

GS ANALYST

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EDITORIAL

INDIA AS MOST POPULOUS CAN BE MORE BOON THAN BANE

CONTEXT:

China is projected to hand over the baton of the most populous country to India by mid-2023. But for India, there are greater prospects for demographic advantage than serious concerns.

◎ POPULATION ATTRIBUTES

- **Population as a resource:** Population is a resource as long as the country's carrying capacity is intact.
- **Concept of carrying capacity:** Carrying capacity is not just per capita availability of natural resources; it is a dynamic concept which changes according to changing technology, the efficiency of production and consumption systems of a country.
- **Population composition:** Looking at the population composition of India, there are greater prospects for demographic dividend than a disaster. The country continues to have a demographic window of opportunity for the next 35 years to reap an economic dividend.

◎ MECHANISMS THAT TRANSLATE A DEMOGRAPHIC BONUS TO ECONOMIC DIVIDEND

- **Employment or job creation:** If India is able to generate sufficient and quality jobs for its bulging working age population, realisation of demographic dividend will become a reality.
- **Education:** Education, skills generation and ensuring a healthy lifespan by preventing diseases and disabilities are also important channels that translate demographic opportunity into economic gains.
- **Governance:** Good governance is another important aspect for reaping demographic dividend as it helps in creating a healthy environment for increasing efficiency and productivity of the population.

◎ WAY AHEAD AS MOST POPULOUS COUNTRY

- **Relatively younger population:** A relatively younger population of India provides higher support ratios — there is lesser disease, disability and caring burden.
- **Boost to GDP:** Available demographic opportunity in the form of a greater share of the working age population has the potential to boost per capita GDP by an additional 43% by 2061.
- **Need of the hour:** The country needs an enabling environment that can provide high quality education, good health care, respectable employment opportunities, good infrastructure, and gender empowerment.

PUSHKARALU FESTIVAL RETURNS TO THE GANGA

SYLLABUS MAPPING

- **Subject:** Art & Culture (GS-I)
- **Sub-topic:** Indian Culture

CONTEXT:

The 12-day Pushkaralu festival of Telugu-speaking people commenced recently in Varanasi.

About the festival

- The festival is being organised in Kashi this year after a gap of 12 years due to a special combination of planetary transits.
- Godavari Pushkaralu is celebrated once in every 12 years when Brihaspati enters Simha Raasi.
- In this festival, pilgrims worship their ancestors and the river Ganga.

It is the second event of the recent past to be organised in Varanasi, after the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam.

The story behind

- As per the legend, after severe penance, the devotee Pushkara was blessed by Lord Shiva with the ability to live in water, and purify holy rivers.
- On a request from Brihaspati (Jupiter), Pushkara decided to enter one of the 12 sacred rivers — Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri, Bhima, Tapti, Narmada, Saraswati, Tungabhadra, Sindhu, and Pranhita.
- Each river has its zodiac sign.
- The river for each year's festival is decided in accordance with Brihaspati travel from one zodiac sign to another.

Pushakaram of these rivers is celebrated when Jupiter / Brihaspati transits from one Raasi (zodiac sign) to the other:

- The cycle of **Pushkaralu** begins with River Ganga when Brihaspati enters Mesha Raasi (Aries). It is celebrated as **Ganga Pushkaram**.
- **Narmada Pushkaram** when Jupiter enters Vrishabha Raasi (Taurus).
- **Saraswati Pushkaram** when Brihaspati enters Mithuna Raasi (Gemini).
- **Yamuna Pushkaram** is celebrated when Jupiter enters Karkataka Raasi (Cancer).
- **Godavari Pushkaram** when Brihaspati enters Simha Raasi (Leo).
- **Krishna Pushkaram** when Jupiter enters Kanya Raasi (Virgo).
- **Kaveri Pushkaram** when Brihaspati enters Thula Raasi (Libra).
- **Bheema Pushkaram** when Jupiter enters Thula Raasi (Libra).
- **Pushkara Vahini** when Brihaspati enters Dhanur Raasi (Sagittarius).
- **Tungabhadra Pushkaram** when Jupiter enters Makara Raasi (Capricorn).
- **Sindhu Pushkaram** when Brihaspati enters Kumbha Raasi (Aquarius).
- And when Jupiter enters Meena Raasi (Pisces), **Pranahita Pushkaram** is celebrated.

