR? [Read Here](#) (Briefly)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is radar imaging?
2. What are earth- observation satellites?

3. Differences between GSLV and PSLV.
4. Applications of EOS-01.
5. Differences between low earth orbit and geostationary orbits.

Mains Link: Why is Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) one of the world's most reliable space launch vehicles? How is it helping India commercially and technologically?

Topics: Awareness in the fields of IT, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

1. Central bank digital currency (CBDC):

Context:

The Reserve Bank of India is likely to soon kick off pilot projects to assess the viability of using digital currency to make wholesale and retail payments to help calibrate its strategy for introducing a full-scale central bank digital currency (CBDC).

Need for:

1. An official digital currency would reduce the cost of currency management while enabling real-time payments without any inter-bank settlement.
2. India's fairly high currency-to-GDP ratio holds out another benefit of CBDC — to the extent large cash usage can be replaced by CBDC, the cost of printing, transporting and storing paper currency can be substantially reduced.
3. The need for inter-bank settlement would disappear as it would be a central bank liability handed over from one person to another.

What is the CBDC or National Digital currency?

A Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), or national digital currency, is simply the digital form of a country's fiat currency. Instead of printing paper currency or minting coins, the central bank issues electronic tokens. This token value is backed by the full faith and credit of the government.

SC Garg Committee recommendations (2019):

1. Ban anybody who mines, holds, transacts or deals with cryptocurrencies in any form.
2. It recommends a jail term of one to 10 years for exchange or trading in digital currency.
3. It proposed a monetary penalty of up to three times the loss caused to the exchequer or gains made by the cryptocurrency user whichever is higher.
4. However, the panel said that the government should keep an open mind on the potential issuance of cryptocurrencies by the Reserve Bank of India.

Challenges in rolling out National Digital Currency:

1. Potential cybersecurity threat.
2. Lack of digital literacy of population.
3. Introduction of digital currency also creates various associated challenges in regulation, tracking investment and purchase, taxing individuals, etc.
4. Threat to Privacy: The digital currency must collect certain basic information of an individual so that the person can prove that he's the holder of that digital currency.

Insta Curious:

Do you know what the IOTA Tangle is? [Read Here](#)

2. What are Cryptocurrencies?

3. Which countries have issued Cryptocurrencies?

4. What is a Bitcoin?

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is a blockchain?

Mains Link: Discuss the pros and cons of CBDC.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GQH8PVCF6.1&imageview=0>.

Topics: Conservation related issues, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

1. Green Hydrogen:

Context:

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) is investing Rs 75,000 crore in its new business focused on **clean energy**, which includes **solar and green hydrogen**.

- The company will build **four giga factories focusing on solar, storage battery, green hydrogen and a fuel cell factory**, which can convert hydrogen into mobile and stationary power.

What is green hydrogen?

Hydrogen when produced by electrolysis using renewable energy is known as Green Hydrogen which has **no carbon footprint**.

- The hydrogen that is in use today is produced using fossil fuels, which is the primary source.
- Organic materials such as fossil fuels and biomass are used for releasing hydrogen through chemical processes.

Significance of Green Hydrogen:

1. Green hydrogen energy is vital for India to meet its **Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC)** Targets and ensure regional and national energy security, access and availability.
2. Green Hydrogen can act as an energy storage option, which would be essential to meet intermittencies (of renewable energy) in the future.
3. In terms of mobility, for long distance mobilisations for either urban freight movement within cities and states or for passengers, Green Hydrogen can be used in railways, large ships, buses or trucks, etc.

Applications of green hydrogen:

1. Green Chemicals like ammonia and methanol can directly be utilized in existing applications like fertilizers, mobility, power, chemicals, shipping etc.
2. Green Hydrogen blending up to 10% may be adopted in CGD networks to gain widespread acceptance.

Benefits:

- It is a clean-burning molecule, which can decarbonize a range of sectors including iron and steel, chemicals, and transportation.
- Renewable energy that cannot be stored or used by the grid can be channelled to produce hydrogen.

What are the steps the Indian government has taken in the production of green hydrogen?

1. During the budget speech in February 2021, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the launch of **the Hydrogen Energy Mission** to produce hydrogen from renewable sources.
2. In the same month, state-owned Indian Oil Corporation signed an agreement with Greenstat Norway for setting up **a Centre of Excellence on Hydrogen (CoE-H)**. It will promote R&D projects for the production of green and blue hydrogen between Norwegian and Indian R&D institutions/universities.
3. Recently, India and the US have set up a task force under the aegis of **the Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP)** to mobilise finance and speed up green energy development.

Insta Curious: Do you know the difference between Green Hydrogen and Blue Hydrogen? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Green Hydrogen.
2. How is it produced?
3. Applications.

4. Benefits.

5. About the Hydrogen Energy Mission.

Mains Link:

Discuss the benefits of Green Hydrogen.

2. Study links Black Carbon with premature deaths:

Context:

A team of researchers conducted a Study on black carbon and its impacts on health.

Key findings:

1. Black Carbon has a significant adverse effect on human health and can lead to a premature death.

2. The Indo-Gangetic plain is exposed to Black Carbon (BC) with serious implications on regional climate and human health.
3. Mortality rises linearly with an increase in air pollutants level and shows adverse impact at higher levels.

Relevance and significance of the study:

- The inclusion of BC as a potential health hazard inspires and provides a background for more epidemiological studies to provide evidence of health effects of air pollutants from different parts of India.
- This will help government and policy-makers for better planning to mitigate the adversity associated with changing climate-air pollution-health nexus.

What is black Carbon? What are the concerns?

Black carbon results from the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels and biomass. BC is **produced both naturally and by human activities** as a result of the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, biofuels, and biomass.

- **Primary sources include** emissions from diesel engines, cook stoves, wood burning and forest fires.
- It is a short-lived pollutant that is the second-largest contributor to warming the planet behind carbon dioxide (CO₂).

Insta Curious: Despite similar names, carbon black should not be confused with black carbon. What is Carbon Black? ([Read very briefly from an exam point of view](#). Preferably the time to save time)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Black Carbon.
2. Sources.
3. Effects.

4. What is brown carbon?

Mains Link: Discuss the issues associated with the deposition of black carbon on snow.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/black-carbon-linked-to-premature-mortality/article35068981.ece/amp/>.

3. Project BOLD:

Context:

The project was launched by [Khadi and Village Industries Commission \(KVIC\)](#) recently from the tribal village Nichla Mandwa in Udaipur, Rajasthan.

- 5000 saplings of special bamboo species – *BambusaTulda* and *BambusaPolymorpha* specially brought from Assam – have been planted in vacant arid Gram Panchayat land.
- KVIC has thus created a **world record of planting the highest number of bamboo saplings on a single day at one location**.

About the Project BOLD:

1. BOLD stands for **Bamboo Oasis on Lands in Drought**.
2. Launched by **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**.
3. The initiative has been launched as part of KVIC's "**Khadi Bamboo Festival**" to celebrate 75 years of independence "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav".
4. **Objectives:** To create bamboo-based green patches in arid and semi-arid land zones, To reduce desertification and provide livelihood and multi-disciplinary rural industry support.

Why Bamboo was chosen?

Bamboos grow very fast and in about three years' time, they could be harvested. Bamboos are also known for conserving water and reducing evaporation of water from the land surface, which is an important feature in arid and drought-prone regions.

Khadi and Village Industries Commission:

- KVIC is a statutory body established under the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act, 1956.
- The KVIC is charged with the planning, promotion, organisation and implementation of programmes for the development of Khadi and other village industries in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary.
- It functions under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

Insta Curious: Can you name Bamboo products with GI tag? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Project BOLD.

2. Objectives.

3. About KVIC.

4. Other projects by KVIC.

4. Fly Ash:

Context:

Seeking potential overseas off-takers for the flyash produced by its thermal power plants, NTPC has invited Expression of Interest (EoI) for sale of the residual product to the West Asian and other regions.

- It will supply the ash from power plants to ports and the total quantum earmarked for export is 14.5 million tonne (MT) per year.

Background:

As per the norms set by the Union ministry of environment, forest and climate change, thermal plants are supposed to utilise 100% of fly ash from the fourth year of operation.

What is Fly Ash?

Popularly known as **Flue ash or pulverised fuel ash**, it is a coal combustion product.

Composition:

Composed of the **particulates that are driven out of coal-fired boilers together with the flue gases**.

- Depending upon the source and composition of the coal being burned, the components of fly ash vary considerably, but **all fly ash includes substantial amounts of silicon dioxide (SiO₂), aluminium oxide (Al₂O₃) and calcium oxide (CaO), the main mineral compounds in coal-bearing rock strata**.
- **Minor constituents include:** arsenic, beryllium, boron, cadmium, chromium, hexavalent chromium, cobalt, lead, manganese, mercury, molybdenum, selenium, strontium, thallium, and vanadium, along with very small concentrations of dioxins and PAH compounds. It also has unburnt carbon.

Health and environmental hazards:

Toxic heavy metals present: All the heavy metals found in fly ash—nickel, cadmium, arsenic, chromium, lead, etc—are toxic in nature. They are minute, poisonous particles accumulate in the respiratory tract, and cause gradual poisoning.

Radiation: For an equal amount of electricity generated, fly ash contains a hundred times more radiation than nuclear waste secured via dry cask or water storage.

Water pollution: The breaching of ash dykes and consequent ash spills occur frequently in India, polluting a large number of water bodies.

Effects on environment: The destruction of mangroves, drastic reduction in crop yields, and the pollution of groundwater in the Rann of Kutch from the ash sludge of adjoining Coal power plants has been well documented.

However, fly ash can be used in the following ways:

1. Concrete production, as a substitute material for Portland cement, sand.
2. Fly-ash pellets which can replace normal aggregate in concrete mixture.
3. Embankments and other structural fills.
4. Cement clinker production – (as a substitute material for clay).
5. Stabilization of soft soils.

Components	Composition (wt %)
SiO ₂	18.9
Al ₂ O ₃	15.2
Fe ₂ O ₃	10.6
Na ₂ O	0.988
CaO	1.18
K ₂ O	2.23
TiO ₂	0.468
SO ₃	0.366
MgO	0.348
SiO ₂ /Al ₂ O ₃	1.2

6. Road subbase construction.
7. As aggregate substitute material (e.g. for brick production).
8. Agricultural uses: soil amendment, fertilizer, cattle feeders, soil stabilization in stock feed yards, and agricultural stakes.
9. Loose application on rivers to melt ice.
10. Loose application on roads and parking lots for ice control.

InstaLinks:

4. Potential applications.

Prelims Link:

1. What is fly ash?
2. Sources.
3. Pollutants.

Mains Link: What is fly ash? What are its effects on human health and environment?

5. Cities on river banks to incorporate river conservation plans:

Context:

[National Mission for Clean Ganga](#) has released a policy document on the conservation of river Ganga.

Highlights of the policy:

1. Cities situated on Ganga river banks will have to incorporate **river conservation plans** when they prepare their Master Plans.
2. These “river-sensitive” **plans must be practical and consider questions of encroachment and land ownership.**
3. There is a need for a **systematic rehabilitation plan** for such encroaching entities that emphasizes **alternative livelihood options in addition to a relocation strategy.**
4. **The Master Plan shouldn't mandate specific technologies**, but it can “create an environment” for facilitating the use of state-of-the-art technologies (without naming the providers) for river management.

Applicability:

The recommendations are currently for towns that are on the main stem of the river Ganga. There are 97 of them encompassing 5 States — Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal.

The [National Mission for Clean Ganga \(NMCG\)](#) in its 36th Executive Committee has approved new projects for rejuvenation of six rivers in Uttarakhand.

- The projects shall cover the six polluted river stretches in the Kumaon region.

The [National Mission for Clean Ganga \(NMCG\)](#), conceived as a ₹20,000-crore programme in 2014 to clean up the river, has so far been allocated ₹15,074 crore.

- Of this only ₹10,972 crore, or about two-thirds, has been released by the Finance Ministry to the NMCG.
- Further, Uttar Pradesh, at ₹3,535 crore, has received the most funds, followed by Bihar (₹2,631 crore), Bengal (₹1,030 cr) and Uttarakhand (₹1001 cr).

Background:

The funding is critical because as of June 30, ₹1,040.63 crore was available with NMCG under the [Namami Gange Programme](#).

- Several sets of interventions need to be taken up for cleaning and rejuvenation of the river such as treating domestic sewage, industrial effluent and solid waste, river front management, maintaining ecological flow, rural sanitation, afforestation, biodiversity conservation, and public participation.

About the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG):

It was registered as a society on 12th August 2011 under the **Societies Registration Act 1860**.

It acted as the **implementation arm of National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA)** which was constituted under the provisions of [the Environment \(Protection\) Act \(EPA\), 1986](#).

- Please note, NGRBA was dissolved with effect from the 7th October 2016, consequent to the constitution of **the National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection and Management of River Ganga (referred as National Ganga Council)**.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Composition of NGC.
2. About NGRBA.

3. What is NMCG?

4. Components of Namami Gange Programme.
5. World Bank group.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/cities-along-rivers-urged-to-include-conservation-plans/article35149029.ece/amp/>.

