

PERFECT

Complete Fortnightly for **UPSC** and **PCS** Exam



dhyeyaias.com

Year : 5

No. : 15

Aug 2023 / Issue 01

Price : ₹ 55



Inauguration & Need of the Differential Global Navigation Satellite System



Need to Make Natural Disaster
Management Strategy More
Effective In India

Effectiveness of the New Tele-Law
Program in the Direction of Legal
Literacy & Justice in India

Efforts to Strengthen Corporate
Governance Through Ease Of Doing
Business & Companies Act 2013

Impact of India-France And
India-UAE Partnership on the
Politics of Eurasia

Highlights of the Export
Preparedness Index Report,
2022 & Its Need

Need for Digital Regulation
Against Increasing Crime on
Social Media in India

Mains Special: Important Questions based on Economy & Agriculture

Why Perfect-7 Current Affairs Magazine?

1. First of all, Perfect-7 Current Affairs Magazine is published **every 15 days** to keep students up-to-date with current affairs, while other coaching institutes have monthly magazines which aggregate the current affairs of the month. Due to large number of current affairs, students are often unable to read all the articles. Eventually they become dependent on annual and half yearly magazines.
2. Perfect-7 magazine has been created keeping in mind the **UPSC and State PCS centric exams**, whereas the magazines of other coaching institutes include unnecessary and extra material in the name of UPSC and State PCS exams, causing confusion among the students.
3. **Perfect-7 magazine has 7 editorial articles by subject experts on important events during 15 days, 42 articles on important events, 7 brain-boosters in creative style, current affairs, one liner, preliminary and mains exam related questions etc.** are given. Along with this there is also a section on eminent personality which shows the contribution of the historical personality towards the country and society. In this way, no important information and news is missed in the period of 15 days for UPSC and State PCS exams.
4. Along with this, through the **case study section**, students learn about the situations, an officer has to face during his tenure and what could be the possible solution.
5. Perfect-7 Current Affairs Magazine, helps students to prepare well for DhyeyaIAS's most important exam program **PMI (Pre + Mains + Interview)**.
6. In current affairs based classes, preparation is done through Perfect-7 Magazine, which enables quality preparation of the students.
7. Perfect-7 magazine becomes available to students on **10th and 25th of every month**, whereas current affairs magazine provided by other institutes are of the previous month and they create confusion in the minds of students by mentioning the current month of publication.
8. Perfect-7 Magazine contains prelims and mains exam focused mock questions through which students can make their preparation more precise.

-: For any feedback Contact us :-

+91 6393005298
perfect7magazine@gmail.com

OUR OTHER INITIATIVES





Message



Vinay Kumar Singh
Founder
Dhyeya IAS

Current Affairs has an important role in the examinations conducted by Union Public Service Commission and State Public Service Commissions. It is necessary for the candidate to have knowledge of relevant information on issues of national and international importance. Perfect 7 Magazine is being presented fortnightly to the students to fulfill this requirement. Preparation of civil services exam is only completed when candidates have holistic knowledge and analysis of the dynamic nature of the current affairs. 'Perfect7' keeps this vision and approach and understands the multidimensional need of students at the content level, so this magazine has presented the current affairs with relevant issues of general studies. Keeping in mind the needs of mains exam, current articles on 7 burning issues, Ethics Case Studies, Biographies of important personalities, coverage of most useful topics of various sections of General Studies and the most important current affairs issues are being covered for Preliminary Examination in which emphasis is being given on national, international, environment, ecology, art and culture, science and technology, economic issues.

Brain boosters with 7 themes based graphics are being presented in a concise form to enhance the conceptual understanding of the students. Apart from this, updated information on Global Initiatives, Global Institutions, Structure of Organizations, Functioning, Important Reports, and Indices will be included in this magazine, which is asked prominently in the Civil Services Examination. To give emphasis on facts and analysis, keeping in view the trends of new nature of questions in Preliminary and Main Examination of Civil Services, an inclusive magazine is being provided to the students so that they can give the right direction to their preparation by understanding the new requirements of Civil Services Examination. Columns have been included in the format of the magazine keeping in mind the factual needs of the candidates, mental development, developing writing technique etc. Along with this, we have been introducing new segments according to the changing needs of the candidates and these initiatives will continue in future also. Hope this issue will prove useful for all of you. Your suggestions are always welcome.

Best wishes.

PERFECT

Complete Fortnightly for UPSC and PCS Exam



In This Issue

Managing Editor	: Vijay Singh
	: Baghendra Singh
Editor	: Vivek Ojha
Co-Editor	: Ashutosh Mishra
	: Saurabh Chakraborty
Sub-Editor	: Hari Om Pandey
	: Bhanu Pratap
Content Support	: Deepak Tripathi
	: Soltanat Parveen
	: Rishika Tiwari
	: Nitin, Arshdeep
	: Ritu, Pratyusha
	: Tapsya, Lokesh
Chief Reviewer	: A. K. Srivastava
Research & Reviewer	: Shashank Tripathi
Design and	: Arun Mishra
Development	: Punish Jain
Social Media	: Keshari Pandey
Support	: Jeevan Jyoti
Marketing Support	: Ravish, Priyank
Typist	: Sachin
	: Tarun
Technical Support	: Waseef Khan
Office Attendent	: Raju, Chandan, Guddu
	: Arun, Rahul
.....	

Important Issues

5-18

1. Inauguration & Need of the Differential Global Navigation Satellite System
2. Need to Make Natural Disaster Management Strategy More Effective In India
3. Effectiveness of the New Tele-Law Program in the Direction of Legal Literacy & Justice in India
4. Highlights of the Export Preparedness Index Report, 2022 & Its Need
5. Impact of India-France And India-UAE Partnership on the Politics of Eurasia
6. Efforts to Strengthen Corporate Governance Through Ease Of Doing Business & Companies Act 2013
7. Need for Digital Regulation Against Increasing Crime on Social Media in India

National	19-22
International	23-27
Environmental	28-32
Science and Tech	33-37
Economy	38-41
Miscellaneous	42-46
Practice Questions for Mains Exam	47
News of National and	

International Importance ..	48-51
Current Affairs at a Glance	52
Brain Boosters	53-59
Mains Special: Important Questions based on Economy & Agriculture ...	
.....	60-66
MCQ Based on Current Affairs	
.....	67-70

Credits: PIB, PRS, AIR, ORF, Prasar Bharati, Yojana, kurukshetra, The Hindu, Down to Earth, The Indian Express, India Today, WION, Deccan Herald, HT, ET, ToI, Dainik Jagran and Others

For Next Issue

- Evaluation of the role of BRICS in the Asian political and economic system
- Increasing espionage and infiltration activities on the border and India's current preparations for international border management
- New Challenges before India and the Global Health System and Evaluation of India's Health Management
- Current status of crimes against women in India and need for effective penal legislation
- To what extent deep sea mining is justified: India's strategy and action
- Evaluation of India's strategy, challenges & potential to become the world's third largest economy
- Recommendation of the Supreme Court Standing Committee to improve wages and budget of MGNREGA is essential for India's rural development.

Inauguration of Differential Global navigation Satellite System and its Rationale

Today, the Indian Ocean carries half of world's container shipments, one-third of the bulk cargo traffic and two-thirds of the oil shipments. 90% of our trade by volume and 90 % of our oil imports take place through sea. We have 12 major ports with a long coastline of 7500 km, 1200 islands and a 2.4 million square kilometres of Exclusive Economic Zone. The Indian Ocean has acquired new salience with the shift of the global economic engines to Asia. At the same time the region is witnessing non-traditional threats such as natural disasters, piracy, terrorism, illegal fishing, oil spills and effects of climate change. Maritime Security is an important dimension of India's bilateral relations with all Indian Ocean Littoral states and through various formal and informal structures currently in place. In view of this, there is now rapidly growing interest in the huge potential of Global Navigation for Satellite System for coastal navigation, search and rescue operations and navigation on inland waterways.

Keeping in mind the strategic importance of Indian ocean for India and Maritime security, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal has recently inaugurated the indigenous Differential Global Navigation Satellite System (DGNSS) 'SAGAR SAMPARK' to strengthen the Maritime sector.

Differential Global Navigation Satellite System:

Differential Global Navigation Satellite System is a terrestrial based enhancement system which corrects the errors and inaccuracies in the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) allowing for more accurate positioning information. This 'Made in India' system will provide more accurate information to the ships for safe navigation.

Global Navigation Satellite System:

- Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) include constellations of Earth-orbiting satellites that broadcast their locations in space and time. GNSS are used in all forms of transportation: space stations, aviation, maritime, rail, road and mass transit. Positioning, navigation and timing (PNT) play a critical role in telecommunications, land surveying, law enforcement, emergency response, precision agriculture, mining, finance, scientific research and so on. They are used to control computer networks, air traffic, power grids and more.
- At present GNSS include two fully operational global systems, the United States' Global Positioning System (GPS) and the Russian Federation's GLObal Navigation Satellite System (GLONASS), as well as the developing global and regional systems, namely Europe's European Satellite Navigation System (GALILEO) and China's COMPASS/Bei-Dou, India's Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) and Japan's Quasi-Zenith Satellite System (QZSS).

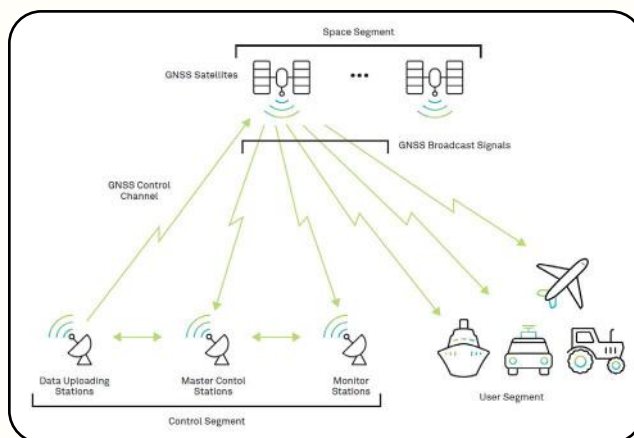
NavIC/IRNSS:

- NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation) is the name of the independent stand-alone navigation satellite system of India. This system was earlier known as IRNSS (Indian Regional

Navigation Satellite System). The name NavIC was coined by the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi on the occasion of completion of the constellation in April 2016.

GAGAN:

- GAGAN stands for GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation. It is a satellite based augmentation system developed primarily for safety-of-life civil aviation applications catering to the Indian airspace. It provides correction and integrity messages for GPS.
- GAGAN has been established jointly by ISRO and Airports Authority of India. It is being operated and maintained by AAI.



Significance for India:

- India has 12 major and 200 non-major/intermediate ports (under state government administration). Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust is the largest major port in India, while Mundra is the largest private port. Jawaharlal Nehru Port becomes first 100% Landlord Major Port. Moreover, India is one of the world's top 5 ship recycling countries and holds 30% share in the global ship recycling market. Approximately 95% of the country's trade by volume and 68% by value is moved through Maritime Transport.
- The recently released World Bank's Logistic Performance Index (LPI) Report 2023 has

brought some encouraging news for the Indian Ports and logistics sector. India has moved up to 22nd Rank in the global rankings in International Shipments Category from the 44th position in 2018. Moreover, the country has earned 38th rank in the overall LPI score, an improvement from the earlier 44th position.

- There is a need for high priority to the safety of navigation, especially due to the considerable increase in shipping volume in the recent past. Launch of 'Sagar Sampark - Differential Global Navigation Satellite System (DGNSS)' at 06 locations under Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGLL), will definitely enhance the capability in the field of the Radio Aids to Marine Navigation.
- The DGNSS service will help mariners in safe navigation and will reduce the risk of collisions, groundings, and accidents in the port and harbour areas. This will lead to safe & efficient movement of vessels.
- DGNSS is an important Radio Aid to Navigation towards fulfillment of international obligations of International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA).
- After recapitalization with multiple satellite constellations like GPS and Global Navigation Satellite System (GLONASS), DGNSS further increases the accuracy and helps the mariners to improve their positioning within 5 meters.
- The DGNSS significantly improves the accuracy of GPS positioning, reducing errors caused by the atmospheric inferences, satellite clock drift and other factors. This is achieved with the help of modern state of art technology receivers and latest software. The error correction accuracy has been improved from 5 to 10 meters to less than 5 meters for 100 Nautical Miles from Indian coastlines.

Initiatives by Government of India for Maritime Sector:

- **SAGARMALA PROJECT-** Sagarmala program was launched in March 2015 with the objective to achieve port modernization & new port development, port connectivity enhancement, port-led industrialization and coastal community development. The Sagarmala programme is the flagship programme of the Ministry of Shipping to promote port-led development in the country through harnessing India's 7,500 km long coastline, 14,500 km of potentially navigable waterways and strategic location on key international maritime trade routes. The main

vision of the Sagarmala Programme is to reduce logistics cost for EXIM and domestic trade with minimal infrastructure investment.

- **SAGAR SETU-** National Logistic Portal- Marine' is a Single Window Digital Platform for all stakeholders including Cargo Services, Carrier Services, Banking and Financial Services and those related to regulatory and participating Government Agencies. This along with the 'Sagar Setu' App facilitates seamless movement of goods and services in the Ports while substantially enhancing the 'Ease of Doing Business' parameters.
- **Maritime India Vision 2030-** It was formulated by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways with the objective of propelling India to the forefront of the Global Maritime Sector in the next decade.
- MIV 2030 envisions an overall investment of Rs. 3 Lakh Cr across ports, shipping, and inland waterways categories. This vision roadmap is estimated to help unlock INR 20,000 Cr worth of potential annual revenue for Indian Ports. Further, it is expected to create an additional 20 lakhs jobs (direct and non-direct) in the Indian maritime sector.
- India aims at becoming 'Global Hub for Green Ship building' by 2030 with launch of Green Tug Transition Programme (GTTP). India's first National Centre of Excellence in Green Port & Shipping (NCoEGPS) was set up in Gurugram, Haryana. 'Green Hybrid Tugs', will be powered by Green Hybrid Propulsion systems, and subsequently adopting non-fossil fuel solutions like (Methanol, Ammonia, Hydrogen). Target has been set for the initial Green Tugs to start working in all major ports by 2025. At least, 50% of all the Tugs are likely to be converted into Green Tugs by 2030, which will considerably reduce emission as the country move towards achieving sustainable development.

Way Forward:

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways is committed towards innovation, building best infrastructure, and strengthening the Indian Maritime sector. Over the past few years, the government has constantly endeavoured to develop the ports as hubs of economic activity due to a series of initiatives and policy reforms led by the Prime Minister. Global recognition for the operational efficiencies of the Indian Ports and the Indian Maritime Sector, as mentioned in the World Bank LPI Report 2023, encourages the country's march towards becoming a global maritime power as envisaged in the Maritime India Vision, 2030.

Need to Make Natural Disaster Management Strategy More Effective In India

The monsoon season in India has been exceptionally harsh this year, with extreme weather events causing widespread devastation. Flash floods and landslides in Himachal Pradesh, Delhi's heaviest rains in 40 years and record-breaking temperatures in February indicate the effects of climate change. In April and June, the East and Central regions of India experienced a humid heatwave that was 30 times more likely due to climate change. Furthermore, Cyclone Biparjoy formed in the Arabian Sea, lasting for 13 days and becoming the longest-lasting cyclone since 1977. Meteorologists and climate scientists link these events to escalating global warming levels, highlighting the urgency of climate action.

Reasons for the Heavy Rains:

- India's current spell of heavy rains results from the convergence of three weather systems:
 - » Western Disturbance in the Western Himalayas
 - » cyclonic circulation in the northwestern plains
 - » Monsoon trough across the Indo-Gangetic Plains.
- Though usual during the Monsoon, climate change has modified this scenario. Escalating land and sea temperatures enhance air moisture capacity, intensifying climate change's impact on extreme weather events in India.
- Climate change also disrupts atmospheric and oceanic phenomena, magnifying global warming's impact. El Nino, larger wildfires releasing more carbon, warmer North Atlantic Ocean, exceptional Arabian Sea warming, and unusual upper-level circulation patterns contribute to 2023's unique weather events. The interaction between these systems, influenced by global warming, contributes to the ongoing heavy rainfall, floods, and landslides emphasizing the need for climate action and adaptation measures.

Monsoon Fury in Himachal Pradesh:

- More than 120 people have so far died in Himachal Pradesh since the onset of the monsoon on June 24. Due to flash floods, landslides and cloudbursts, the state has suffered losses totalling around Rs 4,636 crore. Unplanned urban expansion and infrastructure development have increased the vulnerability of hilly terrains to extreme events. To address these vulnerabilities, it is essential to implement sustainable and well-planned development practices in hilly regions. Environmental and land use planning, incorporating climate-resilient designs, and protecting ecologically sensitive areas are crucial steps in reducing the vulnerability to extreme weather events in hilly areas of India.

Importance of Environmental Planning in Hilly Regions:

- **Mitigating Disaster Risks:** Hilly regions are prone to natural disasters like landslides and floods. Environmental planning helps identify high-risk

areas and prevents development in vulnerable zones, reducing the impact of disasters on human settlements.

- **Preserving Ecological Balance:** Hilly regions often host unique and fragile ecosystems. Environmental planning ensures sustainable development that protects forests, rivers, and ecologically sensitive areas, maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- **Managing Land Use:** Hilly terrain poses challenges for urban development. Planning helps determine suitable and non-suitable land parcels, guiding responsible land use to minimize environmental degradation.
- **Climate Change Adaptation:** With changing weather patterns, hilly regions are experiencing increased rainfall intensity. Environmental planning with hydrology models helps estimate potential flood areas, enabling climate-resilient development.
- **Balancing Economic Growth and Sustainability:** Environmental planning strikes a balance between economic development and environmental preservation. It helps avoid short-term gains that could lead to long-term economic losses from disasters and ecological damage.

Environmental Planning Strategies for Hilly Regions

- **Geographic Information System (GIS):** Utilize GIS and satellite imageries to analyse land use, soil, slope, hydrology, and hazard maps. Overlaying these layers with weightages allows for the identification of suitable development areas. Eg: Himachal Pradesh's guidelines limit development on slopes exceeding 45 degrees and prohibit construction in flood-prone areas near Highest Flood Level (HFL).
- **Hydrology Models and Climate Data:** Implement hydrology models and Intensity Duration Frequency curves to estimate surface runoff and river flows during extreme rainfall events. This aids in mapping potential flood zones.
- **Open-Source Technologies:** Leverage open-source tools like Google Earth Engine and Python to carry out large-scale environmental planning. These technologies enhance computational

efficiency and enable planning at state-level or larger scales.

- **Collaboration with Nodal Agencies:** Work with state-level nodal agencies, such as the State Disaster Management Agency, to map high-risk areas and disseminate the information to relevant stakeholders. Urban development agencies, district administrations, and town planning departments can then discourage development in vulnerable zones.
- **Strong Environmental Policies:** Support environmental and land use planning with robust policies. Regulations and guidelines should promote sustainable development practices, preserving the delicate balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability in hilly regions.

Urban Flooding:

- Urban flooding refers to the inundation of land and property in a densely populated city when rainfall exceeds the drainage capacity. Changing weather patterns lead to more intense rain in fewer days, making urban flooding increasingly common.

Issues related to Urban Stormwater Management:

- **Structural Deficiencies in Planning:** Cities lack consideration for stormwater management during planning while the development control regulations in master plans overlook run-off control measures.
- **Encroachment on Open Spaces and Water Bodies:** Open spaces and water bodies face planned encroachments for urban land uses.
- **Poor Condition of Stormwater Drains:** Stormwater drains in cities are in inadequate and ineffective conditions. Operation and maintenance of drains often neglected.
- **Choking of Drains with Solid Waste:** Stormwater drains frequently choked with municipal and demolition waste.
- **Lack of Non-Structural Policy Frameworks:** Absence of national/state-level policy frameworks and guidelines for urban stormwater management. Urban development missions like Smart Cities, Swachh Bharat, and Atal Mission fail to address urban flooding comprehensively.

Flood Mitigation: A Transdisciplinary Approach

NITI Ayog's Report on 'Urban Floods', highlights both structural and non-structural frameworks to manage urban floods such as: discouraging urban development in flood prone areas, implementing early warning systems, diverting excess runoff to natural depressions, and encouraging water-sensitive urban planning and designs. However, flood mitigation in India is complex and requires policymakers to evaluate the social, physical, and economic dynamics

of floods through transdisciplinary approaches such as:

- **Flood Management Programme:** Under the Flood Management Programme of the Ministry of Jal Shakti, state governments have built 37,073 km long embankments and improved drainage channels, protecting 20.54 Mha from potential flooding
- **Blue-Green Infrastructure:** It refers to a network that uses infrastructure, ecological restoration and urban design to connect people with nature to solve urban climate problems, where blue denotes tanks and water bodies, while green denotes parks, gardens and trees.
- **Flood Warning Systems and Rain Forecasts:** Mumbai's Integrated Flood Warning System (IFLOWS) identifies imminent floods due to high rainfall or cyclones. Chennai's Flood Warning System provides spatial flood warnings for the city. IMD's Mausam mobile app offers rain forecasts and warnings.
- **Water Sensitive Urban Design and Planning:** Preparing drainage master plans with short-, medium-, and long-term strategies along with urban watershed modelling to augment stormwater infrastructure.
- **Identifying vulnerable and high-risk areas:** A state-of-the-art Rain Atlas, providing spatial rainfall maps with 15-minute intervals, can assist in formulating effective monsoon action plans and flood-warning systems.
- **Nodal Authority for Urban Stormwater Management:** Establishing a nodal authority for urban stormwater management will coordinate local-level drainage masterplans and align strategies with city master plans. Modifications in design standards and project reports, along with high-impact pilot projects led by municipalities and development authorities, will showcase rainfall capture and flood-control measures.

