

Gaganyaan

❖ Context

- Recently, The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), along with the Indian Navy, conducted an important trial for the **Gaganyaan**, human space flight mission.

❖ Key Highlights:

- A **Crew Module Recovery Model (CMRM)** was used for the trials.
- CMRM simulates the mass, center of gravity, outer dimensions, and externals of the actual Crew Module at touchdown.
- ISRO's recent operation form the initial recovery trials of Crew Module in a closed pool.
- The safe recovery of the crew is the final step to be accomplished for any successful human spaceflight.
 - It has to be carried out with the minimum lapse of time.
- Different phases of recovery trials starting with the recovery of the Crew Module to the flight crew training are planned at **Water Survival Test Facility (WSTF)**.
- **WSTF**
 - WSTF, Kochi, is a **state-of-the-art facility** of the Indian Navy that provides realistic training of aircrew for escape from a ditched aircraft under varied simulated conditions and crash scenarios.
 - **WSTF** simulates different sea state conditions, environmental conditions, and day/night conditions.

❖ Gaganyaan

- Gaganyaan is a **crewed orbital spacecraft** that is **expected to take three astronauts** to space for a **period of seven days**.
- The Gaganyaan schedule is as follows
 - **3 flights** will be launched into orbit.
 - **2 unmanned flights** and **1 human spaceflight**.
- The first trial (uncrewed flight) for Gaganyaan is being planned by the end of 2023 or early 2024.
- This will be followed by sending Vyom Mitra, a humanoid.
- Humans will be sent to space in the third experiment only when the first two experiments assure that the programme is completely ready.
- ISRO's **Geo-Synchronous Launch Vehicle (GSLV)** will be used for the manned space mission.
- The spacecraft will be **placed in a low earth orbit of 300-400 km**.
- **Cost-** Rs.10,000 crore
- If India successfully sends four astronauts to space, it will be only the **fourth nation to do so after the United States, China and Russia**.

Disinvestment

❖ Context

- In the Union Budget for 2023-24, the government has set a **disinvestment target of ₹51,000 crore**.

❖ Key Highlights:

- It is **down nearly 21% from the budget estimate** for the current year and just **₹1,000 crore more than the revised estimate**.
- It is also the **lowest target in seven years**.

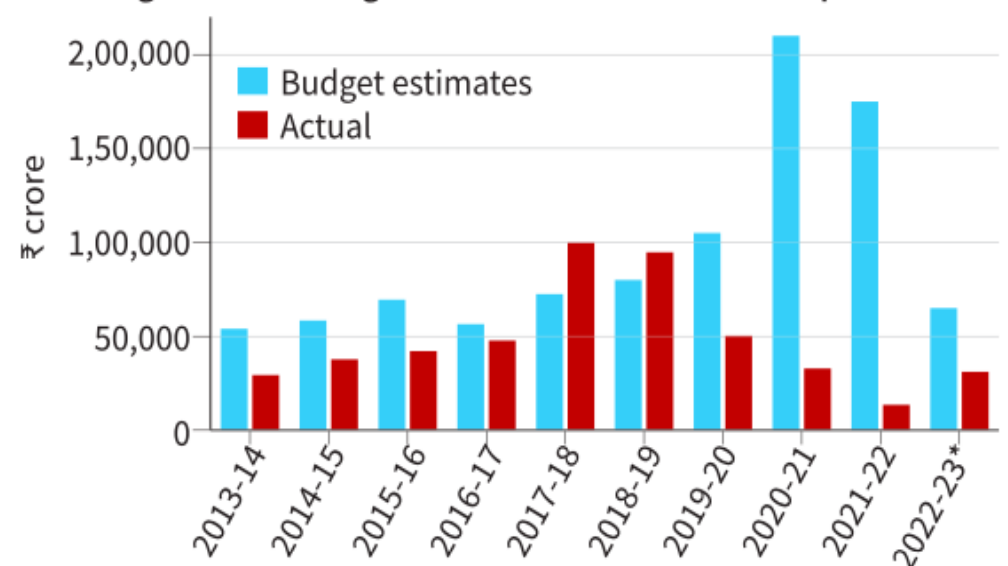
❖ About Disinvestment:

- Disinvestment or divestment, in this context, is when the **government sells its assets or a subsidiary**, such as a Central or State public sector enterprise.
- There are three main approaches to disinvestment
 - **Minority Disinvestment**
 - The government retains a majority in the company, typically greater than 51%, thus ensuring management control.
 - **Majority Disinvestment**
 - The government **hands over control to the acquiring entity** but retains some stake.
 - **Complete Privatisation**
 - 100% control of the company is passed on to the buyer.
- **Concerned Department**
 - The Union **Finance Ministry** has a separate department for undertaking disinvestment-related procedures called the **Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM)**.

• Purpose of Disinvestment

- The government may disinvest in order to reduce the fiscal burden or bridge the revenue shortfall for that year.
- It also uses disinvestment proceeds **to finance the fiscal deficit**, to invest in the economy and development or **social sector programmes**, and to retire government debt.
- Disinvestment also encourages private ownership of assets and trading in the open market.
- If successful, it also means that the government does not have to fund the losses of a loss-making unit anymore.

The budget estimates against the actual realisation of proceeds



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‘Victory City’

❖ Context

- **Salman Rushdie’s latest work, “Victory City”** is a fictionalised telling of the story of Vijayanagara, one of the richest and most powerful kingdoms in medieval India.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Salman Rushdie’s latest novel, **“Victory City”** is a fictionalised telling of the story of the Vijayanagara Kingdom, narrated by a sorceress and poet named **Pampa Kampana**, who, over more than two centuries, witnessed Vijayanagara’s many victories and defeats.

❖ The Vijayanagara Kingdom:

- **Founded by Harihara I of the Sangama dynasty**, Vijayanagara expanded from a strategic position on the banks of the **Tungabhadra River**. By the 15th century, it had become a force to reckon with.
- The kingdom reached its peak under **Krishna Deva Raya (reign 1509-1529)**, a period in which it enjoyed military superiority to its rival kingdoms such as the **Bahmani Sultanate, the Golconda Sultanate and the Gajapatis of Odisha**.
- The Vijayanagara kingdom has long been a subject of historical and political interest.
- **Founded in 1336**, the kingdom of Vijayanagara lasted for more than three centuries, a period in which it withstood multiple political stresses, and saw significant advances in art and economy.
- It was one of the **most powerful kingdoms** in the sub-continent. The kings of Vijayanagara at the peak of their power ruled over a territory of more **than 360,000 sq. km**.
- At its peak, the kingdom stretched **from Goa in the Konkan coast to parts of southern Odisha** in the east and all the way to the very tip of the subcontinent in the south.

❖ The Foundations Of The Kingdom Rested On Its Thriving Trade And A Monetised Economy:

- While the economy of the kingdom was largely dependent on agriculture, trade thrived in its many ports on either coast.
- **Traveler Abd al-Razzaq Samargandi** chronicled how “the ports of Mangalore, Honavar, Bhatkal, Barkur, Cochin, Cannanore, Machilipatnam, and Dharmadam **saw traders from Africa, Arabia, Aden, the Red sea, China and Bengal and also served as ship building centres**”
- **The empire’s principal exports** were pepper, ginger, cinnamon, cardamom, myrobalan, tamarind timber, anafistula, precious and semi-precious stones, pearls, musk, ambergris, rhubarb, aloe, cotton cloth and porcelain.
- In his classic History of South India, K A Nilakanta Sastri wrote that **coins were minted by the state** as well as by merchant guilds using gold, silver, copper and brass, and their value depended on material weight.

❖ Vijayanagara’s Contributions To Culture and Architecture:

- **This was a period when poetry** and scholarship flourished, both in sacral and secular contexts. Literature in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada as well as Sanskrit was produced in the kingdom, with new writing styles and methods emerging.
- **Vijayanagara architecture** is “a vibrant combination and blossoming of the **Chalukya, Hoysala, Pandya and Chola styles**, idioms that prospered in previous centuries.”
- Vijayanagara’s capital **Hampi is a UNESCO World Heritage Site today**, known for its sophisticated fortifications as well as innumerable temples and other architectural marvels.

