GST Council

❖ Context

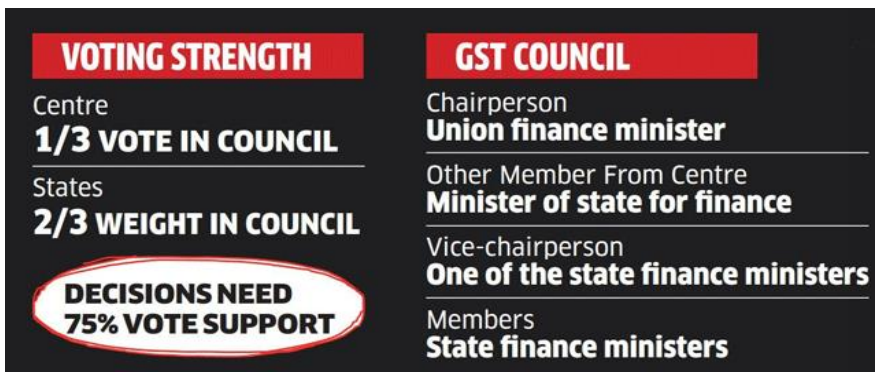
➢ Recently, the **47th meeting of the Goods and Services Tax Council** began in Chandigarh, almost marking **five years of the tax system** coming into effect on July 1, 2017.

❖ Key Highlights

- Over these five years, the GST setup has gone through **numerous changes.**
- The ongoing two-day meeting is **expected to look at following matters:** The GST compensation to states.
  - The imposition of taxes on some currently-exempt goods and services.
  - Extension of the GST compensation regime beyond June 2022

❖ GST Council

- **About:**
  - The Goods and Services Tax regime came into force after the **Constitutional (122nd Amendment) Bill** was passed by both Houses of Parliament in 2016.
  - It is a **constitutional body.**
  - It is a **joint forum of the Center and the states.**
- **Constitutional Provision:**
  - The GST Council was **set up by the President** as per **Article 279A (1)** of the amended Constitution.
- **Composition:**
  - The **Union Finance Minister (chairperson)**
  - The Union Minister of State (Finance) from the Center.
  - Each state can nominate a minister in-charge of finance or taxation or any other minister as a member.
  - The representatives of the states shall choose amongst themselves one "Vice-president".
- **Functions:**
  - As per **Article 279A (4)**, the Council will make recommendations to the Union and the States on important issues related to GST, like:
    - **Taxes, cesses, and surcharges** to be subsumed under the GST.
    - **Goods and services** which may be subject to, or exempt from GST.
    - The **threshold limit of turnover** for application of GST.
    - **Rates of GST.**
    - Model **GST laws,** principles of levy, apportionment of IGST and principles related to place of supply.
    - **Special provisions** with respect to the eight north eastern states Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Uttarakhand.
    - Other related matters.
- **Decision Making**:



NATO

❖ Context

➢ NATO will **increase the strength of its rapid reaction force (RRF)** nearly eightfold to 3,00,000 troops as part of its response to an "era of strategic competition".

❖ Key Highlights

- The NATO reaction force currently **numbers around 40,000 soldiers** which can deploy quickly when needed.
- In NATO's new strategic concept, the alliance is also **expected to address for the first time the security challenges posed by China.**

❖ About NATO

- NATO : the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization** - is a military alliance formed in 1949 by 12 countries, including the US, Canada, the UK and France.
- Members agree to come to one another's **aid in the event of an armed attack against any one member state.**
- Its aim was originally to counter the **threat of post-war Russian expansion in Europe.**
- **Headquarters —** Brussels, Belgium.
- **Headquarters of Allied Command Operations** is near Mons, Belgium.
- Since its founding, the admission of new member states has increased the alliance from the original **12 countries to 30.**
- The most recent member state to be added to NATO was **North Macedonia on 27 March 2020.**
- NATO **membership is open to "any other European state** in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area."
- The 30th country was Macedonia .

Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) Wave

❖ Context

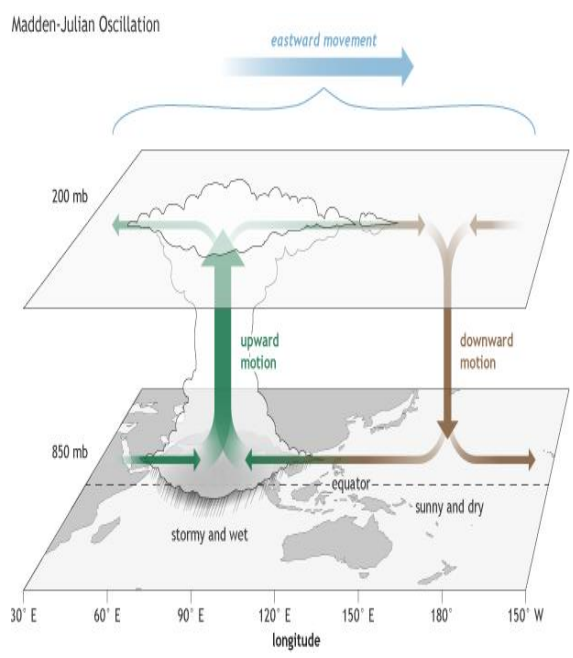
➢ Global weather models have said that a rain-boosting Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) wave will transit from **Africa into the Indian Ocean** from the **month-end into early July**.

❖ About the MJO

- It was discovered in **1971** by Roland Madden and Paul Julian.
- It is an **intraseasonal tropical climate variability** (i.e. varies on a week-to-week basis).
- It is an **eastward moving (4-8 m/s) disturbance** of clouds, rainfall, winds, and pressure that **traverses the planet** in the tropics and returns to its initial starting point in **30 to 60 days**, on average.
- It consists of two parts:
  - **Enhanced rainfall (or convective) phase**:
    - Winds at the surface converge, and air is pushed up throughout the atmosphere.
    - Rising air motion in the atmosphere tends to increase condensation and rainfall.
  - **Suppressed rainfall phase:**
    - Winds converge at the top of the atmosphere, forcing air to sink.
    - As air warms and dries, it suppresses rainfall.
- These two phases produce **opposite changes in clouds** and rainfall and this entire **dipole** (i.e., having two main opposing centres of action) propagates eastward.
- It is **correlated with ENSO**. Strong MJO activity is witnessed in a year of strong El Nino.

❖ Effects on Monsoon

- The effect of the MJO is witnessed in the band between **30 degrees North and 30 degrees South of the equator.**
- Its effects are most evident on the **Indian and Pacific oceans.**
- The **onset of the Indian summer monsoon** is often associated with the arrival of the wet phase of the tropical MJO over the Indian Ocean.
- The delayed monsoon onset is likely caused by the dry phase of a strong MJO that suppresses background changes during the climatological mean onset dates.



- MJO is also one of the most influencing factors of the **intraseasonal variability of the monsoon** rainfall.
- In its active phase, it brings frequent cyclonic activity.
- When an active MJO passes through the Indian ocean, it causes one or two weeks of intense rainfall.

CAPSTONE Mission

❖ Context

➢ The **Cislunar Autonomous Positioning System Technology Operations and Navigation Experiment**, or CAPSTONE, mission was launched by NASA recently on a private company's rocket namely **Electron** from Mahia peninsula, **New Zealand**.

❖ About CAPSTONE

- It is a **cubesat.** Cubesats are a class of research spacecraft called **nanosatellites.** They are built to **standard dimensions** (Units or "U") of 10 cm x 10 cm x 10 cm. They can be 1U, 2U, 3U, or 6U in size, and typically weigh less than 1.33 kg (3 lbs) per U.

❖ NRHO and Gateway

- It is designed to test an elongated orbit around the moon known as **Near Rectilinear Halo Orbit (NRHO).**
- Currently, it has been launched into a low earth orbit and will gradually enter into the NRHO.
- Once in the NRHO, CAPSTONE will fly within **1,000 miles of the Moon's North Pole** on its near pass and **43,500 miles from the South Pole** at its farthest.
- It will repeat the cycle every six and a half days and maintain this orbit for at least six months to study dynamics.
- The orbit is intended in the future for **Gateway**, a lunar space station being built by NASA and its commercial and international partners that will support its **Artemis program**.

❖ Other Key Features

- It also carries a **new precision one-way ranging capability** built into its radio that could reduce the amount of ground network time needed for in-space operations.
- The mission's **Cislunar Autonomous Positioning System** is a spacecraft-to-spacecraft navigation and communications system that will work with NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter to determine the distance between the two lunar orbiting spacecraft.

- This technology could **allow future spacecraft to determine their position in space without relying exclusively on tracking from Earth.**

❖ **Artemis Accords**

- NASA announced the Artemis Accords in **October 2020.**
- It is an agreement for lunar exploration and beyond, with participation of both international partners and commercial players.
- The program envisages the **landing of the first woman on the Moon by 2024.**
- The accords are guided by **key principles enshrined** in the existing international space law including, the **Outer Space Treaty (OST) of 1967**.
- Currently, **Australia, Canada, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and the United States** are the members of the accords.
- The accords would be useful to have spacefaring powers agree upon and comply with a common set of principles, guidelines, and best practices.