Way Forward:

A proactive and holistic approach to environmental planning and disaster management will be instrumental in mitigating the impact of future extreme weather events and building a more sustainable and climate-resilient future. Nature Based Solutions (NBS) at the household level include rainwater harvesting, urban roof water retention tanks, and green corridors around residential buildings. Strengthening early warning systems and promoting multisectoral collaboration are vital for efficient response and preparedness. Embracing these strategies will pave the way towards a more resilient and sustainable future for India amid escalating climate challenges.

Effectiveness of the New Tele-Law Program in the Direction of Legal Literacy & Justice in India

The Preamble of the Constitution of India put forward the political, social and economic justice for its citizens. India is a socialist democratic country, so it was also necessary that the Constitution emphasizes building a just society. It was from here that issues like legal justice, legal services, and legal literacy emerged. The Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India and its Department of Justice are currently giving official information every month on how many people have been given free legal aid in the country so that people can decide whether to go ahead with litigation or not, what to do and what not to do for their legal rights.

- In July 2023, the country's Ministry of Law and Justice circulated an official notification stating that the Tele-law program of the Department of Justice in collaboration with Common Service Centers (CSCs) has revolutionized the provision of pre-litigation advice to people and has provided free legal advice to more than 46 lakh beneficiaries across the country.
- At the 18th All India Legal Services Meeting in Jaipur, Law Minister of India announced that from the year 2022, the tele-law service has been made free of cost for the citizens of the India. Tele-law has taken up the task of mainstreaming the underprivileged to provide legal aid through tele/video-conferencing infrastructure available in Common Service Centers (CSCs) in 1 lakh Gram Panchayats by linking them with panel lawyers. Tele-Law Mobile Application (both Android and iOS) was also launched in 2021 for easy and direct access and is currently available in 22 scheduled languages. Taking advantage of this digital revolution, Tele-Law has expanded the reach of legal services to more than 20 lakh beneficiaries in just five years.

About Tele Law Facilitation:

- Tele Law is an e-interface system to reach out to people who are deprived of the facility of legal aid and legal advice, at the pre-litigation stage, to seek legal advice and consultation. In a general sense, tele-law refers to the use of communication and information technology to deliver legal information and advice. This e-interaction between lawyers and the public will take place through the video-conferencing infrastructure available at the CSCs. It helps the needy and underprivileged community people to get legal aid from panel advocates through video conferencing/telephone facilities available at Common Service Centers (CSCs) located at Panchayat level. The Tele-Law service, launched in 2017, can now be directly accessed through the Tele-Law mobile app.
- Tele-Law of the Department of Justice aims to improve the lives of citizens through free pre-litigation advice, by reaching out to the remotest corners of the country to bridge the digital

divide and make justice delivery accessible and efficient to all. The Department of Justice has partnered with NALSA and CSC e-Governance Service India Limited to provide legal aid to underprivileged communities through Common Service Centers (CSCs).



Constitutional Basis of Tele Law:

- Article 39A of the Constitution of India provides free legal aid to the poor and weaker sections of the society and ensures justice to all. Articles 14 and 22(1) of the Constitution also make it mandatory for the State to ensure equality before law and a legal system promoting justice on the basis of equal opportunity for all. In the year 1987, the Legal Services Authorities Act was enacted by the Parliament which came into force on 9th November 1995 to provide free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society based on equal opportunity. The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has been constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 to monitor and evaluate the implementation of legal aid programs and to lay down policies and principles for providing legal services under the Act.
- A State Legal Services Authority has been constituted in each State and a High Court Legal Services Committee in each High Court. To give effect to the policies and directions of NALSA and to provide free legal services to the people and to conduct Lok Adalats in the State, District Legal Services Authorities and Taluk Legal Services Committees have been constituted in most of

the districts and talukas. The Supreme Court Legal Services Committee has been constituted to administer and implement the Legal Services Program as it pertains to the Supreme Court of India.

Free Legal Services in India:

Keeping in view the need for providing free legal services, legal clinics etc. in India.

Free legal services are as following:

- Payment of court fees, process fees and all other charges payable or incurred in connection with any legal proceedings;
- Providing services of lawyers in legal proceedings and obtaining and supplying certified copies of orders and other documents in legal proceedings.
- Printing and preparation of appeals, paper books including translation of documents in legal proceedings

Persons eligible to receive free legal services include:

- Women and Children, SC/Scheduled tribe members
- Industrial workers, victims of natural disaster, violence, flood, drought, earthquake, industrial disaster.
- Persons with disabilities, persons in custody, victims of human trafficking or beggars
- Individuals whose annual income does not exceed Rs.1 lakh. (The limit in Supreme Court Legal Services Committee is Rs.5,00,000/-).
- Legal Aid Clinics and Legal Services Authorities provide help for bail in the case of long term prisoners in minor offences. Providing free advocates to the prisoners through legal aid clinics has also started. This will help in the work of the judiciary in the country and the burden of cases in the courts will not increase.

Obstacles Affecting Legal Literacy:

- Citizens are not aware of the penal statutes

and legal procedures like IPC and CrPC in the country

- Non-discharge of duty responsibly by advocates on several occasions and non-cooperation with weaker sections of the society for pecuniary gain.
- Less number of law colleges, schools, institutions in the country and non-strengthening of legal literacy infrastructure at the village level.
- Lack of information about social economic welfare schemes implemented in public interest.
- Lack of knowledge of laws made in the interest of general public like Right to Information Act, 2005, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizen Act, 2007, Consumer Protection Act, 1986, Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities and Untouchability) Act, 1989
- Contacting and relying on middlemen in the absence of knowledge of laws and their sections, provisions.

Conclusion:

It can be said that in a country like India where there is Rule of Law, provision has been made for Equality before Law and Equal Protection of Laws, where the Supreme Court says that Justice Delayed means Justice Denied, to provide justice to 1 billion 40 crore people in such a country, the need to strengthen provisions like tele law is self-evident. To increase legal service, and legal literacy, the role of Lok Adalats needs to be made more effective in the country. Today, it is required that Lok Adalats are organized at the national level, state and district levels so that many dispute cases are settled based on reconciliation and there is no need for trial.

**SUBSCRIBE TO OUR
YOUTUBE CHANNEL**



DHYEYA TV QR



BATEN UP KI QR



Highlights of the Export Preparedness Index Report, 2022 & Its Need

“Exports promote growth in a country by expanding markets, generating revenue, driving productivity improvements, and facilitating specialization, making them integral to a nation’s economic development. To leverage exports as drivers of growth, continuous and comprehensive evaluation of a nation’s preparedness is important.” India is one of the world’s fastest-growing economies, with exports playing a vital part in its economic growth. With the advent of globalization in the early 1990s, India’s participation in global trade has increased significantly. In 2022, exports of goods and services accounted for nearly 22.74% of India’s GDP, a near threefold increase from their 7.05% share in 1990. While every country has its own circumstances, India stands out given its sheer size, complexity, and internal heterogeneity. Therefore, continuous evaluation of exports at the sub-national level with significant differences at the state and district levels is required to address the challenges India’s exports face.

Why in News:

Recently, NITI Aayog released the third edition of the report titled ‘Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2022’ for States/UTs of India. The report was released by Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, Shri Suman Bery.

Export Performance Index, 2022:

- The EPI 2022 Report observed that most ‘Coastal States’ have performed well, with the states of TamilNadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat being the top-performers in the Export Preparedness Index across the country, in all categories of states.
- Tamil Nadu with an overall score of 80.89 topped the states, while Maharashtra with a score of 78.20 was second and Karnataka (76.36) was third.
- Among hilly states, Uttarakhand (59.13) has ranked at the top position. It is followed by Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, Sikkim.
- Haryana (63.65) topped the chart among the landlocked regions. It was followed by Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.
- In the category of union territories/small states, Goa (51.58) was ranked first. Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar and Ladakh were ranked second, third, fourth and fifth, respectively.

Features:

- The report presents a comprehensive analysis of India’s export performance in FY22, along with its sector-specific and district-level merchandise export trends.
- The EPI 2022 Report evaluates the performance of the states across four pillars – Policy, Business Ecosystem, Export Ecosystem, and Export Performance. The index uses 56 indicators which holistically capture the export preparedness of States and UTs in terms of exports at both the state and district-level.
 - » **Policy-** It evaluates states and UTs’ performance based on its adoption of export-related policy ecosystem at a state

and district level as well as the institutional framework surrounding the ecosystem.

- » **Business Environment-** It assesses the prevailing business environment in a state/UT, along with the extent of business-supportive infrastructure, and a state/UTs’ transport connectivity.
- » **Export Ecosystem-** It focuses on the export-related infrastructure in a state along with the trade support provided to the exporters, and the prevalence of Research and Development in the state to foster innovation.
- » **Export Performance-** It is an output-based indicator which gauges the growth of a state’s export over the previous year and analyses its export concentration and footprint on the global markets.
- These pillars are further based on ten sub-pillars – Export Promotion Policy; Institutional Framework; Business Environment; Infrastructure; Transport Connectivity; Export Infrastructure; Trade Support; R&D Infrastructure; Export Diversification; and Growth Orientation.

Objective:

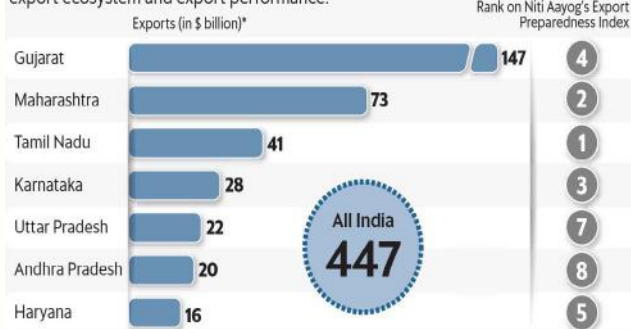
- Throughout the post-pandemic era, Indian exports have proven their resilience by successfully navigating the challenges thrown up by the post pandemic supply-chain issues and geopolitical factors. To maintain this momentum, India aims to become a global export player by promoting States and further districts as export hubs.
- The main objective of the report is to assist the states in improving the export preparedness which can lead to an increase in India’s export performance. The report encourages state governments to create solutions to their context-specific challenges to exports. The states can also exploit their innate diversity by promoting products unique to them and helping them reach the global market.

- The report aims to facilitate competitive federalism in the country which creates a spirit of healthy competition among the states and encourage peer-learning among the states. It further acknowledges that for a comprehensive evaluation of the export preparedness of states important indicators, such as source of origin of export data, and service exports need to be assessed as they are currently not being captured at the sub-national level. Using this index, states can improve on their weak areas and positively impact their export performance.
- The report empowers the state governments with region-specific insights to aid decision making, identify strengths, address weaknesses and foster comprehensive growth.
- Exports are the driving engines of economic growth, although many states do not realize its importance. With its pillars, sub-pillars, and indicators, this report enables the states to learn how they can improve exports and fills the knowledge gap that exists in terms of awareness about developing export strategies.
- This index empowers stakeholders to identify strategies and improve parameters that impact a state's exports, thereby enhancing its export competitiveness.

Export Preparedness Index

Successful states

Export preparedness evaluated across four pillars — policy, business environment, export ecosystem and export performance.



- It provides a comprehensive analysis for policy changes and the creation of a favourable export ecosystem using its data-driven approach.
- The Export Preparedness Index by NITI Aayog in association with the Institute for Competitiveness, delves deeper beyond states and examines exports at the district level. The EPI focuses on exports from a district level by promoting district as district hub.
- Consequently, the report aims to propel India toward achieving the target of merchandise

exports valued over US\$ 1 Trillion by harnessing its diverse strengths, fostering regional competitiveness, and positioning itself as a key player in the global south export market. Improving collaboration between states, and state and Centre, India can achieve sustained export growth and leverage it for development in the country.

- The report emphasizes the need for consistent investment in research and development to foster innovation, which can facilitate higher efficiency and diversification of India's export basket. It also recommends the identification of new markets and exporting products according to the state's competitive advantage.

Way Forward:

- High export growth rate is crucial for India's goal of becoming a \$5 trillion economy by 2025. To achieve this objective, the economy will have to grow at an average rate of 8% during the next four years. India's exports will have to grow at an even higher rate. As we look towards 2047 and becoming the third largest economy, we need to focus on fostering competitiveness in service and agriculture exports along with manufacturing. To achieve it, comparative advantages of states should be leveraged.
- Competitive Federalism has the potential to drive our country's development by leveraging the inherent diversity of states. The comparative analysis of export preparedness among States and UTs introduces a framework that fosters competitiveness within the country. Consequently, Export Performance Index can serve as a catalyst for competitive federalism, elevating the export performance of every state and contributing to the nation's overall development.
- Sanjeet Singh, Senior Advisor, NITI Aayog said, "This report is a great compendium for states to look into and evaluate their approach towards improving exports. EPI 2022 also looks into district-level export trends, state profiles, category-wise, pillar and sub-pillar wise rankings of all states. In addition, each state has a detailed scorecard in the report which can help them understand their performance."
- EPI is a data-driven tool, with a robust methodology, which aims to help states/UTs develop targeted strategies to enhance their export competitiveness. EPI helps foster the spirit of cooperative and competitive federalism by encouraging peer-learning and enabling them to leverage their own strengths.

Impact of India-France And India-UAE Partnership on the Politics of Eurasia

To mark the completion of 25 years of strategic partnership between India and France, the Indian Prime Minister recently visited France to further strengthen the strategic partnership between the two nations. The signing of Strategic Partnership Agreement between India and France took place in the year 1998.

- It is worth mentioning that, geo-strategically, India has been very close to France since 1998. In 1998, when India conducted nuclear tests in Pokhran, France was the only major country that stood neutral to India. After this test, all the nuclear-rich countries of the world imposed various restrictions on India.
- USA, Germany, Japan and Britain had imposed sanctions on India but France did not leave India's side even in that difficult time. Taking a step forward in friendship, the then French President Jacques Chirac also visited India. He had also openly advocated the early removal of the sanctions imposed on India. Even today the relations between India and France are as strong as they were in 1998.
- The main pillars of the strategic partnership between India and France include defence, civil nuclear cooperation and space cooperation. As strategic partners, both the countries have time and again shown their commitment to work together to combat global terrorism. Both countries emphasize the early adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (proposed by India in the United Nations) by the nations. France has consistently supported India's bid for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council, membership in the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Australia Group, the Wassenaar Arrangement, and the Nuclear Suppliers Group. With the cooperation and support of France, India has become a member of three organizations related to nuclear issues except NSG. France, as a strategic partner, has consistently insisted that the long-pending Free Trade Agreement between India and the European Union be concluded at the earliest. India and France have emphasized some new areas of cooperation to strengthen their bilateral relations, including combating climate change and global warming, the formation of the International Solar Alliance to promote renewable energy (especially solar energy) and focusing on sustainable development.
- Based in Paris, the capital of France, the Financial Action Task Force is a global platform to stop the financing of terror. To control the terrorist activities of other countries including Pakistan, the important role of this organization can be ensured under the auspices of France.
- France is also necessary for India from the point of view of ensuring the security of the Indian Ocean or the Indian Pacific as well as the Asia Pacific region. France has naval bases at places like Djibouti, Reunion Island, and Abu Dhabi in the Indian Ocean. The Indo-French alliance is necessary to control piracy and China's attempt to expand its dominance in new areas of the Indian Ocean. China opened its naval base in the African country Djibouti in the year 2017. Keeping this in mind, India and France also conducted the Varuna exercise in Djibouti in May 2019.
- India and France announced the creation of the International Solar Alliance during the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2015 to combat climate change and global warming and to promote renewable energy. This alliance was formed by including 121 such countries which are located in between the Tropic of Cancer and Capricorn and get sunlight throughout the year but its membership is now open for all UN members. France's cooperation is expected in making India a strong power in the field of renewable energy in Asia.
- India and France have expressed their commitment to deal with terrorism at the collective level. France is a firm supporter of India's proposal to adopt the 1996 Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. After the Pulwama terror attacks on India, France has spoken of giving all possible help to India.
- India and France have also concluded a joint exercise to combat bio-terrorism. France has declared Pakistani terrorist Hafiz Saeed as a

Importance of France for India in Eurasia:

India's geo-strategic, geo-economic and geo-political interests are linked with France. France as a superpower can benefit India in various fields. France is necessary for India because of the following reasons-

- France is a member of the European Union

global terrorist in its national law.

- Further, France has played an important role in infrastructural development in India. The French attitude of respect towards Democracy, human rights and the rule of law has further strengthened Indo-French relations. France has offered to cooperate in the modernization of railways and the development of industrial corridors in India.
- Both India and France have decided to enhance their strategic partnership in the Western Indian Ocean region under their Indo-Pacific strategy. India wants to work with France in the direction of port development, the development of the blue economy, and the promotion of trade, tourism, and connectivity in this region. India France Indo Pacific Natural Park Partnership has also been launched.
- Both countries have prepared a strategy to work in the Western Indian Ocean by being associated with the projects of any third country. India, France and the Vanilla Islands comprising Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles met in the French-controlled Reunion Island in an effort to find economic and development partnership. India is also eyeing the discovery of gas reserves in the Mozambique Channel near Vanilla Island.



- At present, it has been decided to extend the defense partnership between India and France to the Western Indian Ocean region. India is strengthening its bilateral relations with countries like Comoros and Madagascar for the security of the Indian Ocean based on its Indo Pacific Outreach Vision. In March 2018, India and France launched the Joint Strategic Vision for Indo-French Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region. Both countries have announced to work

together for freedom of navigation, freedom and security of maritime trade routes in the Indo-Pacific region. Both countries have decided to make their strategic partnership more inclusive to enhance maritime security cooperation.

- Looking at the India-France roadmap for the Indo-Pacific region, it states that the two countries will strengthen maritime security coordination through IFC-IOR, EMASOH in UAE Atlanta, RCOC in Seychelles, RMIFC in Madagascar and RECAAP in Singapore. France also supports India's desire to join the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).
- Both countries will strengthen their multilateral arrangements with Australia and the UAE and create new arrangements in the region, as well as strengthen cooperation in regional fora such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association, Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, Indian Ocean Commission, Djibouti Code of Conduct, ADMM+ and ARF.

Indian interest in Eurasia region and partnership with UAE:

- The Indian Prime Minister has also visited the UAE during his tour to France. The UAE is an important Gulf country that is a member of organizations such as the Gulf Cooperation Council, OPEC and the OIC and has a free trade agreement with India. Both countries have also set a target of \$100 billion in bilateral trade.
 - The first edition of the maritime partnership exercise between India, France and the UAE took place in the Gulf of Oman in June 2023 involving INS Tarkash and French ship Sarcouf, integral helicopters, Rafale aircraft of France and maritime patrol aircraft of the UAE Navy. The maiden exercise among the three countries is aimed at enhancing trilateral cooperation among the three navies and paves the way for adoption of measures to address conventional and non-conventional threats in the maritime environment.
- The exercise will also enhance cooperation in ensuring the security of commercial trade and freedom of navigation on the high seas in the region.
- It has also been decided to work towards the implementation of the India-France Indo-Pacific Triangular Development Cooperation Fund proposal, under which India, France and the UAE will enhance mutual cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

Efforts to Strengthen Corporate Governance Through Ease Of Doing Business & Companies Act 2013

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has taken a significant step towards easing the burden of courts and promoting a favorable business environment in India. On July 14, the MCA announced the go-ahead for the withdrawal of 7,338 pending prosecutions under the Special Arrears Clearance Drive-II. The primary objective of this drive is to decriminalize compoundable offences under the Companies Act, 2013, and foster the ease of doing business in the country. By allowing the withdrawal of these prosecutions, the Union Government aims to reduce the number of pending litigations by 21.86 percent, which will alleviate the burden on courts and streamline the legal process. The move is also expected to boost growth in the corporate sector while ensuring a robust corporate governance framework. It is important to note that the withdrawal of prosecutions is limited to compoundable offences and does not include serious non-compoundable offences such as cheating, fraud, acceptance of deposits, pending charges, etc. The government intends to prioritize the resolution of cases related to more severe violations to ensure accountability and protect the interests of stakeholders.

Introduction:

Corporate governance plays a pivotal role in shaping the business landscape and ensuring the smooth functioning of companies. It encompasses the framework of rules, practices, and processes by which businesses are directed and controlled, aiming to enhance transparency, accountability, and ethical decision-making. In India, the government has taken significant steps to strengthen corporate governance through the Ease of Doing Business (EODB) initiative and the Companies Act 2013.

Understanding Compoundable Offences:

- Compoundable offences are those offenses for which a compromise can be reached between the accused and the affected party. In the context of the Companies Act, 2013, compoundable offences typically involve procedural lapses, non-compliances, or minor violations that do not have a severe impact on stakeholders or society at large. These offences can be settled by paying a prescribed penalty or through other means, as provided by law.

