Global Liveability Index

❖ Context

- Recently, **The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)** revealed its **Global Liveability Index for 2022**.
- It shows some notable changes from the Global Liveability Index for the previous year.

❖ Key Highlights

- The **top ten Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)** rankings continue to be dominated by **Western European cities.**
- **Top Five Liveable Cities:** Vienna (Austria), Copenhagen (Denmark), Zurich (Switzerland), Calgary (Canada) Vancouver (Canada).
- **Top Five Least Liveable Cities:** Tehran (Iran), Douala (Cameroon), Harare (Zimbabwe), Dhaka (Bangladesh), Port Moresby (PNG).
- **Findings about India:**
  - The cities in India have **fared poorly** in the list of the world's most liveable cities.
  - India's **national capital New Delhi has been ranked 112th** in the list of most liveable cities.
  - India's **financial capital Mumbai** is ranked at **117th position.**

❖ About Global Liveability Index

- This year the Global Liveability Index **surveyed over 173 cities across the globe.**
- Previously, the index ranked 140 global cities.
- **Significance:**
  - It **quantifies the challenges** that might be presented to an individual's lifestyle in 173 cities worldwide.
  - It assesses which locations **provide the best living conditions.**
- The survey rates cities worldwide based on **30 qualitative and quantitative criteria**, which fall into five general categories:
  - Stability, Health care, Culture and environment, Education, Infrastructure.

❖ About EIU

- It is an organization that **provides forecasting and advisory services** to assist entrepreneurs, financiers, and government officials.
- It operates as an **independent research and analysis business** within the London-based Economist Group.

Roe v. Wade

❖ Context

- Recently the landmark **1973 Roe v. Wade judgment** in the US has been struck down by the Supreme Court's conservative majority.

❖ Key Highlights

- Roe v. Wade judgment **legalised abortion** in the US.
- This made abortion a **constitutional right.**
- It **established a benchmark for abortion** laws across the world.
- It had been ruled that **abortion would be allowed up to the point of foetal viability.**
  - **Foetal viability** - the time after which a foetus can survive outside the womb.
  - **Foetal viability** is often seen as the **point at which the rights of the woman can be separated** from the rights of the unborn foetus.
- Foetal viability was **around 28 weeks (7 months)** at the time of the Roe judgment.
- Experts now agree that advances in medicine have brought the threshold down to 23 or 24 weeks (6 months or a little less).
- **Abortion laws across the world rely on this metric** but those opposing abortions argue that this is an arbitrary timeframe that legislation and the court in 'Roe' adopted.
- In **approximately 16 countries** around the world, **abortion is entirely prohibited** and even criminalised.

❖ Position on Abortion in India

- India's **Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971** allows abortion until **20 weeks of pregnancy.**
- **MTP Amendment Act, 2021:**
  - The ceiling for abortions was **raised to 24 weeks.**
  - However it was raised **only for special categories of pregnant women** such as rape or incest survivors.
  - It requires the **approval of two registered doctors.**
- **Case of Foetal Disability:**
  - There is **no limit to the timeline for abortion.**
  - However, it is allowed by a medical board of specialist doctors set up by the governments of states and union territories.

VL-SRSAM

❖ Context

- The **Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM)** was successfully flight-tested off the Odisha coast.

❖ Design & Development

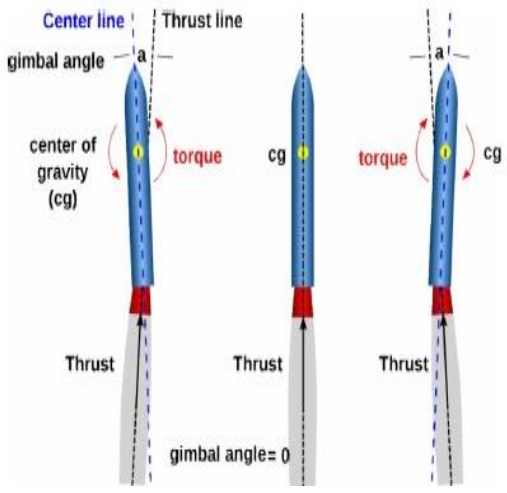
- It has been designed and developed jointly by **three facilities** of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO):
  - Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad.
  - Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad.
  - Research & Development Establishment (Engineers), Pune.
- Its design is based on **Astra missile** which is a Beyond Visual Range Air to Air missile.

❖ Capabilities

- It will be deployed in Indian Naval warships.
- It can strike at the high-speed airborne targets at the **range** of **40km to 50km** and at an **altitude** of around **15km**.
- It can be used to neutralise **sea-skimming targets.**
- The tactic of sea skimming is used by various anti-ship missiles and some fighter jets to avoid being detected by the radars onboard warships.
- For this, they fly as close as possible to the sea surface and thus are difficult to detect and neutralise.