6. WWF and UNEP report on Human-wildlife conflict:

Context:

A report titled, **A future for all - the need for human-wildlife coexistence**, was recently released by **the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)**.

Highlights of the Report:

1. Conflict between humans and animals is one of the main threats to the long-term survival of some of the world's most iconic species.
2. Globally, conflict-related killing affects more than 75 per cent of the world's wild cat species. It also affects polar bears and Mediterranean monk seals as well as large herbivores such as elephants.
3. Global wildlife populations have fallen an average of 68 per cent since 1970.

Indian scenario:

1. Over 500 elephants were killed between 2014-2015 and 2018-2019, mostly due to human-elephant conflict.
2. During the same period, 2,361 people were killed as a result of conflict with elephants.
3. India will be most-affected by human-wildlife conflict because it had the world's second-largest human population as well as large populations of tigers, Asian elephants, one-horned rhinos, Asiatic lions and other species.

What needs to be done?

Completely eradicating human-wildlife conflict is not possible. But well-planned, integrated approaches to managing it can reduce conflicts and lead to a form of coexistence between people and animals.

Sonitpur Model:

1. In Sonitpur district in Assam, destruction of forests had forced elephants to raid crops, in turn causing deaths of both, elephants and humans.
2. In response, WWF India had developed the 'Sonitpur Model' during 2003-2004 by which community members were connected with the state forest department.
3. They were given training on how to work with them to drive elephants away from crop fields safely.
4. WWF India had also developed a low-cost, single strand, non-lethal electric fence to ease the guarding of crops from elephants.
5. Afterwards, crop losses dropped to zero for four years running. Human and elephant deaths also reduced significantly.

Advisory for management of Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) approved by Standing Committee of National Board of Wildlife (SC-NBWL):

1. **Empower gram panchayats** in dealing with the problematic wild animals as per the WildLife (Protection) Act, 1972.
2. Utilise **add-on coverage under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna** for crop compensation against crop damage due to HWC.
3. Augment fodder and water sources within the forest areas.

4. **Other measures:** The advisory prescribes inter-departmental committees at local/state level, adoption of early warning systems, creation of barriers, dedicated circle wise Control Rooms with toll free hotline numbers which could be operated on 24X7 basis.

Insta Curious:

Do you know about the Protected Planet Report of UNEP-WCMC, UNEP, IUCN? [Read Here](#)

Link: <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/wildlife-biodiversity/human-wildlife-conflict-among-greatest-threats-to-animal-species-wwf-and-unep-report-77863>.

7. Govt to issue guidelines for 'flex-fuel' vehicles:

Context:

Union govt will issue new guidelines for use of **flexible fuel vehicles (FFVs) using flex engines** by October.

- The guidelines will specify engine configuration and other changes required in vehicles to conform to stipulated changes in fuel mix.

What are flexible fuel vehicles (FFVs)?

An FFV is a modified version of vehicles that could **run both on gasoline and doped petrol with different levels of ethanol blends**.

- FFVs will allow vehicles to use all the blends and also run on unblended fuel.
- FFVs have compatible engines to run on more than 84 per cent ethanol blended petrol.

Benefits:

- FFVs are aimed at reducing the use of polluting fossil fuels and cutting down harmful emissions.
- Alternative fuel ethanol is Rs 60-62 per litre while petrol costs more than Rs 100 per litre in many parts of the country, so by using ethanol, Indians will save Rs 30-35 per litre.
- For India, FFVs will present a different advantage as they will allow vehicles to use different blends of ethanol mixed petrol available in different parts of the country.
- Also, these vehicles are a logical extension of the **Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme** launched by the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas in January 2003.
- Since India has surplus produce of corn, sugar and wheat, the mandatory blending of ethanol programme will help farmers in realising higher incomes.
- For the overall Indian economy, higher usage of ethanol as an automobile fuel will help save import costs as the country meets more than 80 per cent of its crude oil requirements through imports.

Disadvantages/challenges of using FFVs:

1. **Customer acceptance** will be a major challenge since the cost of ownership and running cost are going to be very high compared with 100 per cent petrol vehicles.
2. **Running cost** (due to lower fuel efficiency) will be higher by more than 30 per cent when run with 100 per cent ethanol (E100).
3. **Flex Fuel Engines cost more** as ethanol has very different chemical properties than petrol. Ethanol has very low (40 per cent) Calorific value as compared to Gasoline, very High Latent heat of vaporization causing cooling of charge/combustion etc.
4. **Ethanol also acts as a solvent and could wipe out the protective oil film inside the engine** thereby could cause wear and tear.

Insta Curious: Do you know what Cetyl alcohol is? [Read about its uses in brief](#)

3. About Ethanol blending.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About FFVs.
2. What is ethanol?

Mains Link:

Discuss the benefits of ethanol blending with traditional fuel.

8. Amnesty scheme for violators of environment norms:

Context:

The union environment ministry has put together an amnesty scheme for infrastructure and industrial projects that have violated environmental clearance norms.

Background:

The SOP is a result of orders from [the National Green Tribunal](#), which earlier this year directed the ministry to put in place penalties and an SOP for green violations.

Standard operating procedure (SOP) laid out by the ministry:

1. As per the new SOPs, projects that have expanded in capacity without requisite permissions will have to revert to older production limits until reassessed.
2. If prior EC was not required for the project but is now required under updated norms, then the project will have to restrict its production to the extent to which prior EC was not required till appraised again.
3. Only projects which are in complete violation of environmental norms and were never eligible for grant of environmental clearance shall be demolished or closed.
4. Projects that violate norms, but are “permissible”, will be assessed for the damage caused and a remediation plan developed. These projects will have to submit a bank guarantee equivalent to the remediation plan and a natural and community resource augmentation plan to the central or state pollution control boards.
5. The memorandum gives powers to government agencies such as the CPCB, state pollution control boards and state environment impact assessment authorities to identify such violations and take penal action against them.

Concerns/issues:

- Experts say the provisions of the new amnesty scheme are very similar to provisions of dealing with violation cases under [the draft environment impact assessment notification 2020](#) which drew widespread public criticism last year for “post-facto” clearances.
- The memorandum normalises “post facto regularisation of violations” – in which violations are first committed and then the project proponent files for clearance by which they “are let off by paying a penalty”.
- Also, this is the institutionalising of violations on the basis of the polluter pays norm.
- The SOP gives “immense power” to the ministry in determining the violator and the offence. This gives scope for violators, especially the big players, to negotiate with the ministry.

Contentious provisions in the draft EIA notification 2020:

1. The draft notification includes an exemption of several large industries and projects from public consultation — as part of the environment impact assessment process — such as chemical manufacturing and petroleum products; building, construction and area development; inland waterways and expansion or widening of national highways.
2. The draft does not provide clarification regarding the criteria for categorizing projects ‘strategic’ by the Central Government and hence could be open to excessively broad interpretations.
3. There is a clause on “post-facto clearance”. These are for projects that have started without obtaining the required environmental clearances or permissions.
4. It shortens the period of public consultation hearings to a maximum of 40 days.
5. It reduces from 30 to 20 days the time provided for the public to submit their responses during a public hearing for any application seeking environmental clearance.
6. The increased validity of the environment clearances for mining projects (50 years versus 30 years currently) and river valley projects (15 years versus 10 years currently) raises the risk of irreversible environmental, social and health consequences on account of the project remaining unnoticed for long.

Insta Curious: What is the difference between Environment Impact Assessment & Strategic Environmental Assessment? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. EIA process.
2. Environment (Protection) Act, 1986- Key provisions,

3. About the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment.
4. Article 253 of the Constitution.
5. Who are UN Special Rapporteurs?
6. Key provisions in the Draft EIA notification 2020.

Mains Link: Explain the significance of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) process in the Indian context. Also highlight the concerns associated with it.

9. New European climate law:

Context:

The **European Union** has unveiled some of the world's most ambitious proposals, titled "**Fit for 55**", to reduce carbon emissions and wean its 27 members off fossil fuels.

- These measures are a EU's roadmap to achieve its target to reduce emissions by 55% by 2030, compared with 1990 levels.

The roadmap includes:

It takes **particular aim at transport**, both personal and commercial, across the block.

- Cars with combustion engines, for example, would not be produced within the bloc from 2035.
- Financial incentives would be offered to countries that replace traditional fuel with a sustainable alternative in aviation and maritime transportation.
- Minimum tax rate for petrol and gasoline fuels would be increased by significant margins, as would tax on kerosene.

Carbon border:

- The proposed carbon border would place tariffs on certain goods produced outside the bloc, depending on their carbon footprint, subjecting them to the same standards that already exist for goods produced within the EU.
- The plan is to discourage EU companies from importing cheaper materials from places where environmental standards are lower.

Lowering of the cap in the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS):

- Created in 2005, the ETS works by placing a cap on the carbon emissions companies within the EU are allowed to produce each year.
- If a company goes over, they are fined. They can also buy "allowances" from others in the ETS, roll over unused allowances.

Benefits:

1. Spur sustainable economic growth
2. Create jobs.
3. Deliver health and environmental benefits for EU citizens.
4. contribute to the long-term global competitiveness of the EU economy by promoting innovation in green technologies.

Challenges in implementation:

1. Some member states are poorer than others, meaning the transition to Brussels' goals are harder, while other member states have economies built on industries that by their nature produce more emissions.
2. It will also be politically difficult, as member states are currently divided on many other pan-European issues -- from rule of law to human rights -- and will likely use this debate on climate change as a proxy for other ongoing rows.

3. Experts say, although it is technologically and economically possible to implement these policies earlier, in this form, the Green Deal will not be enough to limit global warming to 1.5C.
4. Even if the EU becomes carbon neutral, other developing countries will rapidly increase their emissions.

Previously, how has the European Union responded to climate change?

- EU countries have set binding emission targets for key sectors of the economy to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- By 2017, the EU had reduced its emissions by almost 22% compared to 1990, reaching its 2020 emission reduction target three years ahead of schedule.

Why has climate change now become a global challenge?

The current changes in the planet's climate are transforming the world.

1. The last two decades included 18 of the warmest years on record, and extreme weather events, such as forest fires, heatwaves and floods, are becoming more frequent both in Europe and elsewhere.
2. Scientists warn that without urgent action, global warming is likely to exceed 2°C above pre-industrial levels by 2060, and could even reach as much as 5°C by the end of the century.
3. Such a rise in the global temperature will have a devastating impact on nature, bringing about irreversible changes to many ecosystems and a consequent loss of biodiversity.
4. Higher temperatures and intensified weather events will also result in huge costs for the EU's economy and hamper countries' ability to produce food.

Need of the hour:

The European Union accounts for around 8% of the world's carbon emissions from fossil fuels. Containing rising temperatures will need firm action from bigger economies, including the US and China, the world's two biggest carbon emitters.

Insta Curious: Do you know what Asian Brown Cloud is? [Read Here](#)

2. Such initiatives by EU and other developed nations.
3. What is the Paris Agreement?

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Overview of the targets.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of climate targets set by the EU.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/european-union-new-climate-agenda-fit-for-55-explained-7405587/lite/>.

10. Environment Ministry's memorandum stayed:

Context:

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court has granted an interim stay on the operation of **an office memorandum issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**.

- The memorandum provided a procedure for the grant of post facto clearance to projects that have come up without environmental clearance under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) notification, 2006.

What's the issue?

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) notification, 2006 mandated prior clearance, and there was no provision for the grant of post facto clearance under the EIA notification.

- The memorandum provided a backdoor entry to violators.
- By way of the memorandum, violators of the EIA notification could obtain clearance and regularise violations.
- The ex-post facto clearance is also alien to the environmental jurisprudence.
- It was also against the principles of natural justice, and the right of the people to participate in environmental decision-making.

- It was also violative of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

About EIA:

- The EIA was an important tool to ensure the optimal use of natural resources for sustainable development.
- Its purpose was to identify, examine, assess and evaluate the likely and probable impact of a proposed project on the environment.
- Under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, India notified its first EIA norms in 1994, setting in place a legal framework for regulating activities that access, utilise, and affect (pollute) natural resources.
- Every development project has been required to go through the EIA process for obtaining prior environmental clearance ever since.
- The 1994 EIA notification was replaced with a modified draft in 2006.

Insta Curious: Have you heard of the Espoo (EIA) Convention which sets out the obligations of Parties to assess the environmental impact of certain activities at an early stage of planning? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- EIA process.
- Environment (Protection) Act, 1986- Key provisions.

- About the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment.
- Article 253 of the Constitution.
- Who are UN Special Rapporteurs?
- Key provisions in the Draft EIA notification 2020.

Mains Link: Explain the significance of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) process in the Indian context. Also highlight the concerns associated with it.

Link: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/environment-ministrys-memorandum-stayed/article35353973.ece/amp/>.

11. The Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Bill, 2021:

Context:

The bill will be introduced in the parliament by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF).