Importance of Decriminalization:

Promoting Ease of Doing Business:

- Decriminalizing compoundable offences will simplify the regulatory landscape for businesses. Companies, especially startups and small businesses, often face challenges in complying with numerous legal provisions. By reducing the threat of criminal prosecution for minor lapses, businesses can focus on their core operations and growth, leading to a more conducive business environment.

Encouraging Investment and Entrepreneurship:

- Investors, both domestic and foreign, are attracted to countries that offer a business-friendly environment. Decriminalization of compoundable offences sends a positive signal to investors that India is serious about improving the ease of doing business. This move can boost investor confidence and lead to increased investments and entrepreneurial activities,

ultimately fostering economic growth.

Reducing Judicial Burden:

- India's legal system is burdened with a vast number of cases, including those related to minor corporate non-compliances. Decriminalization will help in easing the burden on courts and other dispute resolution mechanisms, allowing them to focus on more critical matters and deliver justice more efficiently.

Enhanced Compliance Culture:

- Excessive criminalization of minor offences may inadvertently discourage companies from self-reporting and rectifying their mistakes. Decriminalization encourages a culture of compliance by promoting openness in rectifying errors without the fear of severe repercussions, thus fostering ethical practices within corporate entities.

Tailoring Punishments to Offences:

- By adopting a more balanced approach through decriminalization, penalties can be tailored to suit the gravity of the offence, ensuring fair and just treatment of companies and directors.
- Decriminalization of compoundable offences under the Companies Act, 2013, represents a progressive step towards fostering the ease of doing business in India. It aligns with the government's vision of promoting a business-friendly environment and attracting investments. By reducing unnecessary burdens on companies and encouraging compliance, the move is expected to create a conducive ecosystem for entrepreneurship and economic growth. However, it is essential to strike a balance between decriminalization and ensuring that more severe offences are duly penalized to safeguard stakeholders' interests and maintain corporate transparency and accountability.

Overview of the Companies Acts 2013: a Paradigm Shift in Corporate Governance:

The Companies Act 2013 is an important piece of legislation that governs the incorporation, operation,

and regulation of companies in India. It replaced the previous Companies Act of 1956 and came into effect on April 1, 2014. The Act aims to promote corporate governance, enhance transparency, protect the interests of shareholders and investors, and facilitate ease of doing business in India. Here are some key aspects of the Companies Act 2013:

- **Incorporation of Companies:** The Act outlines the procedures and requirements for the incorporation of different types of companies, such as private companies, public companies, and one-person companies (OPCs). It also sets forth the minimum capital requirements, the number of directors, and the registration process.
- **Corporate Governance:** The Companies Act 2013 places a strong emphasis on corporate governance to ensure that companies operate responsibly and ethically. It mandates the establishment of independent directors on the board, sets up audit committees, and requires regular financial reporting and auditing.
- **Shareholder Rights and Protection:** The Act safeguards the rights of shareholders by introducing provisions for shareholder democracy, voting rights, and the appointment of proxy representatives. It also aims to prevent insider trading and fraudulent practices that could harm the interests of investors.
- **CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility):** The Companies Act 2013 introduced the concept of CSR for certain companies meeting specific criteria. It mandates that these companies spend a percentage of their profits on activities that benefit society and promote sustainable development.
- **Insider Trading and Fraud Prevention:** The Act includes provisions to curb insider trading and fraudulent activities within companies. It imposes penalties for non-compliance and enforces strict regulations to protect investors' interests.

Impact of the Initiatives on Corporate Governance:

The collective efforts of the Ease of Doing Business initiative and the Companies Act 2013 have had a substantial impact on corporate governance in India. It includes:

- **Improved Investor Confidence:** By streamlining business processes and enhancing corporate accountability, investor confidence has been significantly improved. Foreign direct investments have seen a rise, and Indian companies have attracted global interest due to increased transparency and ease of doing business.
- **Ethical Business Practices:** The emphasis on independent directors, shareholder participation,

and CSR has led to a shift towards more ethical business practices. Companies are now aligning their strategies with sustainable development goals, ensuring long-term value creation.

- **C. Enhanced Corporate Responsibility:** The mandatory CSR spending has resulted in a positive impact on society and the environment. Corporations are actively engaging in community development and environmental conservation projects, contributing to the welfare of the nation.

Challenges and the Way Forward:

While these initiatives have made significant progress in strengthening corporate governance, certain challenges remain.

- **Enforcement and Compliance:** Despite progressive laws, enforcement and compliance issues persist. The regulatory bodies must ensure strict adherence to corporate governance principles and take action against non-compliant entities.
- **Enhancing Board Diversity:** Companies need to focus on enhancing board diversity, not just in terms of gender but also in terms of skill sets and experiences. Diverse boards can lead to more informed decision-making and better risk management.
- **Balancing Regulation and Flexibility:** Striking the right balance between stringent regulation and business flexibility is crucial. Regulations must adapt to changing business landscapes while maintaining their core principles.

Conclusion:

- The efforts to strengthen corporate governance through the Ease of Doing Business and the Companies Act 2013 have significantly contributed to India's business landscape. These initiatives have improved investor confidence, fostered ethical business practices, and encouraged corporate responsibility. By doing so, India can create a corporate governance framework that stands as a model for the world, attracting more investments and ensuring sustainable business growth.
- To achieve this significant milestone, a committee responsible for a comprehensive review of all pending litigations. The committee specifically targeted long-pending prosecutions for compoundable offences and identified them for withdrawal.
- By taking this decisive step, the Indian government seeks to create a more business-friendly climate and encourage investment in the corporate sector.

Need for Digital Regulation Against Increasing Crime on Social Media in India

The Government of India is currently in the process of replacing the Information Technology Act, 2000 by a law that would give the right direction to digital services, including social media platforms, with necessary regulation in this area. Efforts will be made to do this through the Digital India Bill. In this context, the question has also arisen that to deal with the way social media networking sites have been used to promote many crimes, misinformation, rumors and communal thinking, does the Government of India have any national policy? Is there a law or a national policy that can effectively regulate social media so that social media becomes a means of positive thought and expression and not a tool for disseminating crime? Freedom of thought and expression is a fundamental right which has been given constitutional protection under Article 19 of the Indian Constitution. It also includes freedom of media or press. Today it has become the need of an hour to think about to what extent social media sites should get this right.

Why Social Media Regulation is Necessary:

- Cases related to the violation of virtual privacy of people on social media networking sites have increased continuously. Keeping this and other things in mind, the Central Government has approved the draft of the Data Protection Bill, 2022. This bill will help in keeping our data safe and maintain privacy. Since, privacy has been considered a fundamental right by the Supreme Court, this Bill will have jurisdiction over the processing of digital personal data in India. It will include data collected online or offline and subsequently digitized.
- Further, terrorist organizations have used these platforms to spread terrorist ideology, jihad and fanaticism. Several cases of youths being misled and recruited into terrorist organizations have come to the fore, which have been also confirmed by the National Investigation Agency, Anti-Terrorism Squads (ATS) of several states and intelligence agencies. Cases of online jihad and online extremism have also been reported where attempts have been made to promote Taliban ideology and ISIS ideology on social media. Evidence of how social media sites have been used to promote religious fanaticism and mislead people about a particular religion can be seen in the actions of organizations like the Popular Front of India (PFI), which has been declared a banned organization by the Government of India.
- Abrogation of Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir, Ram Mandir issue, Uniform Civil Code, Hijab issue, Compulsory National Anthem, Regulation of Education System in Madras, Change in name of cities, roads, Gyanvapi issue of Varanasi, Friday prayers Violence during India, protests by youth against Agneepath scheme, protests against laws like NRC and CAA, farmers' agitations, etc. The aforementioned incidents are some of the many incidents when social media has been misused to spread communal polarization, extremism, violence, crime, and enmity. This was done by different religions keeping their personal interests in mind. If data is to be obtained on the matters relating to the registered cases related to

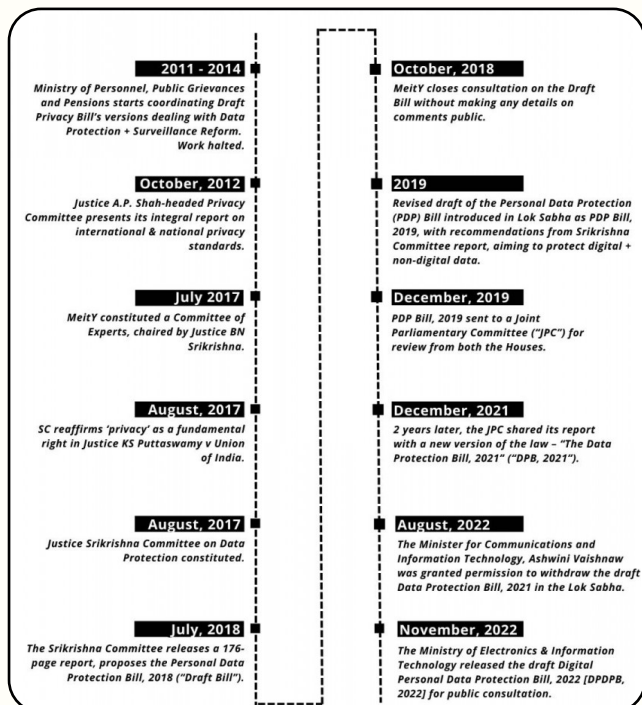
social media crime and how many such cases were disposed of, then one may face some difficulty since NCRB does not keep the data base related to social media crime with itself. It is therefore, crucial that NCRB must maintain data base. Nevertheless, it is also necessary to know here that despite not having such a database, according to NCRB, 85 cybercrime cases related to fake profiles were registered in 2019, 149 in 2020 and 123 in 2021. To keep an eye on fake users on social media platforms, there has been talk of validating them with government ID cards for a long time. At the same time, the central government has rejected any plan to link social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram with Aadhaar or any other identity card issued by the government.

- There are several reasons behind continuous usage of social media or digital platform. For instance, increasing digitization in the country, tele-density, internet facilities, 4G 5G 6G network, broadband connectivity, WiFi facility, data availability at cheap rates by telecom companies, uncontrolled proliferation of apps, large population not knowing about handling of Android phones, etc. All these even though have made the use of social media, and communication networks easy but simultaneously unsafe.
- The number of WhatsApp users in India is around 530 million, YouTube users 448 million, Facebook users 410 million, Instagram users 210 million and Twitter users 17.5 million. India's teledensity as of March 2023 was 84.51 percent. According to the latest data from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, the urban teledensity has increased to around 133.81 percent while the rural teledensity has also increased and has reached 57.71 percent.

Efforts to Regulate Social Media:

- In Section 67 of the Information Technology i.e. IT Act 2000, a provision has been made that if someone posts or shares something objectionable through electronic means, a case can be registered against him/her. This means that if someone tries to spread hatred between different communities by posting on any social media platform including Tik Tok, Share Chat, Facebook, or Twitter, action is

taken against them under Section 67 of the IT Act. Section 67 of the IT Act states that if someone is found guilty of doing such a deed on social media for the first time, he/she can be jailed for three years. Along with this, a fine of Rs 5 lakh may also have to be paid. Furthermore, if such an offense is repeated, then the culprit of the case may be imprisoned for 5 years and may have to pay a fine of up to Rs 10 lakh.



of regulation and control of content going on social media and OTT platforms have not been delegated to state governments or district magistrates or police commissioners.

➤ The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has issued a warning to the print, electronic and digital media, asking them to avoid advertising online betting platforms. The warning was issued after several instances of advertisements for online betting websites/platforms were found in print, electronic, social and online media. The warning states that betting and gambling are illegal in most parts of the country and pose extreme financial and socio-economic risks to consumers, especially youth and children. It has also been pointed out that these advertisements on online betting promote this prohibited activity on a large scale. It states, "The advertisements for online betting are misleading, and not in conformity with the Consumer Protection Act 2019, the Advertising Code under the Cable Television Networks Regulation Act, 1995 and the norms of journalistic conduct prescribed by the Press Council of India under the Press Council Act, 1978.

➤ Overall, we can say that the spread of social media, on the one hand, empowers the citizens, on the other hand, it also gives rise to some serious concerns and consequences, which have increased manifold in recent years. These concerns have been raised from time to time in various fora including Parliament and its committees, judicial orders and civil society consultations in different parts of the country. Such concerns are also being raised all over the world and are becoming an international issue. Some very disturbing incidents have been witnessed on the social media platform. The incessant spread of fake news has forced many media platforms to put in place fact-checking mechanisms. The rampant misuse of social media to share distorted images of women and content related to revenge porn has often put the dignity of women at risk. The misuse of social media to settle corporate rivalry in an apparently unethical way has become a major concern for businesses. Cases of abusive language, derogatory and obscene content and disrespect towards religious sentiments are on the rise through the platforms. The increasing incidents of misuse of social media by criminals, anti-national elements in the last few years have brought new challenges to the law enforcement agencies. These include inducement to recruit terrorists, dissemination of obscene material, promoting disharmony, financial fraud, inciting violence, public order, etc. Looking at all these things, the need for a National Social Media Policy is understandable.

- Social media crimes are also controlled through Section 153A of the IPC. This section is imposed against those who try to spread hatred and disturb the harmony between different communities on the basis of religion, race, language, place of residence or place of birth. Under this section, there is a provision of imprisonment of three years and fine.
- Central government issued new guidelines in 2021 for social media and OTT platforms. The government had been working for a long time to amend the decades-old Information Technology Act and find adequate measures to prevent and regulate objectionable content on social media and OTTs. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has further issued a new Code of Ethics in 2021, in which new rules and regulations have been made regarding online content.
- Powers under Part 3 of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 are administered by the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. These guidelines clearly mention that the rights or powers



National Issue

1. Amendment in Jan Vishwas Bill 2023

Why in News:

The amendment in the Jan Vishwas Bill 2023 has been approved by the Union Cabinet. Under this, an attempt has been made to decriminalize 183 offences in 42 Acts.

Properties:

- Decriminalization of certain offences under the Bill has been decriminalized by imposing only a monetary penalty. For example, disclosure of personal information in breach of a legal contract is punishable with imprisonment of up to 3 years or a fine of up to 5 lakhs. The Bill instead imposes a fine of up to 25 lakhs.
- This bill increases fines and penalties for various offences. Fines and penalties will be increased by 10% of the minimum amount every 3 years.
- A judicial decision officer can be appointed to implement the new provisions, as well as the problems of individuals will be resolved through the appellate mechanism.

Need of the Bill:

- According to the data of the National Judicial Data Grid, there are still 4.3 crore cases pending in Indian courts, which increases the pressure on the courts.
- Such small crimes affect the ease of doing business.
- At present, more prisoners are living in jails than their capacity, which is a question mark on the Indian criminal justice system.

Concerns:

- Removal of criminals under the Act can create privacy-related problems, for example, for the illegal opening of postal items, post office officials, are jailed for 2 years and fined, but this provision is being removed from the bill.
- According to the Observer Research Foundation's report titled "Jailed for Doing Business", there are more than 26,630 prison terms in about 843 economic laws, rules and regulations governing economic activities in India.

Way Forward:

With the above reforms, an increase in the protection of human rights, a reduction in the burden of the judiciary and a boom in business activities can be seen. The government will have to keep removing unnecessary economic and social obstacles while paying attention to the concerns related to it. This will be a good initiative in the direction of good

governance.

2. 13.5 crore Indians out of Multidimensional Poverty in 5 years: NITI Aayog

Why in News:

A recent NITI Aayog report stated that 13.5 crore people in India have moved out of multidimensional poverty in a total of five years between 2015-16 and 2019-21. Poverty in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan has rapidly decreased.

Highlights of the Report:

- India has registered a significant decline of 9.89 percentage points in the number of multidimensional poor, which went down from 24.85% in 2015-16 to 14.96% in 2019-21.
- The sharpest decline in poverty has been recorded in rural areas, which decreased from 32.59% to 19.28%, while poverty in urban areas declined from 8.65% to 5.27%.
- The report provided multidimensional poverty estimates for 36 states and union territories as well as 707 administrative districts, with the sharpest reductions observed in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan.
- In five years, the MPI value halved from 0.117 to 0.066 and the poverty intensity decreased from 47% to 44%, helping India to meet the SDG target 1.2 (reducing multidimensional poverty by at least half) ahead of the 2030 deadline.
- NITI Aayog said that sanitation, nutrition, financial inclusion, access to drinking water and electricity have improved and with the support of the government, significant progress has been seen in these areas.
- Schemes like Poshan Abhiyan and Anaemia Mukht Bharat have contributed significantly to the field of health.
- There has been a positive change in lives with an improvement of 14.6 percentage points in the shortage of subsidized cooking fuel through the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY).
- Initiatives such as Saubhagya, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), and Samagra Shiksha have also played an important role in reducing multidimensional poverty in the country.

About National Multidimensional Poverty Index:

- National MPI measures parameters of health, education, and living standards as well as 12 SDG targets including nutrition, child and adolescent mortality, maternal health, years

of schooling, school attendance, cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing, property and bank accounts etc.

Way Forward:

The report, based on India's national MPI baseline in November 2021, represents India's progress in reducing multidimensional poverty between National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21) and NFHS-4 (2015-16).

3. New Guidelines for the Designation of Senior Advocates in the Supreme Court

Why in News:

The Supreme Court has issued new Guidelines on designating Lawyers as 'SENIOR ADVOCATES' in the Apex court following the judgment in the Indira Jaisingh v/s Supreme Court. These guidelines will supersede the earlier guideline issued by the court in 2018. As per the new guidelines, the minimum age of the senior advocate Designation will be 45 years. This age limit will not apply if the name has been recommended by the Chief Justice of India or a Supreme Court Judge.

Committee For Designation Of Senior Advocates:

- Matters relating to the designation of Senior Advocates will be dealt with by the Permanent Committee.
- The committee will comprise:
 - » The Chief Justice of India – chairperson.
 - » Two Senior-Judge of the Supreme Court of India
 - » Attorney General of India.
 - » A member of the Bar, nominated by the chairperson and members.
- The committee will meet twice a year and a permanent secretariat whose members will be decided by the Chief Justice of India in consultation with the other members of the committee.

Eligibility to be Designated as A Senior Advocate:

- Any person who is at least 10 years standing as an advocate or at least 10 years as an advocate and a District and Session Judge combined / as a Judicial Member of any tribunal in India, will be designated as the Senior Advocate at the Supreme Court.

Area of Practice:

- The candidate's practice should be mainly before the supreme court but an advocate with domain Expertise and practice before specialized tribunals may be given a concession.

Age:

- The candidate must at least be 45 years old unless the age limit is relaxed by the committee.
- Former judges are barred from applying if they are already engaged elsewhere.

Point Based Evaluation:

- The Guidelines have laid down a point-based system through which candidates may be evaluated to be designated as senior Advocates.
- The court may review its decision to designate a person as a Senior Advocate and recall the conferment of designation if the Advocate is found guilty of conduct that the full court feels would disentitle such Advocates from being designated a Senior Advocate.

4. Rajasthan Minimum Income Bill

Why in News:

Rajasthan Government "CM Ashok Gehlot" has introduced 'The Rajasthan Minimum Guaranteed Income Bill, 2023'. The Bill effectivity seeks to cover the entire adult population of the state with guaranteed wages or pensions.

About the Bill:

- Under the Bill, all families of the state get guaranteed employment for 125 days every year.
- The aged, disabled, widows and single women get a minimum pension of Rs 1,000 per month.
- Guaranteed Rs. 4500 per month allowance for unemployed women and divyung people.
- The pension will be increased at the rate of 15% each year.

Major Provision of the Bill:

- The bill contains following rights and provisions:
 1. Right to minimum Guaranteed income
 2. Right to guaranteed employment (which supported MGNREGA Scheme)
 3. Right to guaranteed social security pension, The Government anticipates an additional expenditure of Rs.2500 crore per year for this scheme, which may increase with time.
- **Minimum Guaranteed Income:** Each adult has been guaranteed a minimum income for 125 days a year under the Rajasthan flagship programme " Indira Gandhi Shahri Rojgar Guarantee Yojana for urban areas, along with Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in Rural Areas.
- **Guaranteed Employment:** The right to employment states that post the work in urban or rural employment scheme, the minimum ways scheme be paid "weekly in any case not

later than a fortnight’.

Rational Behind The Bill:

- The bill supports the principle of social justice which will be helpful for the upliftment of vulnerable sections. It gives justice to the underprivileged section by treating Individuals with fairness and dignity. It will provide relief from inflation as prices of the Commodities are rising day by day.
- Social Activist Nikhil Day of the “Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan” (MKSS) said this bill contains many first in the country, it is a very welcome step. The Union Government should also take inspiration from such bills.

Conclusion:

This bill is very beneficial and it will prove very beneficial for the needy and the underprivileged section of society. The bill has not guaranteed just income it has also guaranteed employment and pensions by law and it is a pioneering step towards securing social security for all residents of the state.

5. Notice to 15 websites selling E-Cigarettes

Why in News:

The Health Ministry had expressed concern that e-cigarettes are still available online and with local vendors. The Union Health Ministry has sent notices to 15 websites selling e-cigarettes, which are banned in India, directing them to stop advertisement and sale of the products.

What are e-cigarettes?