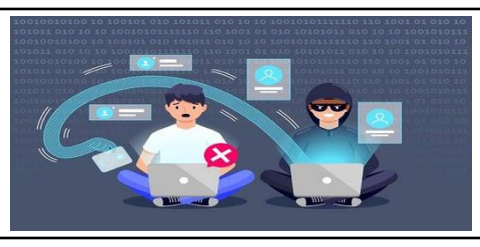
❖ Key Features

- **Cruciform wings** - Four small wings arranged like a cross on four sides which give the projective a stable aerodynamic posture.
- **Thrust vectoring** - An ability to change the direction of the thrust from its engine to control the angular velocity and the altitude of the missile.



- **Canisterised system** - Stored and operated from specially designed compartments. In the canister, the inside environment is controlled, thus making its transport and storage easier and improving the shelf life of weapons.

HERMIT



❖ Context

- A cloud based security company has recently discovered **a new spyware**, called "Hermit", that is capable of affecting both Android and iOS devices.

❖ About Hermit

- It is a **commercial spyware** reported to be used by the governments.
- It has been reported to have targeted high profile victims located in **Italy, Syria and Kazakhstan.**

❖ Modus Operandi

- A **unique link** sent to the target. Once clicked, the page attempts to get the user to download and install a malicious application on either Android or iOS.
- In some cases, it masquerades as **mobile carrier (ISP) applications**. For this, first, target's mobile data connectivity is disabled.
- Once disabled, the attacker would send a malicious link via SMS asking the target to install an application to recover their data connectivity.
- When ISP involvement is not possible, applications are masqueraded as **manufacturer's applications.**
- The malicious apps can be **sideloaded** on any device and **don't need to be even installed via the App Store.**

❖ What can it do?

- It can exploit a rooted device, record audio and even make and redirect phone calls.
- The spyware can also collect data such as call logs, contacts, photos, device location and SMS messages.

News in Between the Lines

Climate Club

❖ Context

- The German government plans to get the G-7 to commit to **collective progress on curbing global warming.**

❖ Key Highlights

- One of the ideas being discussed is the **creation of a climate club** for countries that want to **speed ahead when it comes to tackling the issue.**
- Germany is hosting this year's meeting of G7 in the Bavarian resort of Elmau.

❖ About Climate Club

- The **idea was first floated by Yale economist** and Nobel Prize winner **William Nordhaus.**
- He observed that the voluntary nature of existing climate agreements hasn't resulted in sufficient progress.

- He proposed that **countries which were serious about reducing their emissions could come together and form a club.**
- It would **jointly set ambitious targets** and exempt each other from climate-related trade tariffs that non-members would be subject to.
- The exact details of how the club's rules would work are still sketchy.

One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)

❖ **Context**

- ➢ **Assam has become the 36th State/UT** to **implement One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC).**
- ➢ With this, the ONORC plan is **successfully implemented in all the 36 states/UTs.**

❖ **About ONORC**

- The Union Government launched the **'One Nation, One Ration Card'** scheme on a pilot basis in four states in 2019.
- **Nodal Ministry :** Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- **Aims:**
  - To ensure all beneficiaries, especially **migrants get ration (wheat, rice and other food grains) across the nation** from any **Public Distribution System (PDS)** shop of their own choice.
  - **No poor person should be deprived of getting subsidised food grains** under the food security scheme when they shift from one place to another.
  - To **reduce instances of corruption** by middlemen and fraudulence in ration cards to avail benefits from different states.
- **Process:**
  - ONORC is based on technology that involves **details of beneficiaries' ration card, Aadhaar number, and electronic Points of Sale (ePoS).**
  - The system **identifies a beneficiary through biometric authentication** on ePos devices at fair price shops.
  - The system runs with the support of two portals - Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IM-PDS) and Annavitran, which host all the relevant data.
- **'MERA RATION' Mobile App:**
  - It is another dimension under the ONORC plan.
  - It has been rolled out to take maximum advantage of the ONORC plan.
  - The mobile app is providing a host of useful real time information to the beneficiaries and is **available in 13 languages.**
- **Previous System:** A ration cardholder could buy food grains only from the PDS in the locality where he or she lives.

Tree Pruning

❖ **Context**

- ➢ Recently, **New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC)** launched a campaign to scientifically **prune overgrown and dead branches of old trees** in Connaught Place.