- The bill will establish the commission and replace an ordinance.
- The Bill has taken into consideration the concerns of the farmers following several rounds of negotiations, after they had raised concerns of **stiff penalties and possible jail terms for stubble burning.**

Changes made:

- The government has **decriminalised the act of stubble burning and withdrawn the clause for possible jail time.**
- However, **environmental compensation fees are levied on those who are found to be engaged in stubble burning, including farmers.**

About the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM):

The Commission was first formed by an ordinance in October 2020.

The erstwhile **Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority**, or EPCA had been dissolved to make way for the Commission.

- The Commission will be a **statutory authority.**
- The Commission will supersede bodies such as the central and state pollution control boards of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, UP and Rajasthan.

Composition:

Chairperson: To be chaired by a government official of the rank of Secretary or Chief Secretary.

- The chairperson will hold the post for three years or until s/he attains the age of 70 years.
- It will have members from several Ministries as well as representatives from the stakeholder States.
- It will have experts from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Civil Society.

Powers and functions:

1. It will have the powers to issue directions to these state governments on issues pertaining to air pollution.
2. It will entertain complaints as it deems necessary for the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of the air in the NCR and adjoining areas.
3. It will also lay down parameters for control of air pollution.
4. It will also be in charge of identifying violators, monitoring factories and industries and any other polluting unit in the region, and will have the powers to shut down such units.
5. It will also have the powers to overrule directives issued by the state governments in the region, that may be in violation of pollution norms.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About EPCA.
2. About NGT.

Mains Link: Why was EPCA dissolved? What has replaced EPCA? Discuss.

3. About CPCB.

4. Overview of the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Bill, 2021.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/moef-to-table-bill-for-panel-on-ncr-air-pollution-bill-on-air-quality-commission-drops-clause-on-jail-term-7411144/lite/>.

12. China's national carbon emissions trading market:

Context:

After running pilot projects at the local level for over a decade, China has officially launched its long-awaited **national carbon emissions trading market**.

- China's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) has replaced the EU's as **the world's largest emissions trading system**.

What is a carbon market?

- A carbon market is where greenhouse **gas emitters can buy and sell greenhouse gas emissions permits or allowances**.
- Companies that over-performed and have surplus targets in hand will sell them in this market; those polluting will have to buy the surplus to submit their compliance statement.
- The government sets the cap on the total amount of carbon emissions for the year, then companies receive or buy emissions quotas within the cap.

Who's involved?

- In the first phase, the system only covers the power sector. Over 2,000 power companies, emitting more than 4 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases per year or 40 percent of the country's yearly total, have participated.
- Seven more high energy-intensive industries, including iron and steel and construction materials, will be covered by the carbon market in the future.

Why build a carbon market?

The country is trying to use the trading scheme to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as part of its effort to peak its emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060.

- Now, for the first time, the responsibility for controlling greenhouse gas emissions at the national level is left to the enterprises.

Insta Curious: What is Cap and Trade System? [Read Here](#)

Link: <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/energy/china-has-a-carbon-market-now-what-does-it-mean-77989>.

13. Microplastics in Ganga:

Context:

Various stretches of Ganga have been polluted with Microplastics, a recent study has revealed.

- The highest concentration of such plastic was found at Varanasi, comprising single-use and secondary plastic products.

What are **Microplastics**?

Microplastics are defined as synthetic solid particles sized ranging from 1 micrometre to 5 millimetre (mm), which are **insoluble in water**.

Reasons behind this:

1. Untreated sewage from many cities along the river's course.
2. Industrial waste and religious offerings wrapped in non-degradable plastics pile pollutants into the river as it flows through several densely populated cities.
3. The plastic products and waste materials released or dumped in the river break down and are eventually broken down into microparticles.

Why is plastic pollution especially harmful?

1. Plastic can take **hundreds to thousands of years to decompose** depending on the type of plastic and where it has been dumped.
2. Some marine species such as **zooplanktons** show preferential ingestion of smaller particles, making them easier to enter the food chain and their conversion to fast-sinking faecal pellets.
3. Over the past few years, various news reports have shown that **marine animals such as whales, seabirds and turtles unknowingly ingest plastic and often suffocate to death**.

Impact on humans:

1. For humans, too, marine plastic pollution is harmful if it reaches the food chain. For instance, **microplastics have been found in tap water, beer and even salt**.
2. One of the first studies to estimate plastic pollution in human ingestion that was published in June 2019 said that an average person eats at least 50,000 particles of microplastic each year.
3. Consumption of plastic by humans is harmful since several chemicals that are used to produce plastics can be carcinogenic.
4. Even so, since microplastics are an emerging field of study, its exact risks on the environment and human health are not clearly known.

India's efforts to beat plastic pollution:

- More than 20 States and Union Territories have joined the fight to beat the plastic pollution, announcing a **ban on single-use plastics** such as carry bags, cups, plates, cutlery, straws and thermocol products.
- India has also won **global acclaim for its “Beat Plastic Pollution” resolve**, under which it pledged to eliminate single-use plastic by 2022.

Insta Curious: [Have you heard about the Global Partnership on Marine Litter \(GPML\)?](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Microplastics.
2. What is bioaccumulation?
3. What is a food chain?

4. What are food webs?

Mains Link: Discuss the challenges posed by Microplastics on human health.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GF48PVOFL.1&imageview=0>.

14. Clean Ganga Fund:

Context:

Ministry of Jal Shakti has informed that as on March 2021, funds of more than Rs 450 crore have been deposited in the Clean Ganga Fund.

About CGF:

- It has been setup as a trust under the Indian Trust Act, 1882.
- It will allow resident Indians, Non Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origins (PIOs), Corporates (Public as well as private sector) to contribute towards the conservation of the river Ganga.
- The contributions to Clean Ganga Fund falls within the purview of **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity** as defined in Schedule VII to the Companies Act, 2013.

The following activities are offered under CSR:

1. Ghats Construction /Modification / Extension.
2. Cleaning of Ghats.
3. Providing Amenities at important Ghats.
4. Crematoria Construction / Modification / Extension.
5. Ganga Gram.
6. Bioremediation of Nallas & Drains.
7. Information Education Communication (IEC) Activities.
8. River Surface Cleaning using Trash Skimmers.
9. Solid Waste Management.
10. Tree Plantation.

Significance of Clean Ganga Fund:

- It is an initiative to harness the enthusiasm of people for Ganga and to bring them closer to the Ganga and inculcate a sense of ownership.
- It involves major organizations and general public at large who are coming forward to contribute to the Ganga fund which strengthens the Mission to achieve the objective of a clean and healthy Ganga.

Insta Curious: Do you know about MITRAS – FRIENDS OF THE GANGES ? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About CGF.

2. What is NMCG.

3. About NGRBA.

Mains Link: Write a note on efforts taken up by Government of India for the conservation of river Ganga.

15. Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM):

Context:

A 100-day campaign to provide tap water access to government schools and anganwadis under Jal Jeevan Mission was launched on October 2, 2020.

- However, over a third of government schools and anganwadis still do not have tap water access.
- Also, there is widespread disparity among States, with a few laggards pulling down the national average, despite the fact that nine States and Union Territories have already achieved 100% coverage.

Background:

The campaign aimed to achieve 100% coverage, and provide potable piped water supply for drinking and cooking purposes as well as tap water for hand washing and in toilets in every school, anganwadi and ashramshala or residential tribal school.

About the Jal Jeevan Mission:

JJM envisages supply of **55 litres of water per person per day** to every rural household through **Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024**.

It is under the **Ministry of Jal Shakti**.

It also encompasses:

1. Prioritizing provision of FHTCs in quality affected areas, villages in drought prone and desert areas, Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) villages, etc.
2. Providing functional tap connection to Schools, Anganwadi centres, Gram Panchayat buildings, Health centres, wellness centres and community buildings.
3. Technological interventions for removal of contaminants where water quality is an issue.

Implementation:

- The Mission is based on **a community approach** to water and includes extensive Information, Education and Communication as a key component of the mission.
- JJM looks to create **a jan andolan for water**, thereby making it everyone's priority.
- The fund sharing pattern between the Centre and states is 90:10 for Himalayan and North-Eastern States, 50:50 for other states, and 100% for Union Territories.

InstaLinks:

3. Fund allocation.

Prelims Link:

1. Mission goal.
2. Implementation.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of the mission.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G348Q9CHA.1&imageview=0>.

16. Project BOLD:

Context:

The project was launched by **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** & BSF have launched Project BOLD in Jaisalmer to Prevent Desertification and Support Rural Economy. Under this, they have planted 1000 bamboo saplings.

About the Project BOLD:

1. **BOLD** stands for **Bamboo Oasis on Lands in Drought**.
2. Launched by **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**.
3. The initiative has been launched as part of KVIC's "**Khadi Bamboo Festival**" to celebrate 75 years of independence "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav".
4. **Objectives:** To create bamboo-based green patches in arid and semi-arid land zones, To reduce desertification and provide livelihood and multi-disciplinary rural industry support.

Why Bamboo was chosen?

Bamboos grow very fast and in about three years' time, they could be harvested. Bamboos are also known for conserving water and reducing evaporation of water from the land surface, which is an important feature in arid and drought-prone regions.

Khadi and Village Industries Commission:

- KVIC is a **statutory body established under the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act, 1956**.
- The KVIC is charged with the planning, promotion, organisation and implementation of programmes for the development of Khadi and other village industries in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary.
- It functions under the **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises**.

Insta Curious: Can you name Bamboo products with a GI tag? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Project BOLD.
2. Objectives.
3. About KVIC.

4. Other projects by KVIC.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of Project BOLD.

17. International Tiger Day:

Context:

International Tiger Day is celebrated on **July 29** every year to raise awareness about the dwindling population of the endangered cat.

It is the anniversary of the agreement of **Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit** in Russia in 2010.

- It was declared by representatives that the tiger populated countries would make efforts to double the tiger population by the year 2022.

The theme for the 2021 International Tiger Day is “Their survival is in our hands”.

Key facts related to tiger population:

1. As per the **World Wide Fund for Nature**, the number of tigers dropped by 95 per cent over the past 150 years.
2. India is the land of royal tigers and current tiger population stands at 2967 which is **70 per cent of the global tiger population**.
3. **Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of tigers at 526**, closely followed by Karnataka (524) and Uttarakhand (442).
4. Kanha Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh is **the first tiger reserve in India to officially introduce a mascot, Bhoorsingh the Barasingha**.

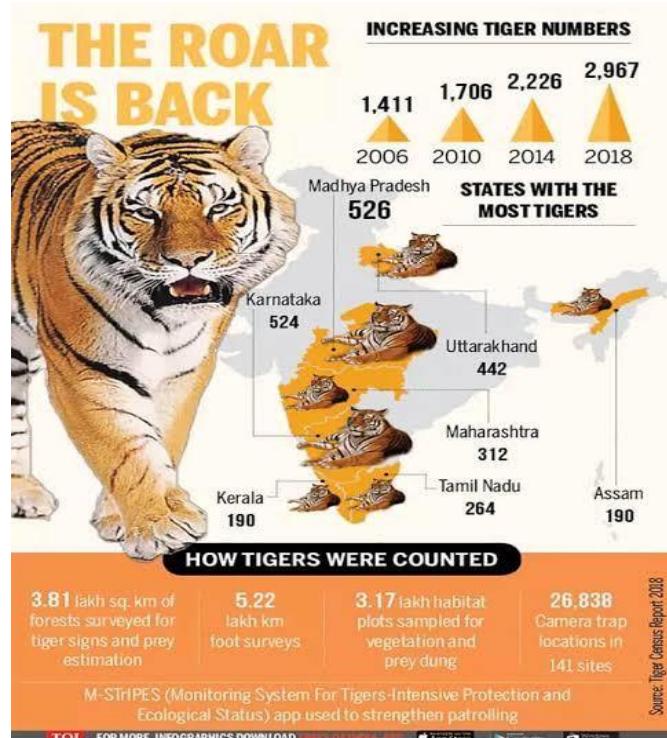
Conservation efforts- National and Global:

1. **The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** has launched the **M-STRIPES** (Monitoring System for Tigers – Intensive Protection and Ecological Status), a mobile monitoring system for forest guards.
2. At the **Petersburg Tiger Summit in 2010**, leaders of 13 tiger range countries resolved to do more for the tiger and embarked on efforts to double its number in the wild, with a popular slogan ‘TX 2’.
3. **The Global Tiger Initiative (GTI)** program of the World Bank, using its presence and convening ability, brought global partners together to strengthen the tiger agenda.
4. Over the years, the initiative has institutionalised itself as a separate entity in the form of **the Global Tiger Initiative Council (GTIC)**, with its two arms –the Global Tiger Forum and the Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection Program.
5. **The Project Tiger**, launched way back in 1973, has grown to more than 50 reserves amounting to almost 2.2% of the country’s geographical area.

Protection Status:

1. **Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule I.
2. **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List:** Endangered.
3. **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES):** Appendix I.