- E-cigarette is a battery-operated vaporizer which is popular for smoking tobacco. It heats nicotine liquid and turns it into water vapour and nicotine smoke. The mixture of liquid nicotine present in it is also called e-juice.
- Vegetable glycerin (a material used in all types of food and personal care products, like toothpaste), and propylene glycol (a solvent most commonly used in fog machines) are also found in liquid nicotine juice or e-juice. Propylene glycol is the component which helps in generating vapour smoke.
- E-cigarettes are also known as Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS).
- Sometimes by the proponents’ of e-cigarettes, it is argued that the practice of smoking by e-cigarettes is healthier than traditional cigarettes because users are only inhaling water vapour and nicotine.

Concerns:

- Evidence reveals that these products are

harmful to health and are not safe.

- The use of E-cigarettes can also expose non-smokers and bystanders, automatically forcing them to inhale nicotine.
- When the products are not of the expected standard or are tampered with by users Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) have also been linked to several physical injuries, including burns from explosions or malfunctions.
- Accidental exposure of ENDS to children, they may swallow the poisonous e-liquid.
- It also seems to be involved in the biology of malignant disease and Neuro-degeneration. It may function as a “tumour promoter”.
- E-cigarettes have serious consequences for the fetus and may lead to brain disorders and anxiety in children.
- There are sufficient pieces of evidence to warn children and adolescents, pregnant women, and women of reproductive age against ENDS use and nicotine.

Conclusion:

The government imposed a ban on e-cigarettes in 2019 but despite this ban, e-cigarettes continue to be sold on e-commerce sites, even to children below 18. Now to curb this, the Health Ministry has launched an online portal to facilitate reporting of violations under the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes (Production, Manufacture, Import, Export, Transport, Sale, Distribution, Storage and Advertisement) Act (PECA).

6. Cabinet Clears Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023, and Mediation Bill, 2021

Why in News:

The Union Cabinet has approved two bills namely, the Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023, and the Mediation Bill, 2021, which were revised to include inputs from a Parliamentary panel.

About Mediation Bill 2021:

- The Mediation Bill proposes a system where civil or commercial disputes are first resolved through mediation, avoiding the need for immediate court or tribunal involvement. This approach aims to make dispute resolution more efficient and lessen the burden of litigation on the judicial system.

Key Points of the Bill:

- The new law makes it compulsory for parties to try resolving disputes through mediation before going to court. They will have up to 180 days to

complete the mediation, which can be extended if both parties agree.

- There will be a Mediation Council of India to register mediators and oversee mediation services. The agreements reached through mediation will be legally binding, just like court judgments.

About Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill 2023:

- The 2023 Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill will replace the 155-year-old Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867. It aims to simplify the law, remove criminal aspects, and bring digital media under its ambit.
- This new law will make the registration process for newspapers and periodicals more straightforward and remove penalties for not disclosing printer information or operating printing presses.

Key Points of the Bill:

- The 2023 bill aims to bring unregulated digital platforms under a three-tier grievance redressal system.
- Digital media houses will need to register themselves with the Press Registrar General within 90 days and violations may result in penalties and registration suspension/cancellation.
- The 2019 draft bill defined news on digital media as news in a digitised format that can be transmitted over the internet, computer, and mobile networks and includes text, audio, video and graphics.
- An appellate body will be set up under the Bill and its chairman will be the chairperson of the Press Council of India.

Way Forward:

The Mediation Bill mandates pre-litigation mediation, raising concerns about its voluntary nature. The Mediation Council's lack of experienced mediator representation and the need for central government approval for regulations is questionable. Concerns have also been raised against the Press and Registration Bill accusing the Centre of attempting to exert control over digital news media entities.

7. Centre may Act Against IAS, IPS, IFoS Pensioners on its own

Why in News:

Recently, the Central Government has made changes in the rules of retirement benefits for pensioners of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian

Police Service (IPS) and Indian Forest Service (IFoS). The Central Government, in consultation with the respective State Governments, amended the All India Services (Death-cum-Retirement Benefits) Rules, 1958, now called the All India Services (Death-cum-Retirement Benefits) Amendment Rules. 2023.

Amendments:

- If the IAS, IPS, and IFoS officer is found guilty of grave misbehaviour or are found guilty of a serious crime, the central government has the authority to take action against them and withhold or withdraw their pensions without a reference from the state government.
- New rules state that communicating or disclosing any document information covered by the Official Secrets Act constitutes "grave misconduct," and that any crime involving a violation of the Official Secrets Act qualifies as a "serious crime."
- Security and intelligence organization officials who express themselves in the media or write books that reveal sensitive information may face repercussions.
- The reliance on state government references has been eliminated by the All India Services (Death-cum-Retirement Benefits) Rules, 1958, in their revised form.
- In the past, if a retiree was found guilty, the central government requested a reference from the relevant state government.
- The central government's decision to withhold or revoke a pension is now deemed to be final. This modification was made in order to address situations in which state governments failed to send references for action against retired officials even after they had been found guilty by juries.
- The central government found it difficult to take the necessary measures against the concerned officers as a result of the state government's lack of cooperation, particularly when dealing with representatives of the All India Services.

Conclusion:

Officers in the three all-India services are hired by the Union government through a centralized process but spend most of their career working for a state government based on their 'cadre' assignment. Nevertheless, there have been allegations from several state governments which believe their erstwhile powers concerning All India Service (AIS) officers serving in their respective states are being usurped by the Union government.

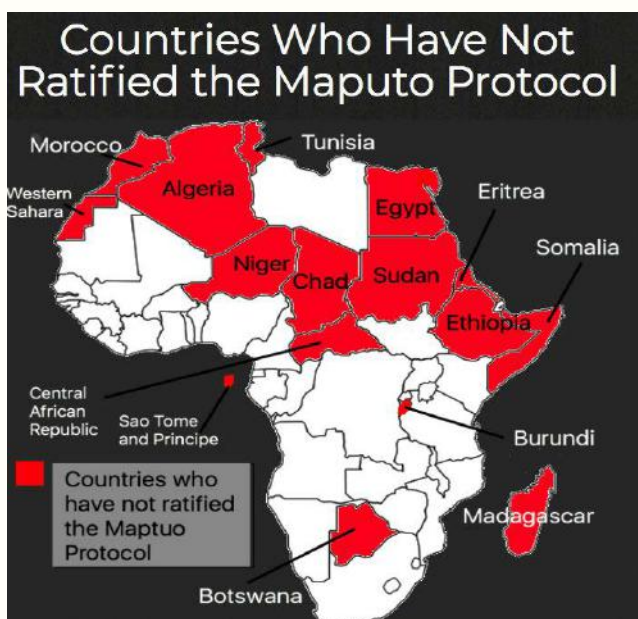


International Issue

1. Maputo Protocol

Why in News:

2023 marks two decades since the adoption of the Maputo Protocol. Civil society organizations have released a landmark report titled '20 Years of the Maputo Protocol: Where are we now?'. The report highlights the slow integration of the Protocol provisions into national legislation and its delayed aim for universal ratification in Africa by 2028, with 12 countries still left to ratify the protocol.



About Maputo Protocol:

- The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol) is one of the most progressive legal frameworks that provide for extensive women's rights, including health, education, inheritance, access to justice, and the elimination of harmful practices such as female genital mutilation.
- This legally binding protocol, adopted by the Assembly of African Union (AU) on July 11, 2003, stands as the fastest human rights treaty to enter into force.

Key Points of the Report:

- The Maputo Protocol has promoted women's rights in some African countries. Countries have enacted laws against discrimination, e.g., Benin's gender equality family code prohibits polygamy, Sierra Leone's prevention of forced marriages and Ethiopia's Health Extension

Programme.

- However, over the past two decades, women's labour force participation rate in Africa remains low compared to men, with 24 countries experiencing a decline.
- Women's economic rights and opportunities and access to social welfare and protection are significantly affected by external factors such as conflict, COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.
- On a positive note, there has been progress in women's political participation, with increased representation in Parliaments. E.g., in Rwanda, women's share in the Lower House has seen a three-fold increase since 2003.
- The ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have reversed the efforts to end child marriages. As a result, up to 10 million more girls are at risk of becoming child brides by 2030.
- The pandemic also strained public health systems, impacting reproductive and maternal health services.

What More Needs to be Done?

Progress in women's rights in Africa has been a mixed bag of notable progress. To ensure gains are consolidated and not reversed, a renewed partnership is needed to realize women's health and reproductive rights. This includes engaging community and religious leaders and enforcing laws to prohibit all forms of violence against women as demanded by Article IV of the Maputo Protocol.

2. UN Warns of Soaring Global Public Debt

Why in News:

Recently, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development released the report 2023 on global debt. The title of the report was "The Growing Burden on Global Prosperity in A World of Debt".

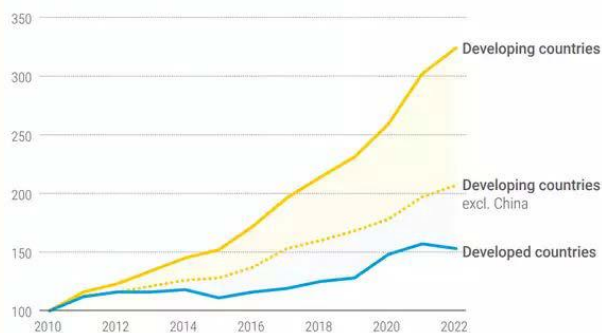
Key Points of Report :

- According to the report, Global public debt has reached around 92 Trillion dollars in 2022, a more than fivefold increase since 2000, the report said.
- In the last decade, debt increased faster in underdeveloped countries when compared with developed nations which accounts for about 30% of global public debt in underdeveloped nations.
- The reason for the increase in this public debt has been attributed to the progressive increase in the cost of living, the COVID-19 pandemic,

climate change, etc.

- Around 3.3 billion people worldwide used to spend much more on debt interest payments than basic amenities (education, health etc).
- As per the report, India's public debt is 2815 billion US dollars.
- Further, more than half of the under-developing countries spend around 1.5% of their GDP and about 6.9% of their government revenue on interest payments.

Public debt is growing faster in the developing world
 Index: outstanding public debt in 2010 = 100



Source: UN Global Crisis Response Group calculations based on IMF World Economic Outlook (April 2023).

Challenges :

- According to UNCTAD, underdeveloped countries are more dependent on private lenders. It has made debt more expensive and its restructuring more complex.
- At the same time, the unequal international financial structure has also made financing inaccessible, which proves costly for underdeveloped countries. Due to this, the pace of economic development slows down.
- Antonio Guterres, the UN secretary general, stated that the international financial system is morally bankrupt, which defends developed countries established by the big economies.

Way Forward:

Inequality in the world is indeed inherent to several dimensions of the world economy. Hence, as the UN Secretary-general Guterres said that in the year 2023, India is chairing the G-20 Summit and it must use its power to exercise radical reform in the international financial structure. So, the world financial system can be made all-inclusive and accessible.

3. Black Sea Grain Initiative

Why in News:

Recently India has supported of UN efforts in continuing the Black Sea Grain Initiative and

expressed hope for an early resolution of the current standoff, while Russia pulled out of the Black Sea Grain Initiative that had assured safe passage to ships carrying grain from Ukraine.

About the Black Sea Grain Agreement:

- On July 22, 2022, brokered by the United Nations and Turkey, Russia agreed to the Black Sea Grain Initiative under which cargo ships were allowed to travel through the three Ukrainian ports of Odesa, Chornomorsk and Pivdennyi after inspection that they were not carrying weapons.
- The safe passage in the Black Sea is 310 nautical miles long and three nautical miles wide. Initially it was scheduled for a period of 120 days; the aim of the initiative was to provide a secure maritime humanitarian corridor for Ukrainian exports (especially for foodgrains). About 32 million tonnes of mostly maize and wheat have been exported by Ukraine under this initiative.
- Ukraine is one of the world's largest grain exporters of wheat and corn and a major contributor to the United Nations' food aid programs. Ukraine's access to deep-sea ports in the Black Sea enables links to Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.



Why hasn't Russia agreed to renew it?

- Russia claims that the promises made under this initiative have not been fulfilled and due to the many sanctions imposed on it by the West, Russia is still facing problems in exporting its agricultural products and fertilizers.
- Although there are no direct sanctions on Russian agricultural products, Russia says barriers to payment platforms, insurance,

shipping and other logistics are hindering its exports.

- According to Reuters, the European Union (EU) is now considering linking a subsidiary of the Russian Agricultural Bank (Rosselkhozbank) to the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT) to allow grain and fertilizer transactions that were cut off due to the war.

Way Forward:

Due to the Russia-Ukraine war, demand-supply has been affected globally. This has had a cascading effect on the prices of food grains as well as on fertilizer prices. The impact of Russia pulling out of the accord would be wide-ranging, especially on developing countries.

4. U.K.'s Inclusion into CPTPP

Why in News:

Recently, the United Kingdom formally joined the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). CPTPP is considered the biggest free trade bloc of 11 countries in the Indo-Pacific region. This move aims to re-integrate the U.K. economy into the world economy in Post-Brexit Scenario.



About CPTPP:

- The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership is a trading bloc of 11 countries comprising Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, New Zealand, Singapore and Vietnam. This agreement was signed in March 2018.
- All 11 countries of CPTPP are also members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).
- It is a free-trade agreement, a successor of the former Trans-Pacific Partnership led by the USA.

Significance of CPTPP:

- CPTPP requires countries to eliminate or significantly reduce tariffs and make strong commitments to opening services and investment markets.
- This bloc also has rules addressing competition and intellectual property rights and protects foreign companies. This essential provision cuts 99% of the tariffs on the trading of goods and services and also member countries have to cut down on wildlife trafficking.
- It also prevents environmental abuses, such as unsustainable logging and fishing.

Benefits for Britain:

- The United Kingdom is the first European Country to join this bloc.
- This move is considered a major breakthrough achieved by Britain after the Brexit Deal. It would provide British businesses with trade access to a market of more than 500 million people and a strategic presence in the Indo-Pacific region. It would also boost the country's international geopolitical and economic clout.
- The deal is expected to add GDP 1.8 billion (USD 2.2 billion) annually to the economy in the long run.
- This membership will also provide veto power to Britain against the joining of China into CPTPP. It would add into Britain's Balance of Power in the Indo-Pacific region.

India and CPTPP:

- The government of India opted out from this alliance because it seeks to place greater labor and environmental standards on its other partners. The CPTPP drafts contain incredibly specific requirements for investment protection, safeguards for the host state's regulatory authority and the imposition of extensive transparency standards.

Way Forward:

This move presents a silver lining for the UK economy in the extreme global headwinds. The effective execution of this move will ultimately benefit the Indo-Pacific region by integrating the results of the existing partnerships like APEC, RCEP, and ASEAN.

5. Sudan Strife

Why in News:

As per a Geneva-based non-profit organization, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), around 2,231,523 displacements (as of June 28, 2023) have been recorded in Sudan due to conflict erupted in April 2023. This number is equivalent to the total displacements combined in the last ten

years in the country.

Reasons behind such displacements:

National Reasons:

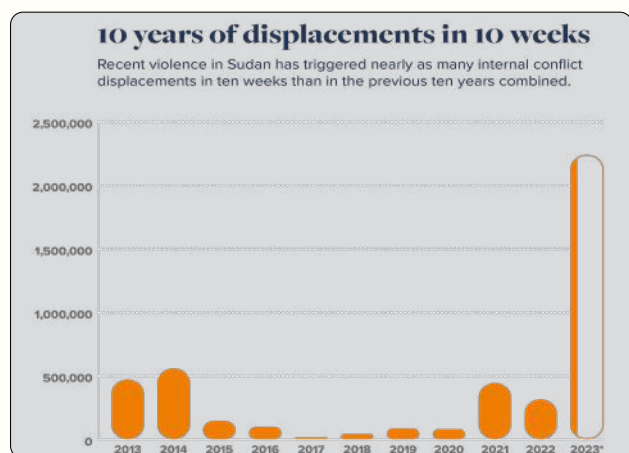
- The fight between the Sudanese Armed Forces(SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which initially took place in cities across northern and Khartoum states and later spread to Darfur and Kordofan states.
- Khartoum has experienced the highest level of internal displacements (1,559,798 reported since April).

2. Ethnic Reasons:

- Most of the displacements in the Blue Nile region are due to conflict between the Hausa and Funj Tribes. This however has been resolved to a certain extent as these tribes signed an agreement to refrain from violence and resolve disputes peacefully.
- The displacements in the west Darfur region are due to ethnic conflict between Arab and non-Arab ethnic groups over land and resources. It remains in a state of permanent humanitarian emergency.
- Since April, around 664,033 displacements have been reported in west, south, central and northern Darfur, respectively.

3. Political Reasons:

- Kleptocracy, apart from the fight for power, has been one of the major reasons behind the instability of Sudan. The leaders fight for power and personal agendas, appropriating the wealth of the nation at the cost of the wider population.



Global Agendas for Sudan crisis:

- The strategic location of Sudan and its rich agricultural resources have attracted regional power struggles. Many nations have vested interests in the region. For instance, the US seeks to counter Russian influence and wants

al-Bashir to topple. Saudi Arab and UAE view this instability of Sudan as a chance to assert their ideological influence in the area. Similarly, Russia as it faces sanctions from the US and other major Western economies strives to expand its presence in the African regions.

Indian Aspect:

- Both Sudan and India have had relations since ancient times, i.e. Indus Valley civilisation. At present, both nations have managed to maintain cordial relations. India has been vocal about the growth and the prosperity of the people of the region.
- The stability of Sudan is necessary for India from an economical aspect as well, as India is the second largest exporter to Sudan after China. Strategically, Sudan is crucial for India to counter Chinese presence in the Red Sea.

Conclusion:

In this era when Asia and Africa are the potential future of the current world, civil-led administration must be asserted in Sudan. Today, in the global world order, instability in any region impacts the entire world in some way or the other. Moreover, a nation is made from its people and any atrocities against them in the name of power or ethnicity is never plausible.

6. Indus Water Treaty

Why in News:

Recently, India has rejected the provision of a decision given by the "Hague based Permanent Court of Arbitration" regarding the Indus water treaty agreement and has raised the demand for the major changes in the terms of this treaty agreement in future.

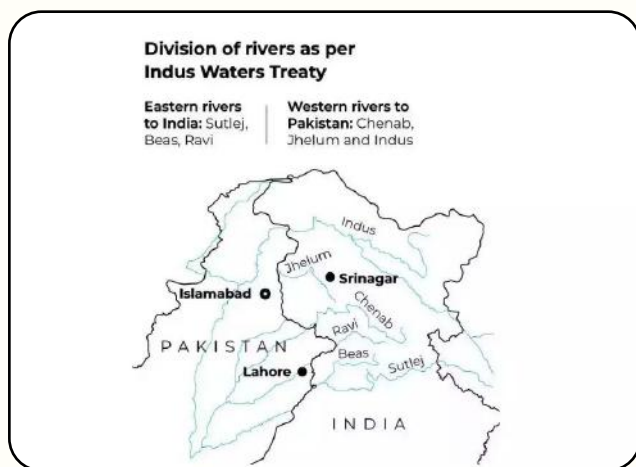
Key Points of Dispute:

- Pakistan says that India's two hydropower projects, Kishnaganga and Ratle, have technical design problems, water flow and environmental violations and they are not compatible with IWT.
- In the year 2016, Pakistan drew the request to a neutral expert-led by the World Bank and placed the proposal in the Permanent Court of Arbitration(PCA).
- However, India requested the appointment of a neutral expert by the Word Bank. Thereafter, the World Bank put a hold on the request proposal of both and said that these countries should find a solution through the Permanent Indus Commission(PIC).
- As a result, separate proceedings were initiated by the World Bank and the Permanent Court of

Arbitration.

India benefits from the Re-negotiation of the Treaty:

- India will benefit the most in terms of Upstream State.
- The Ground Water level of these states like Punjab and Haryana has gone down a lot. As the Sutlej Yamuna link project (SYL) controversies keep happening, the water dispute of these states will end if this treaty is renegotiated.



Disadvantages to India:

- A huge infrastructure will have to be developed for water storage. Since this area comes under earthquake-resistant zone-5, it will be prone to the risk in future.
- As a result of infrastructure development, these dams can be damaged by Pakistan via promoting terrorist activities which may lead to more serious consequences.
- As a relatively weak country and Pakistan being able to give international colour to this issue, it will strengthen Pakistan's position at the negotiable table.

Way Forward:

India wants to return to that situation in which the guided mechanism or step-by-step approach to settlement of the dispute through negotiation was talked about in the basic agreement of the Treaty. Nevertheless, as PM Modi said in the year 2016- "Water and Blood cannot flow together, the negotiations should be proceeded without compromising with the security aspects.

7. Ranil Wickremesinghe's India Visit

Why in News:

On the occasion of 75 years of diplomatic ties between India and Sri Lanka, President Ranil

Wikremesinghe visited India. Also, the Tamil community of Indian origin completed 200 years of its arrival in Sri Lanka. On this anniversary both the countries adopted an important vision document for the expansion of economic partnership.

