The National Emblem

❖ Context

➢ Recently, the Prime Minister of India **unveiled the National Emblem cast on the roof of the new Parliament building.**

❖ Key Highlights

- It has been casted at the top of the Central Foyer of the new Parliament building,
- It is **6.5-metre-high** and **made of bronze, and weighs 9,500 kg.**
- A supporting structure of steel weighing around 6,500 kg has been constructed to support the Emblem.

❖ About National Emblem

- The national emblem is an **adaptation of the Lion Capital, originally found atop the Ashoka Column at Sarnath**, established in 250 BC.
- The capital has **four Asiatic lions**—symbolizing power, courage, pride and confidence—seated on a **circular abacus.**
- The abacus has **sculptures of a bull, a horse, a lion and an elephant.**
- In the national emblem, **three lions are visible;** the abacus shows a bull and horse separated by a **dharma chakra**; the outlines of two more dharma chakras are visible on either side of the abacus.
- Buddhist interpretations say the **animals represent different phases of the Buddha's life,**
- Non-religious interpretations say **they depict the reign of emperor Ashoka** in the four geographical directions, while the wheels depict his enlightened rule.
- The national **emblem is a symbol of the Government** of India and is used on official documents.
- The Lion capital was **adopted as the national emblem on January 26, 1950.**
- The Indian National Emblem's motto is **'Satyamev Jayate.**
- It is the **official seal of the President of India** and the **Central and state governments.**

RBI's New Mechanism For Settling International Trade in Rupees

❖ Context

➢ RBI has introduced a rupee settlement system for international trade.

❖ Vostro Account

- For settlement of trade transactions with any country, **Authorised Dealer Bank** in India may open **special rupee vostro accounts** of **correspondent banks** of the partner trading country.
- A vostro account is an account a correspondent bank holds on behalf of another bank.
- The bank of a partner country may approach an AD bank in India for opening of a special INR Vostro account.
- The AD bank will seek **approval from the Reserve Bank** with details of the arrangement.
- The AD bank maintaining the special Vostro Account will ensure that the correspondent bank is not from a country or jurisdiction in the updated FATF public statement on high risk and non cooperative jurisdictions on which FATF has called for counter measures.

❖ Mechanism

- **All exports and imports** under this arrangement may be **denominated and invoiced in rupee (INR)**.
- **Exchange rate** between the currencies of the two trading partner countries may be **market determined**.
- Indian importers shall make payment in INR into the special vostro account of the correspondent bank of the partner country.
- Indian exporters should be paid the export proceeds in INR from the balances in the designated special vostro account.
- Exporters may receive advance payment against exports from overseas importers in Indian rupees.
- The issue of bank guarantee for trade transactions, undertaken through this arrangement, is permitted subject to adherence to provisions of FEMA notification.
- The rupee surplus balance held may be used for permissible capital and current account transactions in accordance with mutual agreement.

❖ Impact

- Can help India in **facilitating trade with the countries under sanction**.
- Can help in stabilising the rupee which is at historic low against the dollar.
- Can help in narrowing the widening current account deficit.

Office of Insurance Ombudsman

❖ Context

➢ A selection panel of the Ministry of Finance has selected eight new insurance ombudsman for various centres across the country. The orders of their appointments will be issued by the Ministry.

❖ About the office

- It is an alternate **grievance redressal platform.**
- The aim is to resolve grievances of aggrieved policyholders of all **personal lines of insurance, group insurance policies, policies issued to sole proprietorship and micro enterprises.**
- It has been established under **Insurance Ombudsman Rules 2017** issued by the Ministry of Finance in exercise of the powers conferred by **section 24 of IRDA Act, 1999.**
- It is selected from amongst the persons having experience of the insurance industry, civil service, administrative service or judicial service.
- He is appointed for **three years** and is eligible for reappointment.
- He can be removed from his office on the ground of **gross misconduct**.

❖ Executive Council of Insurers

- The office of ombudsman works under the **administrative control** of the Executive Council of Insurers which has also been established under the rules.
- It comprises of :
  - Two persons nominated by LIC.
  - Three person nominated by GIC - 2 for general insurers and 1 for health insurers.
  - One representative of IRDAI.
  - One representative of D/o Financial services, MoF.
  - Chairman, LIC or Chairman, General Insurers' (Public Sector) Association of India (GIPSA) - **chairperson by rotation.**

❖ Selection Committee

- It comprises of :
  - IRDAI Chairperson - Chairman of the committee.
  - One representative of LIC from the council.
  - One representative of GIC from the council.
  - One representative from Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance.

❖ Advisory Committee

- As per the rules, the committee can consist of not more than five members including one central government nominee.
- It is **constituted by IRDAI** to review the performance of the ombudsman.

❖ Number of offices

- As per the rules, the number of offices are specified by the council.
- There are 17 ombudsman offices at present, covering the country, situated in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Delhi, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kochi, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Noida, Pune and Patna.

