

22 July, 2022

Law on Abortion

❖ Context

- A 25 year old unmarried woman had moved to the Supreme court after Delhi HC declined her plea for allowing her termination of pregnancy of almost 24 weeks as the **Medical Termination of Pregnancy Rules 2003**, does not allow unmarried women to seek termination between 20-24 weeks.

❖ IPC Provision

- **Section 312 of IPC, 1860**, criminalises voluntarily causing miscarriage even with consent of women, except when it is caused to save her life.

❖ Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971

- It allows for termination of pregnancy : When there is risk to the life of women or of grave injury to her physical or mental health.
 - When there is substantial risk of serious physical or mental abnormalities to the child, if born.
 - Arises out of rape.
- **For pregnancies upto 20 weeks, the opinion of one doctor is required.** The pregnancy arising out of failure of a method or device used by a woman or her partner for preventing pregnancy can be terminated within this period.
- **For pregnancies between 20-24 weeks, the opinion of two doctors are required** for which rules have specified seven eligible categories : Survival of sexual assault or rape or incest.
 - Minors.
 - Change of marital status during pregnancy (widowhood or divorce).
 - Women with major physical disabilities as per criteria under Right of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016.
 - Mentally ill including retardation.

- Foetal malformation that has substantial risk of being incompatible with life or if the child is born it may suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities to be seriously handicapped.
- Women with pregnancy in humanitarian settings or disaster or emergency situations as declared by the government.
- As per the act, **the consent of women for termination is required** except when she is minor or mentally ill, in which cases guardian's consent is required.

❖ SC Judgement

- The court **expanded the scope of the act to include "unmarried woman"** and allowed the woman to abort her pregnancy arising out of a consensual relationship.
- The bench said that provisions of **the act include the word "partner" instead of "husband"** which shows the intent of Parliament was not to confine the situations arising only out of matrimonial relationships.

MSP Panel

❖ Context

- The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has constituted a committee headed by former agriculture secretary, Sanjay Agarwal, to make minimum support price (MSP) more transparent and effective.

❖ Key Highlights

- Apart from the repeal of the three farm laws, farmers had demanded legal guarantees of MSP based on **Swaminathan commission's C2 + 50% formula**.
- Apart from MSP, the subject matter also includes, natural farming and crop diversification.
- The terms of reference does not include legal guarantee of MSP.

❖ About MSP

- The central government announces the MSP for **22 crops** and the fair remunerative price (FRP) for **sugarcane** based on the recommendation of the Commission of Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) .
- 22 crops include : **14 kharif crops** - paddy, jowar, bajra, maize, ragi, tur, moong, urad, groundnut, soyabean, sunflower, sesamum, nigerseed, cotton.
 - **6 rabi crops** - wheat, barley, gram, masur, rapeseed, mustard
 - **2 commercial crops** - jute and copra

- CACP takes into account various factors :
 - Demand and supply
 - Cost of production
 - Market trends
 - Minimum 50% margin over cost of production
 - Likely implication of MSP on consumers
- It calculates **three types of costs** :
 - **A2** - the lowest - actual paid out cost incurred by the farmer.
 - **A2 + FL** - actual paid out cost incurred plus imputed value of family labour; **Government announces MSP on its basis.**
 - **C2** - comprehensive cost including rental value of own land.

SVAMITVA Scheme

❖ Context

- Scheme aims to cover 6.62 lakh villages in the country from 2020-21 to 2024-25.

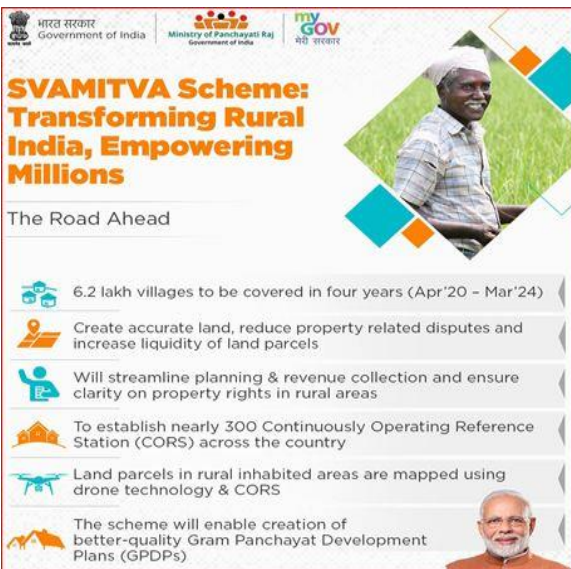
Face to Face Centres

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❖ Key Highlights



- **Aim:** It aims to provide the 'Record of Rights' to village household owners possessing houses in inhabited areas, called **Abadi in some States**, with legal ownership rights (Property cards/Title deeds).
- Under the scheme, the land parcels in rural inhabited area of all the villages are surveyed using drone technology.