Insta Curious:



- Did you know that the fourth cycle of the All India Tiger Estimation 2018 has entered the Guinness World Record for being the world's largest camera trap wildlife survey? How is tiger survey carried out in India? [Reference](#):
- India's 14 Tiger Reserves got Global CA/TS recognition for good Tiger Conservation. What does the accreditation of the Global Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS)? [Reference](#):

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Differences between National Parks, wildlife sanctuaries and biosphere reserves.
- M-STripes is related to?
- What is GTIC?
- When was project tiger launched?
- NTCA- composition and functions.
- Why the fourth cycle of the All India Tiger Estimation 2018 entered Guinness Record book recently?
- State with highest number of tigers.
- State with highest tiger density.

Mains Link:

The centrality of tiger agenda is an ecological necessity for the sustainability of our environment. In this context, examine the steps taken by India to conserve tigers?

18. The Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Bill, 2021:

Context:

The Bill was recently introduced in Lok Sabha. The focus is on better coordination, research, identification and resolution of problems surrounding the air quality index.

- The bill will establish the commission and replace an ordinance.
- The Bill has taken into consideration the concerns of the farmers following several rounds of negotiations, after they had raised concerns of **stiff penalties and possible jail terms for stubble burning**.

Applicability:

The bill will apply to the NCR and the areas adjoining the NCR in the States of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, where any source of pollution is located, causing adverse impact on air quality in the NCR.

What is proposed in the Bill?

The bill provides for the constitution of:

- The commission for air quality management in NCR and adjoining areas.
- Three sub-committees to assist the commission, including sub-committee on monitoring and identification; sub-committee on safeguarding and enforcement; and sub-committee on research and development.

Need for the Bill:

Sources of air pollution particularly in the NCR consist of a variety of factors which are beyond the local limits. Therefore, a special focus is required on all sources of air pollution which are associated with different economic sectors, including power, agriculture, transport, industry, residential and construction.

- Since air pollution is not a localised phenomenon, the effect is felt in areas even far away from the source, thus creating the need for regional-level initiatives through inter-State and inter-city coordination in addition to multi-sectorial synchronisation.

About the [Commission for Air Quality Management \(CAQM\)](#):

The Commission was first formed by an ordinance in October 2020.

The erstwhile [Environment Pollution \(Prevention and Control\) Authority](#), or EPCA had been dissolved to make way for the Commission.

- The Commission will be a **statutory authority**.
- The Commission will supersede bodies such as the central and state pollution control boards of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, UP and Rajasthan.

Composition:

Chairperson: To be chaired by a government official of the rank of Secretary or Chief Secretary.

- The chairperson will hold the post for three years or until s/he attains the age of 70 years.
- It will have members from several Ministries as well as representatives from the stakeholder States.
- It will have experts from the [Central Pollution Control Board \(CPCB\)](#), [Indian Space Research Organisation \(ISRO\)](#) and Civil Society.

Powers and functions:

1. It will have the powers to issue directions to these state governments on issues pertaining to air pollution.
2. It will entertain complaints as it deems necessary for the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of the air in the NCR and adjoining areas.
3. It will also lay down parameters for control of air pollution.
4. It will also be in charge of identifying violators, monitoring factories and industries and any other polluting unit in the region, and will have the powers to shut down such units.
5. It will also have the powers to overrule directives issued by the state governments in the region, that may be in violation of pollution norms.

Other key provisions of the bill:

1. It has decriminalised the act of stubble burning and withdrawn the clause for possible jail time.
2. It proposed to levy environmental compensation fees on those who are found to be engaged in stubble burning, including farmers.

Insta Curious: Do you know about Pusa, a stubble burning solution? [Reference:](#)

4. Overview of the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Bill, 2021.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About EPCA.
2. About NGT.
3. About CPCB.

Mains Link:

Why was EPCA dissolved? What has replaced EPCA? Discuss.

Topics: Disaster and management.

1. Chamoli disaster due to avalanche:

Context:

Flash flood on February 7 in Chamoli district, Uttarakhand, claimed at least 72 lives with at least 200 missing. Now, [Geological Survey of India \(GSI\)](#) has submitted its report on causes of the disaster.

Key findings:

1. Flash flood was due to a large mass of snow, ice and rock avalanche along with a hanging mass of rock crashing into the **Raunthi Garh valley floor**.
2. This impact pulverised the combination of rock, snow and ice causing a rapid flow downstream of **Raunthi Garh** and into the **Rishiganga valley** leading to the deluge.
3. A contributory factor was unusually warm weather in the region.
4. There was no evidence of a **Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF)** having caused the event.

What happened on February 7th?

A glacial break in the Tapovan-Reni area of Chamoli District of Uttarakhand led to massive Flash Flood in **Dhauliganga and Alaknanda Rivers, damaging houses and the nearby Rishiganga power project.**

What is glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF)?

It is an outburst that happens when a dam containing a glacial lake fails.

GLOFs have three main features:

1. They involve sudden (and sometimes cyclic) releases of water.
2. They tend to be rapid events, lasting hours to days.
3. They result in large downstream river discharges (which often increase by an order of magnitude).

Why does a glacier break?

1. Erosion.
2. A build-up of water pressure.
3. An avalanche of snow or rocks.
4. An earthquake under the ice.
5. Massive displacement of water in a glacial lake when a large portion of an adjacent glacier collapses into it.

Insta Curious: Do you know what pelean eruption is? [Read Here](#)

2. About Alaknanda river.

InstaLinks:

3. About Dhaul Ganga.

Prelims Link:

4. About Rishiganga river project.

1. About GLOF.

Mains Link: How is India prepared for disasters posed by glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF)? Discuss.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GE68NGDTF.1&imageview=0>.

Topics: *Linkages between development and spread of extremism.*

1. Aviation ministry releases draft of 'Drone Rules 2021':

Context:

Built on a premise of trust, self-certification, and non-intrusive monitoring, "The Drone Rules, 2021" will replace the UAS Rules 2021 (released on 12 March 2021).

Key changes:

1. **Digital sky platform** shall be developed as a business-friendly single-window online system.
2. **No flight permission required upto 400 feet** in green zones and upto 200 feet in the area between 8 and 12 km from the airport perimeter.
3. **No pilot licence required for** micro drones (for non-commercial use), nano drone and for R&D organisations.
4. **No restriction on drone operations by foreign-owned companies registered in India.**
5. Import of drones and drone components to be regulated by DGFT.
6. **No security clearance required** before any registration or licence issuance.
7. **No requirement of certificate of airworthiness**, unique identification number, prior permission and remote pilot licence for R&D entities.
8. **Coverage of drones under Drone Rules, 2021 increased from 300 kg to 500 kg.** This will cover drone taxis also.
9. **Issuance of Certificate of Airworthiness** delegated to Quality Council of India and certification entities authorised by it.
10. **Manufacturer may generate their drone's unique identification number** on the digital sky platform through the self-certification route.
11. **Maximum penalty** under Drone Rules, 2021 reduced to INR 1 lakh. This shall, however, not apply to penalties in respect of violation of other laws.
12. **Drone corridors** will be developed for cargo deliveries.
13. **Drone promotion council** to be set up to facilitate a business-friendly regulatory regime.

Need for stricter rules and regulations:

- Recently, Drones were used for the first time to drop explosive devices, triggering blasts inside the Air Force Station's technical area in Jammu.
- Over the past two years, drones have been deployed regularly by Pakistan-based outfits to smuggle arms, ammunition and drugs into Indian territory.
- According to government figures, 167 drone sightings were recorded along the border with Pakistan in 2019, and in 2020, there were 77 such sightings.
- With the rapid proliferation of drone technology and exponential growth of its global market in recent years, the possibility of a drone attack cannot be ruled out even in the safest cities in the world.
- Drones are becoming security threats particularly in conflict zones where non-state actors are active and have easy access to the technology.

Insta Curious: Did you know that there are a few countries in the world which do not have armed forces of their own? Which are those countries? [Reference:](#)

Topics: Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.

1. The election in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir:

Context:

Elections are scheduled to be held in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) for 53 seats. There are about 20 lakh voters.

Present position of PoK:

- PoK is called “**Azad Jammu & Kashmir**” (“AJK” in short).
- It came into being after the **1949 ceasefire between India and Pakistan**.
- It comprises the parts of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir that were occupied by the Pakistani forces.
- Pakistan’s constitutional position on PoK** is that it is not a part of the country, but the “liberated” part of Kashmir.

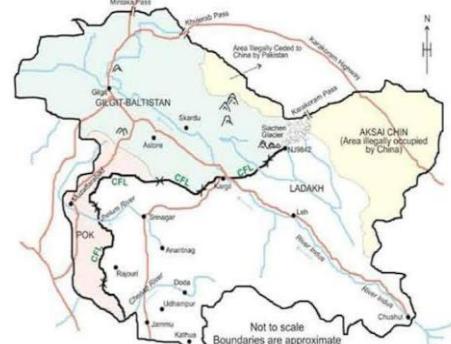
However, **Article 257 of Pakistan's Constitution** says: “When the people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir decide to accede to Pakistan, the relationship between Pakistan and the State shall be determined in accordance with the wishes of the people of that State.”

Political structure and how is it administered?

- The constitution of Pakistan lists **the country's four provinces** — Punjab, Sind, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- For all practical purposes, **PoK is run by the Pakistan government through the all-powerful Kashmir Council**, a nominated 14-member body headed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan.
- The Assembly has a five-year term. The legislators elect a “**prime minister**” and a “**president**” for the territory.
- While PoK is ostensibly an **autonomous, self-governing territory**, the **Pakistan Army is the final arbiter on all matters Kashmir**.

India's stand on PoK:

- The fact that PoK is an integral part of India has been our consistent policy ever since 1947.
- India has also made clear to the world that any issue related to PoK is the internal matter of India.
- Please note that Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) is part of the newly created Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, while Gilgit-Baltistan is in the UT of Ladakh in the fresh maps released by the government.



Insta Curious: Did you know that there are 12 seats reserved for Refugees in PoK elections? [Read Here Briefly](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Location of PoK.
2. Rivers flowing through.

3. Neighbours.

4. Instrument of Accession.

Mains Link: Discuss why PoK is significant for India.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/pakistan-occupied-kashmir-pok-election-7419482/lite/>.

2. Assam-Mizoram border dispute:

Context:

Earlier in June this year, two abandoned houses along the Mizoram-Assam border were burned down by unidentified persons, fuelling tension along the volatile inter-state border.

- Now, early a month after this incident, the border dispute between the two neighbouring states has cropped up again, with both accusing each other of encroaching on their respective territories.

Immediate cause for the dispute:

According to the Mizoram side, people from Assam have violated the status quo – as agreed upon between the two State governments a few years ago – in “no man’s land” to trigger the present crisis.

About the dispute:

- **Mizoram was carved out of Assam as a Union Territory in 1972** and by 1987, it became a full-fledged state.
- The two states have sparred over this 164.6 km long inter-state border over the past, sometimes leading to violent clashes.

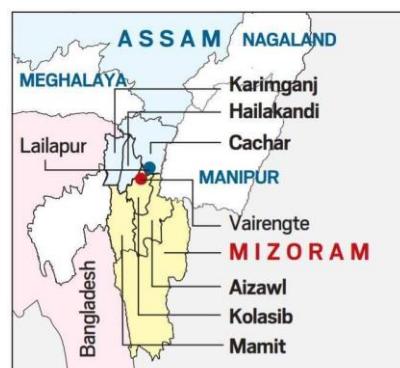
The dispute stems from two notifications passed under British era:

1. First, notification of 1875, that differentiated Lushai Hills from the plains of Cachar.
2. Second, notification of 1933, that demarcates a boundary between Lushai Hills and Manipur.

What are the present claims?

- Mizoram claims that the land is theirs is based on an 1875 notification, which came from **the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act of 1873**.
- Assam for its part, claims that the land is theirs. It goes by a **1933 notification by the state government that demarcated the Lushai Hills**, which Mizoram was formerly known as, from the province of Manipur.

During colonial times, **Mizoram was known as Lushai Hills**, a district of Assam.



What leads to these clashes?

The border between the two neighbouring states is an imaginary line that changes with the natural obstacles of rivers, hills, valleys and forests.

People of Assam and Mizoram have attributed the border conflicts to the differences over this not-so-clear boundary. Hence, often people living in the border areas cross over to the other side as they are not fully aware of the border demarcation.

Insta Curious: Do you know what Protected and Restricted areas? In which of the States Protected Areas are located? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the dispute.
2. Geographical locations and boundaries of North Eastern States.

3. The Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act of 1873.
4. Lushai Hills and the plains of Cachar.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/assam-mizoram-border-dispute-fault-line-from-history-flares-up-in-the-present-7423884/lite/>.

Topics: Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention

1. Cyber Security Index (GCI) 2020:

Context:

The United Nations' specialised agency for information and communication technologies — [International Telecommunication Union \(ITU\)](#) has released [the Global Cyber Security Index \(GCI\) 2020](#).

About the index:

The index is a trusted reference that measures the commitment of countries to cybersecurity at a global level.

- Countries are measured along five pillars, namely, legal measures, technical measures, organisational measures, capacity development, and cooperation to generate an overall score.
- The countries were asked 82 questions where 20 indicators were measured.

Performance of India and its neighbours:

1. India is placed on the 10th spot. In 2018, it was ranked on the 47th spot. It was ranked rank 47 in 2019.
2. In the Asia-Pacific region India secured the 4th spot.
3. Neighbours China and Pakistan were ranked at 33 and 79, respectively.

