

South Asia Area Office & Innovation Centre, ITU

❖ Context

- India signs Host Country Agreement with the International Telecommunication Union for establishment of Area Office & Innovation Centre at New Delhi to give impetus to research and development in telecommunication technologies in South Asia.

❖ Key Highlights

- **International Telecommunication Union** is the United Nations specialised agency (oldest agency of UN), established in **1865**, for information and communication technologies – ICTs. ITU currently has a membership of 193 countries and over 900 private-sector entities and academic institutions.
- The centre is expected to be operational by mid 2022 to serve South Asian countries namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and India and
- The **Host Country Agreement** provides the legal and financial framework for establishment and operations of the Area Office.
- The agreement was signed in a virtual ceremony during the **World Telecommunications Standardisation Assembly-20 (WTSA-20)** being held in Geneva, Switzerland.
- WTSA is a **four-yearly global conference** of ITU dedicated to standardisation of the Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs).
- **India has proposed to host the next WTSA to be held in 2024.**
- India has been taking concrete steps towards development of telecom standards. The **5G standards developed within India** have now been recognised by ITU as **one of the three technologies for 5G.**

Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB)

❖ Context

- The Central government's decision of **adopting a new criterion for selecting members** of the **Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB)**, has evoked sharp criticism from political circles in Punjab and Haryana.

❖ Key Highlights

- The Government of India issued a notification to **amend the BBMB Rules 1974**, thereby changing the criteria for the selection of whole-time members of the Board.
- New rules specify technical qualifications for the appointments and **pave the way for appointment of the members from across India and not only Punjab and Haryana.**

❖ Objections to the New Rule

- The opposition to the new rules has come from within the engineers' fraternity, farmers as well as the political parties of Punjab.
- The engineers have pointed out that **hardly any engineer would qualify for appointment** as per the new specifications, which appear to be tailor-made for some personnel to be appointed from outside Punjab and Haryana.

❖ About Bhakra Dam

- The Bhakra dam is **built on Sutlej River.**
- It is **Asia's second tallest dam** with a height of around 207.26 meters after the Tehri dam, which has a height of around 261 meters.
- The Tehri dam is also situated in India in the state of Uttarakhand.
- The **Gobind Sagar reservoir** of the dam has a capacity to store water up to 9.34 billion cubic meters.

❖ About BBMB

- The **genesis of BBMB** lies in the **Indus Water Treaty signed** between India and Pakistan in 1960.
- Bhakra and Beas projects were established as a **joint venture** of the then undivided Punjab and Rajasthan.
- The Bhakra Beas Management Board was constituted under Section 79 of the Punjab Reorganization Act, 1966.
- The **administration, maintenance and operation** of Bhakra Nangal project was handed over to Bhakra Management.
- On May 15, 1976, when the **Beas Projects Works were completed and handed over.**
- After that, the Bhakra Management Board was renamed as Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB).
- Since then, BBMB is **engaged in the regulation of the supply of water and electricity from Bhakra Nangal and Beas Projects** to the states of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Chandigarh.
- **Management Composition:**
 - A **chairperson and two whole time members** (From Punjab and Haryana).
 - They are **designated as Member (Power) and Member (Irrigation)** from Punjab and Haryana, respectively.
 - Representation from each member state including Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh as nominated by the respective state governments.

News in Between the Lines

Umbrella Scheme Relief and Rehabilitation of Migrants and Repatriates



❖ Context

- Centre has approved the proposal for continuation of the **seven existing sub schemes** under the **Umbrella Scheme Relief and Rehabilitation of Migrants and Repatriates**.

❖ About the Scheme

- **Aim:**
 - The umbrella scheme **enables migrants and repatriates**, who have suffered on account of displacement, to earn a reasonable income and facilitate their **inclusion in mainstream economic activities**.
- **Nodal Ministry:**
 - Ministry of Home Affairs.
- **Sub Schemes:**
 - Relief and Rehabilitation of displaced families of Pakistan Occupied Areas of Jammu and Kashmir and Chhamb.
 - Relief assistance to Sri Lankan Tamil refugees.
 - Relief assistance to Brus lodged in relief camps in Tripura.
 - Enhanced relief to 1984 Anti-Sikh Riot Victims.
 - Financial Assistance and other facilities to the families of affected civilian victims of terrorist violence including militancy, insurgency, communal/ Left Wing Extremism violence and cross border firing and victims of mine/IED blasts on Indian Territory.
 - Grants-in-aid to Central Tibetan Relief Committee (CTRC).
 - Grants-in-Aid to Government of West Bengal for infrastructure development in 51 erstwhile Bangladeshi enclaves in India, situated in Cooch Behar District and for resettlement of 922 returnees from erstwhile Indian enclaves in Bangladesh.

Article 80

Article 80 Composition of the Council of States.