- **Implementing Agency:** It is being implemented with the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Survey of India (Sol), State Revenue Department, State Panchayati Raj Department and National Informatics Centre.
- States need to sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Sol for implementation of the scheme. So far 31 States/UTs have signed MoU with Sol.
- Under the scheme, funds to Survey of India are provided for two components :
 - Large Scale Mapping (LSM) using drones
 - and establishment of Continuous Operating Reference Station (CORS).

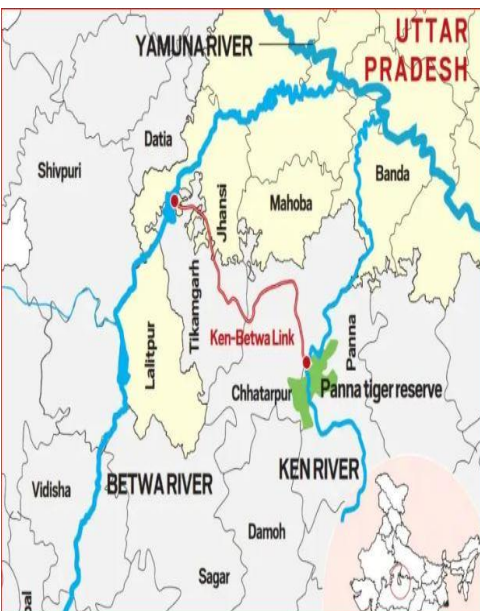
Ken – Betwa Link Project

❖ Context

- The **2nd** Meeting of Steering Committee of Ken-Betwa Link Project was held recently at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

❖ About Ken – Betwa Link Project:

- The Ken-Betwa link project (KBLP) is the first river interlinking project, among the 16 similar projects planned under the Peninsular Rivers Development of the **National Perspective Plan (NPP)**.



- It will connect the **tributaries of the Yamuna River**, namely the Ken river in the Panna district of Madhya Pradesh and the **Betwa river in Uttar Pradesh**.
- The **main objective** of the NPP is the transfer of water from river basins with surplus water to those with scarce water, for tackling the problem of water scarcity.

- The Ken Betwa river linking project, the construction schedule for which has been planned for eight years, will be executed in two phases.
 - **Phase-I:** In the first phase of the Ken betwa link pariyojna, the **Daudhan dam** complex and its appurtenances, such as low-level tunnel, high-level tunnel, **221-kilometre Ken-Betwa** link canal and powerhouses will be completed.
 - **Phase-II:** In the second phase of the Ken Betwa linking project, the development works under the Ken betwa link project will be started for the lower **Orr dam, Bina complex project and Kotha barrage**.
- **Key Concerns:** Over 46 lakh trees are likely to be felled due to the construction work within the national park.
- The tiger reserve is home to many critically endangered wildlife species.
- It is expected to result in the submergence of **6,017 hectares** of forest land under the Daudhan dam of the KBLP.

Space Tourism

❖ Context

- ISRO is in the process of developing indigenous capabilities towards space tourism through the demonstration of human space flight capability to Low Earth Orbit (LEO).



❖ Key Highlights

- The **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe)** also seeks to promote active participation of private sector in carrying out end-to-end space activities, which includes space tourism as well.
- Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) pursues international cooperation and relations with 61 countries in varied domains of space activities.
- **IN-SPACe** has been created as a single window agency, under Department of Space,

- to promote, handhold and authorize the activities of private sector in space domain,
- including those by young entrepreneurs and students interested in the field of Space Science.
- IN-SPACe will come up with mechanisms to enable sharing of technical facilities and expertise available across ISRO Centres with private entities.
- **Low Earth Orbit:** A low Earth orbit (LEO) is, as the name suggests, an orbit that is relatively close to Earth's surface.
- It is normally at an altitude of less than 1000 km but could be as low as 160 km above Earth – which is low compared to other orbits.

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NITI Aayog's India Innovation Index 2021

❖ Context

- Karnataka, Manipur and Chandigarh have topped in their respective categories as per the third edition of NITI Aayog's India Innovation Index released recently.

