

Digital Services Act (DSA)

❖ Context

- Recently, the **European Union (EU)** has confirmed the names of **19 platforms** that will be subject to its landmark online content rules.



❖ Key Highlights

- Five subsidiaries of Google's parent Alphabet, two Meta units, two Microsoft businesses, Apple's AppStore, Twitter, and Alibaba's AliExpress are among the entities that the EU has identified.

❖ About (Digital Services Act) DSA

- The rules notified under the **DSA**, aim at :
 - Overhauling the EU's social media and e-commerce rules.
 - Tightly regulating the way big technology platforms moderate user content.
- **Intermediaries** - Large platforms such as Google, Meta, Twitter, and YouTube.
- **Features :**
 - New procedures for **faster removal of content** deemed illegal or harmful.
 - Users can **challenge takedown decisions taken by platforms** and seek out-of-court settlements.

- **Very Large Online Platforms' (VLOPs)** and **'Very Large Online Search Engines' (VLOSEs)**, that is platforms, having more than **45 million users** in the EU, will have more stringent requirements.

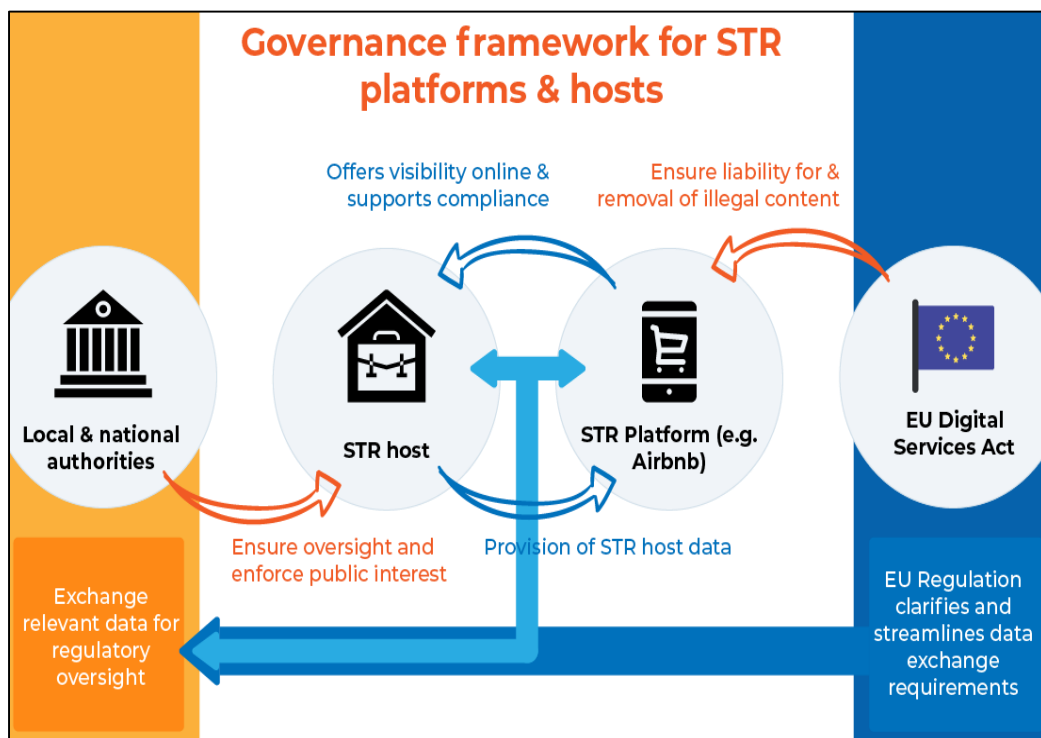
- **Direct supervision** by European Commission.
- **More transparency** on how algorithms work.
- **Clearer identifiers** for ads and who's paying for them.

• Significance :

- It will give **better protection** to users and to fundamental rights online.
- It will establish a **powerful transparency and accountability** framework for online platform.
- It will provide a **single, uniform framework across the EU**.

❖ India's Online Laws

- In February 2021, India had notified extensive changes to its social media regulations in the form of the **Information Technology Rules, 2021 (IT Rules)**.
- **Features :**
 - **Appointing key personnel** to handle law enforcement requests and user grievances.
 - **Enabling identification of the first originator of the information** on its platform under certain conditions.
 - **Deploying technology-based measures** on a best-effort basis to identify certain types of content.
- The IT Ministry notified a contentious measure by creating government-backed grievance appellate committees.
 - It would have the authority to review and revoke content moderation decisions taken by large tech platforms.