❖ **ILRS**

- **China and Russia** have also proposed to build an **International Lunar Research Station (ILRS).**
- China National Space Administration (CNSA) and Russia's Roscosmos have invited partners to join them at all stages of this proposal including planning, design, research, development, implementation, and operations.
- China and Russia entered into this partnership in March 2021.

Performance Grading Index for Districts (PGI-D)

❖ **Context**

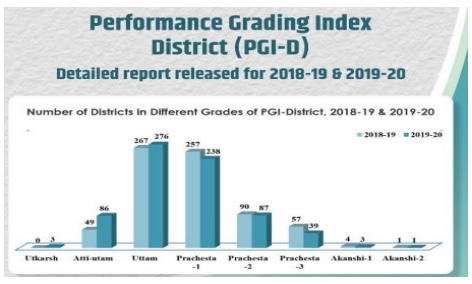
➢ Recently, **The Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSE&L)**, Ministry of Education (MoE) has released the Performance Grading Index for Districts (PGI-D) for 2018-19 and 2019-20.

❖ **About PGI-D**

- The PGI-D assesses the **performance of the school education system at the District level** by creating an index for comprehensive analysis.
- The PGI-D **studied 83 indicators** grouped in six following categories:
  - Outcomes.
  - Effective classroom transaction.
  - Infrastructure facilities and student's entitlements.
  - School safety and child protection.
  - Digital learning and governance process.
- **Assessment Grades:**
  - The PGI-D grades the **districts into 10 grades.**
  - The highest achievable grade is **'Daksh'**, which is for districts scoring more than 90% of the total points in that category or overall.
  - It is followed by **'Utkarsh' (81% to 90%).**
  - **'Ati Uttam' (71% to 80%).**
  - '**Uttam' (61% to 70%).**
  - **'Prachesta-1' (51% to 60%**) and **'Prachesta-2' (41% to 50%).**
  - The lowest grade in PGI-D is **'Akanshi-3'** which is for scores upto 10% of the total points.

❖ **Key Findings of PGI-D**

- **None of the districts attained highest grade Daksh** in both 2019-20 and 2018-19.
  - It implies that there is **ample scope for the districts to further improve** their performance in future years.
- 3 districts, **Sikar, Jhunjhunu and Jaipur** from Rajasthan achieved the 'Utkarsh' category.
- The second state which has the highest number of districts in the report is **Punjab, with 14 districts being featured in the Ati-uttam grade.**
- It is followed by **Gujarat and Kerala**, with each having 13 districts in this **Ati-Uttam Grade category.**
  - Rajasthan has the highest 24 districts in this grade.
- **12 states and Union Territories** do not have even a single district **being featured in the Ati-Uttam and Uttam.**



- These include Bihar, Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttarakhand.

News in Between the Lines

Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment

❖ **Context**

➢ **G7 leaders** have unveiled an ambitious plan which is seen as a counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative.

❖ **Key Highlights**

- The plan is to mobilise **$600 billion in funding by 2027** to deliver transparent and game-changing infrastructure projects in **middle and low-income countries.**

- The US has promised to raise **$200bn (£162bn)** of the total through grants, federal funds and private investment, while the **EU** has announced a further **300bn euros (£257bn).**
- The initiative will be geared towards tackling **climate change, improving global health, achieving gender equity and building digital infrastructure**.
- Some of the highlighted initiatives include a **solar-powered project in Angola**, a vaccine manufacturing facility in **Senegal,** and a **1,609 km submarine telecommunications cable** connecting Singapore to France via Egypt and the Horn of Africa.
- The infrastructure plan was **first unveiled at the 2021 G7 summit in Britain**.
- Called the **Build Back Better World** at the time, the plan faltered from a lack of progress, and the project was renamed to PGII before being resuscitated at the 2022 summit.
- **China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** has been criticised as a means of providing "**predatory loans"**, forcing debt-saddled countries like Sri Lanka to cede key assets if they fail to meet their debt repayments.

P17A

❖ Context

- Keel for the **seventh ship** under **Project 17 Alpha** was laid at **M/s Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. (MDL), Mumbai.**

❖ About P17A

- It is the **Nilgiri-class guided missile stealth frigate**.
- The frigates were designed by the **Directorate of Naval Design (DND).**
- **Seven frigates** were to be built under the project, four at MDL and three in Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd. Kolkata with MDL as lead yard.
- Their names are - ***Nilgiri, Himgiri, Taragiri, Udaygiri, Dunagiri, Vindhyagiri & Mahendragiri*.**
- The indigenous content is to the order of **75%**.
- They differ in the very concept of warship building by adoption of modern technology , **Integrated Construction**.
- In this, blocks are pre-outfitted before joining to reduce the build period of warships.