Key Points of Vision Document:

- The India-Sri Lanka Economic Partnership Vision aims to strengthen mutual relations in five areas.
- **Maritime connectivity-** Under this, both countries will cooperate in the development of port and logistic infrastructure in Colombo, Trincomalee and Kankensanthurai.
- **Air connectivity-** To increase flight movement in the region between Chennai and Jaffna and to explore air connectivity to other places in Sri Lanka.
- **Energy & Electricity connectivity-** Under this, the development of renewable energy and cooperation in the search for green hydrogen and green ammonia will be done. Also, a multi-product petroleum pipeline will be built and joint exploration and production of hydrocarbons in offshore basins will be encouraged. In addition, the implementation of the MoU on the Sampur Solar Project and LNG infrastructure will be expedited.
- **Business Economic & Financial connectivity-** There will be Joint Declaration on development in the field of Animal Husbandry and Dairying. UPI-based digital payment operations would be launched in Sri Lanka. Apart from this, further investment in Sri Lanka will be facilitated and economic and technology cooperation agreements will be discussed.
- **People to People connectivity-** Its objective will be to popularize Buddhist, Ramayana and other religious places in India and Sri Lanka for tourism. At the same time, cooperation between educational institutions of both sides will be promoted.

Way Forward:

The economic and political crisis last year led to a civil war-like situation in Sri Lanka. These circumstances made it important not only for Sri Lanka but also for India to find a solution to the problem. Sri Lanka has an important place in India's Neighborhood First Policy and SAGAR Vision. At the same time, a well-settled, secure and prosperous Sri Lanka is not only in India's interest but in the interest of the entire Indian Ocean region.



Environmental Issue



1. Hoolock Gibbon

Why in News:

Recently, steps have been taken to conserve the Hoolock gibbon, a species of ape found in the northeastern state of Assam. This species has become the 20th species among the extinct apes.

About the Hoolock Gibbon:

- Hoolock gibbons, the smallest and fastest of all monkeys, are found in tropical and subtropical forests in Southeast Asia. The hoolock gibbon is one of the 20 species of gibbon on earth, found in northeast India. Its population is estimated to be around 12,000.
- According to the Global Gibbon Network (GGN), hoolock gibbons, like all apes, are highly intelligent, have distinctive personalities, and are gregarious. The current conservation status of the gibbon species is worrying. Since 1900, there has been a decline in the distribution and population of the gibbon species, making it the smallest population found in tropical rainforests.

Highlights of the Global Gibbon Network (GGN):

- The hoolock gibbon is threatened mainly due to deforestation in India because of the loss of its habitat.
- Two species of ape are found in the Northeast,
 - » The eastern hoolock gibbon (*Hoolock leuconedus*), found in a specific area of Arunachal Pradesh.
 - » The western Hoolock gibbon (*Hoolock hoolock*) that has its presence in Assam and other areas of the northeast.

Center for Cellular and Molecular Biology:

- CCMB, Hyderabad has described only one species of ape in India in 2021 based on genetic analysis. This disproved earlier research that the eastern Hoolock gibbon was a separate species based on its coat colour.
- A CCMB study concluded that split between the two populations of the western Hoolock gibbon and the eastern Hoolock gibbon occurred around 1.48 million years ago. It has also been estimated that the expansion of the gibbon took place 8.38 million years ago.
- In the IUCN list, the Western Hoolock gibbon is classified as Endangered, and the eastern Hoolock Gibbon as vulnerable.

Way Forward:

Mining, infrastructure, industrial development, and poaching are destroying the habitat of the Hoolock

gibbon species, therefore immediate attention should be paid to its conservation by banning and regulating such activities that are threat to these animals.

2. Avian Influenza

Why in News:

Recently, a joint report released by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) stated that outbreaks of avian influenza spreading in animals have raised concerns about the potential risks of humans becoming infected.

Highlights of the Report:

- Avian influenza viruses have primarily affected animals including poultry farms, wild birds, mammals, and other animals. The increasing number of H5N1 avian influenza strains among mammals has raised the possibility of the virus being adapted for being more easily transmissible to humans.
- H5N1 avian influenza viruses specifically belonging to the goose/Guangdong lineage have been causing outbreaks in birds since 1996. Since 2020, a variant of the virus belonging to the H5 clade 2.3.4.4b has caused a high number of deaths in wild birds and poultry in Africa, Asia, Europe and America.
- About 67 countries reported H5N1 outbreaks in poultry farms and wild birds in 2022 resulting in the loss of more than 131 million domestic poultry. In 2023, 14 countries along with America reported the outbreak.
- Although sporadic cases of influenza A (H5N1) virus infection have been reported in humans, the risk of human-to-human transmission is low. Cases so far have mostly been linked to close contact with infected birds and contaminated environments. FAO, WHO, and WOAH however, have stressed the importance of vigilance and surveillance for any changes in the virus, saying that it can spread rapidly between humans.
- The outbreak of avian influenza affects mammals, including farmed minks, seals, sea lions, cats, and dogs.

Threat to humans from Mammals:

- There are about 26 species affected by the H5N1 virus. Pandemics of avian influenza have raised global concern, with increasing cases in mammals because mammals are biologically closer to humans than birds, making the

A horizontal timeline on a dark red background with a large white arrow pointing right at the bottom. The timeline consists of five vertical panels, each with a circular image at the top and text below. The panels are: 1. 1996: HPAI H5N1 isolated in farmed goose in China (Image: a white goose). 2. 1997: Virus isolated in Hong Kong poultry. First human cases with H5 HPAI (Image: chickens in a cage). 3. 2003: H5N1 reported in poultry in several SE Asian countries (Image: a group of chickens). 4. 2004: H5N1 spreads further in Southeast Asia (poultry) including felids (Thailand) (Image: a tiger's face). 5. 2005: First report of HPAI H5N1 outside of Asia (in Turkey, Ukraine and Romania) (Image: a globe showing Europe and Asia).

Year	Event
1996	HPAI H5N1 isolated in farmed goose in China
1997	Virus isolated in Hong Kong poultry. First human cases with H5 HPAI
2003	H5N1 reported in poultry in several SE Asian countries
2004	H5N1 spreads further in Southeast Asia (poultry) including felids (Thailand)
2005	First report of HPAI H5N1 outside of Asia (in Turkey, Ukraine and Romania)

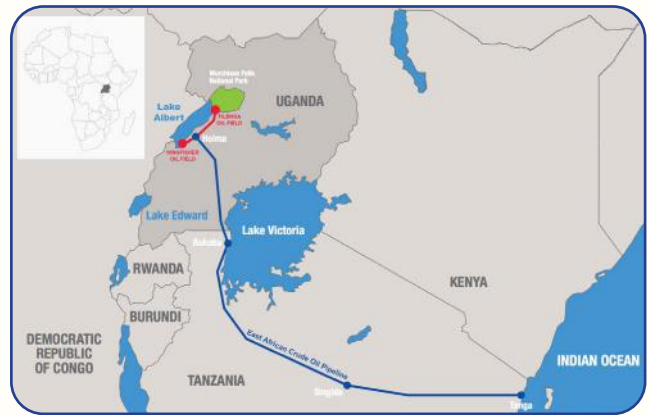
- In 1971, the influenza virus was first classified based on its structural antigenic properties as nucleoprotein (NP), hemagglutinin (HA), and neuraminidase.

Effective control of the outbreak can be done by implementing advanced biosecurity measures to prevent outbreaks of avian influenza, rapid detection of animal outbreaks, and strengthening surveillance in animals and humans while encouraging epidemiological and virological investigations.

Recently, the international non-profit organization Human Rights Watch (HRW) said that the oil pipeline project which is under construction in East Africa could pose a threat to the continent's ecosystem and the global climate crisis.

- The EACO project will have a 1,443-kilometer pipeline, including more than a dozen oil wells and hundreds of kilometers of roads, camps, and other infrastructure.
- This pipeline will transport crude oil to the Indian Ocean port of Tanga via Uganda and Tanzania. The pipeline will pass through 178 villages in Uganda and 231 in Tanzania.
- The collapse of this pipeline would result in significant damage to land, water, air, and the species that depend on them, from inadequate waste management and other pollution.
- The French multinational has announced a \$10 billion investment deal with Uganda, Tanzania, and Chinese company CNOOC (China National Offshore Oil Corporation) to complete the project.
- The pipeline project is expected to be completed by 2025.

- The project is one of the important fossil fuel infrastructures linking the Tilenga and Kingfisher oil fields in western Uganda to the port of Tanga in eastern Tanzania, which is estimated to emit 379 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, more than the annual emissions of Australia.
- The East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) will disrupt the entire ecosystem including Murchison Falls National Park and Murchison Falls-Albert Delta Ramsar Site in Uganda.



- The project will result in the permanent eviction of more than 100,000 people in Tanzania and Uganda, raising concerns about their compensation.
- However, French oil company TotalEnergies has claimed to pay 97 percent compensation in Tilenga by May 2023.

This land acquisition process can lead to serious financial problems for thousands of Ugandan farmers, including heavy household debt, food insecurity, and the inability to pay school fees, forcing many children to drop out of school.

Recently, the Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) has said that an aquatic weed called 'Ludwigia peruviana' found in Peru, and some countries of Central and South America, has threatened the habitat and grazing areas of elephants in Kerala border and 'Valparai' hill station in Tamil Nadu.

- It is one of the 22 priority invasive plants of Tamil Nadu.
- It is a fast-growing weed along the banks of

water bodies, which infests most of the marshy areas around hill stations.

- It is also known locally as 'vayal', which damages the edible fodder and green grass of elephants.
- It is found locally in areas of Peru, and Central and South America and grows rapidly in lowland areas. Its small and yellow flowers are used as ornamental plants.
- This has limited the growth of grass and native plants, which are palatable to other animals including elephants and gaur.



How are elephants at risk?

- Since the last five years the increasing prevalence of this weed has been observed, it spreads mainly in the swamps in the middle of tea gardens and forms thickets.
- These swamps are known to have excellent grass cover, sedges, and water bodies which are especially good for herbivores like gaur and elephants.
- Grasses and sedges are found along the banks of water and marshes in the valley during the summer months, but the dense thickets of Ludwigia suppress these grasses and edible fodder, thus eliminating the forage grass, which poses a threat to elephants and other animals.

Effect on Swamps:

- Swamps are home to large herbivores apart from amphibians and otters, which act as water storage areas that need to be protected.
- Even if Ludwigia is uprooted by hand, the tender plant breaks easily and can be re-spread by roots or broken stems that have fallen into a swamp.

Way Forward:

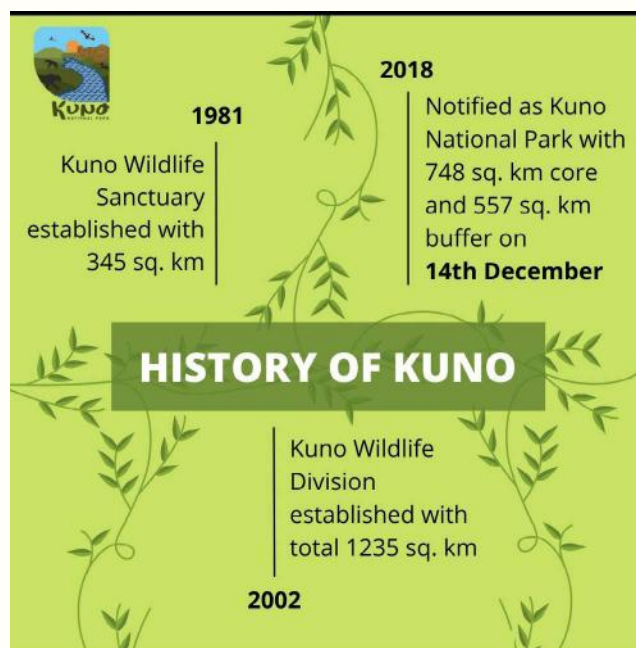
There is an urgent need for the protection of all swamps so that they are free from Ludwigia. Although not all swamps are affected by it, some swamps are

seriously damaged, so focusing on preventing their invasion and spread should be done by identifying those swamps.

5. Kuno National Park needs at least 50 cheetahs - South African Expert

Why in News:

Vincent Merwe, a South African expert, shared some observations with the Cheetah Steering Committee constituted by the National Tiger Conservation Authority. Based on observational experience and facts, a minimum of 50 founder cheetahs would be needed before the wild cat population is stabilised, which will eventually help in the growth of feral cat populations. Cheetahs have been declared extinct in India in 1952. As part of the Cheetah reintroduction plan by India, 20 cheetahs from Namibia and South Africa were released in Kuno National Park. Also, the National Tiger Conservation Authority has decided to bring 50 cheetahs from Namibia within the next 5 years.



Present situation:

- The results obtained in the last few months have put a question mark on this project because 8 of all cheetahs brought from Africa have died.
- Different reasons have been given for the death of cheetahs-
 - » The problem of widespread heat and dehydration in Kuno National Park
 - » Infection caused by tracking device
 - » Relocation for example, male cheetah Uday

died of heart disease.

Expert Opinion:

- Wildlife expert Vincent van der Merwe has described the death of three cubs as normal and also said that there may be more deaths in future. It is believed that out of 20 cheetahs that came in the first year under the Cheetah Project, even if 50% remains safe then the project will be considered successful.

Kuno National Park:

- It was declared a national park in 2018. Kuno is mainly grassland. The Kuno River (a tributary of Chambal) flows through it. Kuno National Park holds important ecological importance due to its strategic location and diverse habitats. Wild animals like wild boar, chinkara are found here.

Way Forward:

The authorities may limit the risk by implementing the South African model of keeping fenced reserves, and by analysing deaths due to anthropogenic factors. By following such measures the Cheetah Project can be made a success.

6. Mhadei Sanctuary to be declared a Tiger Reserve

Why in News:

The Goa bench of the Bombay High Court has directed the Goa government to declare the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary and other specified areas as a tiger reserve under Section 38-V (1) of the Wildlife Protection Act, within three months, following directives from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). This decision came after the discovery of a poisoned tigress and three cubs in the sanctuary in 2020, reigniting the demand for a tiger reserve by environmentalists.

Where is the Mhadei Sanctuary located?

- The Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary in Goa, located near Valpoi village in the state's Northern Part, covers a vast 208 sq. km. area. It safeguards the rich biodiversity of the Western Ghats, making Goa the only state in the country to protect the entire Western Ghats area within its borders.
- **Flora:** The sanctuary features dense moist deciduous forests with some evergreen species and rare endemic orchids and is renowned for its sacred groves, preserving rare indigenous trees like the saffron-flowered evergreen Ashoka tree.
- **Fauna:** Commonly spotted animals include Indian gaur, barking deer, sambar deer, Asian palm civet, wild boar, and others, while rarer

sightings may include Royal Bengal tigers, black panthers, sloth bears, and slender lorises, (an endangered species).



How is a Tiger Reserve notified?

- The procedure to notify an area as a tiger reserve in India begins with identifying a suitable area with a significant tiger population. The proposal is then sent to NTCA, that assesses the ecological, biological and socio-economic aspects and evaluates the viability of tiger conservation.
- After receiving approval from the central government, the concerned state government issues a formal notification, legally declaring the area as a tiger reserve.
- In a recent ruling, High Court held that states have absolute discretion in notifying an area as tiger reserve, the recommendations of NTCA Section 38-V (1) of WLP (Wildlife Protection Act) are mandatory.
- WLP and NTCA Guidelines of 2012 promote human-wildlife coexistence, minimizing large-scale displacements of population and protecting forest dwellers' rights.

Way Forward:

Declaring a forest as a tiger reserve in India presents challenges such as resettlement and rehabilitation of local communities, human-wildlife conflict, resource conflicts, illegal activities, social issues and habitat fragmentation. Addressing these requires careful planning, community engagement, and collaboration among stakeholders for successful tiger conservation.

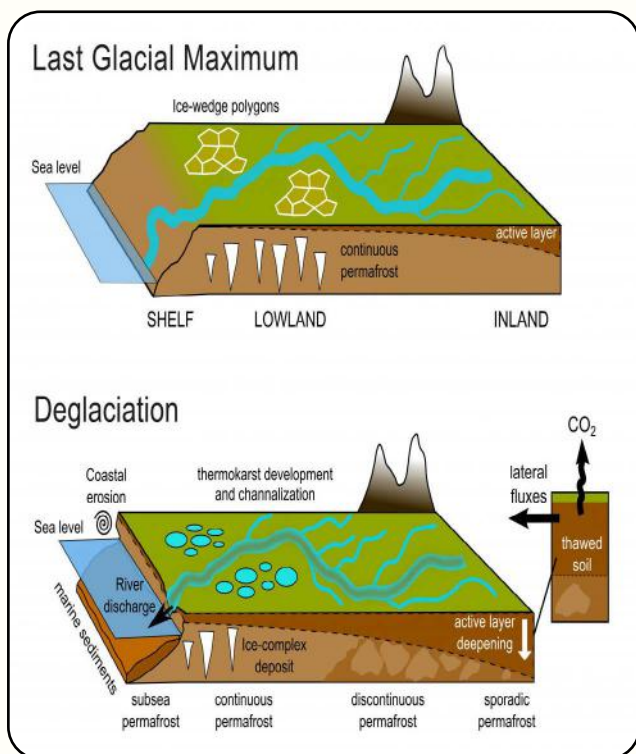
7. Thawing of the Biggest Permafrost Crater

Why in News:

Recently drone imagery has revealed the details of the World's biggest permafrost crater- Batagaika Crater in Russia's far eastern region of Sakha Republic.

Key Findings:

- Local scientists have found mega slumps in the Batagaika crater in the Siberian region. It is widening up to 20 meters a year on average. This massive sinkhole is melting the permafrost.



Permafrost and Significance:

- Permafrost is soil and rocks that remain frozen for at least two years straight, making up the bulk of the Polar landscape. Due to the warming of the planet, the permafrost melts/thaws and the earth loosens and slumps resulting in mega slumps.
- Permafrost is essential to protect polar and earth ecosystems. It traps various GHG gases and organic carbon. The permafrost also reflects most of the incoming insolation due to high albedo.

The Batagaika Crater:

- The Batagaika Crater, the world's largest

thermokarst depression is located in the Chersky Range Area (Sakha Republic) of Russia. It is a 1-km long permafrost crater and it is expanding at a surprising rate.

- The melting of the Batagaika crater started after deforestation in the region in 1960. The sinking of land is exacerbated by increasing anthropogenic activities and climate change.
- The sinking of a crater is also called 'the cave-in' or 'mega-slump'.

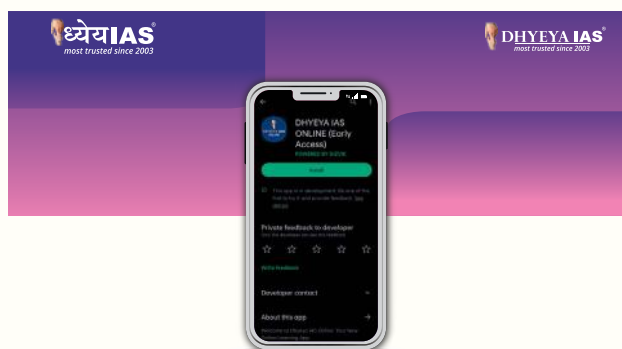
Impacts of Megaslumps:

The region of Siberia (Russia) is warming about 2.5 times faster than the rest of the world. This results in the melting of the long-frozen Tundra region (which covers 65% of Russia). The thawing permafrost has the following consequences:

- Immediate Infrastructural Damage like buckling of roadways, railway lines, splitting apart houses and disrupting pipelines.
- Trapped greenhouse gases like methane are being released into the atmosphere.
- Global warming and climate change will further get fueled by this.
- The impact of warming is resulting in frequent wildfires that are exacerbating the thawing.

Way Forward:

The thawing of Batagaika Crater is a warning sign for the earth and has become a glaring symbol of the impacts of global warming today. It is expected to rise in future with the starting of economic activities in the Arctic region. Therefore, a global consensus needs to be constructed soon for preserving the permafrost regions of the planet.



DOWNLOAD OUR
 ANDROID MOBILE APP





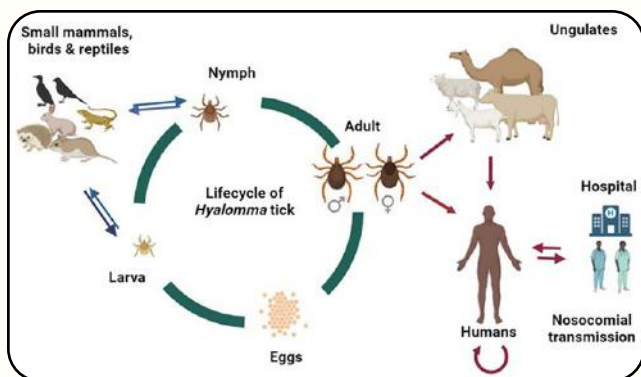
1. Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever

Why in News:

A recent warning has been issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) about the possible transmission of Crimean Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF), a tick-borne infection known for high mortality.

What is CCHF?

- Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF) is a viral hemorrhagic fever, transmitted by ticks.
- It can also occur through contact with viraemic animal tissues (animal tissues where the virus has entered the bloodstream) during and immediately after slaughter.
- Outbreaks of CCHF are threat to public health services, as the virus can cause epidemics, has a high case-fatality ratio (10–40%), and potentially causes more outbreaks in hospitals and healthcare facilities.