Ramanujacharya

❖ Context

- Recently, prime minister of India remembered Ramanujacharya on his 1006th birth anniversary.



❖ Key Highlights

- Sri Ramanujacharya was **born in 1017** in Sri Perumbudur, Tamil Nadu.
- He was one of the most **important exponents of the Sri Vaishnavism tradition** within Hinduism.
- He is famous as the **chief proponent of Vishishtadvaita**, a subschool of Vedanta.
 - **Vishishtadvaita (Qualified Non-Dualism)** - He Argued that Brahman is the ultimate reality, but also that the universe is real and a manifestation of Brahman.
 - **Advaita Vedanta (Non-Dualism)**- Ultimate reality is Brahman and that the universe is an illusion (Maya).

- He emphasized devotion to achieve union with the divine.
- He was also referred to as **Ilaya Perumal**, which means the radiant one.
- He **wrote influential texts, such as bhāṣya on the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita**, all in Sanskrit.
- **Bhakti movement** was greatly influenced by Sri Ramanujacharya's philosophical teachings of devotionism.
- He worked **against casteism and social hierarchies**.

Face to Face Centres

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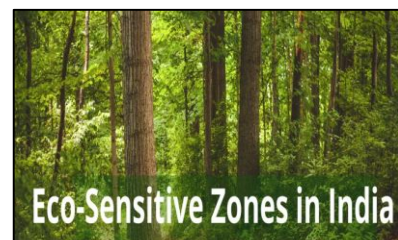


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Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ)

❖ Context

- The Supreme Court has recently modified its judgment on mandatory eco-sensitive zones (ESZ) of at least one kilometre around protected forests, national parks, and wildlife sanctuaries across the country.

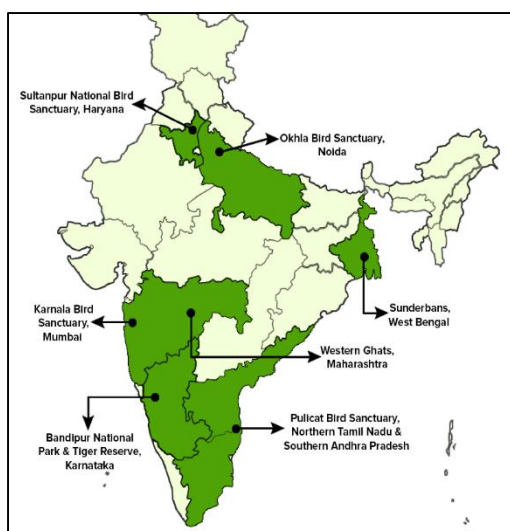


❖ Key Highlights of the Judgment:

- The Court has stated that ESZ cannot be uniform across the country and has to be **"protected area-specific."**
- The Centre and several States, including Kerala, had returned to the court seeking **modification of the June 2022 judgment**, saying the judicial direction affected hundreds of villages on the peripheries of forests.
- The court agreed that the purpose of declaring ESZs is not to hamper the day-to-day activities of citizens.
- The court said a stringent observance of the June 2022 judgment would cause more harm than good, as man-animal conflict would increase rather than decrease.
- However, the court clarified that mining within the national park and wildlife sanctuary and within an area of one kilometre from the boundary of such national park and wildlife sanctuary **shall not be permissible**.

❖ What are Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ)?

- ESZs are declared by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** under the Environment Protection Act, 1986.
- These were included in the **National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016)**.
 - 10 km of the boundaries of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries are to be notified as eco-fragile zones or ESZ.
- This 10 Km rule is not to be **strictly implemented**.



❖ What activities are allowed and prohibited in ESZs?

- **Activities Prohibited in ESZ :**
 - Commercial mining
 - Sawmills - These generate dust that can harm biodiversity.
 - Commercial use of wood, etc.
- **Regulated activities in ESZ :**
 - Felling of trees.
 - Establishment of hotels and resorts,
 - Commercial use of natural water,
 - Erection of electrical cables,
 - A drastic change in the agriculture system
 - adopting heavy technology,
 - Usage of Pesticides
 - Widening of roads.
- **Permitted Activities :**
 - Ongoing agricultural or horticultural practices,
 - Rainwater harvesting
 - Organic farming.