TAP-bypass

❖ Context

- Investigations into the co-location scam at the National Stock Exchange have unearthed **a new facet of market manipulation** by **high-frequency traders.**

❖ Key Highlights

- The malpractice is known as **Trading Access Point-bypass** which dates back to **2013.**
- Typically, a trading member with access to co-location servers could send **40-1,000 orders per second.**
- The brokers could buy software that gave them access to the trading access point (TAP) to fire orders, and the price of the software depended on the maximum number of orders that could be fired per second.
- If the trader sent more orders than permitted, they would be **throttled.**
- However, select brokers would bypass this control by firing so many orders that the pipeline was clogged and crowded out other brokers.
- In sum, **it involves firing a barrage of algorithmic orders, many more than they are allowed to, to crowd out orders of rival brokerages.**

G20

❖ Context

- **Jammu & Kashmir will be hosting its 1st ever G-20 meeting** next year in 2023.

❖ Key Highlights

- After the abrogation of article 370, this **will be the first international meeting to be held in the Union Territory.**

- **India will assume the G20 Presidency on December 1, 2022 from Indonesia,** and will convene the G20 Leaders' Summit for the first time in India in 2023.

❖ About G20

- The G20 is a **strategic multilateral platform** connecting the world's major developed and emerging economies.
- The G20 holds a strategic role in **securing future global economic growth and prosperity.**
- It **started in 1999** as a meeting for the finance minister & central bank governors.
- The G20 has evolved into a **yearly summit involving the Head of State and Government.** It comprises **19 countries** and the **European Union (EU).**
- Together, the G20 members represent more than **80 percent of world GDP, 75 percent of international trade** and **60 percent of the world population.**
- It works to address major issues related to the global economy, such as international financial stability, climate change mitigation, and sustainable development.
- The group has **no permanent staff of its own**, so every year in December, a G20 country from a rotating region takes on the presidency.
- **Membership:** Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union.

Nadaprabhu Kempegowda

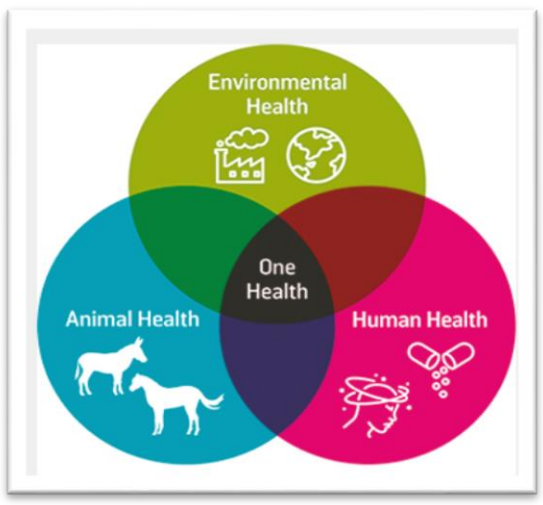
❖ Context

- A **bronze statue of Nadaprabhu Kempegowda** will be unveiled soon at the **premises of the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA).**
- The 108-ft bronze statue is being constructed in a 23-acre heritage park on the airport premises.

❖ About Nadaprabhu Kempegowda

- Nadaprabhu Kempegowda was a **16th century chieftain of the Vijayanagara empire.**
- He was from the dominant agricultural Vokkaliga community in south Karnataka.
- He is **credited as the founder of Bengaluru.**
- It is said that he conceived the idea of a new city while hunting with his minister.
- He **marked its territory by erecting towers in 4 corners** of the proposed city.
- Kempegowda is also known to have **developed around 1,000 lakes** in the city to cater to drinking and agricultural needs.

One Health Pilot



❖ Context

- Recently, The **Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD),** under the **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal husbandry and Dairying,** has taken an initiative to bring stakeholders from **animal, human and environment health** on a common platform to address the challenges through **One-Health approach.** Aligning with it, **'One Health Pilot'** will be launched in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

❖ Key Highlights

- The **'One Health India'** program initiated by the Department aims to work with stakeholders from various sectors to improve livestock **health, human health, wildlife health, and environmental health** through **technology and finance.**

❖ Benefits

- The One Health project helps in realizing the **interdependencies** that **animal and environmental health** have on human life.
- This will be useful in preventing **zoonotic disease** outbreaks in the future and facilitate a better response mechanism.
- The pilot project will institutionalize better management, and development of a targeted surveillance plan, integrate a network of laboratories, develop and implement communication strategy across sectors.
- It will also integrate data with the digital architecture of the **National Digital Livestock Mission.** Furthermore, it will also help in building a **strong social infrastructure** that supports the health of the people and the planet.

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