

Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012

❖ Context

- Recently, the Bombay High Court said that the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act was enacted not to punish minors in a consensual relationship and to brand them as criminals,



❖ POC SO Act

• About :

- It was enacted in consequence to India's ratification of the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992**, came into effect on November 14, 2012.
- The Act has been enacted to **protect children from offences of sexual assault**, sexual harassment and **pornography**.
- It provide for **establishment of Special Courts** for trial of such offences and related matters and incidents. The Act was **amended in 2019**.

• Salient Features of the Act :

- **It is a gender-neutral law** : By defining a child as **'any person' below the age of 18 years**, the POC SO Act sets a gender-neutral tone for the legal framework available to child sexual abuse victim
- **Not reporting abuse is an offence** : It penalises those who have failed to report the offence with either imprisonment or a fine or both.
- **No time limit for reporting abuse** : Victim can report an offence at any time, even a number of years after the abuse has been committed.
- **Maintaining confidentiality of the victim's identity**.

- It **defines different forms of sexual abuse**, including penetrative and non-penetrative assault, as well as sexual harassment and pornography.
- People who traffic children for sexual purposes are also punishable.
- The **storage of child pornography material** has been made a new offence.

- It **provides for special courts** that conduct the trial in-camera and without revealing the identity of the child, in a manner that is as child-friendly as possible.
- It also **casts the police in the role of child protectors** during the investigative process.
- **Terms of the POC SO Act** : The **age of consent for sex in India is 18** under the POC SO Act.
 - Consent given by a girl aged **below 18 is not regarded as valid** and sexual intercourse with her amounts to rape.

❖ Recent Court's Directions Related to POC SO Act

- The Karnataka High Court said that the **courts have no power to reduce the minimum sentence** prescribed in the POC SO Act on convicting the accused for committing sexual assault on children.
- The **Delhi High Court** reminded judicial officers, public prosecutors and police to be **mindful of the "adverse impact on the psyche"** of child victims of sexual offences when insisting on their physical appearance in court at the time of arguments.

❖ National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

- It monitors the implementation of POC SO Act.
- It's a **statutory body**.
- Established by an Act of Parliament, the Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005.
- The Commission **works under the aegis of Ministry of Women and Child Development, GoI**.
- **Composition** : A chairperson and six members of which at least two should be women. All of them are **appointed by the Central Government for three years**.
- The maximum age to serve in commission is **65 years for Chairman and 60 years for members**.

Irrevocable Deregistration & Export Request Authorisation (IDERA)

❖ Context

- With the **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)** reserving its order on low-cost airline **Go First's** urgent plea for voluntary insolvency resolution proceedings and a moratorium on its obligations, aircraft lessors moved quickly and sought deregistration and repossession of 20 aircraft leased to the **Wadia Group airline**.



❖ Key Highlights

- They did so by filing applications with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) using their IDERA.

❖ IDERA

- IDERA **empowers lessors to get their aircraft deregistered** from the registry of the country where the lessee is based, repossess them, and fly them out, in cases like those of lease payment defaults.

- The objective is to **simplify and improve the efficiency of aircraft leasing operations**, while providing comfort to lessors that their assets (planes) would not get stuck for extended periods due to legal issues.
- The quick deregistration process **allows lessors to repossess planes and lease them to other operators**, minimising the losses they would have to incur if their planes got stuck in litigation.

Face to Face Centres

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Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)



❖ Context

- Recently, RBI Deputy Governor observed that Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) platforms could bring about a substantive change in the sphere of cross-border payments.

❖ About CBDC

- CBDC is the **legal tender issued by a central bank in a digital form**.
- It will be **issued in the same denominations** as paper currency and coins, and will be distributed through intermediaries, i.e., banks.
- Users will be able to transact with **e₹-R** through a digital wallet offered by the participating banks and stored on mobile phones and devices, according to the RBI.
- Transactions can be both **person to person (P2P) and person to merchant (P2M)**.
- Payments to merchants can be made using **QR codes** displayed at merchant locations.

❖ Types of Digital Rupee

- The RBI has launched pilots of CBDC in both Wholesale and Retail segments.
- The pilot in wholesale segment is known as the Digital Rupee -Wholesale (e₹-W) : It was launched on November 1, 2022, with use case being limited to the settlement of secondary market transactions in government securities.
 - Use of (e₹-W), is expected to make the inter-bank market more efficient.
- The pilot in retail segment is known as digital Rupee-Retail (e₹-R) : It was launched on December 01, 2022, within a closed user group (CUG) comprising participating customers and merchants.
 - the RBI has identified eight banks for phase-wise participation in the retail pilot project.
 - It will **initially cover the four cities** of Mumbai, New Delhi, Bengaluru, and Bhubaneswar.
 - **Four banks** will be involved in the controlled launch of the digital currency in these four cities:
 - State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Yes Bank, and IDFC First Bank.
 - Subsequently, another four banks, viz., the Bank of Baroda, the Union Bank of India, the HDFC Bank and the Kotak Mahindra Bank.