Manamadurai Pottery

❖ Context

- Recently, The **Manamadurai pottery** earned a **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.



❖ Key Highlights

- Manamadurai in **Sivagangai district** is known for pottery making.
- **Making of The Pots :**
 - The **right proportion of mud, clay and heating** makes this product very strong.
 - The main raw materials for making these pots are soil and water.
 - A unique type of clay is sourced from water bodies like **Nedunkulam, Nathapurakki, Sundaranadappu, Seikalathur** to make these pots.

- The **Vaigai river** enriches the clay used for the Manamadurai pottery.
- The particles of the mud get separated by sieving.
- The slurry is mixed with the sand and lead and graphite are added to the mixture to improve the quality.
- This mixture is now rich in calcium lime, ash, red lead, sodium silicate, manganese, iron, and plasticizing.
- The pot is also **painted in different colours**.

WHAT IS A GI TAG?

- A GI tag is a geographical indication of an item which is specific to a particular place
- GI status can be sought for agricultural products, handicrafts, handloom and food products
- The RGI (registration of geographical indications) logo given to a particular product can

only be used by registered and authorised users

- When marketed, a GI tagged product must carry a logo showing its place of origin
- Civil and criminal proceedings can be initiated against those using the logo in unauthorised manner



HOW TO APPLY?

- An association or collective body can apply to GI Registry
- Application should be backed by proof of uniqueness, historical records to show proof of origin, quality and special character

- After rounds of verification, presentation and meetings, if registry is satisfied, application goes to GI Registry journal
- If application receives no opposition within four months, it gets the GI tag

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PM-SHRI Scheme

❖ Context

- A total of **6,448 schools from 28 states** and Union territories have been selected for upgradation under the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) scheme, with maximum institutions being from Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Maharashtra,



• About :

- The Cabinet approved a new **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** named **PM SHRI** on 7th September 2022.
- Under the scheme, **14,597 existing schools will be selected** from amongst those managed by the Central government, States, Union Territories & local bodies.
- The Centre expects **18 lakh students to directly benefit from the scheme.**

• Key Features of the Scheme :

- Schools will be **redeveloped as model institutions**, or PM Shri Schools, to **fulfil the objectives of the NEP 2020.**
- These schools will **deliver quality teaching** for the cognitive development of students and strive to create individuals equipped with key 21st-century skills.
- These schools will be **equipped with modern infrastructure** including labs, smart classrooms, libraries, sports equipment, art room etc.
- These shall also be **developed as green schools** with water conservation, waste recycling, energy-efficient infrastructure and integration of organic lifestyle in curriculum.

• Funding and Implementation :

- It will be implemented with a total project cost of ₹27,360 crore, with ₹18,128 crore being the Centre's share, for five years from 2022-23 to 2026-27.
- States or UT will sign a memorandum of understanding agreeing to **"implement the NEP in entirety.**

• Eligibility :

- All elementary schools (Classes 1-5 or 1-8).
- Secondary (Classes 1-10 or 6-10).
- Senior secondary schools (Classes 1-12 or 6-12)
- They should be **managed either by the Centre, State, UT, or local bodies** and have a **UDISE+** (Unified District Information for Education Pus) code can apply.

• School Selection Process :

- Schools that fulfil the minimum benchmark (by analysis of UDISE+ data) will be shortlisted.
- The last stage will be challenge-based.
- Teams from States, Kendriya Vidyalaya or Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya schools will visit the applicant institution to inspect and verify claims.
- They will then recommend the selected schools to the Ministry of Education.
- The Ministry will **select a maximum of two schools** — one elementary and the second either secondary or senior secondary — **from a block or urban local body.**
- **UDISE** : It is a platform which **collects information** on a school's profile, physical infrastructure, teachers, enrolments, results, etc. through an online Data Collection Form that contains information on multiple performance indicators.