THE ANCIENT ART FORM OF BHOOТА KOLA

SYLLABUS MAPPING

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|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Subject: Art & Culture (GS-I) | • Sub-topic: Indian Culture |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|

CONTEXT:

The ancient art form of Bhoota Kola, which gained mainstream popularity after the film Kantara, inspires anticipation and hope in Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Kasaragod.

About the culture

- The trained **Bhoota Kola performer**, in a possessed state, provides the answers to the community and is revered as the manifestation of God himself.
- The ritual performance that starts in the night goes on into the early hours of the morning.
- **Different forms:** Performed in the open air, the Bhoota Kola comes in the forms of **Panchuruli, Kallurutti, Koragajja** and so on.
- **Objective:** The Tuluvas, the people who speak the Tulu language, believe in animism and the Bhoota Kola is performed to invoke these spirits of Nature.
- **Tribe:** The traditional right to perform the kola belong to the **Nalike and Parava tribes** of the region.
- A typical **Bhoota Kola** season starts in January and extends to May.



How is different from Theyyam?

Originally from **Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts of Karnataka** and the northern parts of **Kasaragod district**, the Bhoota Kola has striking similarities with Kerala's Theyyam, but have subtle differences too.

- **Costume:** The costumes of the Bhoota Kola are not as strikingly colourful as those of the Theyyam. The Bhoota Kola performer is bedecked in an attire entirely made of intricately woven palm leaves.
- **Face painting:** The elaborate face painting, however, is similar to Theyyam. The incantations the performer utters are in Tulu. The nema or kola (as the performance is called) usually involves a fierce dance accompanied by drums, music and other rituals.

Theyyam

- Theyyam, also known as Kaliyattam, is a ritual dance popular in north Kerala. It encompasses dance, mime and music.
- It exalts the beliefs of the ancient tribals who gave a lot of importance to the worship of heroes and the spirits of their ancestors.
- The ceremonious dance is accompanied by the chorus of such musical instruments as Chenda, Elathalam, Kurumkuzal and Veekkuchenda.
- There are over 400 separate Theyyams, each with their own music, style and choreography.
- The most prominent among these are **Raktha Chamundi, Kari Chamundi, Muchilottu Bhagavathi, Wayanadu Kulaven, Gulikan and Pottan**.



G7 CALLS FOR EXTENSION OF BLACK SEA GRAIN DEAL

SYLLABUS MAPPING

- Subject:** International Relations (GS-II)
- Sub-topic:** Important International treaties

CONTEXT:

The Group of Seven (G7) economic powers have called for the “extension, full implementation and expansion” of a critical deal to export Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea.

Need of the deal

- Ukraine is a major global exporter of sunflower, maize, wheat and barley.
- When Russia invaded in February 2022, its naval vessels blockaded Ukraine’s ports, trapping some 20 million tonnes of grain.



What is in the deal?

- Brokered by the United Nations and Turkey, the deal was signed in Istanbul last July, allowing Ukraine to export more than 27 million tonnes of grain from several of its Black Sea ports.
- The deal allowed exports from Ukraine of grain, other foodstuffs, and fertilizer, including ammonia, to resume through a safe maritime humanitarian corridor from three key **Ukrainian ports** to the rest of the world:
 - Chornomorsk
 - Odesa
 - Yuzhny/Pivdennyyi

EU'S NEW CRYPTO-LEGISLATION

SYLLABUS MAPPING

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|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Subject: International Relations (GS-II) | • Sub-topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

CONTEXT:

The European Parliament, the legislative body of the 27-country block European Union, has approved the world's first set of comprehensive rules to bring largely unregulated cryptocurrency markets under the ambit of regulation by government authorities.

What is in the new legislation?