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राज्य सभा की
संरचना

❖ Context

- Recently, pushing for representation in the Rajya Sabha, the Chandigarh civic body approved a proposal to **amend Article 80 of the Constitution**.
- So that its councilors could elect and send one person to the Upper House of the Parliament.

❖ Key Highlights

- The Union Territories of Puducherry, Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi have representation in the Rajya Sabha,
 - while Ladakh, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli — Daman and Diu, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep are unrepresented.
- Chandigarh has a seat of MP in Lok Sabha Only.
- **Article 80:**
 - Article 80 of the Constitution of India **deals with the composition of the Council of States** also called the Upper House and Rajya Sabha (Upper House).

CAATSA



❖ Context

- Recently, USA said that President will decide **whether to apply or waive sanctions on India**, one of America's key partners, under the CAATSA law for its purchase of the **S-400 missile defence system from Russia**.

❖ About CAATSA

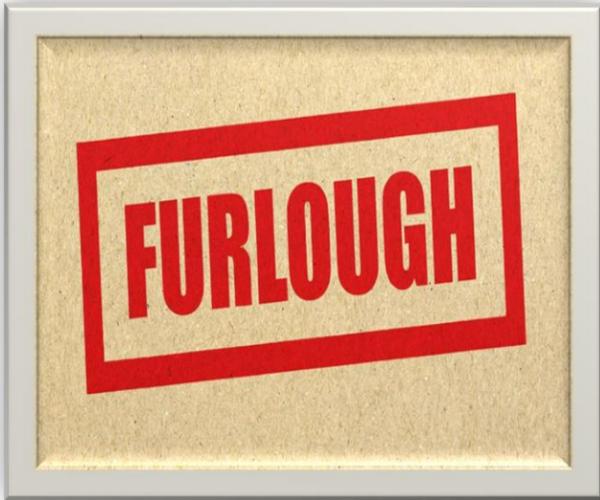
- The US Congress passed Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) in 2017 with an **aim to counter the aggressions by Russia, Iran and North Korea**.
- **Objective:**
 - To **discourage exports of Russian defense equipment**.
- **Types of Sanction:**
 - The CAATSA contains **12 types of sanctions**.

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- There are **only two sanctions** that may impact either India-Russia relations or India-US relations.
- The first of these, which is likely to have an impact on India-Russia relations, is the “**Prohibition of Banking transactions**”.
 - This would mean difficulties for India in making **payments in US Dollars to Russia** for the purchase of the S-400 systems
- The second sanction is export sanction which has the potential to completely **derail the India-US Strategic and Defense partnership**, as it will deny the license for, and export of, any items controlled by the US.

Furlough



❖ Context

- Recently, the 21-day-long furlough of Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, a murder and rape convict, ended with his return to Rohtak jail on February 28.

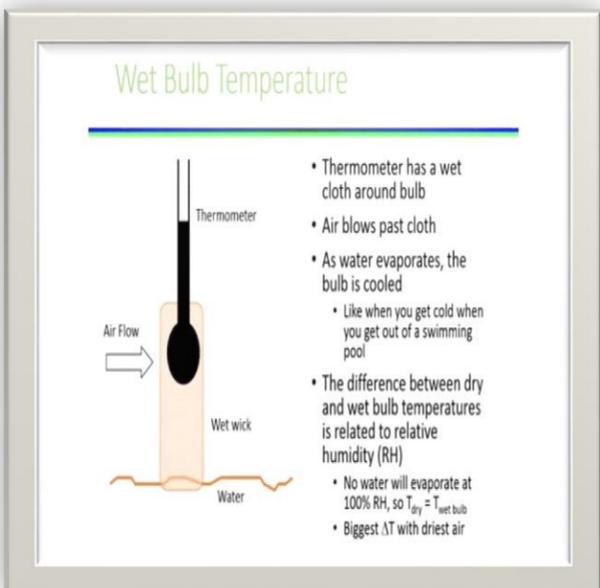
❖ About Furlough

- Furlough is given in cases of **long-term imprisonment**.
- A prisoner’s sentence is **considered to be remitted** during his furlough time.
- It is to be **allowed on a regular basis** for no reason other than to allow the prisoner to maintain familial and social relationships and to counteract the negative consequences of long-term imprisonment.
- **The right to be released on furlough** is a substantial and **legal right** of the prisoner, and it **cannot be rejected if permitted by law**.

❖ About Parole

- Parole means the **release of a prisoner either temporarily for a special purpose or completely** before the expiry of a sentence, on the promise of good behavior.
- Parole is the **privilege given to the prisoners to return to the society** and socialize with families and friends.
- It **requires periodic reporting** to the authorities for a set period of time.
- It is granted to that person who has already served a portion of his or her sentence.