❖ What is India Innovation Index?

- Prepared by NITI Aayog and the Institute for Competitiveness, the India Innovation Index is a comprehensive tool for the evaluation and development of the country's innovation ecosystem.
- It ranks the states and the union territories on their innovation performance to build healthy competition amongst them.
- The number of indicators has increased from 36 (in the India Innovation Index 2020) to 66 (in the India Innovation Index 2021).

India Innovation Index		
Major States		
States	III 2021	Rank
Karnataka	18.01	1
Telangana	17.66	2
Haryana	16.35	3
Maharashtra	16.06	4
Tamil Nadu	15.69	5
Punjab	15.35	6
Uttar Pradesh	14.22	7
Kerala	13.67	8
Andhra Pradesh	13.32	9
Jharkhand	13.10	10
West Bengal	12.98	11
Rajasthan	12.88	12
Madhya Pradesh	12.74	13
Gujarat	12.41	14
Bihar	11.58	15
Odisha	11.42	16
Chhattisgarh	10.97	17

NE and Hill states		
States	III 2021	Rank
Manipur	19.37	1
Uttarakhand	17.67	2
Meghalaya	16.00	3
Arunachal Pradesh	15.46	4
Himachal Pradesh	14.62	5
Sikkim	13.85	6
Mizoram	13.41	7
Tripura	11.43	8
Assam	11.29	9
Nagaland	11.00	10

- The indicators are now distributed across 16 sub-pillars, which, in turn, form seven key pillars :

- human capital,
- investment,
- knowledge workers,
- business environment,
- safety and
- legal environment,
- knowledge output, and
- knowledge diffusion.

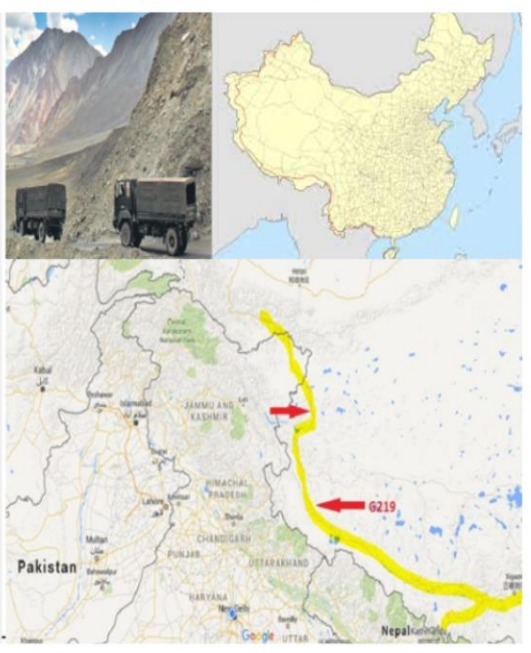
UT and City states		
States	III 2021	Rank
Chandigarh	27.88	1
Delhi	27.00	2
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	17.29	3
Puducherry	15.88	4
Goa	14.93	5
Jammu and Kashmir	12.83	6
Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu	12.09	7
Lakshadweep	7.86	8
Ladakh	5.91	9

❖ Key Highlights of Report

- The overall index score is about 14.56. This is arguably low but we are ambitious to enter into the top 25 nations on the Global Innovation Index (GII).
- Overall, India has performed well on certain pillars like 'human capital', 'safety & legal environment' & 'business environment'.
- **The Global Innovation Index:** India, from the 60th position in 2017, has reached the 46th spot in 2021. India was ranked 1st among the Central and South Asian nations and 2nd among the lower-middle-income countries.

News in Between the Lines

G695 Highway



❖ Context

- **China** is planning to build another highway through **Aksai Chin**, G695, running along the India border.

❖ Key Highlights

- It will be only the **second national highway**, since the construction of the G219 highway in the 1950s, and is expected to be completed by **2035**.
- It will run even closer to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) than **G219**.
- It is likely to broadly run along the course of G219 from Mazha in Xinjiang in the north, through Aksai Chin, heading south along the borders with India, Nepal and Bhutan, and down to Lhunze in southeastern Tibet right across the border from Arunachal Pradesh.
- Its course will bring it close to several disputed areas that have seen recent tensions, from Eastern Ladakh down to near Doklam close to the India-China-Bhutan trijunction.
- Aksai Chin is the disputed region, where China controls 38,000 sq km of land claimed by India.
- **G219** : over 10,000 kms length, it connects Xinjiang with Guangxi autonomous province of China.