The spread of CCHF:

- This virus is present in insects of the tick family, so animals like cattle, goats, sheep, and rabbits can become victims of this virus. Transmission to humans can occur through contact with an infected tick or the blood of animals.
- CCHF can be transmitted from one infected person to another by contact with infectious blood or body fluids, such as sweat and saliva. Ticks can also be spread by migratory birds, which can spread the virus over long distances.

History of CCH Fever:

- The disease was first detected in 1944 in soldiers of the Crimean Peninsula (near the Black Sea), in 1969 it was found that the disease identified in the Congo Basin was similar to the disease in the Crimean Peninsula, hence the name Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic Fever kept.

- The first death due to this disease in Europe was reported in 2016 in Spain.
- In India this case has been found in Gujarat where one person has died of this fever, the incidence of this case in India is a serious issue.

Symptoms and treatment of CCHF:

- The main symptoms include fever, muscle aches, dizziness, neck pain, back pain, headache, eye pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain sore throat, and sensitivity to light.
- No vaccine has yet been developed for this virus in humans or animals, the antiviral drug ribavirin has been used to treat this infection.

Way Forward:

To stop the spread of this infection and other preventive measures, laboratory tests can be used, which include ELISA, antigen detection, serum neutralization, reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR), etc.

2. Highest ever DPT3 vaccination coverage in India

Why in News:

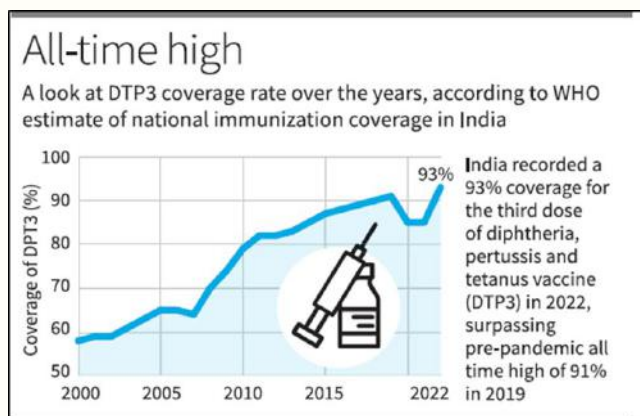
The recent report of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) stated that India crossed the 2019 high of 91% and achieved 93% DPT3 (diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus) vaccination coverage in 2022.

Highlights of the Report:

- According to the data of 2022, which was given to WHO by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, a total of 25.2 million received the first dose of DPT-1. While a total of 24.6 million people received all three doses of diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus. A total of 25.2 million children received the first dose of the measles vaccine, while 23.8 million received both doses.
- Maharashtra became the most vaccinated state with its 27 Municipal Corporations playing a big role in achieving their target of vaccinating a total of 19.32 lakh infants (0-1 years) from April 2022 to March 2023.
- The number of cases of whooping cough in India decreased from 31,431 in 2000 to 4,362 in 2022. Cases of tetanus decreased from 8,997 in 2000 to 65 in 2022. There were 5,125 cases of diphtheria in 2000, which came down to 3,286 in 2022. Nevertheless, the incidence of measles has increased, from 38,835 in 2000 to 40,967 in 2022.

Improvements in South-East Asia:

- The WHO said that Southeast Asia has the highest vaccination recovery compared to all other regions, which can be attributed mainly to the efforts being made by India and Indonesia. Both nations did 85% coverage in 2022.
- In the Southeast Asia region, the coverage rate for DTP3 sharply increased from 82 percent in 2021 to 91 percent in 2022.



Status of other countries in vaccination coverage:

- Bhutan has achieved 98% vaccination while Maldives achieved 99%, surpassing pre-pandemic vaccination rates (90%).
- Bangladesh with 98% and Thailand with 97% have demonstrated consistency in routine immunization coverage throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.
- Sri Lanka with 98% coverage, Nepal with 90% and Timor-Leste with 86% were closer to the pre-pandemic coverage of 99%, 93% and 90%, respectively.
- Myanmar with 71% DTP3 coverage in 2022, was far away from the pre-pandemic target of 90% coverage in 2019.
- Due to border restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic in North Korea, national vaccine stock-outs were reported in 2021 and 2022, leaving no vaccinations for several antigens but this coverage is expected to increase further.

Way Forward:

The Centre's Mission Indradhanush scheme has been lauded for covering unvaccinated or partially vaccinated children, and its intensive efforts have helped expand immunization coverage.

3. ICBM Hwasong-18

Why in News:

Recently, North Korea tested its latest Hwasong-18

Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM), which is the first missile to use solid propellant. Missiles using solid propellant can be deployed and fired faster.

About Hwasong-18:

- The Hwasong-18 is a solid-fueled ICBM and it was first unveiled this year.
- The use of solid propellant in Hwasong-18 allows rapid deployment of missiles. Solid propellants can fire faster and accelerate more quickly at liftoff.
- Solids materials have been used for many military applications, such as short-range rockets, but had not been used for any longer-range applications.
- Nevertheless, solid propellants are mainly considered to be very good for military missile use because they can be stored easily.

About ICBM:

- ICBMs are ballistic missiles that have a range of more than 5,500 km and have good nuclear weapon delivery techniques.
- Currently, apart from the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), Russia, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, China, India, and Israel are the countries that have land-based ICBM missiles.

Importance of North Korea's ICBM Test:

- North Korea while referring to the Washington Declaration has said that the US and South Korea are sensitizing the military security situation on the Korean Peninsula and the region and that the US is intensifying military force against the DPRK.
- North Korea said that both US-South Korea are planning to openly discuss the use of nuclear weapons against our state through a meeting of the 'Nuclear Consultative Group', which would be the parent body of the "trilateral nuclear alliance" of US-Japan-South Korea.
- North Korea fears that they could send nuclear-powered submarines and nuclear strategic bombers to and around the Korean Peninsula at any time.
- The United States had deployed a nuclear-powered submarine capable of carrying about 150 Tomahawk missiles to South Korea, and it was stationed at the port of Busan, a port city in South Korea.

Way Forward:

Japan said the missile fell about 250 km west of northern Japan's Okushiri Islands, which fall within its strategic territory. After the test, South Korea held an emergency National Security Council meeting in Lithuania for the NATO summit.

4. Gambusia Fish

Why in News:

In an effort to combat malaria, dengue fever, and other ailments spread by mosquitoes, the state of Andhra Pradesh recently released millions of Gambusia fish into many of its water bodies.

Gambusia Fish

- The Gambusia fish species exhibits a high potential for reproduction; for instance, a single female Gambusia could give birth to between 900 and 1200 offspring during her lifetime.
- The fish, also known as mosquito fish or gambezi, is small compared to many freshwater fishes and is employed as a biological control agent for mosquito larvae all over the world.
- They can devour around 300 mosquito larvae every day, which limits the number of mosquitoes that can reproduce.
- They are typically found in shallow areas and are among the most common freshwater fish in the world.
- Gambusia affinis' (G. affinis) native habitat is the southeastern United States' waterways.
- Since 1928, India has included fish as a biological control for mosquito larvae in its mosquito prevention plans.

Concerns:

- The invasive nature of Gambusia fish poses a hazard to the existing ecosystem as they may



outcompete and prey upon native species.

- The discharge of Gambusia fish has sparked worries about potential harm to native species in freshwater bodies. Aggressive behaviour in Gambusia fish, such as consuming the tadpoles of frogs and the eggs of rival fish may destroy the existing native biodiversity.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature(IUCN) has listed them as one of the 100 worst invasive alien species. Additionally, India has classified it as an invasive alien species.
- In India, after being introduced to the Nainital Lake in the 1990s to combat malaria, mosquito fish had an impact on the ecosystem health of the lake.

Way Forward:

A World Health Organization publication warns against the release of exotic fish species into natural environments, highlighting the potential negative effects on local species and aquatic animals. Instead, experts recommend focusing on native fish species that naturally control mosquito larvae and encouraging their release into the natural environment.

5. Evolution of Synthetic Cells with Minimal Genome through Natural Adaptation

Why in News:

Recently, evolutionary biologist Jay T. Lennon and his team have discovered that a synthetic cell with a reduced genome could evolve as quickly as a normal cell. Despite losing 45% of its original genes, the synthetic cell adapted and demonstrated resilience in a laboratory experiment lasting 300 days, effectively showcasing that life forms can evolve under situations where raw materials are limited, forcing the genome to perish or survive through evolution.

What is a synthetic cell?

- A synthetic cell is an artificially created cell designed to imitate natural cells using non-living materials. They consist of essential components like cellular machinery and synthetic genetic material that does not exist in nature. Scientists can synthesize these genetic sequences using chemical processes and assemble them to form a complete genome.
- Synthetic cells and genomes have numerous potential applications, including designing organisms with specific desired traits, creating microorganisms for biotechnological purposes (e.g., biofuels production, pharmaceuticals,

or industrial enzymes), and advancing our understanding of genetic functions and cellular processes.

are expected to expand, leading to better public health outcomes and disease control measures.

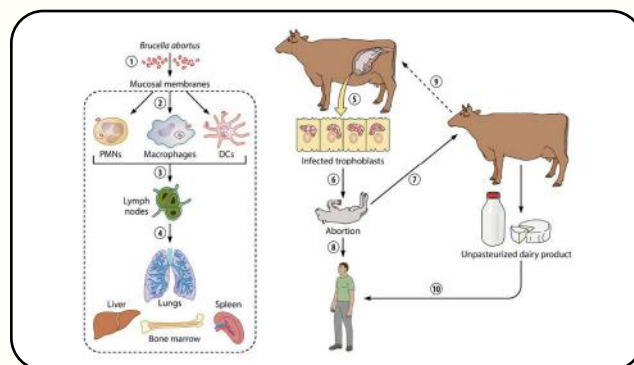
6. Brucellosis

Why in News:

Recently a case of brucellosis infection in seven years old girl has been reported in Kollam, Kerala. Brucellosis is a deadly bacterial infection that is usually found in cattle and it is transmitted from animals to humans via contact.

Brucellosis:

- Brucellosis infection is caused by various species of *Brucella* bacteria and it usually affects cattle, swine, goats, sheep and dogs. It is also known as Mediterranean fever or Malta fever.
- It can be transmitted from animals to humans via direct contact or consumption of animal or dairy products, especially unpasteurized milk or cheese from goats or sheep.
- It can also be transmitted by inhaling contaminated air or touching the blood and body fluids of infected animals.
- The transmission of brucellosis from human to human is very rare.



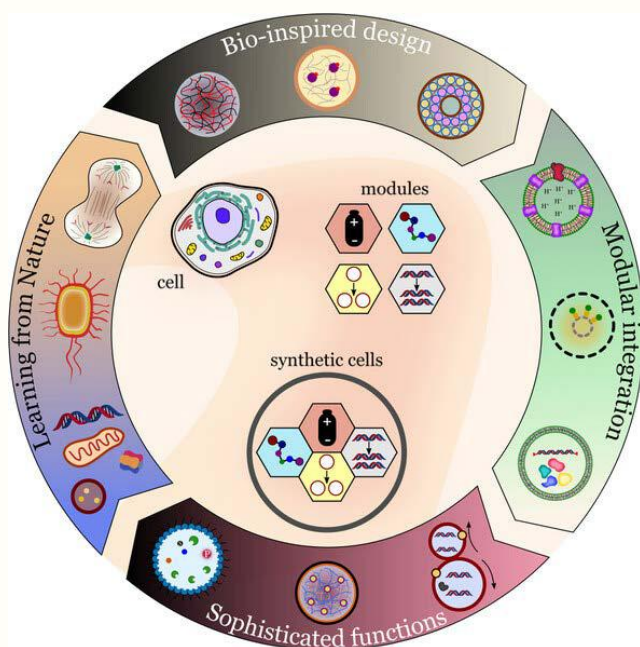
Symptoms:

- This bacterial infection can start to show symptoms in humans from a few days to a few months after having been infected. They are alike to flu-kind symptoms- fever, chills, loss of appetite or anorexia (a psychological disorder in which one less eats due to fear of weight gain) weakness, joint pain and fatigue.

Brucellosis in India:

It is endemic in India and it leads to huge economic losses to the dairy industry via:

- Infertility
- Abortion
- Birth of weak offspring
- Reduced Productivity.



Findings of the latest research:

- Researchers at the J. Craig Venter Institute, California, used a synthetic organism, *Mycoplasma mycoides* JCVI-syn3B, a minimized version of the bacterium *M. mycoides* and eliminated 45 percent of its natural genome. At 493 genes, the minimal genome of *M. mycoides* JCVI-syn3B is the smallest of any known free-living organism.
- The synthetic organism was allowed to evolve freely for 300 days in the lab where they compared its performance to the original bacterium and another unevolved version. It was found that the evolved bacterium improved and became stronger, while the unevolved one did not.
- The study demonstrated that synthetic life forms could evolve through natural processes of evolution and adapt themselves to the environment. The minimisation of genome didn't constraint the natural adaptation.

Way Forward:

The research findings have significant implications. They provide valuable insights into how organisms evolve and how antimicrobial resistance develops. This knowledge can help in creating improved treatments and vaccines. It is also essential for controlling and preventing disease outbreaks through One Health strategies. As synthetic biology progresses, its applications in disease epidemiology

Brucellosis in World:

- While Brucellosis is rare in the USA but it is common in Southern European countries like Portugal, Spain, Turkey, Italy, Greece, South France, Eastern Europe, Central America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East Asian regions.
- Brucellosis has infected over 3000 people in China.

Treatment and Government Measures:

- It is usually treated with antibiotics (rifampin and doxycycline). Further, it can be prevented through proper vaccination of reared/ domesticated animals and consumption of processed dairy products and meats.
- Earlier in 2020, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research's Indian Veterinary Research Institute (ICAR-IVRI) developed Brucella abortus S19⁺ per Vaccine for Brucellosis prevention in the dairy sector.

Way Forward:

Human brucellosis is quite common in rural India as there is a lack of vaccination and inadequate provision of services in the animal husbandry sector. Therefore vaccination and awareness programs must be executed with the participation of agencies like MNREGA and Gram-Sabha for effective prevention.

7. Bacterial Link to Endometriosis Uncovered

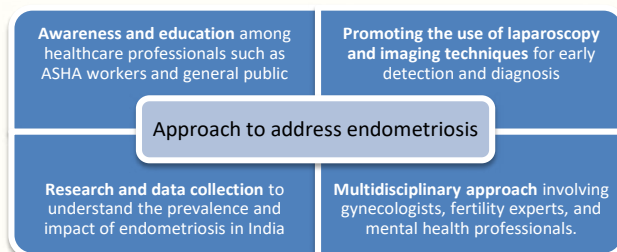
Why in News:

A new study published in Science Translational Medicine has revealed a potential link between bacterial infection and endometriosis, a painful condition among women. A bacteria called *Fusobacterium* was found in 60% of women with endometriosis. This finding indicates that microbes might be involved in the development of the disease, and using antibiotics to target *Fusobacterium* could potentially reduce lesion size and frequency and open the doors for non-invasive treatment.

What is Endometriosis?

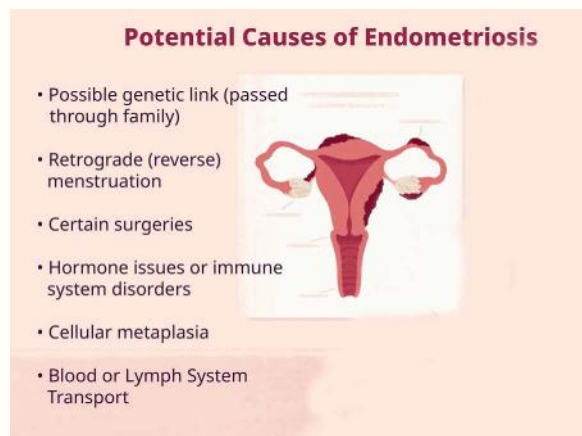
- Endometriosis is a reproductive disease that affects about 10% of women worldwide. It occurs when tissue similar to the lining of the uterus (endometrium) grows outside the uterus, typically in the pelvic area, ovaries, fallopian tubes, and other surrounding organs.
- This misplaced tissue responds to hormonal changes during the menstrual cycle, leading to inflammation, scarring, and the formation of lesions. Symptoms include pelvic pain, heavy bleeding, infertility, fatigue, and depression.

- In India, about 42 million women are affected by this condition. However, poor understanding of the disease combined with cultural constraints and myths have resulted in delayed diagnosis and non-availability of treatment facilities in rural areas.



Improving Endometriosis Diagnosis and Treatment

- Improving the diagnosis and treatment of endometriosis in women in India requires a comprehensive approach involving various stakeholders, including healthcare providers, policymakers, researchers, and patient advocacy groups.



Way Forward:

- The study linking endometriosis and bacterial infection has opened new avenues for treating this widespread condition affecting millions of women. Antibiotics show promise as a potential treatment, but further research is essential to fully comprehend the bacteria's role in causing the condition and how antibiotics work as a treatment for endometriosis. By fostering a multidisciplinary approach, early detection and improved management can be achieved, enhancing the overall well-being and quality of life for women in India living with endometriosis.



Economic Issues



1. Modification in E-Auction System for the Sale of Rice

Why in News:

The Food Corporation of India (FCI) launched an e-auction of rice for the first time after wheat to control the rising retail prices. For the first e-auction for rice under Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS) small businessmen would also be included.

Key Points Related to E-Auction:

- In the latest round of e-auction under Open Market Sale Scheme-Domestic (OMSS-D), 290 MT of rice has been sold in three states namely Karnataka, Kerala (100 MT each), and Maharashtra (90 MT each).
- The Food Corporation of India had planned to sell 3.88 lakh tonnes of rice in the first round, but only 170 tonnes were sold to five bidders.
- According to FCI, the sale of rice under OMSS will continue till March 31, 2024, and the sale will take place every week through e-auction.
- The sale of rice has been launched to improve availability and arrest the rise in retail prices as rice stocks. Rice stocks saw a shortfall of 13 percent over the last two years and its production and procurement are further likely to be affected due to weather disruptions caused by El Nino.
- Karnataka has been kept out of the open market sale scheme, and the current requirement of about 360 lakh tonnes of food grains to meet the demand under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) is stressed.
- FCI had already announced to sell 4 lakh tonnes of wheat and 5 lakh tonnes of rice from buffer stock to bulk consumers and traders to check rising retail prices of food grains.

About Food Corporation of India (FCI):

- In 1965, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) was set up under the Food Corporations Act, of 1964, given the acute shortage of food grains, especially wheat, in the country.

Way Forward:

Under the Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic), the Food Corporation of India sells wheat and rice stocks from time to time through e-auction at pre-determined prices to augment supplies during the lean season of food grains, particularly wheat, and to control open market prices.

2. MoU on LCS signed between India and UAE

Why in News:

In a move to further economic cooperation between the countries, a Memorandum of Understanding on the Local Currency Settlement (LCS) was signed during PM Modi's recent visit to Abu Dhabi.

What is LCS?

- The LCS system allows for the use of local currencies i.e. Indian Rupee and UAE Dirham in this case, for the purpose of bilateral trade. This is India's first-ever LCS arrangement which aims to transform cross-border transactions.

Benefits:

The signing of LCS is a milestone achieved in the growing India-UAE partnership which is also outlined by the Vision Statement released during a virtual summit in 2022. In this context, it promises the following benefits –

- It is expected to reduce transaction costs and processing time thus increasing the volume and speed of bilateral trade.
- It will provide flexibility to traders and businesses to choose the payment currency on the basis of mutual agreement.
- It will help to avert exchange rate risks and high global inflation as visible through present geo-economic conditions. Thus, it will strengthen domestic currency by reducing dependence on foreign currency.
- Furthermore, it allows for the investment of surplus balances in various local currency assets such as government securities, industrial bonds, stock market, etc. It will ensure growth along with providing new avenues for cooperation.
- It will facilitate transfer of remittances especially by less skilled low earners by cutting transaction costs.
- Also, it will elevate preferential trade terms as envisaged in the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed between the two countries.

Other Areas of Cooperation:

- Besides LCS, a MoU was signed for the establishment of a campus of IIT Delhi in Abu Dhabi. It will bring academic excellence of the IITs to the global forefront and also benefit Indian diaspora significantly.
- Another MoU was signed for interlinking the payment and messaging systems of the two countries. As a result, India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) will be linked to UAE's Instant Payment Platform (IPP).
- Along with this, linking card switches (RuPay switch and UAESWITCH) will facilitate communications and transactions between

different payment service providers.

Way Forward:

Trade in local currencies along with the interlinking of payment messaging systems will provide a new dimension to India-UAE economic ties. India should explore this dimension with other countries as well, to achieve Atmanirbharta in international relations.

3. Advance Authorization Scheme

Why in News:

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has implemented the Advance Authorization Scheme under the Foreign Trade Policy. This scheme aims to allow duty-free import of inputs for export purposes.

About the Scheme:

- Advance Authorization Scheme aims to enhance trade facilitation and streamline processes for exporters through the introduction of new measures. It allows the duty-free import of inputs which are directly incorporated into an export product.
- In addition to any inputs, packaging material, fuel, oil, and catalyst which is consumed/utilized in the process of production or export, is allowed.
- The eligibility of inputs is determined by the sector-specific norms committees based on input-output norms.
- The duty-free imports provisioned under this scheme are not allowed to be sold as the products in domestic market.