- The regulation is called the Markets in Crypto Assets (MiCA). MiCA is the most comprehensive regulatory framework for digital assets to date.
- The rules will impose a number of requirements on crypto platforms, token issuers and traders around transparency, disclosure, authorization, and supervision of transactions.
 - ▶ Platforms will be required to inform consumers about the risks associated with their operations, while sales of new tokens will also come under regulation.
- **Coverage:** The MiCA legislation will apply to 'cryptoassets' (Bitcoin, Ethereum and stablecoins)
 - ▶ Cryptoassets can be understood as a digital representation of a value or a right that uses cryptography for security and is in the form of a coin or a token or any other digital medium which may be transferred and stored electronically, using distributed ledger technology or similar technology
- **Stablecoins:** It will apply not only to traditional cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin and Ethereum but also to newer ones like stablecoins. MiCA will establish new rules for three types of stablecoins-
 - ▶ asset-referenced tokens, which are linked to multiple currencies, commodities or cryptocurrencies
 - ▶ e-money Tokens, which are linked to a single currency
 - ▶ utility tokens, which are intended to provide access to a good or service that will be supplied by the issuer of that token

Stablecoins are digital tokens that aim to stay pegged in value with a more stable asset — a fiat currency like the U.S. dollar or other stable cryptocurrencies.

Out of coverage

- MiCA's scope will not regulate digital assets that would qualify as transferable securities and function like shares or their equivalent and other cryptoassets that already qualify as financial instruments under existing regulation.
- It will also for the most part, exclude nonfungible tokens (NFTs).
- MiCA will also not regulate central bank digital currencies issued by the European Central Bank and digital assets issued by national central banks of EU member countries when acting in their capacity as monetary authorities, along with cryptoassets-related services offered by them.

What is the need of such regulation?

- **Concentration of crypto industry:** About 22% of the global crypto industry was concentrated in central, northern and western Europe, which received \$1.3 trillion worth of cryptoassets.

- **Rise in size:** The investments and the size of the crypto industry have grown at unprecedented rates.
- **Increasing Distability:** The year 2022 saw some of the biggest failures and wipeouts in the crypto industry involving bankruptcies and fraud scandals, be it the collapse of the crypto exchange FTX and its spat with Binance or the failure of Terra LUNA cryptocurrency and its associated stablecoin.

What are the benefits of such framework?

- **Harmonising the industry:** Having a comprehensive framework like MiCA for 27 countries in Europe would harmonise the crypto industry.
- **Competitive edge:** It would also give the EU a competitive edge in its growth compared to the U.S. or the U.K. which lack regulatory clarity.
- **Stability:** The governance practices in crypto firms would ensure stability and financial sector-like rules and contagion. The law would protect consumers against deception and fraud,

Regulation of cryptocurrency in India

- India is yet to have a comprehensive regulatory framework for cryptoassets. A draft legislation on the same is reportedly in the works.
- However, the Indian government has taken certain steps to bring cryptocurrencies under the ambit of specific authorities and taxation.
 - ▶ In Budget 2022, the Finance Ministry said that cryptocurrency trading in India has seen a "phenomenal increase" and imposed a 30% tax on income from the "transfer of any virtual digital asset."
 - ▶ In March 2023, the government placed all transactions involving virtual digital assets under the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)**.

DRDO, INDIAN NAVY CONDUCTS SUCCESSFUL TRIAL OF INTERCEPTOR MISSILE

SYLLABUS MAPPING

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|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Subject: Science & Technology (GS-III) | • Sub-topic: Defence |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|

CONTEXT:

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Navy successfully conducted a maiden flight trial of a sea-based endo-atmospheric interceptor missile off the coast of Odisha in the Bay of Bengal.

Key-highlights

- The purpose of the trial was to engage and neutralize a hostile ballistic missile threat thereby elevating India into the elite club of Nations having Naval Ballistic missile defence (BMD) capability.
 - ▶ AWACS (airborne warning and control systems) and other hostile aircraft, as well as approaching long-range nuclear missiles, can be intercepted by BMDs.
- Prior to this, DRDO successfully demonstrated land-based BMD system with the capability to neutralize ballistic missile threats, emerging from adversaries.

Endo-atmospheric missiles

- Endo-atmospheric interception means the missile fired by Indian testing agencies had destroyed the incoming enemy ballistic missile within the Earth's atmosphere.
 - ▶ The endo-atmospheric missiles are those that function within the earth's atmosphere and have a range of less than 100 kilometres.
- Exo-atmospheric interception, on the other hand, is for destroying incoming enemy ballistic missiles outside of the Earth's atmosphere at a higher altitude.
 - ▶ The exo-atmospheric missiles are capable of completing missions in the uppermost part of the earth's atmosphere.
- India's phase-II ballistic missile defence interceptor AD-1, which can engage a wide variety of targets, successfully completed its first flight test in November.
- Long-range ballistic missiles and planes can be intercepted by the AD-1 long-range interceptor missile in both "low exo-atmospheric" and "endo-atmospheric" settings.