Top 5 Countries:

1. The US.
2. The UK and Saudi Arabia.
3. Estonia.
4. South Korea, Singapore and Spain.
5. Russia, United Arab Emirates and Malaysia.

General challenges ahead for the countries worldwide:

1. Digital gaps amongst nations create an unsustainable environment in the cyber domain.
2. Growing digital reliance in the post-COVID era has exposed digital disparities which must be bridged through capacity building.
3. There's a sophisticated use of cyberspace by terrorists to broaden their propaganda and incite hatred.

How is India tackling its cyber security threats?

1. India is working on its **first Cyber Security Strategy**.
2. **Computer Emergency Response Teams or CERT** is responsible for coordinating and supporting the response to computer security events or incidents on the national or government level.
3. **Online cybercrime reporting portal** has been launched to enable complainants to report complaints pertaining to Child Pornography/Child Sexual Abuse Material, rape/gang rape imageries or sexually explicit content.
4. A scheme for establishment of **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)** has been established to handle issues related to cybercrime in the country in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.
5. Establishment of **National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC)** for protection of critical information infrastructure in the country.

Insta Curious: Do you know about TechSagar? [Read more about it](#),

2. National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC).
3. CERT- In.
4. Cyber Swachhta Kendras.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C).

2. New IT rules:

Context:

The Centre has told the Delhi High Court that social media giant Twitter Inc has failed to comply with India's **new IT Rules (Came into force on 26th May)**, which is law of the land and is mandatorily required to be complied with.

Implications:

- Any non-compliance amounts to breach of provisions of IT Rules, leading to Twitter losing its **immunity as an "intermediary"**.
- A loss of its intermediary status, which provides its immunity from liabilities over any third-party data hosted by it, makes it liable for criminal action in case of complaints.

What the rules say?

Twitter Inc is admittedly an 'intermediary' within the meaning of Section 2(1)(w) of IT Act, 2000, and an SSMI (Significant Social Media Intermediary) under the IT Rules 2021.

- SSMIs are required to appoint a **chief compliance officer**, a nodal officer, and a grievance officer -- all whom are required to be residents of India, according to the IT rules.

Background:

On February 25, the Centre framed the **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021**, in the exercise of powers under **section 87 (2) of the Information Technology Act, 2000** and in supersession of the earlier Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2011, which will come into effect from May 26.

Overview of the new rules:

1. It mandates a **grievance redressal system** for over the top (OTT) and digital portals in the country. This is necessary for the users of social media to raise their grievance against the misuse of social media.
2. **Significant social media firms** have to appoint a **chief compliance officer** and have a **nodal contact person** who can be in touch with law enforcement agencies 24/7.
3. **A grievance officer**: Social media platforms will also have to name a **grievance officer** who shall register the grievance within 24 hours and dispose of it in 15 days.
4. **Removal of content**: If there are complaints against the dignity of users, particularly women - about exposed private parts of individuals or nudity or sexual act or impersonation etc - social media platforms will be required to remove that within 24 hours after a complaint is made.
5. **A monthly report**: They also will have to publish a monthly report about the number of complaints received and the status of redressal.
6. There will be **three levels of regulation for news publishers** -- self-regulation, a self-regulatory body, headed by a retired judge or an eminent person, and oversight from the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, including codes of practices and a grievance committee.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Overview of the new rules.
2. Who are intermediaries as per the definition?

3. What is safe harbour protection?

4. Grievance redressal mechanism as provided under the new rules.

Mains Link: What are the concerns being raised against the new IT rules? Discuss ways to address these concerns.

3. HC notice to Centre on plea against IT Rules:

Context:

The Delhi high court has sought the Centre's reply on a plea challenging the new IT rules for allegedly being in gross disregard of the fundamental rights of **free speech and privacy** of users of social media intermediaries such as WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter.

Controversial provisions in the new rule:

1. The new rules give excess of the powers given under the parent legislation, the IT Act, to voluntarily remove access to information that does not conform to Rule 3(1)(b).
2. They also allow the social media platforms to place the users under constant surveillance which is a gross breach of the right to privacy.
3. The rules also mandate that even if the person is not under any investigation for violation of the rules, the intermediary has to retain his or her data without any justification, which is a gross violation of the right to privacy of the user.
4. No appellate procedure has been provided for under the rules against the decision of a Grievance Officer and/or the Chief Compliance Officer.
5. There is also no mandate that the author of the allegedly objectionable information has to be heard before deciding any complaint against him/her.

In simple terms, the petitioner said that the social media intermediaries cannot be given the power to decide, on the basis of a complaint or otherwise, as to which information is liable to be taken down.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Overview of the new rules.
2. Who are intermediaries as per the definition?

3. What is safe harbour protection?
4. Grievance redressal mechanism as provided under the new rules.

Mains Link: What are the concerns being raised against the new IT rules? Discuss ways to address these concerns.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GF48PVOFF.1&imageview=0>.

4. National Security Act (NSA), 1980:

Context:

Former civil servants have demanded an end to the misuse of the National Security Act terming it a draconian preventive detention law.

The Supreme Court has directed the release of Manipur-based activist Erendra Leichongbom, detained under **the National Security Act** for his social media posts allegedly on the efficacy of cow dung and urine as cures for COVID-19 in the context of the death of a BJP leader.

- The court said his continued detention would be a violation of his fundamental right to life and the due process of law.
- The court also expressed concern because the government was using preventive detention in cases where even ordinary penal sections did not apply.

About the National Security Act (NSA):

The NSA is a **preventive detention law**.

- Preventive Detention involves the detainment (containment) of a person in order to keep him/her from committing future crimes and/or from escaping future prosecution.

Article 22 (3) (b) of the Constitution allows for preventive detention and restriction on personal liberty for reasons of state security and public order.

Article 22(4) states that:

No law providing for preventive detention shall authorise the detention of a person for a longer period than three months unless:

- An Advisory Board reports sufficient cause for extended detention.

The 44th Amendment Act of 1978 has reduced the period of detention without obtaining the opinion of an advisory board from three to two months. However, this provision has not yet been brought into force, hence, the original period of three months still continues.

Period of Confinement:

- The maximum period for which one may be detained is 12 months. But the term can be extended if the government finds fresh evidence.
- A person can be held for 10 days without being told the charges against them. The person can appeal before a high court advisory board but will not be allowed a lawyer during the trial.

Concerns associated with the misuse of this law:

- Article 22 (1) of the Indian Constitution says an arrested person cannot be denied the right to consult, and to be defended by, a legal practitioner of his choice.
- According to Section 50 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CRPC), any person arrested has to be informed of the grounds of arrest and has the right to bail.

However, under National Security Act, none of these rights are available to the person detained. The government holds the right to conceal information which it considers to be against public interest to disclose.

Insta Curious: Know the History of Preventive detention laws in India, briefly

Do you know about the types of bail available in India? [Reference:](#)

Instalinks:**Prelims Link:**

1. Who can invoke NSA?
2. Appeals against preventive detention?

3. Right to be informed the reason for arrest under this?
4. Applicability of Constitutional rights in this regard.
5. The writs under the constitution.

Mains Link: What is the National security act? Why is it termed as a draconian law? Discuss.

5. WhatsApp privacy policy on hold till law is framed:

Context:

WhatsApp recently told Delhi High Court it will not compel users to opt for new privacy policy till data protection bill comes into force.

What's the issue?

The court is hearing the appeals of Facebook and its firm WhatsApp against the single-judge order refusing to stop the competition regulator [Competition Commission of India \(CCI\)](#)'s order directing a probe into WhatsApp's new privacy policy.

Background:

- WhatsApp has drawn massive criticism from users globally, including India, over concerns that data was being shared with its parent company, Facebook.
- WhatsApp, on its part, has maintained that messages on the platform are end-to-end encrypted and that neither WhatsApp nor Facebook can see the private messages on WhatsApp's platform.

Personal Data Protection Bill:

1. The Bill, under consideration, seeks to regulate the use of an individual's data by the government and private companies.
2. While entities will have to maintain security safeguards to protect personal data, they will also have to fulfill a set of data protection obligations and transparency and accountability measures.
3. The Bill seeks to give users a set of rights over their personal data and means to exercise those rights.
4. The Bill seeks to create an independent and powerful regulator known as the Data Protection Authority (DPA). The DPA will monitor and regulate data processing activities to ensure their compliance with the regime.

Why was a Bill brought for personal data protection?

1. In August 2017, the Supreme Court held that **privacy is a fundamental right, flowing from the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution.**
2. The Court also observed that privacy of personal data and facts is an essential aspect of the right to privacy.
3. In July 2017, a **Committee of Experts, chaired by Justice B. N. Srikrishna**, was set up to examine various issues related to data protection in India.
4. The Committee submitted its report, along with a Draft Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018 to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in July 2018.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is Right to Privacy?
2. Key features of the Bill.

3. About WhatsApp's privacy policy.

Mains Link: Discuss the concerns associated with WhatsApp's privacy policy.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G5G8OJSKA.1&imageview=0>.

6. What is Israeli spyware Pegasus?

Context:

The continued use of spyware Pegasus, which an Israeli company sells to governments worldwide, has been confirmed with fresh reports. Like the phones it targets, Pegasus has been apparently updated and now comes with new surveillance capabilities.

What is Pegasus?

It is a spyware tool developed by an Israeli firm, the NSO Group.

Spyware spy on people through their phones.

- Pegasus works by sending an exploit link, and if the target user clicks on the link, the malware or the code that allows the surveillance is installed on the user's phone.
- Once Pegasus is installed, the attacker has complete access to the target user's phone.

What can Pegasus do?

- Pegasus can “send back the target’s private data, including passwords, contact lists, calendar events, text messages, and live voice calls from popular mobile messaging apps”.
- The target’s phone camera and microphone can be turned on to capture all activity in the phone’s vicinity, expanding the scope of the surveillance.

What is a zero-click attack?

A zero-click attack helps spyware like Pegasus gain control over a device without human interaction or human error.

- So all awareness about how to avoid a phishing attack or which links not to click are pointless if the target is the system itself.
- Most of these attacks exploit software which receive data even before it can determine whether what is coming in is trustworthy or not, like an email client.

What's the Difference Between Malware, Trojan, Virus, and Worm?

Malware is defined as a software designed to perform an unwanted illegal act via the computer network. It could be also defined as software with malicious intent.

Malware can be classified based on how they get executed, how they spread, and/or what they do. Some of them are discussed below.

1. **Virus:** A program that can infect other programs by modifying them to include a possible evolved copy of itself.
2. **Worms:** Disseminated through computer networks, unlike viruses, computer worms are malicious programs that copy themselves from system to system, rather than infiltrating legitimate files.

3. Trojans: Trojan or trojan horse is a program that generally impairs the security of a system. Trojans are used to create back-doors (a program that allows outside access into a secure network) on computers belonging to a secure network so that a hacker can have access to the secure network.
4. Hoax: An e-mail that warns the user of a certain system that is harming the computer. The message thereafter instructs the user to run a procedure (most often in the form of a download) to correct the harming system. When this program is run, it invades the system and deletes an important file.
5. Spyware: Invades a computer and, as its name implies, monitors a user's activities without consent. Spywares are usually forwarded through unsuspecting e-mails with bonafide e-mail i.ds. Spyware continues to infect millions of computers globally.

Insta Curious: Have you heard of Google Project Zero? [Reference:](#)

3. Differences between Spyware, malware and Trojans.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Spyware.
2. About Pegasus.

Mains Link: What is a zero-click attack? Discuss.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/pegasus-whatsapp-spyware-israel-india-7410890/lite/>.

7. The laws for surveillance in India, and the concerns over privacy:

Context:

Amidst the controversy caused by Israeli spyware Pegasus, the Indian government has claimed that **all interception in India takes place lawfully**.

What are the laws covering surveillance in India?

Communication surveillance in India takes place primarily under two laws:

1. [The Telegraph Act, 1885](#).
2. [The Information Technology Act, 2000](#).

What does the Telegraph Act say?

Basically, the Act deals with **interception of calls**.

- Under this law, **the government can intercept calls only in certain situations** — the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states or public order, or for preventing incitement to the commission of an offence.
- These are the **same restrictions imposed on free speech under Article 19(2) of the Constitution**.
- The law also states that **even this lawful interception cannot take place against journalists** except under a few circumstances.

Public Union for Civil Liberties v Union of India (1996):

A public interest litigation was filed in the wake of the report on “Tapping of politicians phones” by the CBI.

- So, the Supreme Court pointed out lack of procedural safeguards in the provisions of the Telegraph Act and laid down certain guidelines for interceptions.

These guidelines formed the basis of introducing:

1. Rule 419A in the Telegraph Rules in 2007.
2. The rules prescribed under the IT Act in 2009.

1. [Rule 419A in the Telegraph Rules in 2007:](#)

A Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs can pass orders of interception in the case of Centre, and a secretary-level officer who is in-charge of the Home Department can issue such directives in the case of a state government.