Significance of the Scheme:

- The measures would simplify the advance authorization via several trade facilitation measures. It would ultimately result in shorter turnaround times for exporters, improved ease of doing business and reduced burden compliance.
- This will also reduce the import-induced inflation in the export sector and will promote investors to export more.

Process for Authorization:

- The DGFT has created a user-friendly and searchable database of Ad-hoc Norms fixed in the previous years to make the norms fixation process more-efficient.

Foreign Trade Policy- 2023:

- The Foreign Trade Policy 2023 sets a \$2 trillion target for exports of goods and services by 2030. The FTP 2023 is based on the four major pillars- Remission (Reduction of debt, duty, or penalty), Export promotion through collaboration, Ease of doing business and focus on Emerging Areas (E-Commerce, developing District Export hubs and Streamlining of SCOMET policy).

DGFT-

- The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) is a government body responsible for implementing the country's foreign trade policy and investment in India. It is attached to body of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GOI.

Way Forward:

India is aiming to become a \$5 trillion economy by 2030 and without the strengthening of export sector this target will not be realized. Further, the creation of capital and physical infrastructure and redressal of supply chain blockages are essential to promote export size.

4. Centre Bans Export of Non-Basmati White Rice

Why in News:

Recently, the Food Department has said that the central government has banned the export of non-basmati rice to curb price rise in the domestic market.

Reasons for the ban:

- Center said retail prices of non-basmati rice have increased by 3% in the last month and 11.5% in the last year, despite the imposition of a 20% export duty from September 2022 to bring down prices as well as ensure availability in the domestic market.
- Exports increased from 33.66 LMT (Lakh Metric Tonnes) during the September-March 2021-22 period to 42.12 LMT in September-March 2022-23.
- In FY 2023-24, about 15.54 LMT of this variety of rice was exported, while only 11.55 LMT was exported during FY 2022-23.
- The sharp increase in exports can be attributed to factors such as higher international prices due to the geopolitical scenario, El Nino, and extreme climatic conditions in other rice-growing countries.
- Rice prices in India have risen by 20-30% in the last three months on prospects of poor crop production in 2023-24 in the Rabi season, poor sowing of the Kharif crop due to low rainfall in east-south India, and heavy rains in northern India. The 7% increase in the minimum support price for paddy has also contributed to the price rise.

Export Exemption for Parboiled Rice:

- Non-basmati white rice accounts for about 25% of the total rice exported from the country, however, there has been no change in the export policy for non-basmati rice (parboiled rice) and basmati rice, which account for a major share in rice exports. This will ensure that the farmers

will continue to get the benefit of remunerative prices in the international market.

Global reason for the ban:

- According to the International Monetary Fund Russia's exit from the agreement to transact Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea threatens to increase global food insecurity and could lead to higher food prices, especially in low-income countries.

Way Forward:

Export curbs may help in controlling domestic rice prices, but this may have a significant impact on India's rice exports, and global prices may increase, affecting some countries in Africa that import Indian rice. Many are heavily dependent on grain, which is usually cheaper than grain sold by Vietnam, Thailand, and Pakistan. Therefore, this aspect must simultaneously be considered.

5. Standing Committee on Statistics

Why in News:

The Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation has recently constituted a new Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS) to enhance the credibility and transparency of official data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).

Significance of SCoS:

Addressing data quality issues:

- In recent years, the credibility of data from NSO, in particular the credibility of household surveys conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), has been questioned. The government had withheld the results of two key NSSO household surveys in 2017-18, citing "data quality issues". As a result, economic indicators such as retail inflation, GDP and poverty estimates are based on out-of-date data for 2011-12, reducing the current credibility.

Role of SCoS in rebuilding trust:

- The SCoS is expected to play a key role in addressing data quality concerns and rebuilding trust in India's official statistics.
- Apart from providing advice on individual surveys and datasets, the committee will also focus on sensitizing data users to ensure better interpretation of relevant data.
- By assisting the NSO in finalizing the survey results, the committee aims to bring transparency by restoring the credibility of India's real data.

Advanced Coordination and Integration:

- With its expanded mandate, the SCoS will facilitate better coordination and integration of statistical activities across various ministries and departments, thereby reducing data duplication and inconsistencies.

Enhanced Transparency and Accountability:

- SCoS aims to ensure regular dissemination and publication of data, involve stakeholders and experts in the statistical process to promote transparency and accountability.

Challenges:

- Resource constraints in terms of manpower, infrastructure, technology or money may hinder the effective functioning of the SCoS.
- Accessing and using data through different sources or platforms with different regulations may pose legal or institutional barriers.
- Political or public pressure may interfere with the production or release of sensitive or controversial data.

Conclusion:

The aim of this committee is to address the issues of data quality and to address the lack of credibility in the estimation of India's economic indicators and poverty estimates. The setting up of the new Standing Committee on Statistics is a significant effort to improve the quality and credibility of India's official data. By doing so, India can rely on accurate and timely multiple data to make informed policy decisions and promote sustainable development.

6. India-Indonesia Economic and Financial Dialogue

Why in News:

Recently, the finance ministers of India and Indonesia have launched the India-Indonesia Economic and Finance Dialogue platform. This initiative has been unveiled to boost cooperation and foster a shared understanding of global issues between the two countries.

About the Platform:

- India-Indonesia Economic and Financial Dialogue was launched during the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting- 2023.
- This platform is established to enhance collaboration on bilateral and international economic and financial matters. This would also provide a common platform for the economic policymakers and financial regulators of both countries.
- This would bolster economic coordination and strengthen technological engagement in the field of fintech.
- The strong and cooperative engagement between India and Indonesia will also promote India's leadership in the Southeast and Indo-Pacific region.

India-Indonesia Relations:

- The bilateral relations between India and Indonesia have become more dynamic and multilateral after the implementation of the Look East Policy (1991) followed by the Act East Policy in 2014.
- Indonesia has been India's largest trading partner in the ASEAN region. India is Indonesia's largest buyer of palm oil, as well as a major importer of coal, minerals, rubber, pulp and paper.
- Indonesia receives a wide range of exported commodities from India like refined petroleum products, agro-products, telecommunication and commercial vehicles etc.
- Both countries have shared two millennia of close cultural and commercial contact. The cultural linkages from Buddhist heritage to the Ramayana epic hold a strong connecting thread between the two countries.
- Indonesia also holds a strategic position in the Indo-Pacific region as it is positioned near the critical choke point of the Malacca Strait.



Way Forward:

India and Indonesia are engaging at diverse platforms in several ways. Nevertheless, it is crucial to promote growth in both economies and also to maintain the broader economic and financial stability of Southeast Asia and the world. This would also counter the assertiveness of China in the region.

7. PFC Joins Asia Transition Finance Study Group

Why in News:

Power finance corporation Ltd (PFC) has achieved a milestone by joining the "Asia Transition Finance Study Group"(ATFSG). This is an initiative spearheaded by the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) to encourage sustainable transition finance in Asian countries. To be a part of this initiative, PFC will voice India's perspective, by developing policy considerations for effective and efficient energy transition financing.

Power Finance Corporation:

- It is an Indian central public undertaking under the Ownership of the Ministry of Power, Government of India and accorded the prestigious "MAHARATNA" status.
- It was incorporated in 1986 as a largest Infrastructure company which is dedicated to the power sector.
- It has played a pivotal role in the electrification of India as a backbone of India's power sector.

Key Points:

- The Joining of ATFSG was announced by PFC during the Bilateral Ministerial Meeting at the G-20 summit in Goa, in the presence of Minister of Power and New and Renewable Energy Mr RK Singh and His Excellency Mr Yasutoshi Nishimura, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Government of Japan. The collaboration will help in fostering cooperation among Asian countries to advance financing for Energy Transition and net Zero objectives.

Asia Transition Finance Study Group (ATFSG):

- ATFSG was established in 2021, by a private financial Institution based on the recognition that transition finance will play an important role in Asian Economics being able to achieve carbon neutrality.
- ATFSG is an initiative of the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry for promoting sustainable transition finance for Asian countries.

Way Forward:

Joining ATFSG will help reduce today's high greenhouse emissions, driving the transition to a climate-neutral and sustainable Economy. These could be potential investments into green production methods or reducing the environmental footprint as far as possible where no green technologies are yet available. Further, it would be helpful to achieve Net zero objectives which is the prime concern for India.

1. Henley Passport Index

Why in News:

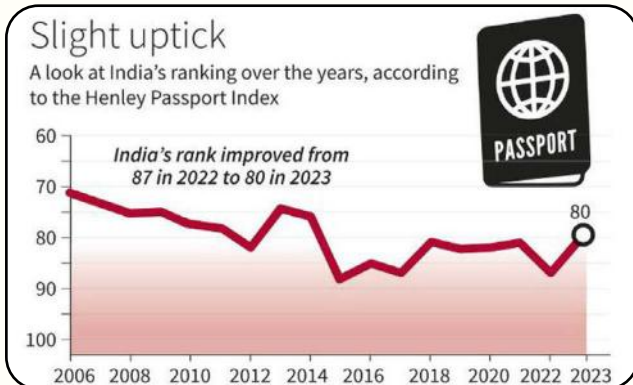
India has improved by seven points in the recent Henley Passport Index, 2023 from 87th position to 80th position from last year, although the number of countries allowing Indian passport holders visa-free access remains unchanged.

About the Index:

- The Henley Passport Index ranks all countries in the world with passports that their holders can access without prior visas.
- The index includes passports from 199 different countries and 227 different travel destinations. This index has been released by Henley & Partners.

India's ranking in the past:

- In 2014, India was ranked 76th among the 52 countries allowing visa-free access to Indian passport holders, but its performance has not been uniform. It ranked 88th in 2015 (Visa-free access to 51 countries), 85th in 2016, 87th in 2017, 81st in 2018, 82nd in 2019 and 2020, and 81st in 2021.



Status of other countries:

- Singapore, whose citizens can travel visa-free to 192 out of 227 travel destinations worldwide, has topped the index, surpassing Japan, which had outperformed the index for five years.
- Germany, Italy, and Spain are in second place while Austria, Finland, France, Luxembourg, South Korea, and Sweden along with Japan are in third place.
- The UK improved by two points to fourth place, while the US continued its decade-long decline in the index, dropping two places to eighth.

About Henley Openness Index:

- This index ranks countries that provide Visa-

free access. India, which allows visa-free access to only four countries, has been ranked 94th out of a total of 97 ranks.

- The bottom four countries on the index are Afghanistan, North Korea, Papua New Guinea, and Turkmenistan, which scored zero for not allowing visa-free access to any passport.
- The top 20 visa-free countries are all small island nations or African states except for Cambodia. Burundi, Comoro Islands, Djibouti, Guinea-Bissau, Maldives, Micronesia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Samoa, Seychelles, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu are the 12 countries that offer a visa-free visa-on-arrival facility on all 198 passports in the world.

Way Forward:

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have generally displayed higher-than-average changes in openness. In particular, since 2018, the United Arab Emirates' Openness Score increased from 58 to 80 (22 points) and Oman's from 71 to 106 (35 points).

2. Namda Art of Jammu & Kashmir

Why in News:

The Namda crafts of Kashmir are being successfully revived under the pilot project of Skill India as part of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY).

About Namda Art:

- It originated in the 16th century, when the Mughal emperor Akbar wanted to make a cover for his horses to protect them from the cold.
- It was introduced to Kashmiris by a Sufi saint named Shah-i-Hamdan.
- Namda is a type of traditional Kashmiri rug (a rug is something made of woven cloth that covers the floor).
- It is made from sheep's wool through the felting technique instead of the normal weaving process.
- The uniqueness of Namda lies in its intricate themes and floral patterns, which are inspired by



nature.

- The designs often contain flowers, leaves, buds, and fruits, which are visually appealing.
- Namda art is not limited to Kashmir only but is also practised in many other Asian countries including Iran and Afghanistan.

Government Initiatives to Revive Namda Art:

- Between 1998 and 2008, there was a decline of almost 100 percent in the export of Namda crafts.
- To preserve this craft, a project was started by the government under the pilot project of Skill India.
- Under this project, around 2,200 candidates have been trained in the art of Namda craft.
- The project sets a great example of the Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) model in the skill development sector, as it is being implemented in collaboration with local industry partners.
- This initiative has been implemented in association with Meer Handicrafts and Srinagar Carpet Training and Market Centre.
- This project was launched in 2021.

About Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana:

- The scheme was launched by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in 2015 and is administered by the Skill Development Corporation.
- It aims to empower the youth of the country by imparting industry-relevant skills to enhance their employability and bridge the skill gap in various sectors.

Way Forward:

This aligns perfectly with the vision of 'New India, New Opportunities, New Prosperity', which emphasises that skilling is about creating new opportunities and new prosperity. It demonstrates the Government's commitment to skilling and upgrading the youth of India. With the support of local industry partners like Meer Handicrafts and Srinagar Carpet Training and Market Centre, Namda Art has gained global recognition.

3. Ancient Tankai Shipbuilding Method

Why in News:

Recently, the Ministry of Culture and the Indian Navy signed an MoU to revive ancient, 2000-year-old shipbuilding methods (the tankai method).

About the Tankai Method:

- The Tankai method is an ancient shipbuilding technique. In this method, ships are constructed by sewing wooden planks together instead of

using nails.

- This method provides flexibility and stability to the ships, making them less prone to damage from shallow and sandy reefs.
- The arrival of European ships brought a change in shipbuilding techniques. But this art of shipbuilding has survived in some coastal areas of India, mainly for small local fishing boats.



Importance:

- The Indian Navy will monitor the implementation and execution of the entire project.
- The participation of the Indian Navy will ensure seamless project management and adherence to the highest standards of safety and precision.
- To preserve cultural heritage and knowledge for future generations.
- Revival of ancient trade relations with the littoral countries of the Indian Ocean
- The project seeks to gain insight into the historical interactions in the Indian Ocean that facilitated the flow of Indian culture, knowledge systems, traditions, technologies, and ideas by sailing ancient sea routes using traditional navigational techniques.
- Cultural pride: The project will instill a sense of pride among its citizens in India's rich maritime heritage.

Way Forward:

The art holds significant cultural value and is slowly disappearing. The revival of the stitched shipbuilding method is important to preserve India's rich maritime heritage and cultural history. It aims to revive maritime memory and instill a sense of pride in India's rich maritime heritage among its citizens. This will help in promoting cultural relations among the littoral countries of the Indian Ocean.

4. National Geoscience Awards 2022

Why in News:

Recently, the prestigious National Geoscience Awards 2022 were presented by the President of India, Mrs Draupadi Murmu, and the Ministry of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs at the Cultural Center of Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi.

About the National Geosciences Award:-

- The Ministry of Coal and Mines presents the National Geosciences Awards every year in three categories:
 1. National Geoscience Award for Life Time Achievement.
 2. National Young Geoscientist Award.
 3. National Geoscience Awards in various fields of geosciences.
- The award was established in 1966.
- National Geoscience Awards (NGA) are presented to exceptional individuals and organizations who have demonstrated excellence, dedication, and innovation in the field of geosciences.
- The awards are given in the fields of Minerals and exploration, Basic Geology, Applied Geology, Mining, Mineral Beneficiation, and Sustainable Mineral Development.
- Before 2009, this award was known as the National Mineral Award.

Selection Process:

- There are three levels of committees to select the winner of this award.
- The Award Making Authority (AMA) has constituted 4 Sectional Screening Committees (SSC) as the first-level committees and a Screening Committee of Experts (SCE) as the second-level committee for discipline-wise evaluation and screening.

National Geosciences Awards-2022:

- A total of 173 nominations were received for the National Geosciences Awards-2022. However, the number of valid nominations under the three award categories is 168 only.
- Out of a total of 12 awards, the AMA selected only 10 awardees which include 4 individual awards, 3 team awards and 3 joint awards. 4 individual awards also include the National Geology Award for Lifetime Achievement and another award for the National Young Geosciences Award.
- The National Geosciences Award for Lifetime Achievement will be presented to Dr Om Narayan Bhargava, who is known for his pioneering work in the Himalayas over the last four decades.
- The National Young Geosciences Award will be presented to Dr Amiya Kumar Samal, Assistant Professor, at Banaras Hindu University, for his

significant contribution to the understanding of the heterogeneity of the sub-continental lithospheric mantle (SCLM) beneath the various Archaean cratons of the Indian shield.

Way Forward:

These awards also include the discovery of coal, lignite, coal bed methane, and the discoveries of economic or strategic importance. Further, they include the application of innovative technologies and the discovery and exploration of oil, natural gas, shale gas and gas hydrates.

5. UN Report on Women Empowerment and Gender Parity

Why in News:

A recent report released jointly by the UN Women and UN Development Programme has highlighted that barely 1% of women live in the countries with high gender parity and women empowerment.

Highlights of the Report:

- The report has been prepared by combining and analyzing the data of Women's Empowerment Index (WEI) and the Global Gender Parity Index (GGPI) collected from 114 countries.
- According to the report, only 60% of the women across the world realize their full potential.
- As far as key human development dimensions are concerned, women are found to achieve 28% less than men.
- More than 90% of women across the world live in countries having low or medium women empowerment and gender parity.
- Out of 114 countries analyzed, 85 countries have low or medium women empowerment and gender parity.
- The report has found that none of the country has achieved complete female empowerment or gender parity. Moreover, no country with high gender inequality has achieved high women's empowerment.
- Position of India in this report is distressing with low women empowerment and gender parity despite having medium human development.

Need for action:

The report has embarked on the need of following policy actions-

- **Health policies:** While providing universal health coverage it also focuses on sexual and reproductive health of women.
- **Education:** Equality in education demands bridging gaps in literacy rates, skills and opportunities. Moreover, maternity jinx needs to be addressed and participation of women in STEM must be enhanced.

- **Work-life balance:** It includes services like affordable and quality childcare, crèche facilities, parental leave schemes, flexible working arrangements like work from home so that role of women as a mother shouldn't be compromised.
- **Equal participation:** Targets should be set and action plans should be devised to achieve gender parity in all spheres of public life. It should be complemented by eliminating discriminatory laws and practices.
- **Addressing violence:** Forms of violence against women have changed with changing times. A comprehensive framework is needed which mainly focuses on prevention and speedy trial.

Way Forward:

Women empowerment and gender equality are complementary to each other. While we talk about the extended notion of gender in the 21st century, it demands dedicated efforts on part of all stakeholders to realize the ultimate goal of inclusive development.

6. Drug-Resistant Superbug Found in Stray Dog

Why in News:

Scientists from Delhi University and McMaster University have found the first live culture of the superbug *Candida auris* in Delhi stray dogs' ear canals. The findings suggest that pets could act as reservoirs for superbugs raising concerns for potential transmission of infection from pets to humans. The drug-resistant fungus could lead to severe infections and widespread hospital outbreaks.

About *Candida auris*:

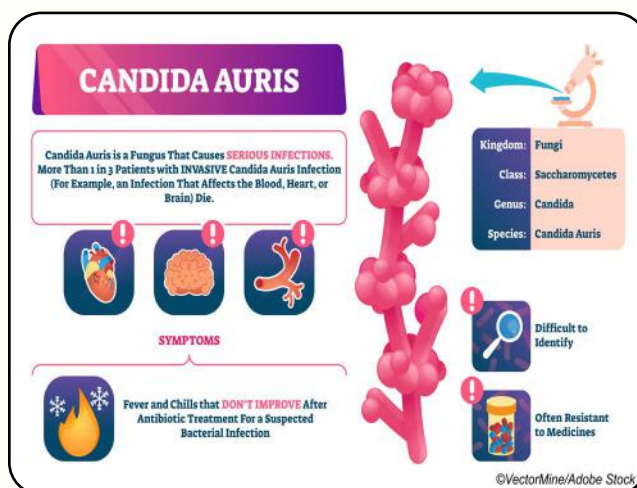
- *Candida auris* is a species of fungus that can cause serious and potentially life-threatening infections in humans. It is considered a superbug because it has developed resistance to many commonly used antifungal medications, making it difficult to treat.
- *C. auris* has also been discovered on the surface of stored apples, in tidal marshes, in environments with extremely high salinity and, recently, in wastewater, suggesting it can survive in harsh conditions.
- *C. auris* can cause infections in various parts of the body, including the bloodstream, wounds, and ears. The World Health Organization has declared it one of the world's four 'critical priority' fungal pathogens.

Why are Superbugs a Threat?

- **Antibiotic Resistance:** multidrug resistant organisms develop resistance against commonly

used antibiotics making traditional treatments completely ineffective and infections harder to treat.

- **Difficult to Treat:** Due to their resistance, superbug infections are challenging to treat, leading to prolonged illnesses, increased medical costs, and higher rates of mortality.
- **Widespread Infections:** Superbugs can spread rapidly in healthcare settings, and have the potential to cause widespread and severe outbreaks, putting vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, children, and immunocompromised individuals, at greater risk.
- **One Health Approach:** Superbugs also impact animals and the environment. Antibiotic use in agriculture and veterinary medicine can contribute to the development and spread of resistance in animals, which can subsequently be transmitted to humans.



Way Forward:

Treating superbug infections is often more expensive and time-consuming, leading to increased healthcare costs and economic burden on healthcare systems and society as a whole. To address the threat of superbugs, it is essential to promote responsible antibiotic use, strengthen infection prevention and control measures, develop new antimicrobial drugs, and invest in research and surveillance to monitor and combat emerging resistance.