News in Between the Lines

PM Poshan Scheme



❖ Context

- Recently, the Education Ministry requested CAG for a Special Audit of implementation of PM Poshan Scheme in the State of West Bengal for the last three financial years.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Ministry of Education has received reports about alleged misuse of funds in West Bengal under the PM Poshan Scheme.
- This Audit will encompass compliance, performance & financial audit.

PM Poshan Scheme

- The current version of the programme, **renamed PM Poshan Shakti Nirman or PM Poshan in 2021**.
- It was **launched in 1995**
- **Scheme Type**- Centrally Sponsored
- **Nodal Ministry**- Ministry of Education
- **Students up to Class VIII** are guaranteed one nutritional cooked meal at least 200 days in a year.
- Initially it was launched for students up to Class 5.
 - In 2007, the UPA government expanded it to Class 8.
- The **scheme covers 11.80 crore children** across Classes 1 to 8 (age group 6 to 14) in 11.20 lakh government and government-aided schools.
- It is a **legal entitlement** of all school-going children in primary and upper primary classes, through the **NFSA, 2013**, as well as the **Supreme Court’s ruling**.
- The primary objective of the scheme is to improve the nutritional status of children studying in classes I-VIII in eligible schools.

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Northern Ireland Protocol



❖ Context

- Recently, The United Kingdom Supreme Court ruled that the **Northern Ireland Protocol is lawful**

❖ Key Highlights:

- **About :** Northern Ireland Protocol is a **post-Brexit agreement** that created a trade border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.
- **Background :**
 - After Brexit, **Northern Ireland remained the UK's only constituent** that shared a land border with an EU member, the Republic of Ireland.
 - EU and UK having different product standards, checks would be necessary before goods could move from Northern Ireland to Ireland.
 - However, the two sides have had a long history of conflict, with a hard-fought peace secured only in 1998 under the **Belfast Agreement, also called the Good Friday agreement.**
 - Fiddling with this border was thus considered too dangerous, and it was decided the checks would be conducted between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.
 - This was called the Northern Ireland Protocol.
- **Significance :** Under the protocol, **Northern Ireland remains in the EU single market**, and trade-and-customs inspections of goods coming from Great Britain take place at its ports along the Irish Sea.

ODO P - DEH



❖ Context

- Under the **ODOP- Districts as Export Hubs initiative**, products with export potential have been identified from all 765 districts of the country.

❖ About ODOP – DEH:

- **ODOP – DEH is not a scheme but rather** an initiative aimed at fostering balanced regional development across all districts of the country.
- The idea is to select, brand, and promote one product from each district (of the country for **enabling holistic socioeconomic growth** across all regions.
- **ODOP has been merged with 'Districts as Export Hubs Initiative'** being run by the Department of Commerce (DoC) with Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) as a major stakeholder.
- **DEH Initiative highlights** the need to channelize the potential and diverse identity in each district of the country to make them export hubs.
- As ODOP-Districts as Export Hubs is **not a scheme, there is no financial assistance provided.**

Vikas Engine



❖ Context

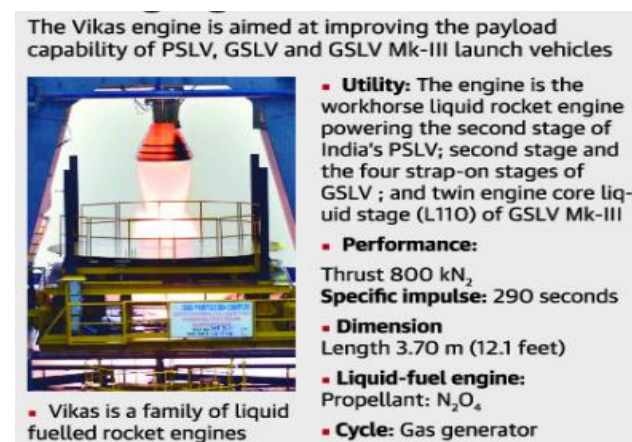
- The Indian Space Research Organisation has successfully tested the throttling of Vikas, its workhorse launch-vehicle engine.

