

Foreigners, Illegal Migrants and Refugees

❖ Context

- A controversy had recently erupted over providing flats to Rohingyas who were termed as refugees and illegal foreigners by different Ministries.

❖ Registration of Foreigners

- The extant Acts dealing with entry, stay and exit of foreign nationals in the country are:
 - **The Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920**
 - **The Foreigners Act, 1946**
 - **The Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939**
- All foreigners** (including foreigners of Indian origin) visiting India on **long term (more than 180 days)** - *Student Visa, Medical Visa, Research Visa, Employment Visa, Missionary Visa and Project Visa* - are **required to get themselves registered** with the Foreigners Regional Registration Officer (FRRO)/ Foreigners Registration Officer (FRO) concerned **within 14 days of arrival**.
- A **Residential permit** is issued at the time of registration. It is valid only for the period of stay specified in the visa.
- The **Bureau of Immigration (BoI)**, under administrative control of MHA, was set up in 1971 to undertake Immigration functions in the country.
- BoI is headed by Commissioner of Immigration and assisted by FRROs for immigration facilitation service at airports and work relating to registration of foreigners under various Acts and Rules.

❖ Illegal Migrants

- Foreign nationals who enter into the country without valid travel documents are treated as illegal immigrants.
 - Illegal immigrants are **detected, detained and deported** under provisions of the Passport Act, 1920 or the Foreigners Act, 1946.
 - The **powers** to identify and deport them have also been **delegated to State governments and Union Territories**.
 - Once a 'foreigner' has been apprehended by the police for staying illegally, without any document, he or she is produced before the local court.
 - If the accused is found guilty, they can be **imprisoned for three months to eight years**.
 - After completing their sentence, the court orders deportation.
 - The foreign inmates are moved to **detention centres** till the country of origin verifies and accepts them.
- ### ❖ India's stand on Refugees
- India is not a signatory to the **1951 UN Convention** relating to the Status of Refugees and the **1967 Protocol**.
 - There is **no national law** on refugees at present.
 - Standard Operating Procedures** are issued by the MHA to deal with foreign nationals in India, who claim to be refugees.

Cloudburst in Uttarakhand

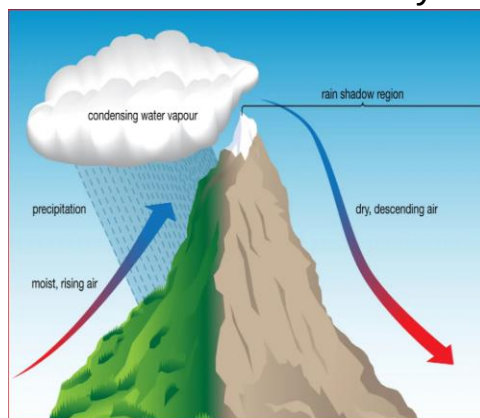
❖ Context

- A cloudburst hit the Raipur-Kumalda area recently causing rivers to breach their banks and wash away bridges.

❖ What is Cloudburst?

- Cloudburst, a sudden, very heavy rainfall, usually local in nature and of brief duration. Most so-called cloudbursts occur in connection with thunderstorms. In these storms there are violent uprushes of air, which at times prevent the condensing raindrops from falling to the ground.
- A large amount of water may thus accumulate at high levels, and if the upward currents are weakened the whole of this water falls at one time.
- Cloudbursts are especially common in mountainous areas.
- This is probably because the warm air currents of a thunderstorm tend to follow the upward slope of a mountain.

- The effects of heavy rain are especially striking on mountain slopes because the falling water is concentrated in valleys and gulleys.



- Mountain cloudbursts cause sudden and destructive floods. The intensity of rainfall in the most severe cloudbursts can only be conjectured.

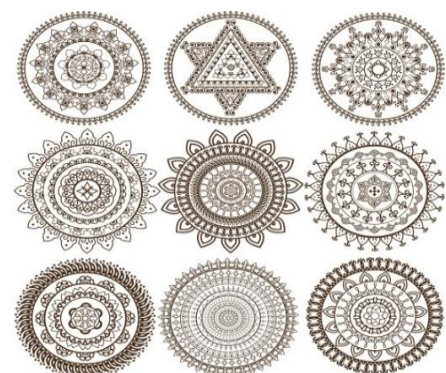
Mandala in Art

❖ Context

- Residents of Liverpool, UK are marvelling over a mandala the size of one and a half football pitches in length created by an artist with materials such as leaves and rocks.