- In unavoidable circumstances such orders may be made by an officer, not below the rank of a Joint Secretary to the Government of India, who has been duly authorised by the Union Home Secretary or the state Home Secretary.

2. IT Act, 2000:

Under the IT Act, all electronic transmission of data can be intercepted.

- Apart from the restrictions provided in Section 5(2) of the Telegraph Act and Article 19(2) of the Constitution, **Section 69 the IT Act** adds another aspect that makes it broader — interception, monitoring and decryption of digital information “for the investigation of an offence”.
- Significantly, **it dispenses with the condition precedent set under the Telegraph Act that requires “the occurrence of public emergency of the interest of public safety”** which widens the ambit of powers under the law.

Need for reforms and a comprehensive law on surveillance:

A comprehensive law is needed to fill the gaps in the existing laws as highlighted by the Planning Commission.

Currently, there are issues with:

1. Permitted grounds.
2. Type of interception.
3. Granularity of information that can be intercepted.
4. The degree of assistance from service providers.
5. The “destruction and retention” of intercepted material.

Conclusion:

Tapping is a serious invasion of an individual’s privacy. With the growth of highly sophisticated communication technology, the right to sold telephone conversation, in the privacy of one’s home or office without interference, is increasingly susceptible to abuse. Therefore, a comprehensive data protection law to address the gaps in existing frameworks for surveillance is to be enacted.

Insta Curious: Do you know what the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) says about Surveillance? [Reference:](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

Key Provisions of:

1. The Telegraph Act.

2. IT Rules.

3. Rule 419A.

4. Section 69A of the IT Act.

Mains Link: Discuss the concerns associated with telephone surveillance in India.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/project-pegasus-the-laws-for-surveillance-in-india-and-the-concerns-over-privacy-7417714/lite/>.

Topics: *Security challenges and their management in border areas; linkages of organized crime with terrorism.*

1. India is party to 26 bilateral pacts to fight drug trafficking:

Context:

As per the information given by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), India has signed **26 bilateral pacts, 15 memoranda of understanding and two agreements on security cooperation** with different countries for combating illicit trafficking of narcotic, drugs and psychotropic substances, besides chemical precursors.

International organisations with which the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) coordinated include:

1. The SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk.
2. BRICS Colombo Plan.
3. ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD).
4. Bay of Bengal Initiative For Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Co-Operation (BIMSTEC).
5. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
6. The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB).

Domestic measures:

- For coordination among various Central and State agencies, **the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) mechanism** was set up by the MHA in year 2016.
- A **Joint Coordination Committee** with the NCB Director General as its chairman was set up on July 19, 2019, to monitor the investigation into cases involving large seizures.
- For digitisation of pan-India drug seizure data, the MHA has launched an e-portal called '**SIMS' (Seizure Information Management System)** in 2019 for all the drug law enforcement agencies under **the mandate of Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS)**.
- Security Agencies involved:** Besides the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, the Border Security Force, Sashastra Seema Bal, Indian Coast Guard, Railway Protection Force and the National Investigation Agency have also been empowered under the NDPS Act for making drug seizures.

Need for these measures:

A 2019 national study conducted by AIIMS-Delhi on the prevalence of drug abuse in the country, establishes that:

- A substantial percentage of people use psychoactive substances (alcohol, cannabis and opioids), and adult men top the list of drugs users.
- Alcohol is the most commonly abused psychoactive substance followed by cannabis, opioids (heroin, opium) and inhalers.
- Addiction generally begins with alcohol, moves towards nicotine and cannabis – considered as gateways to hard drugs – and then hard substances.

National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) annual Accidental Death & Suicides in India (ADSI) reports:

- In the year 2019, 7719 out of the total 7860 suicide victims due to drug abuse/alcohol addiction were male.
- Even in the data relating to deaths due to road accidents, drugs & alcohol are one of the most causative factors.

Insta Curious:

As per UNODC, drug trafficking has long been a problem in the Golden Triangle. Which countries come under the Golden Triangle? [Reference:](#)

Also know about the Golden Crescent.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- About UNODC.
- Overview of scheme of "Financial Assistance to States for Narcotics Control".
- Composition of Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD).
- National Fund for Control of Drug Abuse.
- About Narcotics Control Bureau.
- International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking and theme this year.

Mains Link:

India is vulnerable to narcotic drug trafficking. Critically examine its causes. Also comment on the role of Government in combating drug problem.

Link:

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-is-party-to-26-bilateral-pacts-to-fight-drug-trafficking/article35448343.ece/amp/>

Topics: Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

1. 'Scene of crime officers' in Karnataka police:

Context:

Karnataka Government is planning to recruit 206 'scene of crime officers' (SoC officers) across the state.

Who are they?

- Scene of Crime officers will have a rank equivalent to police sub-inspector and will be part of the Directorate of Forensic Science Laboratories.
- The SoC officers will specialise in forensic science as well in identification, collection and preservation of evidence at the scene of the crime.

- These officers will be trained investigators, who will undergo training at National Forensic Sciences University in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, and Central Forensic Science Laboratory in Hyderabad.
- According to the initial plans by the police department, all districts will have one SoC unit with four to five SoC officials.

Significance:

According to the Karnataka police, this is the first time in the country that dedicated officials will be deployed for evidence collection, a system that exists in advanced countries.

- In 1961 in London, the first crime scene officer post was created.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-role-of-the-scene-of-crime-officers-karnataka-police-is-set-to-induct-7404314/lite/>.

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FACTS FOR PRELIMS

1. Indrajaal:

Hyderabad-based technology R&D firm Grene Robotics has designed and developed **India's first indigenous drone defence dome called "Indrajaal"**.

- **Features:** The drone defence dome has the capability to autonomously protect an area of 1000-2000 sq km against the aerial threats by assessing and acting on aerial threats such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), loitering munitions, and Low- Radar Cross Section (RCS) targets.



2. NATRAX:

- National Automotive Test Tracks (NATRAX) is the High Speed Track (HST) located in Indore.
- It is the longest such track in Asia. It is a 11.3 km long. It is also the world's fifth high speed test track.
- It is built under **NATRIP** (National Automotive Testing and R&D Infrastructure Project) of the Heavy Industries Ministry.
- NATRAX is a one stop solution for all sorts of high speed performance tests for widest categories of vehicles from 2 wheelers to heavy tractor trailers.

3. Saral Sanchar Portal:

Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has expanded the Saral Sanchar Portal.

'SARAL SANCHAR' (Simplified Application For Registration and Licenses) is a web-based portal for issuing various types of licenses and registration certificates.

The following types of licenses/authorizations shall be issued from this portal:

1. Unified License.
2. Unified License-Virtual Network Operator.
3. WPC Licenses (Wireless Planning and Coordination).

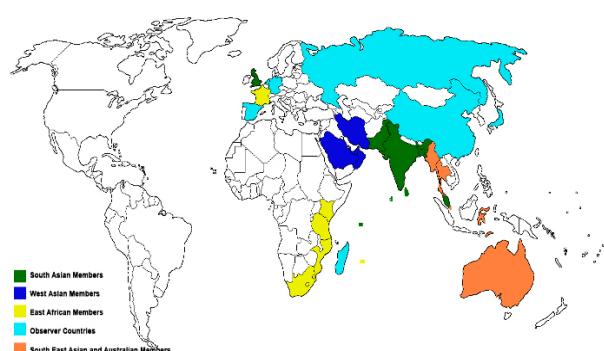
4. Enforcing Contracts Portal:

- **Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice** has launched the "Enforcing Contracts Portal".
- It is envisioned to be a comprehensive source of information pertaining to the legislative and policy reforms being undertaken on the "Enforcing Contracts" parameters.

5. Indian Ocean Naval Symposium:

7th edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), a biennial event, was hosted by the French Navy recently.

- IONS is a significant international maritime security **initiative launched in February 2008**.
- It provides a forum for discussion of regional maritime issues and promotes friendly relationships among member nations.
- It is a **voluntary initiative** that seeks to increase maritime co-operation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues.
- IONS includes **24 nations that permanently hold territory that abuts or lies within the Indian Ocean, and 8 observer nations**.



6. National Doctors' Day:

- **July 1** is observed as **National Doctors' Day** in the memory of **Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy**, who had his birth and death anniversary on the same day.

- Dr Roy, former Chief Minister of Bengal, was known for his selfless service.
- He played a great role in establishing many medical institutions.
- He was also referred to as the first medical consultant in the subcontinent of India.
- He was also awarded the Bharat Ratna in 1961.

7. Bagram airbase:

- The last US and Nato forces have left Afghanistan's Bagram airbase, the centre of the war against militants for some 20 years.
- The pull-out could signal that the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan is imminent.
- The airbase is located next to the ancient city of Bagram.

8. Last Ice Area:

- A part of the Arctic's ice called "Last Ice Area", located north of Greenland, has melted before expected.
- While climate projections forecast the total disappearance of summer ice in the Arctic by the year 2040, the only place that would be able to withstand a warming climate would be this area of ice called the "Last Ice Area". Scientists had believed this area was strong enough to withstand global warming.
- WWF-Canada was the first to call this area 'Last Ice Area'.



9. Financial Stability Report:

- Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released its **Financial Stability Report (FSR)**.
- The FSR which is published biannually reflects the collective assessment of the Sub-Committee of the **Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)** on risks to financial stability and the resilience of the financial system.
- The Report also discusses issues relating to development and regulation of the financial sector.

10. Bihar's Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR):

- Authorities in **Bihar's Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR)** have started planning for conservation of vultures after 150 of the birds were sighted recently in the protected area.
- **Different species of vultures including Egyptian vulture, Griffon vulture, White-rumped vulture and Himalayan griffon** were among the 150 individuals spotted in VTR.
- VTR forms the easternmost limits of the **Himalayan Terai forests in India**. Situated in the Gangetic Plains bio-geographic zone of the country, the forest has a combination of bhabar and terai tracts.
- Indian **flying foxes** can be sighted here.

There are nine recorded species of vultures in India — the Oriental white-backed, long-billed, slender-billed, Himalayan, red-headed, Egyptian, bearded, cinereous and the Eurasian Griffon.

BIRD'S EYE VIEW

9 RECORDED SPECIES:
Oriental white-backed, long-billed, slender-billed, Himalayan, red-headed, Egyptian, bearded, cinereous and the Eurasian Griffon.



(4 CRITICALLY ENDANGERED, 1 ENDANGERED, 3 NEAR THREATENED)

THE CRISIS:

A massive dip in vulture populations came into limelight in the mid-90s, and in 2004 the cause of the crash was established as diclofenac, a veterinary nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug.

WHAT NEXT AFTER 2006 PROJECT:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ■ Testing of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs on vultures, development of new NSAIDs | endangered species |
| ■ Covering two more species in the breeding programme that earlier focussed on 3 critically | Additional conservation breeding centres and four rescue centres planned across India |
| | ■ Nationwide vulture survey once in four years |

11. Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC):

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry has initiated a project on Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC).

- The task has been assigned to **Quality Council of India (QCI)**.

- ONDC aims at promoting open networks developed on open sourced methodology, using open specifications and open network protocols independent of any specific platform.
- ONDC is expected to digitize the entire value chain, standardize operations, promote inclusion of suppliers, derive efficiencies in logistics and enhance value for consumers.

12. The white flag campaign in Malaysia:

- In Malaysia, some residents of low-income families have started waving white flags as part of the so-called “White Flag Campaign”, or the #benderaputi (white flag) movement.
- They are doing this to convey distress about the financial crunch they have had to deal with amid the lockdowns due to Covid-19.
- As part of the movement that was initiated last week, families that are facing hunger or need any other kind of assistance are encouraged to wave a white flag or put a piece of white cloth outside their homes to signal that they need help.
- The idea is that by spotting the white flag, neighbours and good samaritans can reach them.



13. Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam:

- LOCATION:** Benishangul-Gumuz region, Ethiopia.
- Formerly known as the **Millennium Dam**, it is under construction in the Benishangul-Gumuz region of Ethiopia, on the Blue Nile River, which is located about 40km east of Sudan.
- After completion, it'll be Africa's largest hydroelectric project.



14. What is Revenge Tourism?

‘Revenge Tourism’ is hitting Indians.

- The term ‘revenge travel’ is a riff on the 1980s Chinese concept of ‘revenge spending’, when the country saw an explosion in consumer spending after it emerged from restrictions.
- Now, it is used to describe the angst, bottled-up demand for travel after several months of lockdown.
- Revenge travel or revenge tourism, stems from a feeling of wanting to break free from the monotonous life of lockdowns. It is a product of another phenomenon called ‘lockdown-fatigue’.

15. Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR):

- A rare Melanistic Leopard (commonly known as Black Panther) has been recorded in Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR) of Maharashtra.
- The tiger reserve comprises the notified area of Navegaon National Park, Navegaon Wildlife Sanctuary, Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary, New Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary and Koka Wildlife Sanctuary.
- NNTR has connectivity with the major tiger reserves in Central India like Kanha and Pench Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, Pench & Tadoba-Andhari TR in Maharashtra, Indravati tiger Reserve in Chhattisgarh and indirectly with the Kawal & Nagarjunsagar Tiger Reserve in Telangana & Andhra Pradesh and Achanakmar TR in Chhattisgarh.
- It is also connected to important tiger bearing areas like Umred-Karhandala sanctuary and Bramhapuri division.