News in Between the Lines

Taam Ja



❖ Context

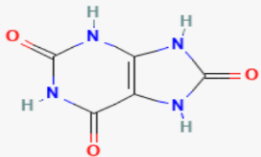
- Recently, Scientists have discovered a **massive sinkhole off the coast of the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico.**

❖ Key Highlights

- The giant blue hole is **around 900 feet deep** and scientists have dubbed it the **second deepest blue hole found on the planet.**
- The blue holes found on **coastal karst platforms** around the world, including the Caribbean Sea and the Yucatán Peninsula, contain unique environments within them.
- Spread over an area of 13,660 square meters, the giant, underwater cavern is **located in the Chetumal Bay** and has been **named Taam Ja' which means "deep water" in Mayan.**
- The submerged blue hole has a **nearly circular shape** at its surface with steep sides that form a large conic structure covered by biofilms, sediments, limestone, and gypsum ledges.
- It was **found in the central portion of Chetumal Bay**, where submerged coastal **karstic sinkholes locally named 'pozas'** have been reported.
- A series of discontinuous terraces were detected at water depths, near the eastern and north-western walls of the blue hole before developing steep & almost vertical slopes.
- There is variation in salinity and temperature inside the blue hole.

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Uric Acid



❖ Context

- Researchers at the **Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST)**, which falls under the purview of the Department of Biotechnology, have developed a **bioelectronic device** that can detect uric acid.

❖ Key Highlights:

- This device can be used in **wearables and point-of-care diagnoses**.
- Uric acid is an essential antioxidant compound that helps in maintaining stable blood pressure and reducing oxidative stress in living organisms.
- It is produced as a waste product during the **breakdown of purines**, which are substances found in many foods and drinks, including seafood, red meat, and alcohol.
- It is a **heterocyclic compound** composed of carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, and hydrogen, and is produced as a waste product in the human body, primarily in the liver.
- High levels of uric acid in the blood can lead to a medical condition called **hyperuricemia**, which can cause gout, kidney stones, and other health problems.
- The development of this device could have significant implications for the early **detection and treatment of various medical conditions** related to uric acid levels.

The Big Catch-up



❖ Context

- A global initiative called "The Big Catch-up" is being implemented by **WHO, UNICEF, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**, among other health partners.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Its aim is to boost **childhood vaccinations** worldwide and reverse the declines caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The initiative will particularly **focus on 20 countries**, including India, where most of the children who missed vaccinations in 2021 live.
- **"The Big Catch-up"** will strengthen healthcare workforces, improve health service delivery, build demand for vaccines, and tackle obstacles to restoring immunization.

Sree Seetharama Swamy Temple

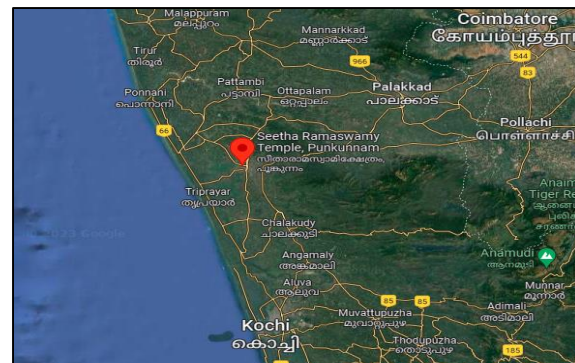


❖ Context

- The Prime Minister of India recently unveiled a 55-foot-tall statue of Hanuman, making it the largest such statue in Kerala, at the **Seetharama Swamy Temple in Thrissur Kerala**.

❖ Key Highlights:

- The temple complex is home to shrines of Lord Seetharama, Lord Ayyappa, and Lord Shiva.
- The temple is renowned for the **Thrissur Pooram**, an annual temple festival celebrated at the **Vadakkunnathan Temple**, which is considered to be the **"mother of all Poorams"** in Kerala.



Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO)



❖ Context

- The ministry of corporate affairs (MCA) said recently that the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), which increased its capacity in FY23, **completed 23 investigations during the year**, up from 13 in the year before.

❖ About SFIO:

- It is a multidisciplinary organization in India established by the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs to investigate serious financial fraud**.
- The SFIO conducts investigations into cases of **corporate fraud and white-collar crimes** that are beyond the scope of the **routine inspection and investigation** carried out by regulatory bodies.
- The SFIO has the power to **summon and examine witnesses**, demand the production of books, documents and records, and carry out searches and seizures.
- The SFIO also **collaborates with other regulatory agencies** and law enforcement bodies to investigate and prosecute cases of financial fraud.
- The SFIO plays an important role in maintaining the **integrity of the corporate sector** and protecting the interests of investors and stakeholders.

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