❖ About Mandala

- Literally meaning "circle" or "centre" in Sanskrit, mandala is defined by a geometric configuration that usually incorporates the circular shape in some form. While it can also be created in the shape of a square, a mandala pattern is essentially interconnected.



Face to Face Centres

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- It is believed to be rooted in **Buddhism**, appearing in the first century BC in India.
- Over the next couple centuries, Buddhist missionaries travelling along the silk road took it to other regions.
- By the sixth century, mandalas have been recorded in **China, Korea, Japan, Indonesia and Tibet**.
- In Hinduism, the mandala imagery first appeared in Rig Veda (1500 – 500 BCE).

- It is believed that by entering the mandala and moving towards its center, one is guided through the cosmic process of transforming the universe from one of suffering to that of joy.
- A traditional Buddhist mandala, a circular painting drawn with coloured sand, aided in meditation, with the main objective of aiding its creator to discover their true self.
- In Hinduism, a mandala or yantra is in the shape of a square with a circle at its center.

National Automated Fingerprint Identification System

❖ Context

- India has inaugurated a **National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS)**, a centralised database of fingerprints.



❖ What is NAFIS?

- NAFIS, was developed by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).



- Recently **Madhya Pradesh** became the first state in the country to identify a deceased person through NAFIS.
- NAFIS project is a country-wide searchable database of crime- and criminal-related fingerprints.
- The web-based application functions as a central information repository by consolidating fingerprint data from all states and Union Territories.

- NAFIS assigns a unique 10-digit **National Fingerprint Number (NFN)** to each person arrested for a crime. This unique ID will be used for the person's lifetime, and different crimes registered under different FIRs will be linked to the same NFN.

- ❖ The ID's first two digits will be that of the state code in which the person arrested for a crime is registered, followed by a sequence number.

❖ Significance:

- By automating the collection, storage, and matching of fingerprints, along with digitizing the records of fingerprint data, NAFIS will "provide the much-needed unique identifier for every arrested person in the CCTNS (**Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems**) database as both are connected at the backend.
- According to a 2020 report by the NCRB, it enables law enforcement agencies to upload, trace & retrieve data from the database in real time on a 24×7 basis.
- It would help in the quick and easy disposal of cases with the help of a centralized fingerprint database.

State Government's Power of Remission

❖ Context

- The Gujarat Government had recently ordered the premature release of 11 convicts who were sentenced to life imprisonment for the 2002 Bilkis Bano gangrape case.



❖ Section 432 of CrPC

- Under Section 432, the **state government** can suspend the execution of a sentence or remit the whole or any part of the punishment, with or without any condition.
- However, the government may take the **opinion of the court** before which the conviction was confirmed.

❖ Prison : A State Subject

- Prisons (and their management) fall under the ambit of State subject under the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

- The administration and management of prisons is governed by the **Prisons Act, 1894**, and the Prison Manuals of the respective state governments.
- The Prisons Act provides that **only states can make rules** regarding the release of prisoners **on remission**, as part of the correctional process in jail.

❖ Requirement of Concurrence of the Centre

- **Section 435** of CrPC states that in a case where an investigation is carried out under any Central Act by a central agency, no order of remission can be passed by the State Government, unless concurrence has been produced by the Central Government.

Forever Chemicals

❖ Context

- A recent study has found that rainwater from many places across the globe is contaminated with "per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances," (PFAs), which are called "**forever chemicals**".

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❖ What are PFAs?

- PFAs are man-made chemicals used to make nonstick cookware, water-repellent clothing, stain-resistant fabrics, cosmetics, firefighting forms and many other products that resist grease, water & oil.
- PFAs can migrate to the soil, water and air during their production and use.
- Since most PFAs do not break down, they remain in the environment for long periods of time.
- Some of these PFAs can build up in people and animals if they are repeatedly exposed to the chemicals.

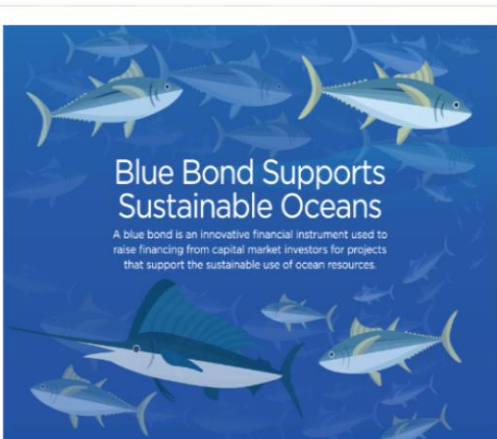
❖ Key Issues



- A variety of health risks that are attributed to PFA exposure, including decreased fertility, developmental effects in children, interference with body hormones,
- Long-term low-level exposure to certain PFAs can make it difficult for humans to build antibodies.