ALL ABOUT MELANISM

► Black panther in Asia and Africa is black leopard (*Panthera Pardus*), and the one in the US is black jaguar (*Panthera Onca*)

► Black panther same species as a normal-coloured panther with a high amount of pigment (melanin) causing the animal to appear to be black. Melanism occurs because of a recessive gene mutation

► Condition is caused by agouti gene which regulates distribution of black pigment within hair shaft

► Close look at a panther's coat will reveal characteristic spots of leopard and jaguar, hiding under a cloak of excess



The leopard was recorded in camera traps during Phase IV estimation in NNTR in February

melanism in what is called 'ghost striping'.

► Black panthers found in states like Kerala, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and Odisha

► Melanism hereditary but is not necessarily passed on directly to the next generation.

A black panther cub may be born even if both parents are normal coloured

► Normal-colored leopard can carry recessive melanistic gene. Often, a black leopard cub is born along with fair-colored cubs. If both parents are black, the leopard cubs are always black

16. Bhalia wheat:

- The first shipment of Geographical Indication (GI) certified Bhalia variety of wheat was exported to Kenya and Sri Lanka from Gujarat.
- This wheat variety has high protein content and is sweet in taste.
- The crop is grown mostly across the Bhal region of Gujarat.
- It is grown in rainfed conditions without irrigation and cultivated in around two lakh hectares of agricultural land in Gujarat.

17. Khadi Prakritik:

- It is India's first paint made from Cow Dung.
- Union MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari is the brand ambassador of Khadi Prakritik Paint.
- The Paint has been launched with the twin objectives of increasing farmers' income and creating self-employment across the country.

18. SPARSH [System for Pension Administration (Raksha)]:

- It is an integrated system for automation of sanction and disbursement of defence pension.
- Implemented by the Ministry of Defence.
- This web-based system processes pension claims and credits pension directly into the bank accounts of defence pensioners without relying on any external intermediary.

19. dbGENVOC:

- It is the world's first database of genomic variants of oral cancer.

It is created by the DBT-National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (NIBMG), Kalyani an autonomous institute funded by the Department of

20. Bhumi Panduga:

- These are celebrations marking the beginning of farm operations every year.
- Celebrated by Koya tribes in Andhra Pradesh.
- **For men, hunting is mandatory as part of the festival.** The catch is distributed among all the families in the hamlet equally during a feast every evening.
- Usually celebrated in the month of June.



21. Himalayan yaks:

The National Research Centre on Yak (NRCY) at Dirang in West Kameng district, Arunachal Pradesh, has tied up with the National Insurance Company Ltd. for insuring their livestock.

- The insurance policy would shield the yak owners against the risks posed by weather calamities, diseases, in-transit mishaps, surgical operations and strikes or riots.
- According to the policy, the owners would have to get their yaks ear-tagged and provide a proper description in order to get their animals insured.



About Himalayan Yaks:

1. Yak is accustomed to very cold temperatures and can up to minus 40 degrees.
2. Two other prominent nomadic communities engaged in yak rearing are **Changpas and Dokpas** in **Ladakh, Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh**.
3. Currently considered to be **Vulnerable by the IUCN**.
4. The number of yaks across the country declined by almost 24.7% between 2012 and 2019.

5. Yak population in India is found in Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Uttarakhand.

22. India Industrial Land Bank (IILB):

- It is a **GIS-based portal** with all industrial infrastructure-related information such as connectivity, infra, natural resources and terrain, plot-level information on vacant plots, line of activity, and contact details.
- It acts as a **one-stop repository of all industrial infrastructure-related information**.
- It serves as a **decision support system for investors scouting for land remotely**.
- It has around 4,000 industrial parks mapped across an area of 5.5 lakh hectare of land and is expected to achieve pan-India integration by December 2021.
- It is under the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**.

23. Lemru Elephant Reserve:

- To be located in Chhattisgarh.
- Proposed in 2005 and got central approval in 2007.
- It is planned to prevent human-animal conflict in the region, with elephants moving into Chhattisgarh from Odisha and Jharkhand.

Why in the News?

It has run into controversy as the government is planning to decrease the area of the proposed reserve from 1,995 sq km to 450 sq km. It is because if the government doesn't reduce it then several coal mines would become unusable.

- The area proposed under the reserve is part of the Hasdeo Aranya forests, a very diverse biozone that is also rich in coal deposits.

24. Bryum bharatiensis:

- Scientists in India have discovered a **native moss species in Antarctica**.
- It has been **named Bryum bharatiensis - after India and India's Antarctic station Bharati**.
- This is the **first time a plant species has been discovered in the four decades of the Indian Antarctic mission**.



25. Honorary Consul generals:

Industrialist N.S. Srinivasa Murthy based in Bengaluru has been appointed as Honorary Consul General of Vietnam for Karnataka.

- He is the first honorary consul general of Vietnam from India and the 19th across the world.

Who are Honorary Consuls?

- Together with diplomatic missions, an honorary consul promotes economic and cultural relations.
- They are private individuals who take care of their tasks on a part-time basis without remuneration.
- Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)'s approval is essential before the formal appointment.
- Honorary consuls do not accept passport applications nor do they handle matters pertaining to visas or residence permits.
- Honorary consuls cannot serve as attorneys in judicial proceedings or as legal advisers.

Who are Honorary Consuls?

They are not professional diplomats and are usually citizens of the host country



They are designated by a foreign government to look after the affairs of its citizens

They often get no remuneration from the sending state; they have to maintain consulate offices

There are 30,000 honorary consuls across the world

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26. India's first cryptogamic garden:

- Inaugurated recently in the Chakrata town of Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
- The garden will be housing nearly 50 species of lichens, ferns and fungi (collectively known as Cryptogamae).
- This site is chosen because of its low pollution levels and moist conditions which are conducive for the growth of these species.

What are cryptograms?

- Plant kingdom can be divided into two sub-kingdoms viz. Cryptogams and phanerogams.
- Cryptogams consist of seedless plants and plant-like organisms whereas phanerogams consist of seed-bearing plants.
- Phanerogams are further divided into two classes i.e. gymnosperms and angiosperms.
- The word "Cryptogamae" implies 'hidden reproduction', referring to the fact that they do not produce any reproductive structure, seed, or flower.
- A cryptogam is a plant that reproduces with the help of spores.

27. International trade finance services platform (ITFS):

The [International Financial Services Centres Authority \(IFSCA\)](#) has released a framework for setting up and operating an **international trade finance services platform (ITFS)** to provide **trade finance services** at international financial services centres (IFSCs).

- The framework will enable exporters and importers to avail various types of trade finance facilities at competitive terms, for their international trade transactions through a dedicated electronic platform ITFS.
- This will help in their ability to convert their trade receivables into liquid funds and to obtain short-term funding.

28. The Kanwar Yatra:

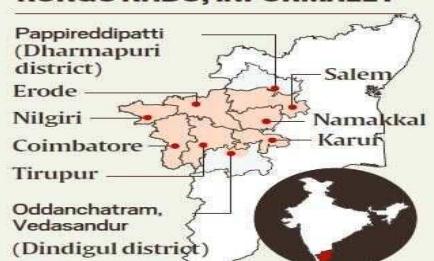
- It is a pilgrimage organised in the Hindu calendar month of Shravana (Saavan).
- Saffron-clad Shiva devotees generally walk barefoot with pitchers of holy water from the Ganga or other holy rivers. The water is used by the pilgrims to worship Shiva lingas at shrines of importance.
- Devotees carry the pitchers of holy water on their shoulders, balanced on decorated slings known as **Kanwars**.
- In the Gangetic plains, the water is taken from pilgrimage sites such as Haridwar, Gaumukh and Gangotri in Uttarakhand, Sultanganj in Bihar, and Prayagraj, Ayodhya or Varanasi from Uttar Pradesh.
- An important festival with similarities to the Kanwar yatra in North India, called **the Kavadi festival**, is celebrated in Tamil Nadu, in which Lord Muruga is worshipped.



29. Kongu Nadu:

- 'Kongu Nadu' is neither a place with a PIN code nor a name given formally to any region. It is a commonly used name for part of western Tamil Nadu.
- In Tamil literature, it was referred to as one of the five regions of ancient Tamil Nadu.
- There were mentions of 'Kongu Nadu' in Sangam literature as a separate territory.
- The name derives from Kongu Vellala Gounder, an OBC community with a significant presence in these districts.

KONGU NADU, INFORMALLY



30. What is chemotaxis?

Chemotaxis in microbiology refers to the migration of cells toward attractant chemicals or away from repellents.

- Somatic cells, bacteria, and other single-cell or multicellular organisms direct their movements according to certain chemicals in their environment.
- This is important for bacteria to find food (e.g., glucose) by swimming toward the highest concentration of food molecules, or to flee from poisons (e.g., phenol).

31. International Cooperation and Convention Centre - Rudraksh in Varanasi:

- It was inaugurated recently.
- It has been constructed with Japanese assistance.
- The objective of the project is to provide opportunities for social and cultural interactions between people.



32. World Youth Skills Day:

- In 2014, the **United Nations General Assembly** declared **15 July as World Youth Skills Day**, to celebrate the strategic importance of equipping young people with skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship.
- The day was marked to achieve the **Incheon Declaration: Education 2030**, which is a part of **Sustainable Development Goal 4** that urges to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”
- **2021 Theme** – “Reimagining Youth Skills Post-Pandemic”.

33. Kisan Sarathi:

- Digital Platform Kisan Sarathi launched to facilitate farmers to get ‘right information at right time’ in their desired language.
- Farmers can avail personalised advisories on agriculture and allied areas directly from scientists through the digital platform.

34. UMANG app:

- The UMANG mobile app (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) is a Government of India single, unified, secure, multi-channel, multi-platform, multi-lingual, multi-service mobile app, providing access to high impact services of various organizations (Central and State).
- Launched in 2017.
- As on date, UMANG provides about 1251 services from 257 Departments & 32 States and about 20,280 Utility Bill Payment services and many more services are there in the pipeline.

35. School Innovation Ambassador Training Program:

- It is innovative and one of its kind training program for School Teachers.
- Aim: Training 50,000 school teachers on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, IPR, Design Thinking, Product development, Idea generation etc.
- The training will be delivered in online mode only.
- Designed by Innovation Cell of the Ministry of Education and AICTE for School Teachers.

36. Kadambini Ganguly:

- Google on July 18 celebrated **Kadambini Ganguly**- the country's first woman doctor with a special doodle on her 160th birth anniversary.
- Born in a Brahmo family on July 18, 1861, Ganguly, **along with Chandramukhi Basu**, became the first female graduates in India, from Bethune College in Kolkata.

- A champion of women's rights, Ganguly was among the six members of the first all-women delegation of the 1889 Indian National Congress.

37. New findings on Mercury's core:

- New study by researchers from the University of Maryland on the structure of Mercury has revealed that Mercury has a big-sized core relative to its mantle.

Sun's magnetism is the reason for this.

- During the early formation of the solar system, when the young Sun was surrounded by a swirling cloud of dust and gas, grains of iron were drawn toward the centre by the Sun's magnetic field.
- When the planets began to form from clumps of that dust and gas, planets closer to the sun incorporated more iron into their cores than those further away.

38. What is Space rice?

- It is the rice harvested from seeds that went on a 23-day lunar voyage with China's Chang'e-5 in November.
- After being exposed to cosmic radiation and zero gravity, these seeds weighing around 40 gram returned and were harvested.
- It is believed that rice seeds exposed to the environment in Space may mutate and produce higher yields once planted on Earth.
- China has been taking seeds of rice and other crops to Space since 1987.
- In 2018, the total plantation area for space crops approved in China reached more than 2.4 million hectares.

39. First continent to complete collection of digital land use data:

- **Africa has become the first continent in the world to complete the collection of accurate, comprehensive and harmonised digital land use and land use change data under the Africa Open DEAL initiative.**
- **DEAL** stands for Data for the Environment, Agriculture and Land Initiative.
- The data collection and analysis initiative is led by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the African Union Commission (AUC).
- The data was analysed to highlight land use change over the past 20 years and the potential for restoration at the national level for every country in the African continent.

40. Bihar's Kishanganj gets digital fertility map:

The digital fertility map has been prepared by the scientists of Bihar Agriculture University (BAU).

Benefits for farmers:

- They can now easily decide which crops they should grow in particular areas for better gains.
- They can introduce new crops, go for crop diversifications.
- They can also decide about the exact dose of fertilisers after knowing the fertility level of their soil. This will get them bumper crops.

Concerns:

Agricultural experts and farmers are worried over the growing digitisation of land records and their fertility details. They apprehend the data could be exploited by private companies and big corporate houses for various purposes, such as land acquisition and predatory lending, leaving farmers in crisis.

41. Rules for registration of vintage cars:

Transport ministry has amended Central Motor Vehicles Rules (CMVR) 1989, formalising the registration process of vintage motor vehicles.

- This is aimed at preserving and promoting the heritage of old vehicles in India.