❖ **Tree Pruning**

- **About:** Pruning is when **selectively branches are removed from a tree.**
  - The goal is to remove unwanted branches, improve the tree's structure, and direct new, healthy growth.
- **Benefits of Pruning:**
  - Each cut can **potentially change the growth of the tree**.
  - Some common reasons for pruning include, removal of dead branches to **improve form and increase safety,** to **increase light and air penetration** for plants below the tree's crown, or corrective and preventative measures.
  - A **clean, polished look** that elevates the whole landscape.
  - Set the tree up with a **good foundation for long-term health.**

Daily Current Affairs
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Bharat NCAP (New Car Assessment Programme)

❖ Context

- The government has recently approved the draft notification to introduce Bharat NCAP**(New Car Assessment Programme)**.

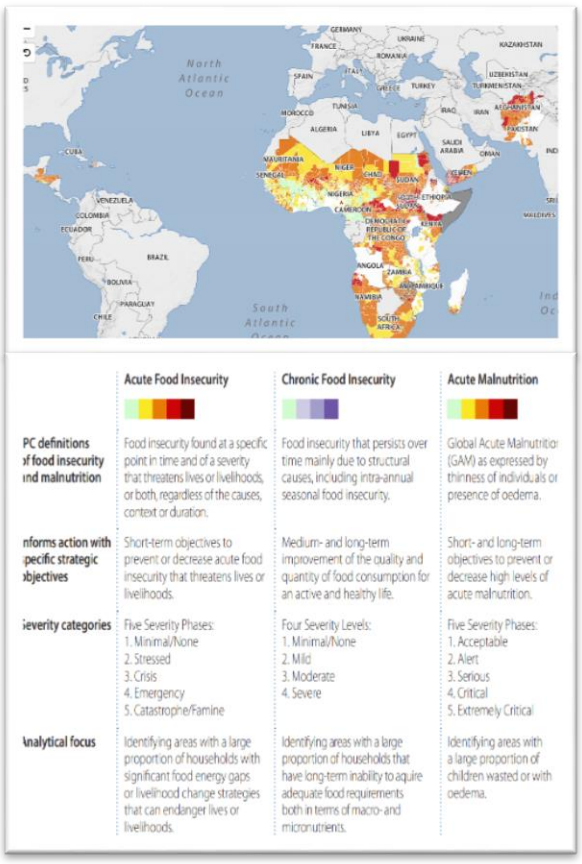
❖ Key Highlights

- For this, a new rule **126E** in **CMVR (Central Motor Vehicles Rules), 1989** will be inserted.
- It will provide **star ratings** to vehicles based on their performance in crash tests.
- It will evaluate the vehicle in the areas of :
  - Adult Occupant Protection (AOP).
  - Child Occupant Protection (COP).
  - Safety Assist Technologies (SAT).
- It will allow customers to opt for safer cars based upon their star-ratings and thus promote healthy competition among original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) to manufacture safer vehicles. It will be applicable from **1st April, 2023.**

❖ Background

- India is the **fifth biggest car market** in the world.
- Indian agencies such as the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) and the International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT) do not provide star ratings or certifications on crash tests.
- So, manufacturers conducted crash tests on a voluntary basis at their research labs or would send the cars to independent agencies (third party) like Global NCAP in the UK to get the star ratings.

Global Hunger Crisis



❖ Context

- The Secretary General, United Nations, has warned that the world faces a “catastrophe" because of the growing shortage of food around the globe.
- More than **4,60,000 people in Somalia, Yemen and South Sudan** are in famine conditions under IPC.
- There is a real risk that **multiple famines will be declared in 2022 and 2023** could be even worse.

❖ Causes

- Main causes are the **war in Ukraine, climate change, the coronavirus pandemic and inequality.**
- Ukraine and Russia produce about **29%** of the global wheat export.
- Shipments from Ukrainian ports have been halted by Russia’s invasion. Russia wants certain western sanctions lifted in order to resume its grain and fertiliser export.
- Consequently, farmers around the world are struggling to cope with rising fertiliser and energy prices which will in turn affect harvests across the world.

❖ Integrated Food Security Phase CLassification (IPC)

- It is a scale used by UN agencies, regional bodies and aid groups to determine food insecurity.
- It was originally developed in **2004** for use in Somalia by the **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation's Food Security Analysis Unit (FSAU).**
- It has **three scales**.

Personal Rapid Transit System

❖ Context

- The **Telangana government** has asked the centre to finalise standards, specifications and a regulatory framework to establish a **Personal Rapid Transit System (PRTS).**

❖ Key Highlights

- The state government is planning to build a 10-km PRTS corridor to serve as **feeder services** for Metro and local train services.
- PRTS is a transport mode with **small and automated vehicles** carrying people on an **elevated platform** to make it convenient for accessing the mass transport systems, thereby reducing travel time significantly.

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