❖ Features of CBDC

- **High-security instrument:** CBDC is a high-security digital instrument; like paper banknotes, it is a means of payment, a unit of account, and a store of value.
- **Uniquely identifiable:** And like paper currency, each unit is uniquely identifiable to prevent counterfeiting.
- **Liability of central bank:** It is a liability of the central bank just as physical currency is.
- **Transferability:** It's a digital bearer instrument that can be stored, transferred, and transmitted by all kinds of digital payment systems and services.
- Digital Rupee will be **powered by blockchain technology** which makes currency management cheaper, allowing the Government to print fewer notes in the future.
- CBDC wallet will not accrue interest like money in your bank account does

❖ A Key Difference Between Cryptocurrencies Like Bitcoin and Digital Rupee

- Bitcoin operates in a decentralised environment, where all the **data is stored in a wide network of computers**.
- In Digital Rupee, the **controlling position lies with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** which will set up its own network with other banking entities.
- **Difference between CBDC and UPI :**
 - CBDC is a currency system and UPI is a payments system.
 - CBDC is **central bank's money while UPI is bank money**.
 - CBDC could maintain **cash-like anonymity**, which is not available in UPI.
 - The CBDC also **doesn't require any time for settlement between the banks** of the buyer and seller, unlike UPI.
 - A citizen **won't necessarily need a bank account** to use the CBDC, unlike UPI.

Malcha Mahal

❖ Context

- The much-awaited '**haunted walks**' was launched by the Delhi Tourism Department recently.
- The first heritage walk of the first-of-its-kind initiative will start with the Tughlaq-era monument '**Malcha Mahal**'.



❖ Key Highlights:

- Malcha Mahal, also known as Malcha Kothi, is a historical monument located in the city of Delhi, India.
- It holds a unique place in history and is often shrouded in intrigue and mystery.
- It was built by Sultan **Firoz Shah Tughlaq** and located inside Ridge forest

- The palace complex consists of several structures, including a main building, courtyards, and gardens.
- In the early 20th century, the palace came under the ownership of the royal family of **Oudh (Awadh)**.
- After the Indian subcontinent gained independence in 1947 and the princely states were abolished, the last residents of Malcha Mahal, **Princess Wilayat Mahal** and her descendants, continued to live there.

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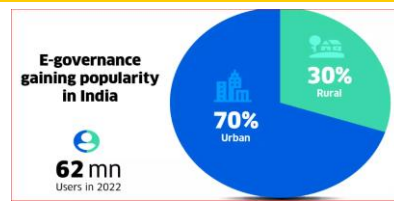


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Internet In India Report 2022

❖ Context

- A recent report jointly published by **IAMAI** and **Kantar** has unveiled significant developments in India's internet landscape



❖ Key Highlights:

- The study highlights that a majority of Indians have embraced internet usage, with **52% of the population**, equating to approximately **759 million people**, accessing the internet at least once a month in 2022.
- Encouragingly, this figure is projected to rise to **900 million by 2025**.
- Notably, the report emphasizes that rural India is the primary driver of internet growth, accounting for **399 million active internet users**, while urban areas contribute 360 million.
- The report underscores the pivotal role played by rural India in propelling the country's internet expansion.
- It predicts that 56% of all new internet users in India by 2025 will emerge from rural regions.
- Interestingly, despite urban India's higher internet penetration rate of **approximately 71%**, it experienced a modest growth rate of 6% in 2022.
- In contrast, rural India exhibited a growth rate of **14% over the past year**, making it the primary catalyst for the overall increase in internet users.

- However, the report highlights a digital divide between states, with Bihar lagging behind considerably, possessing less than half the internet penetration level of the leading state, Goa.
- Another notable aspect highlighted in the report is the correction of the gender divide. **While 54% of active internet users were male**, 57% of new users in 2022 were female.
- Encouragingly, the report estimates that by 2025, **65% of new users will be female**, thereby playing a crucial role in narrowing the gender gap.
- Furthermore, the report acknowledges the improvement in digital access, not only in terms of coverage but also in **terms of usage depth**.
- While all users access the internet via mobile devices, the adoption of other devices such as tablets, streaming devices, and 'smart' devices has increased from **8% in 2021 to 13% in 2022**.

News in Between the Lines

Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC) for 2023



❖ Context

- According to the **Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC) for 2023**, the number of individuals facing acute food insecurity has risen, affecting over 258 million people across **58 countries and territories**.