LOCKBIT RANSOMWARE

SYLLABUS MAPPING

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|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Subject: Science & Technology (GS-III) | • Sub-topic: Awareness in the fields of IT and Computers |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|

CONTEXT:

Cybercriminals have developed new ransomware encryptors designed to target macOS devices, making this the first major ransomware operation to specifically target Apple computers.

What is LockBit ransomware?

- First reported in September 2019 and dubbed the "abcd" virus, due to the file extension used when encrypting victim's files, the LockBit ransomware is designed to infiltrate victims' systems and encrypt important files.
- The virus is categorised as a "crypto virus" due to its requests for payment in cryptocurrency to decrypt the files on the victim's device.
- The ransomware is therefore typically deployed against victims who feel hindered enough by the disruption to pay heavy sums in exchange for access and can afford to do so.

LockBit ransomware gang

- The group behind this is known as the LockBit gang. It is considered the most prolific ransomware group ever.
- It operates on the ransomware-as-a-service (Raas) model and comes from a line of extortion cyberattacks.

- **Target:** Historically, ransomware has targeted Windows, Linux, and VMware ESXi servers. However, the LockBit is now working to create encryptors targeting Macs for the first time.
- It works as a self-spreading malware, not requiring additional instructions once it has successfully infiltrated a single device with access to an organisational intranet.
- **Protection:** While there are no fool-proof ways of protecting against ransomware attacks, organisations and individuals can take certain steps to increase resilience against such cyber threats.

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SHORT NEWS

Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM)



External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar co-chaired the 4th India-CARICOM Ministerial Meeting with his Jamaican counterpart Kamina J Smith at the CARICOM Secretariat in Guyana.

- The Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) is a regional group of nations that encourage common policy and economic goals.
- The CARICOM was formed in 1973 and consists of 20 nations, including 15 full-time members and five associate members.
- The CARICOM was formed after the founders had enacted the **Treaty of Chaguaramas**.
- It was established to replace the **Caribbean Free Trade Area**, which had failed in its mission to develop policies in the region pertaining to labor and capital.
- The treaty was revised in 2002 to allow for the eventual establishment of a single market and a single economy.

The single market and economy is known as the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME), which is meant to integrate all of the member states of CARICOM.

India, China hold 18th round of corps commander talks



India and China held the 18th round of **Corps Commander Level talk** at the **Chushul-Moldo meeting point** in the **Eastern Ladakh sector**.

The format

- The corps commander-level talks started to resolve the matters between the two sides in the eastern Ladakh area after the Chinese side tried to alter the status quo on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) by aggressively moving forward with heavy weaponry and a large number of troops in 2020 during the initial period of the Covid pandemic.

Hakki Pikki in Sudan Conflict



More than 181 members of the Hakki Pikki tribal community from Karnataka are stuck in violence-hit Sudan.

Who are the Hakki Pikki?

- The Hakki Pikki is a tribe that lives in several states in west and south India, especially near forest areas.
- Hakki Pikkis (Hakki in Kannada means 'bird' and Pikki means 'catchers') are a semi-nomadic tribe, traditionally of bird catchers and hunters.
- In different regions, they are known by different names, such as Mel-Shikari in northern Karnataka and Maharashtra.
- They are divided into four clans, called Gujaratia, Panwar, Kaliwala and Mewaras.