❖ Complaint to Ombudsman

- Before making any complaint to the ombudsman, representation to the insurer is to be submitted.
- Compliant is to be made within **one year** of :
  - If insurer reject the complainant's representation.
  - If complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the insurer.
  - If one month has expired and the insurer fails to furnish a reply.
- Has to be made **in writing** by the person /legal heirs/ nominee/assignee to the office under whose territorial jurisdiction, the place of residence of the person is located.

James Webb Telescope

❖ Context

➢ Recently, **Webb Telescope revealed the clearest image to date of the early universe, going back 13 billion years.**

❖ Key Highlights

- The latest tranche included the "mountains" and "valleys" of a star-forming region called **NGC 3324 in the Carina Nebula,** dubbed the "Cosmic Cliffs," 7,600 light years away.
- Webb also **revealed never before seen details of Stephan's Quintet.**
  - It is a grouping of five galaxies including four that experience repeated close encounters.
  - It provides insights into how early galaxies formed at the start of the universe.

❖ About James Webb Telescope

- The telescope has been developed under an international partnership between **NASA**, the European Space Agency **(ESA**) and the Canadian Space Agency **(CSA)**.
- It was launched aboard a rocket on December 25, 2021.
- It headed to an outpost 1.5 million kilometers (9,30,000 miles) from Earth.
- It is currently at a point in space known as the Sun-Earth L2 Lagrange point.
  - L2 is approximately 1.5 million km beyond Earth's orbit around the Sun.
- It is a successor of the **Hubble Telescope.**
- The telescope will study the **atmospheres of a wide diversity of exoplanets**
- It will also **search for atmospheres similar to Earth's**, and for the signatures of key substances such as **methane, water, oxygen, carbon dioxide,** and **complex organic molecules,** in hopes of finding the building blocks of life.

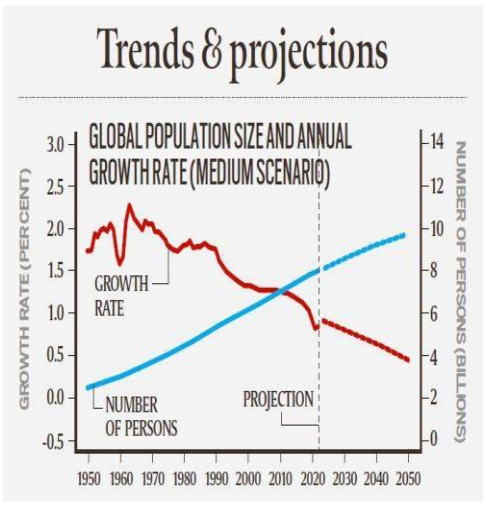
World Population Prospects 2022

❖ Context

➢ Recently, the 2022 edition of the **United Nations' World Population Prospects (WPP)** was released.

❖ Key Highlights of the Report

- **India is projected to surpass China** as the world's most populous country in 2023.
- It also projected the **world's population to reach 8 billion** on November 15, 2022.



- The **pace of population growth** is **slowing down.**
  - In 2020, the global growth rate fell under 1% per year for the first time since 1950.
  - The **46 least developed countries (LDCs)** are among the world's **fastest-growing.**
- **Regional Variation:** More than half of the projected increase in global population up to 2050 will be **concentrated in just eight countries.**
  - The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania.
- The **population of older persons is increasing both in numbers and as a share of the total.**
- A sustained **drop in fertility** has led to an increased concentration of the population at working ages (between 25 and 64 years).
  - It created an opportunity for accelerated economic growth per capita.
- **International Migration:** It is having important impacts on population trends for some countries.
  - The **outflows were due to temporary labour movements**, such as :
    - Pakistan (net flow of -16.5 million),
    - India (-3.5 million),
    - Bangladesh (-2.9 million),
    - Nepal (-1.6 million)

❖ About World Population Prospects (WPP)

- The Population Division of the UN has been publishing the WPP in a **biennial cycle since 1951**.
- Each revision of the WPP **provides a historical time series of population** indicators starting in 1950.
- It does so by taking into account newly released national data to revise estimates of past trends in fertility, mortality or international migration.

News in Between the Lines

Ammonia, Phosphate Pollution in Yamuna

❖ Context

➢ Increased levels of ammonia and phosphates have been observed in the Yamuna.

❖ Ammonia Pollution

- Ammonia is a **colourless gas** and is used as an industrial chemical in the production of **fertilisers, plastics, synthetic fibres, dyes** and other products.
- Ammonia occurs naturally in the environment from the **breakdown of organic waste matter**, and may also find its way to ground and surface water sources through industrial effluents or through contamination by sewage.
- The safety limit for Yamuna is **0.5 PPM (as per BIS).**
- If the concentration of ammonia in water is **above 1 ppm it is toxic to fishes.**
- In humans, long term ingestion of water having ammonia levels of 1 ppm or above may cause damage to internal organs.