Highlights of the new rules:

- Under the new rules, all two and four-wheelers over 50 years old, maintained in their original form and which have not undergone any substantial overhaul, shall be defined as Vintage Motor Vehicles.

- It allows for retention of old numbers for already registered vehicles and a “VA” series (Unique Registration Mark) for fresh registrations.
- Vintage motor vehicles shall not be driven on roads for regular/commercial purposes.

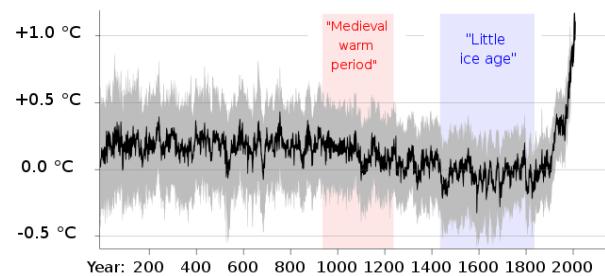
42. Climate change has added over 1,000 lakes in Swiss Alps:

- Melting glaciers in Swiss Alps have created more than 1,000 new lakes across the mountains.
- This is because of rapid climate change.
- Almost 1,200 new lakes have formed in formerly glaciated regions of the Swiss Alps since the end of the Little Ice Age around 1850. Around 1,000 of them still exist today.

Little Ice Age (LIA) is the climate interval that occurred from the early 14th century through the mid-19th century.

- **Scientists have tentatively identified seven possible causes of the Little Ice Age:** orbital cycles; decreased solar activity; increased volcanic activity; altered ocean current flows; fluctuations in the human population in different parts of the world causing reforestation, or deforestation; and the inherent variability of global climate.

Global Average Temperature Change



43. National Logistics Excellence Awards:

- This newly launched awards will provide due recognition to the various players involved in the logistics supply chain in the country.
- The awards are divided in two categories. The first category includes service providers and logistics infrastructure and second category will be awarded for the various user industries.
- The Awards will highlight best practices which include process standardisation, consolidation, digital transformations, technological upgrade and sustainable practices in the logistics sector.

44. Dairy Investment Accelerator:

- Set up by the **Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD)**, Government of India under its Investment Facilitation Cell.
- The aim is to provide dedicated focus towards promoting & facilitating investments in the Indian dairy sector.
- It will also generate awareness among investors about the **Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF)**.

It shall provide support across the investment cycle:

1. Offering specific inputs for evaluation of investment opportunities.
2. Addressing queries about application to govt. schemes.
3. Connecting with strategic partners.
4. Providing on-ground assistance with state departments & relevant authorities.

45. WHO-GMP/COPP Certification for Ayurvedic Products:

Indian Medicines Pharmaceutical Corporation Ltd. (IMPCL) has applied for WHO-GMP/COPP certification for 18 Ayurvedic products.

- **GMP** is a short form of **Good Manufacturing Practice**.
- The **WHO GMP certificate** is mandatory in most global markets for pharmaceutical companies to be able to sell medicines.
- The **certificate of pharmaceutical product (CPP or CoPP)** is a certificate issued in the format recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- It is valid for 3 years from the date of issue and companies can apply for renewal after that.

46. Man-portable anti-tank guided missile:

- MPATGM is third-generation anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) indigenously developed by DRDO.
- It has strike range of 2.5 km.
- It is capable of being fired from shoulder and can be used during day and night. It has minimum lateral centre and gravity offset.
- It works on fire and forget principle and is known for its top attack capabilities.

47. New Generation Akash Missile:

- It is a surface-to-air missile system.
- It has a strike range of 60 km and fly at a speed of up to Mach 2.5.
- Developed by DRDO.

48. Kaman Aman Setu:

- India and Pakistan Armies recently held a Flag meeting and exchanged sweets at Kaman Aman Setu.
- Kaman aman setu is located at Uri in North Kashmir.
- Kaman Aman Setu - Friendship Bridge between India and Pakistan, is also the last point of the India-Pak border in the Uri district.

49. Bhartiya Prakritik Krishi Padhati (BPKP):

- Government is implementing Bhartiya Prakritik Krishi Padhati (BPKP) as a **sub scheme of Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)** since 2020-21 for the promotion of traditional indigenous practices.
- It mainly emphasizes on exclusion of all synthetic chemical inputs and promotes on-farm biomass recycling with major stress on biomass mulching; use of cow dung-urine formulations; plant-based preparations and time to time working of soil for aeration.
- Under BPKP, financial assistance of Rs 12200/ha for 3 years is provided for cluster formation, capacity building and continuous handholding by trained personnel, certification and residue analysis.

50. Gaon Buras:

- The institution of Gaon Bura in Assam dates back to the colonial era, when the British appointed the oldest person in the village as the head, who would oversee matters relating to land and revenue in a particular area.
- The position would usually go to the oldest, most knowledgeable man who had good personal ties with everyone in a village, or a cluster of small villages.
- In Arunachal Pradesh, too, the Gaon Buras (and Buris) are the most important village-level functionaries.

Why in News?

Recently, the Assam Cabinet announced that Gaon Buras will henceforth be called 'Gaon Pradhans'.

51. Alexander Dalrymple award:

Chief Hydrographer to the Govt. of India has received the Alexander Dalrymple award from the British High Commissioner. He was rewarded in recognition of his leadership in the disciplines of hydrography and nautical cartography.

- The Alexander Dalrymple award has been named after **the first hydrographer of the Admiralty and was instituted in 2006**.
- Recipients are selected for their efforts in raising the standards of hydrography, cartography and navigation around the world.

52. ARMEX-21:

It is the Indian Army Skiing Expedition.

- It was conducted in the mountain ranges of the Himalayan region to promote the adventure activity in the country and the Indian Army.

- The expedition was flagged off at Karakoram Pass in Ladakh on 10th March and culminated at Malari in Uttarakhand on 6th of July.

53. India in top 10 list of agri produce exporters:

As per a report by World Trade Organization (WTO) on the trends in world agricultural trade in the past 25 years:

- India entered the top 10 list of the countries exporting agricultural produce in the year 2019.
- India and Mexico with 3.1% and 3.4% share in global Agri exports, respectively, replaced New Zealand (9th) and Malaysia (7th) as the largest exporters across the globe.
- India is also the third-largest cotton exporter (7.6%), and the fourth-largest importer (10%) in 2019.
- However, India lagged behind as a value-added contributor to world agri exports.
- The US, which topped the list in 1995 (22.2%), was overtaken by the European Union in 2019 (16.1%).
- China climbed from the sixth spot in 1995 (4%) to fourth in 2019 (5.4%).
- The top 10 exporters accounted for more than 96% of exports in both 1995 and 2019.

54. Tripura agarwood policy:

Draft Tripura Agarwood Policy 2021 released.

- It seeks to promote the state's agarwood business in a bid to develop a Rs 2000 crore economy in the state within 2025.
- The project, which is worth Rs 100 crore, has been undertaken as part of the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Vocal for Local' initiatives of the Centre.

About Agarwood:

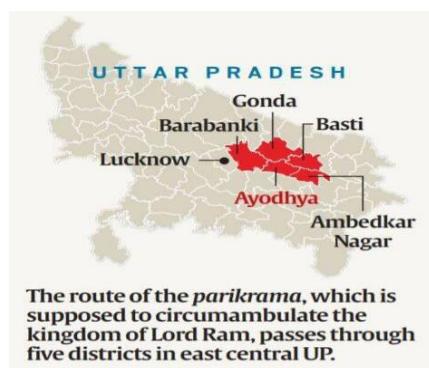
- The agarwood tree (*Aquilaria malaccensis*) oil is also known as liquid gold.
- A litre of agar oil costs Rs 5 lakh in the global market.
- IUCN has listed it under the critically endangered category.
- The agarwood tree is native to Northeast India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and parts of Southeast Asia.
- It is an evergreen tree that can grow to 40 metres.

55. National Centre of Excellence for Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming & Comics:

- The Union Government has decided to set up a National Centre of Excellence for Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics for creating a world-class talent pool in India to cater to the Indian as well as global industry.
- It will be set up in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.

56. 84 kos parikrama marg:

- The central government has decided to declare the "84 kos parikrama marg" around Ayodhya a national highway.
- All three parikramas in Ayodhya — the 5 kos (around 15 km), 14 kos (42 km), and 84 kos (about 275 km) parikramas — are linked to Lord Ram.
- The Baal Kand of the Valmiki Ramayana mentions that Ayodhya was earlier known as Koshaldesh, initially spread over 48 kos, and was later expanded to 84 kos.
- The 84 kos parikrama is a circumambulation of Koshaldesh, touching all important places associated with the kingdom of Ram.
- As per Hindu belief, the 84 kos parikrama frees a person from the obligation of completing 84 lakh yoni (lives). Hindus believe the parikrama of Ayodhya started from Treta Yug, the yug of Lord Ram, which was over 1 lakh years ago.



The route of the parikrama, which is supposed to circumambulate the kingdom of Lord Ram, passes through five districts in east central UP.

57. KASEZ becomes 'first green industrial city' in India:

- Kandla Special Economic Zone (KASEZ), the oldest export zone in the country, has become the "first green industrial city" in India to receive a platinum rating under IGBC Green Cities Rating for existing cities in the industrial cities category.
- The SEZ has increased its green cover and managed to grow 68 species of trees and attract 28 varieties of birds on a piece of land that was once a salt pan with almost no vegetation.
- Most of these trees have been planted post 2019, using the Miyawaki forestation method.

IGBC Green Cities rating system is a voluntary and consensus based programme. It is the first of its kind rating in India to address environmental sustainability in existing cities.

- The Indian Green Building Council (IGBC), part of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) was formed in the year 2001.

58. Raja Mircha:

- Also known as 'Bhoot Jolokia' or 'Ghost pepper', it is a famous chilli from Nagaland.
- In 2008, it received GI certification.
- It has long been regarded as the world's hottest chilli, consistently ranking in the top five on lists of the hottest chillies in the world based on Scoville Heat Units (SHUs).

59. INDRA 2021:

- It is an Indo-Russia joint military Exercise.
- The 12th edition of the exercise will be held at Volgograd, Russia.
- The exercise will entail conduct of counter terror operations under the United Nations mandate by a joint force against international terror groups.

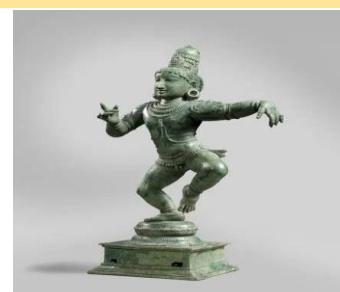
60. Puri becomes the first city in country to have 'drink from tap' facility:

- Odisha government has declared Puri as the first city in the country to have city-wide safe drinking tap water that can be used directly for drinking and cooking without further filtration or boiling.
- Under Drink From Tap-Sujal Mission, people of Puri will be able to fetch water directly from the tap to drink. There is no need for storage or a filter. Tap water will be available 24x7.
- Benefits: The move will now eliminate the usage of 3 crore plastic water bottles. This would mean the city will now be free from nearly 400 tonnes of plastic waste.

The Sujal Mission was launched on October 13 last year to ensure quality tapped drinking water for more than 1.5 million people in more than 15 urban areas. It includes a 24/7 helpline centre with IVRS for grievance redressal, a mobile water testing laboratory and a quick response team for rapid redressal of water supply complaints.

61. Sambandar:

- Dancing child-saint Sambandar of 12th century belongs to Chola dynasty.
- The National Gallery of Australia(NGA) has announced that it would return 14 works of art from its Asian art collection to India including Sambandar.
- Sambandar was one of the nayanmars, a group of sixty-three saints active in South India from the sixth to the ninth century who were instrumental in popularizing the worship of Shiva through devotional poetry and song.



62. Odisha plans DNA profiling for leopards:

- Odisha's Forest and Environment Department has decided to do DNA profiling of the leopards in the state.
- The exercise will help ascertain and trace the origin in case of deaths of the leopards, after the skin and other organs from poachers and traders are seized.

- The system will strengthen the fight against wildlife crimes, especially poaching of leopards.

63. INRA NAVY:

- The 12th edition of exercise INRA NAVY was held in the Baltic Sea.
- INDRA NAVY is a biennial bilateral maritime exercise between Indian Navy and Russian Navy.
- Initiated in 2003, Ex INDRA NAVY epitomises the long-term strategic relationship between the two navies.

When things didn't fall in line even in my third Mains, I emailed **InsightsonIndia** to seek guidance for the next attempt. InsightsIAS Offline program suited all my requirements. Thus, I moved in and stayed nearby Insights institute.

I followed offline prelims test series of Insights and also, prelims cum mains integrated study plan that was given to core batch students. I scheduled my day in accordance with the test series timetable(please make your own timetable which suits you the best). In my timetable I ensured 8 hours of sleep, one hour of sports and 5 minutes break in between. Make a realistic timetable which is practically possible to implement, set achievable targets and be honest to yourself in following it.

I improved immensely by getting the personal feedback by Vinay Sir, and was able to top the UPSC CSE-2016.

NANDINI K R

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