❖ Key Highlights:

- The throttling test was done toward **enabling booster-stage recovery in future launch vehicle configurations.**

❖ About Vikas Engine:

- Vikas **belongs to a family of liquid fuelled rocket engines** conceptualized and designed by ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre in the 1970s.
- The Vikas engine powers the 2nd stages of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV), the liquid strap-ons of GSLV and the core liquid stage of LVM3 (Launch Vehicle Mark III).



Judicial Process in Local Languages

❖ Context

- **Union Minister of Law & Justice** in a written reply in Rajya Sabha informed about Judicial Process in Local Languages.

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❖ Judicial Process in Local Languages:

- **Article 348(1) (a) of the Constitution of India** states that all proceedings in the **Supreme Court** and in every **High Court (HC)**, shall be in English language.
- Clause (2) of the Article 348 of the Constitution states that notwithstanding anything in sub-clause (a) of clause (1), the **Governor of a State may**, with the previous consent of the President, authorize the use of **Hindi Language, or any other language** used for any official purposes of the State, in proceedings in the High Court having its principal seat in that State.
- **The Cabinet Committee's decision** dated 21.05.1965 has stipulated that **consent of the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India** be obtained on any proposal relating to use of a language other than English in the High Court.

- **Under Article 235** of the Constitution of India, the administrative control over the district and subordinate judiciary in the States **vest with the concerned High Court**.
- As regards, use of Hindi or regional language in lower courts, **it is decided by the High Court and State Government concerned in consultation with each other.**

Designated Survivor



❖ Context

- Biden's government Labor Secretary Marty Walsh was given the duty of being the **Designated Survivor** when he was delivering the annual State of the Union Address.

❖ About Designated Survivor:

- Though extremely unlikely, there is a theoretical possibility of a catastrophic disaster striking the venue of the State of the Union Address, which is attended by nearly every top official and judge.
- **The purpose of having a designated survivor** is to ensure continuity of government in such an eventuality.
- **To be a designated survivor**, one must be eligible to become United States' President. If a higher ranking official survives the attack, the designated survivor gives way to them when they are fit to lead.

- According to the National Constitution Center, **the tradition of appointing a designated survivor began in the 1950s**, as the specter of a nuclear holocaust loomed amidst the Cold War with the USSR. However, the US government did not publicly acknowledge the existence of the figure till 1981, Presidential inaugurations & congressional joint sessions have also used designated survivors, **according to the National Constitution Center.**

Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM)



❖ Context

- The indigenous **Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM)** is set to be tested again in April with some changes suggested by the Army.

❖ Key Highlights:

- It is being developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The QRSAM is designed to operate on the move with search and track capability and fire on short halt, a requirement for the Army's Air Defence to move along with offensive formations.
- **Its Range is 25-30 KM and propelled by Single Stage Solid Rocket Motor.**
- It can **engage 6 targets simultaneously.**

Shree Ann



❖ Context

- Prime Minister **appreciated Lahari Bai**, who has shown remarkable enthusiasm **towards Shree Ann.**

❖ Key Highlights:

- **Lahari Bai is a 27-year-old tribal woman** from Madhya Pradesh's Dindori, known for preserving more than **150 rare millet varieties** through its seeds.
- **Also called Shree Ann**, millets have come to the forefront as part of India and the world observing 2023 as the International Year of Millets.
- Recognising her passion for preserving the rare millet seeds, **her name has been forwarded by the village head for scholarship** to ICAR-Vivekananda Parvatiya Krishi Anusandhan Sansthan, Jodhpur.
- Millet is a common term to categorise small-seeded grasses that are often termed nutri-cereals or dryland-cereals, and includes **Sorghum, Pearl Millet, Foxtail Millet, Ragi, Proso Millet, Barnyard Millet And Kodo Millet**, among others.
- Millets need a **third of the water required by rice**. "They are hardy grains that can withstand long periods of drought and require little pesticides or fertilisers to thrive, truly making them super grains."

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