5th round of RCS-UDAN	 <p>Following the four successful rounds of bidding, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched the 5th round of the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) – Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government launched RCS-UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) in October, 2016. Aim: to enhance regional air connectivity from unserved and underserved airports in the country and make air travel affordable for the masses. UDAN is a self-financing scheme. It has a self-financing mechanism with the development of the Regional Connectivity Fund (RCF).
Myelin basic protein (MBP)	 <p>Scientists have fabricated monolayers of pure myelin basic protein (MBP), which is a protective membrane that wraps around the axon of nerve cells and acts as a model protein in studying diseases like multiple sclerosis (MS).</p> <p>About</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myelin basic protein (MBP) is the second most abundant protein in central nervous system myelin. It is responsible for adhesion of the cytosolic surfaces of multilayered compact myelin. MBP helps in compactification of the myelin sheath. The fabricated tailored monolayers can give an in-depth understanding of the role of MBP in forming multilamellar myelin sheath structure as well as preserving the integrity, stability, and compactness of the sheath.
West Bengal adds four new biodiversity heritage sites	 <p>Bengal has added four new biodiversity heritage sites (BHS) in West Bengal, taking the total tally to eight.</p> <p>The new sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Char Balidanga comprises two islands on the Hooghly with tropical riverine vegetation of tall grasses and swampy flat lands that are periodically inundated with tidal ebbs. State Horticulture Research and Development Station campus in Deypara, in Nadia Namthing Pokhari is a Himalayan natural wetland The Amkhoi Fossil Park has unique geological and paleo-botanical features. It is the first wood fossil park in West Bengal. <p>• As per Section 37 of the Biological Diversity Act, the State Governments are empowered to notify areas of biodiversity importance as Biodiversity Heritage Sites.</p> <p>• BHS are areas that are unique, ecologically fragile ecosystems having rich biodiversity comprising of any one or more of the components such as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> species richness high endemism presence of rare, endemic and threatened species keystone species species of evolutionary significance wild ancestors of domestic/cultivated species or land races or their varieties past pre-eminence of biological components represented by fossil beds and having cultural or aesthetic values



TOP 100

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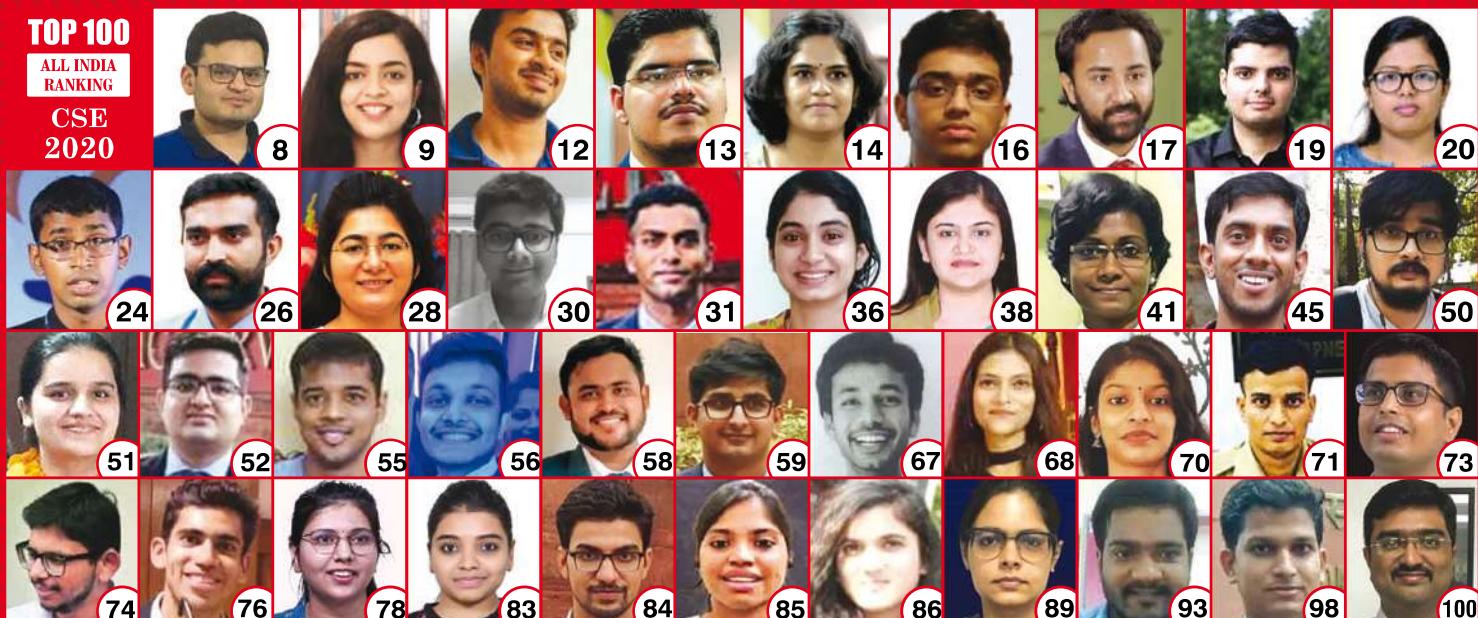


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