Caste Census

Context: The Indian government stated that only the central government has the authority to conduct a census, responding to the Supreme Court regarding Bihar's caste-based survey.

- On August 28, the Indian government replied to the Supreme Court's query about Bihar's caste-based survey.
- The Centre stated that only it has the legal right to conduct a census, citing the Census Act of 1948.
- The subject of census is covered in the Union List under Entry 69 in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution
- The Centre reiterated its commitment to uplifting marginalized communities as per the Constitution and laws.

Caste Census

- Caste census involves systematically recording India's population categorized by caste.
- The last caste census was conducted in 1931, halted in 1941 by the British due to financial reasons.
- Data on Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) has been published separately since 1951, excluding other castes.
- The Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) was conducted in 2016 but wasn't publicly disclosed.
- SECC 2016 was managed by the Ministry of Rural Development in rural regions and the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation in urban areas.

Difference between SECC and Caste Census

Aspect	Socio-Economic Census (SECC)	Caste Census
Conducted Focus	Across all households	Specific community
Purpose	Identify state support	Portrait of caste population
Data Confidentiality	Not confidential	Confidential
Data Availiablity	Available on the website	Not available publicly
Last Conducted	Conducted regularly since 1931	Conducted regularly since 1931

Addis Ababa Declaration

Context: 54 nations signed the Addis Ababa Declaration, recognizing the environmental challenges of land degradation, desertification, and drought.

- African environment ministers have agreed to establish national and regional strategies to minimize environmental impacts during the extraction and processing of critical mineral resources.
- The continent is grappling with challenges as countries, particularly China, seek Africa's mineral resources.
- The Addis Ababa declaration, made on August 18, 2023, highlighted pressing environmental issues such as land degradation, desertification, and drought.
- The declaration emerged from the 19th African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) 2023, held from August 14 to 18 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- The conference's theme was "Seizing Opportunities and Enhancing Collaboration to Address Environmental Challenges in Africa."
- United Nations Environment Programme reported productive dialogues and discussions during AMCEN 2023 focused on devising joint strategies to confront challenges and capitalize on emerging prospects.

Goals and Objectives

- **Environmental Challenges**: Urgent action on climate change, plastics pollution, marine protection, biodiversity conservation, and natural capital.
- **Global Goals**: Mitigate climate change, protect ecosystems, and promote sustainable development.
- **Biodiversity Framework**: Implement Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework through updated national strategies and targets.
- **Biodiversity Finance**: Close $700 billion annual biodiversity finance gap, increase international flows.
- **Development Aid**: Increase international financial flows to developing countries to $20 billion/year by 2025, aiming for $100 billion/year globally.
- **Africa Blue Economy**: Prioritize African Union's Africa Blue Economy Strategy.
- **Africa UN Forum**: Launched Africa UN Science-Policy-Business Forum on August 17, 2023.
- **Africa's Priority**: Focus on inclusive sustainable economic transformation while addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.
- **Discussed Topics**: Engaging African nations at UN Environment Assembly, addressing plastic pollution, combating desertification.
- **COP28 Priorities**: COP28 President-Designate emphasizes adaptation financing and energy transition, particularly in Africa.

X-Ray Imaging and Spectroscopy Mission

Context: Japan cancels launch of X-ray telescope and moon lander due to unspecified reasons.

- **Mission Overview:**
  - XRISM is a collaborative mission involving JAXA, NASA, ESA, and Canadian Space Agency.
  - Its goal is to observe X-rays from deep space and precisely identify their wavelengths.

- **Observation Technique:**
  - The mission employs advanced spectroscopy to measure brightness changes of celestial objects across different wavelengths.
  - Detects X-rays with energy levels from 400 to 12,000 electron volts.
  - Provides insights into hot cosmic regions, large structures, and objects with strong gravity.
- **Instruments:**
  - **Resolve:**
    - Collects spectroscopic data with higher resolution than Earth-orbiting X-ray observatories.
    - Requires cooling just above absolute zero to detect minute temperature changes upon X-ray impact.
  - **Xtend:**
    - Simultaneously captures cosmic images at a resolution akin to X-ray vision.
    - Works alongside Resolve, offering broader views of the same X-ray sources.
- **Functionality:**
  - Resolve zooms in to analyze specific details of celestial objects.
  - Xtend zooms out to provide complementary views of X-ray sources across a larger area.

SLIM

- Japan's upcoming lunar mission, SLIM, is significant as it will be the country's first mission to the lunar surface.
- A key focus of SLIM is to demonstrate highly precise and accurate lunar landing techniques.
- During its descent, the lander will utilize facial recognition technology to identify lunar craters and will determine its position using data from the SELENE (Kaguya) lunar orbiter mission.
- The mission aims for a soft landing with an unprecedented accuracy range of 100 meters (330 feet).
- In comparison, Apollo 11's lunar module had a much larger landing ellipse of 20 km (12 mi) wide in downrange and 5 km (3.1 mi) wide in cross range.
- Success in this endeavor is anticipated to elevate the overall quality of space exploration, according to Yoshifumi Inatani from JAXA Institute of Space and Astronautical Science.
- SLIM is slated for launch alongside the X-Ray Imaging and Spectroscopy Mission (XRISM) space telescope, with its landing site near the SHIOLI crater at coordinates 13.3°S, 25.2°E.