News in Between the Lines

Blue Bonds



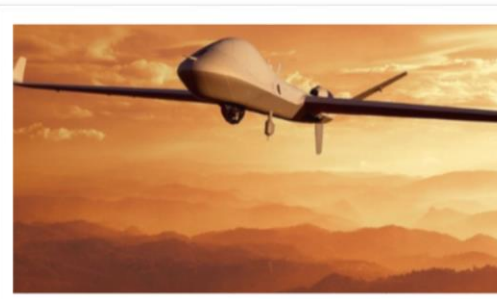
❖ Context

- SEBI has proposed the concept of blue bonds as a mode of sustainable finance, saying such securities can be utilized for various blue economy related activities, including oceanic resource mining and sustainable fishing.

❖ Key Highlights

- A blue bond is a debt instrument issued by governments, development banks or others to raise capital from investors to finance marine and ocean based projects that have positive environmental, economic and climate benefits.
- At present, the blue economy comprises 4.1 per cent of India's economy.
- It offers an opportunity for private sector capital to be mobilized to support the blue economy. It helps in raising awareness about important marine issues while providing much needed funding to projects
- It will catalyze progress towards SDG 14 (Life Below Water). India has a 7,500 kilometre-long coastline and 14,500 kilometres of navigable inland waterways, and the development of the blue economy can serve as a growth catalyst.

MQ-9B drone



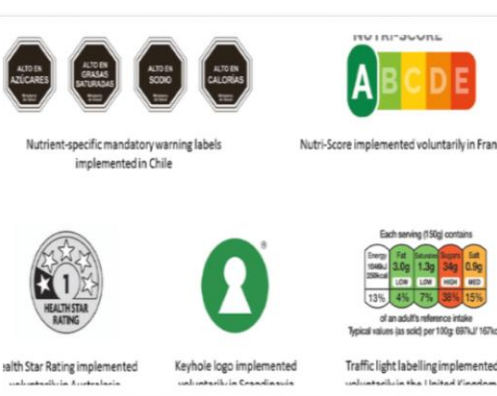
❖ Context

- India is in an advanced stage of negotiations with the US to procure 30 MQ-9B Predator armed drones to crank up its overall surveillance apparatus along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China and in the Indian Ocean.

❖ Key Highlights

- The long-endurance-hunter-killer drones are being procured for the **3** services as they can carry out a variety of roles including maritime surveillance, anti-submarine warfare, over-the-horizon targeting & hitting stationary ground targets.
- The remotely piloted drones are capable of remaining airborne for around 35 hours.

Front-of-package Labelling (FOPL)



❖ Context

- A new study in India has found that **warning labels** on food packets are **most effective** as compared with other labelling formats.

❖ Key Highlights

- It found that on most parameters, the **Health Star Rating (HSR) format** - where a product is assigned between half a star and five stars - was **least effective**.
- There are **five FOPL formats** :
 - Control label (barcode).**
 - Nutrient-specific warning label** (octagon symbol indicating whether the product was high in salt/sugar or saturated fat).
 - Health Star Rating.**
 - Guideline for daily amount** (GDA that gives nutritional content information).
 - Traffic light label** (indicating red, amber or green levels of nutrients of concern).

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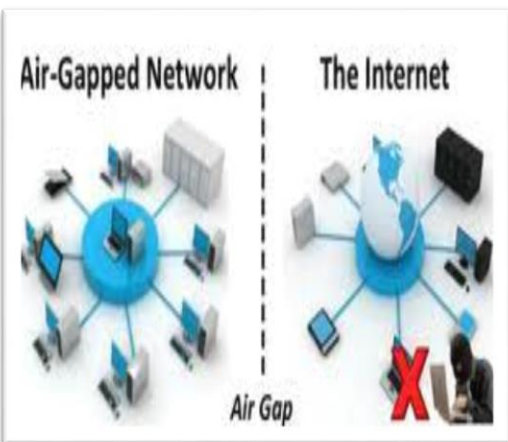
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Air Gap



- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is expected to issue its draft regulation on front-of-package labelling (FOPL) soon and has indicated that it favours HSR.

❖ Context

- According to a report on **cyberthreats** released by a US firm, hackers have been taking advantage of **USB removable media** to bypass the air gaps.