❖ Phosphate Pollution

- The pollutant is responsible for a **toxic white foam** in the river.
- Its level has increased from the **safety limit of 0.1 PPM (as per BIS)** to 0.7 PPM.
- Detergents, domestic wastewater, industrial effluents, idol immersion, pesticide residue and untreated sewage are some of the sources of this pollutant in the river.

ICSE Initiative

❖ Context

➢ Central Bureau of Investigation has joined the Interpol's **International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) initiative**.

❖ Key Highlights

- India is the **68th country** to have access to this database and software.

- It will allow CBI to collaborate with investigators in other countries for detecting **child sex abuse online** and identifying abusers, victims, and crime scenes from audio-visual clips using **specialised software**, the database.
- The ICSE database uses **video and image comparison** to analyse **Child Sex Exploitation Material (CSEM)** and make connections between victims, abusers and places.

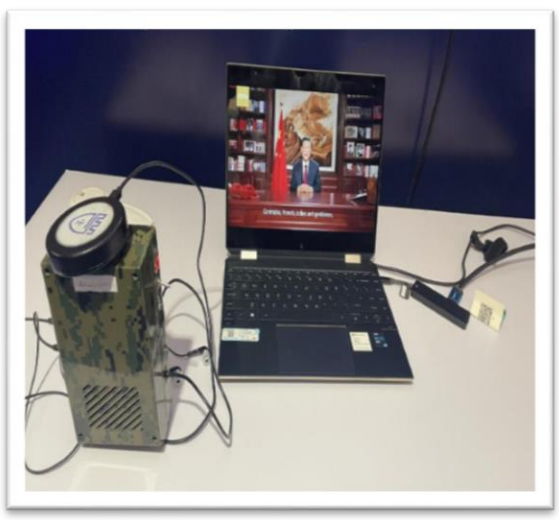
❖ **Interpol**

- Interpol is the world's largest international police organisation with 195 member countries, and is headquartered in **Lyon, France.**
- Each member country hosts an Interpol **National Central Bureau** that connects their national law enforcement to it.
- In India, the **CBI is the nodal agency.**

❖ **Online Child Sexual Abuse in India**

- According to Interpol data, India reported over **24 lakh instances** of online child sexual abuse from **2017 to 2020**, with **80% victims** being girls **below the age of 14 years.**
- In 2019, the CBI set up a special unit called the '**Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention/Investigation (OCSAE)**', for tracking and monitoring posting, circulation and downloads of CSEM online.

AI-based Mandarin Translation Devices



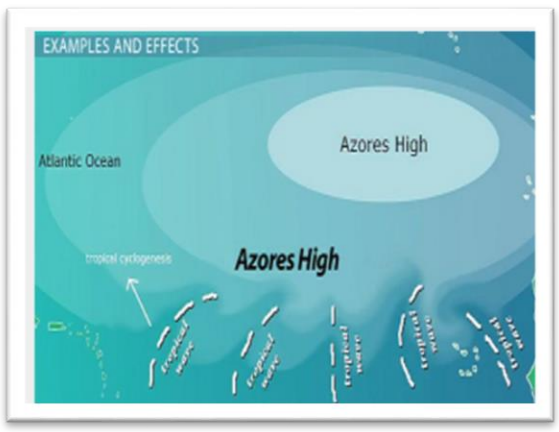
❖ **Context**

- Recently, the **Defense Minister unveiled 75 AI-based products** and technologies at the AI in Defense' symposium.
- The Mandarin translation device was one of the 75 AI-enabled products.

❖ **Key Highlights**

- It is an **offline handheld language translation system** which works based on AI.
- Its performance will improve as more data comes from the field.
- It is **bidirectional with a range of 5-10 feet and converts Mandarin to English.**
- They are also working on a Hindi version and trying to enhance the range to 20 feet.
- **Significance:**
  - **Troops of India and China come face to face** on various occasions during patrols and local commanders too interact at various levels as part of efforts **to maintain peace on the ground.**
  - **Language is a major hindrance** and interpreters need to be present during occasions like flag meetings.

Azores High



❖ **Context**

- According to a new study, **an extremely large 'Azores High' has resulted in abnormally dry conditions** across the western Mediterranean, including the Iberian Peninsula, primarily occupied by Spain and Portugal,.

❖ **About Azores High**

- Azores high is also called **Bermuda high, Azores anticyclone, or Bermuda-Azores high.**
- It is a **large persistent atmospheric high-pressure center** that develops over the subtropical region of the eastern North Atlantic Ocean during the winter and spring seasons in the Northern Hemisphere.
- It is a **subtropical high-pressure cell** that **moves westward** during the summer and fall, when it is known as the Bermuda high.
- The Bermuda high is **often associated with warm humid weather** in the eastern United States during the summer months.

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