Sadakat Ashram



❖ Context

- Patna HC has asked the state govt to make Bihar Vidyapeeth campus a museum.

❖ Key Highlights

- The ashram is the headquarters of Bihar Vidyapeeth which was established by Dr. Rajendra Prasad with Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Majharul Haq in 1921.
- Dr. Rajendra Prasad lived in a house in the ashram before moving to Delhi in 1946 and returned to it after his retirement in 1962. He lived there till his death.

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AT-1 Bonds



❖ Context

- **Public sector banks** raised capital through issue of Additional Tier -1 bonds.

❖ Characteristics

- They are also called **perpetual bonds**.
- They carry **no maturity date**, but have a **call option** that permits issuer banks to redeem these bonds **after five years**.
- They offer **higher returns** to investors but carry a **higher risk** as well.
- These bonds are subordinate to all other debt and **senior only to equity**.

❖ Purpose

- These bonds were introduced by the **Basel accord** after the global financial crisis to protect depositors.
- These are issued by banks to **augment their core equity base**, and thus comply with Basel III norms.
- If the capital ratios of the issuer fall below a certain percentage or in the event of an institutional failure, the rules allow the **issuer to stop paying interest** or even write down these bonds.

GST Revenue Shortfall



❖ Context

- A new working paper by the **National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP)** has highlighted that the revenue collections from GST had fallen short of expectations for both the Centre and the States.

❖ Key Highlights

- In the face of the shortfall, the **union government** raised '**non-shareable taxes**' and '**cesses on commodities**' on excisable goods under the Union Excise Duty.
- The **revenue compensation** assured to states had helped them cope with shortfalls.
- In absence of revenue compensation (w.e.f. July 2022), states may face **revenue shock**. Some states like **Goa, Punjab and Chhattisgarh**, may face relatively higher revenue stress than others, because
 - Their dependence on GST compensation (as measured by the share of GST compensation in SGST collection) is higher.
 - The share of SGST in its own tax revenue is also higher.

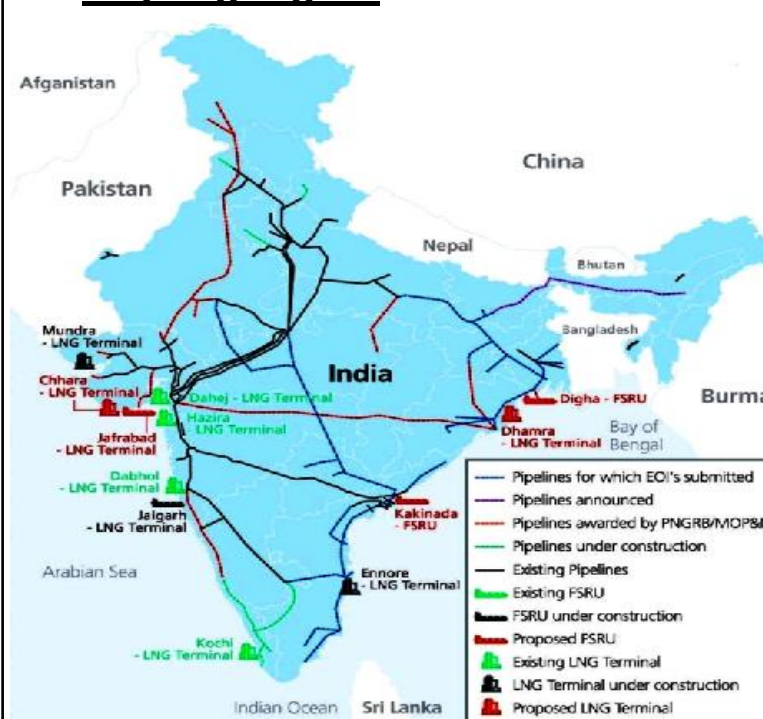
One Nation One Gas Grid Project



❖ Context

- There is focus on developing the Natural Gas infrastructure in the country and to implement "**One Nation One Gas Grid**".

❖ Key Highlights



- **Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB)** is the body to authorize the development of pipelines.
- **33,500 km** Natural Gas Pipeline network has been authorized across the country.
- Out of this, **21,715 km** Natural Gas Pipelines are operational and a total of **13,605 km length** of pipelines is under various stages of construction.
- Expansion of pipeline infrastructure is a continuous effort based on gas demand assessment of various regions.