New Delhi- Athens Bilateral Relationship

Context: During Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Greece visit, the countries upgraded their relationship to a "strategic partnership," emphasizing political, defense, and security cooperation.

- It's been 40 years since an Indian Prime Minister visited Greece.
- Greece awarded Modi the Grand Cross of the Order of Honour, its second-highest civilian honour, a first for a foreign head of government.
- Both nations target doubling bilateral trade by 2030.
- Priority on quickly finalizing the Mobility and Migration Partnership Agreement (MMPA) to ease skilled migration between them.
- Shared commitment to a free and rule-based Indo-Pacific and Mediterranean region for global peace, stability, and security.

Various aspects of Relations

- **Ancient Interactions:**
  - Interaction initiated by Alexander's 4th-century BCE campaign.
  - Diplomatic, trade, and cultural ties mentioned in Ashoka's edicts.
  - Cultural exchange during Indo-Greek era under rulers like Demetrius I and Menander I.
- **Political Relations:**
  - Diplomatic relations established in 1950.
  - High-level visits and cooperation between leaders.
  - Support for India's inclusion in groups like NSG.
- **Commercial Relations:**
  - Bilateral trade valued at 1.32 billion euros.
  - Main exports include cotton, scrap, and marble.
  - Indian participation in Thessaloniki International Fair.
  - India-Greece Framework Agreement on International Solar Alliance.
- **Defence:**
  - Bilateral cooperation and MoU on defense.
  - Joint military exercises.
- **Geostrategic Significance:**
  - Greece's potential as India's gateway to Europe.
  - India's relations with Greece causing concern in Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Pakistan.
  - Counterbalancing China's influence in the Mediterranean region.

- **Geopolitical Significance:**
  - Greece's support on issues like Kashmir and terrorism.
  - Shared stance on initiatives such as UN reforms and the Cyprus issue.
  - Consideration of Greece's NATO membership and Armenia's alignment with Russia.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

National War Memorial in NCERT

NCERT Class VII curriculum now includes a chapter titled "National War Memorial - A Homage to our Brave Soldiers." Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Education jointly initiated this inclusion.

Objective:
- Instill patriotism, duty, courage and sacrifice values in school children.
- Encourage youth participation in nation building.

Aim: Aims to cultivate respect for soldiers' sacrifices.

Chapter Content:
- Explores National War Memorial's history, significance and concept.
- Highlights post-Independence sacrifices of Armed Forces.
- Creative depiction of gratitude exchange between friends for soldier sacrifices.

Onam

Onam is Kerala's annual harvest festival, celebrated with cultural fervor.

Cultural Significance:
- Also known as Thiru-Onam or Thiruvonam.
- Celebrated with grandeur by the Malayali community in Kerala.

Duration: Celebrated over a period of ten days, typically falling in the Malayalam month of Chingam (August-September).

Rituals and Traditions:
- Rituals like Atham, Chithira, Chodi, Vishakam, Anizham, Thriketta, Moolam, Pooradam, Uthradom and Thiruvonam hold cultural importance.
- Customs like nakkodi (giving new clothes) and Vallamkali (boat race) are observed.Occasion: Hindu harvest festival celebrated mainly in the state of Kerala, India.

Vallam Kali (Boat Races):
- Colorful boat races held on rivers, especially the backwaters of Kerala.
- The Nehru Trophy Boat Race is a popular event in Alappuzha.

Peregrine Falcon

Identification: Known for speed and hunting skills, Peregrine Falcon is a bird of prey with slate-blue upperparts and barred underparts.
Scientific name: Falco peregrinus
Habitat: Found globally except Antarctica, in cliffs, coasts and urban areas.
Speed: Fastest bird, reaches 240 mph in hunting stoop (dive).
Diet: Carnivorous, preys on birds, hunts by diving from heights.
Breeding: Nests on cliffs, both parents incubate eggs, chicks fledge in 6 weeks.
Conservation: Declined due to pesticides, recovery efforts helped, still concern in some areas.
Role: Top predator, controls prey, indicates habitat health.
Cultural: Used in falconry, culturally significant.
Protection: Legally protected globally.
IUCN Red List status: Least Concern

PLI-Auto Scheme

What is PLI-Auto Scheme?
PLI-Auto Scheme stands for Production Linked Incentive Scheme for the Automobile & Auto Components Industry.

Objective:
- To boost manufacturing and exports in the Indian automotive sector.
- Encourage local production of advanced automotive t echnology products.