Wet Bulb Temperature (WBT)



❖ Context

- According to one of several studies cited in the recently published IPCC report, **Lucknow and Patna, are among the cities predicted to reach wet-bulb temperature** (a metric of humidity) of 35°C if emissions continue to rise.

❖ Key Highlights

- Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Mumbai, Indore, and Ahmedabad are identified as at risk of reaching wet-bulb temperatures of 32-34°C with continued emissions.
- If emissions keep rising, all States will have regions that experience wet-bulb temperature of 30°C or more by the end of the century.

❖ About Wet Bulb Temperature

- Wet bulb temperature is the **lowest temperature to which air can be cooled** by the evaporation of water into the air **at a constant pressure**.
- This lowest temperature is **achieved by adiabatic evaporation** (= without adding heat or with equal enthalpy) . (Absolute humidity rises). It is therefore **measured by wrapping a wet wick around the bulb** of a thermometer and the measured temperature corresponds to the wet bulb temperature.
- **Dry Bulb Temperature**
 - The dry bulb temperature is the **ambient temperature**.
 - The **difference** between these two temperatures is a measure of the **humidity of the air**.
 - The higher the difference in these temperatures, the lower is the humidity.

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Sagar Parikrama



❖ Context

- **Department of Fisheries**, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India and National Fisheries Development Board has launched the program as part of "Azad Bharat Ka Amrit Mahotsav".

❖ Key Highlights

- The sea journey is proposed to be **conducted across the coastal belt of India** in all coastal states/UTs through a pre-decided sea route down right from Gujarat, Diu, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands. The journey marks **gratitude to oceans and seas saluting freedom fighters, sailors and fishermen**.
- It will encompass besides **understanding the problems of fishermen**, distribution of **certificates/sanctions to progressive fishermen** under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampadha scheme (PMMSY), KCC & State Scheme. It will start **from Mandvi port**, situated at the estuary where the **river Rukmati** meets **Gulf of Kutch**.

E-bill Processing System



❖ Context

- The system was launched by Finance Minister on **46th Civil Accounts Day**.

❖ Key Highlights

- The suppliers and contractors will now be able to **submit their claims online which can be tracked on real time basis**.
- It will make end to end process digitised and transparent.
- It will stop the '**rent-seeking**' in clearance of dues by the departments.
- The claim will be authenticated by the suppliers using **Digital Signature**.
- Initially deployed in eight ministries/departments on pilot basis, it will be implemented across all departments and extended to the citizen's use in second phase.

Hawkesbury River



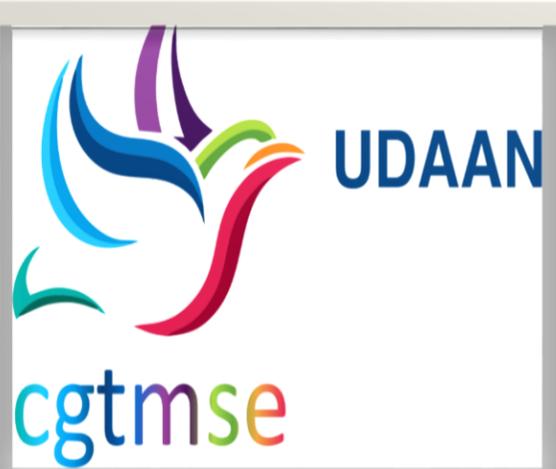
❖ Context

- **Torrential rainfall** hits the Sydney city as the extreme weather affects eastern coast of Australia's Queensland and New South Wales states.

❖ Key Highlights

- The rainfall has caused floods in the river and the city.
- The **Hawkesbury-Nepean river** flows northwest of the city and falls into the **Tasman Sea**.

CGSCL



❖ Context

- The Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (**CGTMSE**) recently launched a **CGS for co-lending (CGSCL)** to provide **guarantee cover** to credit facilities extended to MSEs under the **co-lending model (CLM)**.

❖ Key Highlights

- CGSCL covers credit facilities extended to MSEs jointly by scheduled commercial banks (excluding small finance banks, regional rural banks, co-operative banks and local area banks) and NBFCs.
- The introduction of CGSCL comes in the backdrop of announcement in the Union Budget for FY23 that CGTMSE scheme will be revamped with required infusion of funds. This will facilitate **additional credit of ₹2 lakh crore for MSEs and expand employment opportunities**.
- In order to facilitate collateral/third party guarantee free loans to MSEs, **Ministry of MSME** has launched **Credit Guarantee Scheme** and has **jointly set up CGTMSE** with **SIDBI** for the purpose.
- The **extent of guarantee coverage** provided by CGTMSE is for loans (**of upto Rs. 2 crores**) - **75 %** of the amount in default for secured credit facility (**85%** for loans upto Rs. 5 Lakhs) and **50 %** of the amount in default for unsecured credit facility.

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