❖ Key Highlights:

- This report is a collaborative effort by the **Food Security Information Network (FSIN)** and the **Global Network against Food Crises (GNAFC)**.
- The key drivers behind this rise in acute food insecurity include various factors such as
 - economic shocks resulting from events like the COVID-19 pandemic and
 - the Ukraine War, ongoing conflicts and insecurity,
 - as well as extreme weather events and climate disturbances.
- Acute **food insecurity refers** to a **dire situation where individuals** or households face severe limitations in accessing **sufficient food and nutrition**, placing them at high risk of **starvation or even death**.
- To address these pressing issues, a global initiative has been established with the collaboration of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).
- This initiative aims to **strengthen food and nutrition** security information systems, ensuring the production of reliable and accurate data to guide analysis and decision-making in combating food crises.

Rwanda



❖ Context

- Several people were killed as heavy rainfall triggers devastating floods in Rwanda recently.

❖ About Rwanda:

- It is bordered by Uganda to the north, Tanzania to the east, Burundi to the south, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west.
- The capital and largest city of Rwanda is **Kigali**.
- Three major ethnic groups:** the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa.
- Major Rivers:** Akagera, Akanyaru, Base, Rubiyero.
- Major Lakes:** Kivu, Ruhondo, and Mugesera

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Washington Declaration



❖ Context

- The President of South Korea and the US President recently signed the Washington Declaration on the anniversary of 70 years of their bilateral relationship.

❖ Key Highlights

- The agreement outlines **cooperation towards deterrence**.
- **According to the declaration :**
 - An American nuclear ballistic submarine would be deployed in the Korean peninsula;
 - A nuclear consultative group would be formed to formulate principles of joint response tactics;
 - South Korea would receive Intel from the U.S. regarding nuclear advancements;
 - The U.S. will strengthen South Korea's nuclear deterrence capabilities through joint military training programs and an annual intergovernmental simulation.
- The declaration **reaffirmed the non-proliferation Treaty** implying that South Korea would not venture into the creation of its own independent nuclear capabilities and would instead focus on deterrence measures through an alliance-based approach.
- It also mandates the **U.S. President as the only 'sole authority'** to use the nuclear arsenal of the U.S. in the event of a nuclear confrontation.
- While the existence of the agreement is based on the security needs of South Korea, the policy reflects big power politics where the interests of the larger power (U.S.) takes precedence.

Kremlin



❖ Context

- Recently, Russia accused Ukraine of attacking the Kremlin with drones overnight in a failed attempt to kill President Vladimir Putin.

❖ About Kremlin

- The word literally means **"fortress inside a city"**, and there are over 20 kremlins across Russia.
- The **most important and popular one is in Moscow**, metonymically used to refer to **Russian political authority**.
 - It has been the seat of political power in Russia since the 14th century (with a hiatus between 1713 & 1918 when the czar shifted the capital to St Petersburg).
 - It is situated on the northern bank of the Moskva river,.
 - The **28-hectare Kremlin** is roughly the size of New Delhi's iconic shopping plaza of Connaught Place.
 - It comprises **five palaces and four cathedrals**, and is enclosed within the Kremlin Wall with its distinctive towers.
 - To the east of the Kremlin are the iconic St Basil's Cathedral and Red Square, where major state functions take place.
 - The Kremlin has been a **UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1990**.

Rare Diseases



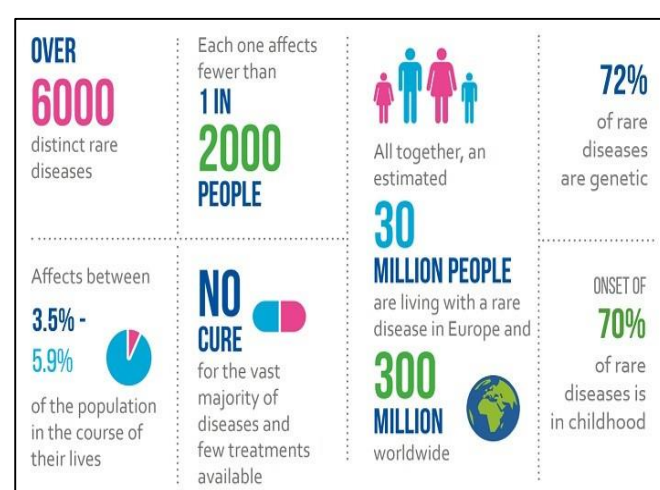
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❖ Context

- The Delhi High Court has issued an order requiring the Secretary of the Union Health Ministry to appear before it.

❖ Key Highlights:

- This directive comes after the court's previous order, which directed the release of Rs. 5 crore for the treatment of children afflicted with rare diseases, was not followed.



❖ About Rare Diseases:

- Rare diseases are medical conditions that affect a small number of people in the population.
- These diseases often have complex and unique symptoms, making diagnosis and treatment challenging.
- Due to their rarity, research, funding, and support for individuals with rare diseases can be limited.
- Examples of rare diseases include Duchenne muscular dystrophy, Huntington's disease, and cystic fibrosis.

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