Aims:
- Aligns with the government's "Make in India" and "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" initiatives.
- Aims to establish India as a global manufacturing hub for automobiles and auto components.

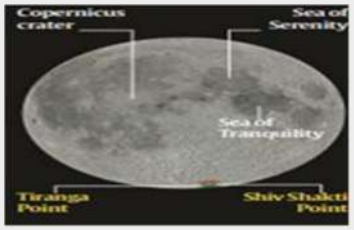
Implemented By: Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI)

Financial Outlay:
The scheme has a budget of ₹25,938 crore dedicated to promoting the automotive industry.

Focus Areas:
- Encourages the development of Advanced Automotive Technology (AAT) products within India.
- Promotes localization to reduce dependency on imports.

Impact:
- Expected to drive higher production, employment and exports in the automotive sector.
- Enhance competitiveness of the Indian automotive industry on a global scale.

Naming of Lunar Points



Recently the Prime Minister of India (Narendra Modi) announced names for lunar points.

Shiv Shakti and Tiranga on Moon:

- Chandrayaan-3 lander's touch down point to be named Shiv Shakti.
- Chandrayaan-2 lander's "footprints" point to be named Tiranga.

Historical Moon Maps:

- Early Moon maps from 17th century laid foundation for naming reference.
- Italian astronomers Grimaldi and Riccioli's Mare Tranquillitatis marked first manned mission landing site.

Outer Space Governance:

- Exploration regulated by the Treaty on Principles Governing Activities in Outer Space (1967).
- International Astronomical Union (IAU) responsible for planetary and satellite nomenclature since 1919.

China's Example: China's Chang'e 5 mission's landing site named Statio Tianchuan by IAU in May 2021.

Indian Names on Moon:

- Chandrayaan-1's Moon Impact Probe crash site named Jawahar Sthal after India's first PM.
- Crater named after ISRO's first chairman Vikram Sarabhai.
- Astronaut Kalpana Chawla honored with Chawla crater.

Dewatering Vehicles

Dewatering Vehicles:

Dewatering vehicles are specialized vehicles used to remove accumulated water from roads, underpasses and other areas prone to waterlogging and flooding.

Functionality:

- High-capacity vehicles equipped with pumps and suction systems to rapidly clear out large volumes of water.
- Designed to address major waterlogging incidents, not minor cases.

Significance:

- Essential during heavy downpours and flooding to prevent disruptions, traffic congestion and potential damage.

Collaboration and Use:

- Delhi Fire Services sought assistance from Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation for dewatering vehicles.
- Vehicles will be positioned strategically in waterlogged hotspots, such as underpasses and critical roads.

Key Features:

- High-capacity pumps with strong suction capabilities.
- Quick response time to mitigate flooding impacts.

Importance in Urban Areas:

- Vital in cities to minimize water-related disruptions, protecting infrastructure and public safety.

K9 Squad

What is K9 Squad?

K9 Squad refers to a specialized unit within the police that employs trained dogs (canines) for various tasks, including detection, tracking and security.

Composition:

- Consists of trained dogs of various breeds, each with specific skills.
- Handlers accompany the dogs and are skilled in interpreting their behavior.

Functions:

- Mainly used for tasks such as explosive detection, narcotics detection, tracking suspects and search operations.

Training:

- Canines undergo intensive training in specific areas like explosive or narcotics detection.
- Training enhances their ability to recognize scents, behaviors and cues.

Explosive Detection Dogs:

- Trained to detect explosives and suspicious objects.
- Essential for enhancing security in crowded places, events, and critical locations.

Narcotics Detection Dogs:

- Specialized in identifying narcotics and illegal drugs.
- Crucial for law enforcement in detecting drug-related activities.

Security Applications: Deployed for VIP security, important events, airports and critical infrastructure protection.

Place in News **Zimbabwe**	Recently, Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa was reelected to a second term, securing 52.6% of the vote according to the electoral commission. **Geographical Location:** ○ Landlocked country in south-central Africa. ○ Bordered by Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique, and South Africa. **Capital:** Harare **Political Scenario:** Recently concluded election with the current President's re-election. **Geographical Features:** **Highest Point:** Mt. Nyangani **Lake Kariba:** World's largest man-made lake by volume, located on the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. **Major Rivers:** Zambezi, Pungwe, Buzi, Save, Limpopo, etc.

POINTS TO PONDER

- **The concept of which monument is to be discussed in the newly added chapter to NCERT named "A Homage to out Brave Soldiers"** – National War Memorial
- **Which city has built India's first Solar roof cycling track?** – Hyderabad
- **Which Lagrange points are closest and the farthest to Sun?** – L1 an L2 respectively
- **Where is the 5th Edition of AUSINDEX being held?** – Sydeny
- **In which state is the Kumbhalgarh WLS situated?** – Rajasthan