❖ What is an Air Gap?

- An air gap is a **security measure** that isolates a digital device or private local area network (LAN) from other devices and networks, including the public internet.
- It is also known as an **air wall** and the strategy of using air gaps to protect critical data is also known as **security by isolation**.
- They are used to protect critical computer systems and the data they store from malware, keyloggers, ransomware and other types of unauthorised access.
- This strategy seeks to ensure the total isolation of a given system electromagnetically, electronically and physically.
- It also plays an important role in backup and recovery.
- For example with 3-2-1 backups, each backup has three copies. While two of the copies can be stored on the same network, the third copy has to be air-gapped and stored in a completely different physical location.

Section 33 of the Aadhar Act



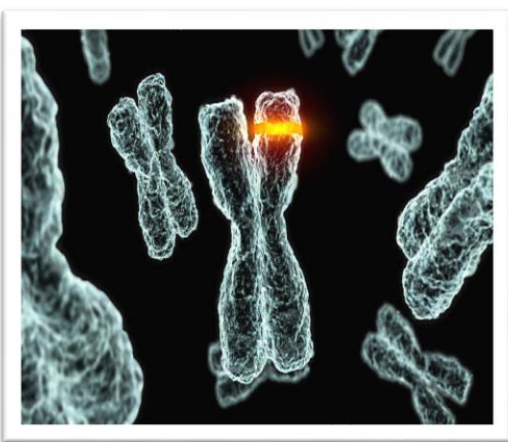
❖ Context

- The High Court of Karnataka has directed the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to furnish to NIA, information and documents submitted for securing Aadhaar by 12 Bangladesh nationals.

❖ Key Highlights

- Section 33 mandates that confidential information/authentication documents, which are prohibited from being revealed, can be disclosed in **certain cases only by an order of the court not inferior to a judge of the High Court**.
- The court before passing such an order should give an **opportunity of hearing** to the Authority and the concerned Aadhar holder.
- Every such direction should be reviewed by an Oversight committee consisting of :
 - Cabinet Secretary.
 - Secretary, Department of Legal Affairs.
 - Secretary, MeitY.
- The validity of such direction is **three months** at a time which can be **extended** for further three months after review by the Oversight committee.

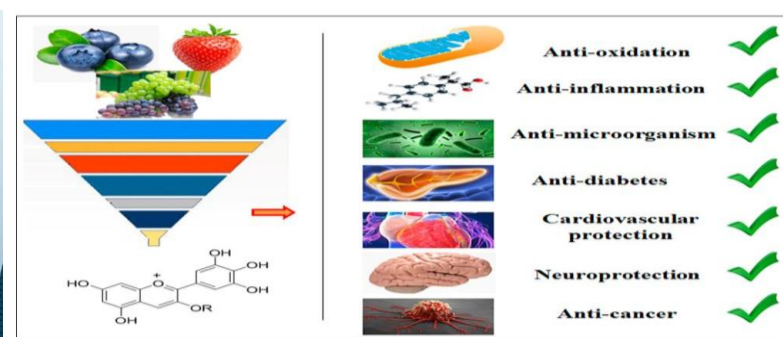
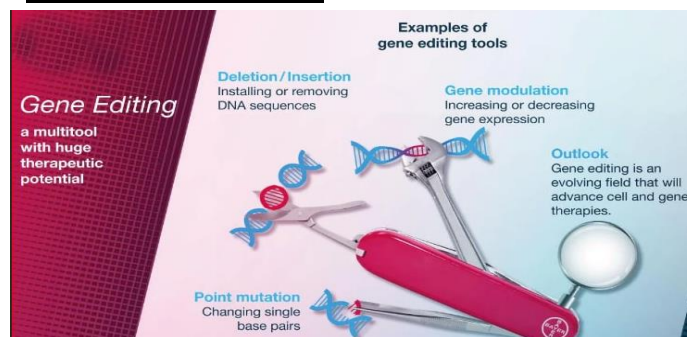
Gene Modulation



❖ Context

- According to a recent study, the **yield** of a Chinese rice variety was **boosted up by 40%** using a Gene Modulation technique.

❖ Key Highlights



- Gene modulation refers to the **process of temporarily altering gene expression** levels without making heritable changes to the underlying cellular DNA. It is, thus, **different from genetic modification technique**.
- In this case, **scientists added a second copy of one of the genes of the rice**.
- The change helped the plant absorb more fertiliser, boost photosynthesis, and accelerate flowering.

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