7. Fascinating Mix of Rudragiri Hill Rock Art

Why in News:

Recently, a rock painting has been discovered at Rudragiri hill in Andhra Pradesh, which unveils

a combination of prehistoric rock paintings of the Mesolithic period and the masterpieces of the Kakatiya dynasty.

Key points related to Mural Painting:

- The first cave of the Rudragiri hill, starting from the southern end, presents a narrative fresco depicting the war between the monkey brothers, Bali and Sugriva. Both these figures are standing on the battlefield with a mace, and their faces show a determined determination.
- In this narrative, Lord Rama is shown standing behind Sugriva, shooting arrows at Bali. This figure reveals the origin and dating of the structures.
- A magnificent drawing of Lord Hanuman along with the holy symbols of conch shell and fire altar (Yagya Vedi) is displayed in the middle cave which attracts the attention of tourists.
- Lord Hanuman is shown carrying a hill of Sanjivani in his right hand, which shows his courage to save the life of Lakshmana.
- In the third cave, prehistoric rock paintings of the Mesolithic era have been displayed. It depicts the beautiful figure of Lord Hanuman with his hands folded in the 'Anjali' posture.

About Rudragiri Hill :

- It is a famous historical past and archaeological site located in Orvakallu village of Atchampet

mandal in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh.

- It is one of the five naturally formed rocky shelters in the Eastern Ghats. These shelters were used by people during the Mesolithic era, around 5000 BC.
- Two natural caves at the southern end of this hill also display extraordinary frescoes of the famous Kakatiya kingdom.

Relation with Kakatiya Dynasty:

- Ganapati Deva Maharaja (1199-1262 AD) of the Kakatiya dynasty, was the founder of the Muppavaram temple who patronized the ancient mural heritage found at Rudragiri.
- Similarity has been found between the magnificent frescoes on the rock shelters of Rudragiri and the frescoes discovered at Muppavaram and Pandavulagutta in Warangal district. It is believed that the scenes from Ramayana painted at Rudragiri are related to the Muppavaram artefacts.

Way Forward:

These caves display the artistic brilliance of the Kakatiya period, and the paintings, obtained from white kaolin and various colours, depict picturesque scenes from the Ramayana. This gives an important insight into the 13th-century AD composition.




New Batch for IAS

GENERAL STUDIES

International Relations

by

Vinay Sir

11th AUG. 8:30AM | 6:00PM


**9506256789
7570009002**


**A-12 Sector-J
Aliganj, Lucknow**

Practice Questions for Mains Exam

1. In the context of increased crimes on social media in India, discuss about the recent draft of the Data Protection Bill 2022 presented by the central government.
2. India & France have completed 25 years of strategic partnership. Evaluate the recent visit of Indian Prime Minister to France from the perspective of world and India.
3. In the Preamble political, social and economic justice to the citizens has been mentioned. Discuss how the free Tele law service by the Indian Law Minister in the 18th All India Legal Services Meet will help in achieving this goal.
4. Weather events in India have been exceptionally diverse this year, with extreme droughts and heavy rains at different places during this monsoon season, which is an indicator of climate change. Mention the Natural Disaster Management Policy in India and discuss how to make it more effective.
5. What is multidimensional poverty? Critically analyse the recent report on Multidimensional Poverty in India released by NITI Aayog.
6. Mention the highlights and challenges of the global report released by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) recently.
7. What is the Black Sea Grain Deal? Discuss its implications with respect to India.
8. What is permafrost? Discuss the possible consequences of a recent report on the melting of Russia's largest permafrost crater.
9. What is Local Currency Settlement (LCS)? Discuss the benefits and challenges of Local Currency Settlement System Agreement between India and the UAE.
10. What is Namda Art? Critically evaluate the efforts of the Government of India in reviving this art form.
11. Briefly mention the key points of the United Nations report on women empowerment and gender equality and the policy actions needed to achieve it.
12. What is the Credit Guarantee Scheme of the Government of India? Describe the purpose and importance of the new credit guarantee scheme of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
13. No Confidence Motion is a parliamentary process that allows the opposition to challenge a government's majority and ability to govern. Mentioning the constitutionality and process of no-confidence motion and confidence motion, critically evaluate its democratic implications.
14. What is Nari Adalat initiative of the Central Government? Mentioning its target areas, objectives and organization, discuss its possible contribution to women empowerment.
15. Mentioning the major provisions of the Rajasthan Government's Minimum Guaranteed Income Bill 2023, how it will be helpful in achieving the principles of social justice as an ally of the MGNREGA scheme of the Government of India? Discuss.

News Of National and International Importance

Rajasthan Honour of Dead Body Respect Bill, 2023

Recently, the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly has passed the Rajasthan Honour of Dead Body Respect Bill, 2023 which prohibits relatives of deceased persons from sitting on roads or public places with dead bodies and protesting demanding compensation or jobs.

Key points related to the bill:

- The Bill casts an obligation on family members to perform the last rites of the deceased “as soon as possible”.
- Sitting in public places with dead bodies will come under the category of crime, which can lead to a maximum punishment of five years.
- The bill provides the right of every dead person to be cremated with dignity.
- The Bill also includes provisions for protection of genetic data information through DNA profiling as well as digitization and confidentiality of information.
- If the family members do not perform the last rites despite the orders of the local police officer or executive magistrate, it will be done by the public authority.

Byculla Railway Station gets UNESCO's Asia Pacific Cultural Heritage Award

Recently, the Byculla Railway Station was awarded the Asia Pacific Cultural Heritage Award by UNESCO. The award was announced only in November last year.

Key Points:

- This railway station located in Mumbai is 169 years old and is one of the oldest railway stations in India which is still in use.
- The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) was last year conferred with the highest award of excellence at the UNESCO Asia Pacific Awards 2022 for Cultural Heritage Conservation.
- The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Prize for Cultural Heritage Conservation has been awarded since 2000, recognizing private and public sector achievement in preserving or restoring structures, places and properties of heritage value in the region.

Jim Skea Elected as the New Chairman of the IPCC

Recently James Ferguson ‘Jim’ Skea of the United Kingdom was selected as the new chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in Nairobi, Kenya. Skea beat his nearest rival, Thelma Krug of Brazil. The election took place at the United Nations Environment Program headquarters in Nairobi.

About the IPCC:

- It was constituted in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).
- The primary purpose of the IPCC is to provide governments at all levels with scientific information that they can use to develop climate policies.
- The IPCC currently has 195 member states, with its headquarters located in Geneva, Switzerland.

Parliament Passes Constitution (ST) Order (5th Amendment) Bill, 2022

Recently, the Parliament has passed the Constitution (ST) Order (5th Amendment) Bill, 2022 to include certain communities of Chhattisgarh in the ST category.

Highlights of the Bill:

- The Bill will amend the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order 1950.
- The Bill proposes to include Dhanuhar, Dhanuwar, Kisan, Saunra, Sonra, and Binjhiya communities in the list of Scheduled Tribes in Chhattisgarh.
- The Bill includes Bhuinya, Bhuiyan, and Bhuiyan communities as synonyms of the Bharia Bhumia community. It also contains three Devanagari versions of the name of the Pando community.

- In addition, the Bill replaces the names of certain tribal communities in the Constitution Order with their respective names in the Hindi version of the Madhya Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2000. For example, the names of Oraon, Dhanka, and Dhangar communities will be substituted.

Bad Loans worth Rs 2.09 lakh Crore Written off

Recently, the RBI stated that loan waiver by banks increased to Rs 209,144 crore during the financial year ending March 2023, compared to Rs 174,966 crore in March 2022 and Rs 202,781 crore in March 2021, a year ago.

Key Points:

- According to RBI, Banks have written off bad loans worth over Rs 2.09 lakh crore (about US\$25.50 billion) during 2022-23.
- The total bad loans written off by the banking sector in the last five years has reached Rs 10.57 lakh crore (about \$129 billion).
- This loan waiver by the banks has resulted in a reduction in gross non-performing assets (GNPA).
- Gross NPAs of banks have come down from Rs 10.21 lakh crore in FY18 to Rs 5.55 lakh crore in March 2023.
- Total defaulted loans (including write-off but excluding loans recovered from write-off in three years) reached Rs 10.32 lakh crore.

Credit Guarantee Scheme for the Livestock Sector

Recently Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has launched a new Credit Guarantee Scheme.

Objective:

- The objective of the scheme under the Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) is to facilitate collateral-free loans to MSMEs in the livestock sector.
- To implement the scheme, a Credit Guarantee Fund Trust of Rs 750 crore has been set up for credit guarantee coverage of up to 25 percent of the loans disbursed to MSMEs by banks and other lending institutions.
- Credit Guarantee Scheme to facilitate access to finance for the underserved and under-served livestock sector by providing financial assistance from lenders primarily to entrepreneurs and the underprivileged section of society.
- The establishment of the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust has been approved under the Prime Minister's Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan incentive package of Rs. 15,000 crore and Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund.

President Appoints Chief Justices of four High Courts

Recently Justice Sunita Agarwal new Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court, Alok Aradhe new Chief Justice of Telangana High Court, Justice Subhasis Talapatra new Chief Justice of Orissa High Court, Justice Ashish Jitendra Desai new Chief Justice of Kerala High Court were appointed while Justice Ujjwal Bhuiyan was transferred from the post of Telangana Chief Justice to the Supreme Court.

Judges of the High Court:

- The appointment of the Chief Justice and other judges of the High Courts is done by the President under Article 217.
- High Court Judge retire at the age of 62 years.
- High Court Judge is transferred under Article 222 of the Constitution.
- A Judge of a High Court can be removed from office only for proven misbehavior or incapacity in the same manner as a Judge of the Supreme Court.

India, Lao People's Democratic Republic sign MoU

India and the Lao People's Democratic Republic have signed five Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) for the implementation of five projects in the fields of education, health, water facilities, and IT.

Important points of MoU:

- The MoU was signed during the third round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between the two countries in Vientiane, Lao PDR.
- The Indian side was led by Saurabh Kumar, Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs and Lao PDR was lead by Deputy Foreign Minister Phoksey Khaikhamphithoun.
- Both sides comprehensively reviewed the spectrum of bilateral ties and discussed ways to enhance cooperation in development partnership, economic and trade ties, agriculture, health, education, defense, and heritage conservation.
- Both sides also exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest as well as cooperation in multilateral fora such as the United Nations, ASEAN, and Mekong Ganga Cooperation.

India and ADB Sign a Loan Agreement of US \$ 200 Million

The Union Government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a \$200 million loan to expand water supply and sanitation systems and enhance urban resilience and heritage in selected cities.

Key Points of the Agreement:

- The agreement will support the Government of Rajasthan's commitment to bridging the infrastructure gap in its secondary towns by expanding water supply and sanitation services and improving liveability in selected urban local bodies.
- The project, which has been running since 2020, has so far laid 1,451 km of water supply pipes, and 1,110 km of sewer pipes and connected 68,098 households to water services in selected secondary cities of Rajasthan.
- The project will cover at least eight cities to improve sanitation systems by connecting 54,000 households to sewage systems by rehabilitating 580 km of sewers and building plants.

Gujarat's First Greenfield Airport

Recently Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Gujarat's first greenfield airport at Hirasar near Rajkot.

About the airport:

- This airport built in an area of 1500 acres at a cost of 1,405 crores has been renamed as Rajkot International Airport.
- This greenfield airport located at Hirasar is 30 km away from Rajkot city, the commercial capital of the Saurashtra region. The airport has a 45 m wide runway that can park 14 aircraft at any point.
- The airport has one passenger terminal that can handle more than 1,200 passengers per hour. This greenfield airport is equipped with a solar energy system, green belt, and rainwater harvesting system.
- Air connectivity will lead to industrial development, especially benefiting the ceramic industry in Morbi and creating new employment opportunities in the region.

Exercise Nomadic Elephant-23

A Bilateral joint military exercise "NOMADIC ELEPHANT-23" will be conducted at amb Ulaanbaatar, Mangolia from 17 to 31 July. It is the 15th Edition of Exercise, while 14th edition was held in 2019.

About The Exercise:

- The aim of this exercise is to the Army of these two nation foster bilateral relations, Exchange best practices, develop inter-operability Bonhomie, camaraderie and friend ship between the two armies etc.
- The scope of this exercise involves Platoon Level "FIELD TRAINING, EXERCISE" During the Exercise Indian and Mongolian troops will engage into various training acturties to flourish their skills and

Capabilities.

- It is conducted annually and hosted alternatively by Mongolia and India
- Soldiers of the the Mongolian Armed forces Unit 084 and Indian Army soldiers from Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry Regiment will be participating in the Exercise.
- Exercise will primarily focus on counter-terrorism operation in mountainous terrain under United Nations Mandate.

Jammu Starts Country's First Cannabis Medicine Project

Recently, CSIR-IIM Jammu and Kashmir e fwist of its Kind “Cannabis Research Project” in the Country under Private Public Partnership with a Canadian firm.

About the Project:

- Project The will produce export quality medicines be drugs meant for different kinds of neuropathic & diabetic pains.
- It will spread awareness that this substance of abuse has diverse medicinal uses for patients suffering from cancer and epilepsy.
- It was historic just not for Jammu and Kashmir but for whole India because it has the potential to produce those kind of Medicine which have to be exported from other Countries so this project of CSIR-IIM is also important from the “Atma Nirbhar Bharat” point of view.
- The scientist of the Institute are working in different directions to provide the end-to-end technology for cancer Cultivation, drug discovery etc.

No-Confidence Motion Against Modi Government

- No Confidence motion is a parliamentary process that allows the opposition to challenge the government majority and ability to Govern.
- If the motion is passed, the Government must resign.
- The speaker of the Lok Sabha will decide whether to admit the motion for discussion and debate (under sub rule (2) and (3) of Section 198 of Lok Sabha Rules:
- It is a a way to compel PM Modi to speak on the ongoing issue of Manipur in Parliament, which has brought the monsoon session to a standstill.
- Opposition parties decided to move a no-Confidence motion against the NDA Government to get attention on the situation in the northeastern Region.
- The decision was taken after a meeting of the Constituents of the 26 party INDIA (Indian National Development Inclusive Alliance)

India's First Fisheries Atal Incubation Centre To Come Up At KUFOS

Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS) has been selected to recieve a substantial grant of Rs 10 Crore from NITI Aayog to get up India's Atal Incubation Centre in fisheries.

Objectives:

- This Initiative will be dedicated for promotion of Technological advancements and Entrepreneurial venture in fisheries and allied sectors.
- It will provide a nuturing environment innovative for start-ups and Innovative ideas that will address the challanges confronting for our marine ecosystem and fishing Communities.
- Atal Incubation centre will promote Collaboration among academic, Industry and government fostering knowledge transfer and Commercialization of Research result.
- It will play a significant role in Employment generation by providing a favourable environment for start-ups.
- KUFOS is an autonomous public funded institution. It was establish ed. for the development of manpower in fisheries.

Current Affairs at a Glance

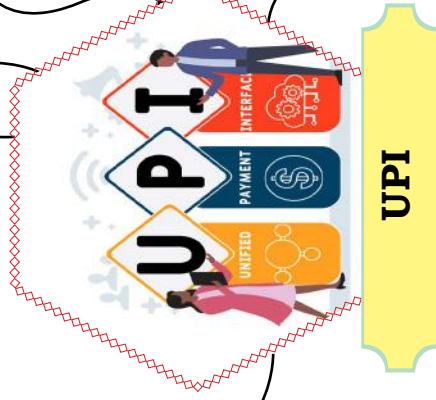
1. HDFC Bank becomes the first bank in India to link Digital Rupee with UPI QR code. HDFC Bank merchants who have joined its CBDC platform can accept payments from their customers in the form of Digital Rupee currency.
2. The Central Government has appointed IPS officer Manoj Yadav as the Director General of Railway Protection Force (RPF). Manoj Yadav, a 1988 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Haryana cadre, will replace Sanjay Chander.
3. Anshuman Jhingan became the youngest person in the world to cross the North Channel. He is an open sea swimmer. The North Channel is located between Scotland and Northern Ireland.
4. Satpal Bhanu has been appointed as the Managing Director of Life Insurance Corporation. He succeeds Siddhartha Mohanty, who was appointed as the chairman of LIC in April.
5. India has moved to 99th spot in the FIFA rankings after defeating Lebanon and Kuwait in the semi-finals and final of the SAFF Championship held in Bengaluru. Argentina topped the list, followed by France, Brazil, England and Belgium.
6. Admiral Lisa Franchetti became the first woman to lead the US Navy. She has become the first woman in history to serve as the Chief of Naval Operations and as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
7. Shahrukh Khan has been appointed as the brand ambassador of ICC World Cup 2023. The ICC World Cup 2023 in India will be held from 5 October to 19 November 2023.
8. The American social media platform Twitter has launched a new logo. The blue bird has been replaced with a white X on a black background.
9. Odisha cabinet approved Mission Shakti scooter scheme. Under the scheme, interest subvention will be provided to the beneficiaries on bank loans up to Rs 1 lakh for the purchase of scooters.
10. Wang Yi, the foreign affairs chief of the Communist Party, has been re-appointed as China's foreign minister in place of Qin Gang.
11. Madhya Pradesh has topped the list of state with the highest crime rate against Scheduled Castes (SCs) in 2021, according to NCRB data.
12. Veteran journalist-author-columnist Shirish Kanekar passed away due to heart attack. His story collection 'Lagaon Batti' was awarded the Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad Award for Best Comedy. He was famous for his works on cricket, Bollywood movies 'Nut Bolt Bolpat', 'Kanekari' and 'Cricket Vedh'.
13. Ashwamedh Devi has been appointed as the chairperson of the State Women's Commission by the Bihar government. She is a former JDU MP from Samastipur parliamentary constituency. This appointment has been made for a maximum period of three years. The Bihar State Women's Commission is a statutory body formed in 1993.
14. The first women police station was set up in Kargil, Ladakh. This police station will exclusively deal with crimes against women.
15. Maharashtra's 17-year-old chess player Aditya S Samant became India's 83rd Chess Grandmaster. Earlier he had the title of International Master. V Praneeth from Telangana was the 82nd Grandmaster of India.
16. Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik became the second longest serving Chief Minister for 23 years.
17. Shri Rakesh Pal has been appointed as the new Director General of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG). He is the 25th Director General of the Indian Coast Guard.
18. Australian author of Sri Lankan origin Shankari Chandran received the Miles Franklin Literary Prize 2023 for her book 'Chai Time at Cinnamon Gardens'. 'Chai Time at Cinnamon Gardens' is a story about family, memories, community and ethnicity.

Why In Broadcast

Punjab National Bank (PNB) has rolled out an IVR-powered digital payment solution "UPI 123PAY" in collaboration with the National Payments Corporation of India.

UPI - Benefits to the Ecosystem participants

1. **Banks:**
 - Single click Two Factor authentication
 - Universal Application for transaction
 - Leveraging existing infrastructure
 - Safer, Secured and Innovative Payment basis Single/ Unique Identifier
 - Enable seamless merchant transactions
2. **Customers:**
 - Round the clock availability
 - Single Application for accessing different bank accounts
 - Use of Virtual ID is more secure, no credential sharing
 - Single click authentication
 - Raise Complaint from Mobile App directly
3. **Merchants:**
 - Seamless fund collection from customers - single identifiers
 - No risk of storing customer's virtual address like in Cards
 - Tap customers not having credit/debit cards
 - Suitable for e-Com & m-Com transaction
 - Resolves the COD collection problem
 - In-App Payments (IAP)



Aim

The introduction of 123PAY UPI is aimed at providing UPI perks to areas without internet connection and people having no smartphones.

Bank Transaction Limit on UPI

- NPCI has set out guidelines for UPI transactions stating that a person can initiate a maximum payment of Rs.1 lakh per day through UPI.
- The UPI limit varies from small banks (Canara Bank Rs. 25,000), to big banks (SBI Rs.1 lakh).
- NPCI has also set a limit on the number of transactions per day which is 20 transactions post per day.

UPI App Limit

Google Pay, Paytm, and Amazon Pay UPI have set a limit of Rs.1 lakh per day along with a total of up to ten transaction limits across all UPI apps and bank account.

Unified Payments Interface

- Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is a system that powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application, merging several banking features, seamless fund routing & merchant payments into one hood.
- It also caters to the "Peer to Peer" collect requirement which can be scheduled and paid as per requirement and convenience.
- The pilot launch was on 11th April 2016 by Dr. Raghuram G Rajan, Governor, RBI at Mumbai.

Uniqueness

- Immediate money transfer through mobile device round the clock 24*7 and 365 days.
- Single mobile application for accessing different bank accounts.
- Single Click 2 Factor Authentication - Aligned with the Regulatory guidelines, yet provides for a very strong feature of seamless single click payment.
- Virtual address of the customer provides for incremental security with the customer not required to enter the details such as Card no, Account number; IFSC etc.
- QR Code
- Best answer to Cash on Delivery hassle, running to an ATM or rendering exact amount.

- Merchant Payment with Single Application or In-App Payments.
- Utility Bill Payments, Over the Counter Payments, QR Code (Scan and Pay) based payments.
- Donations, Collections, Disbursements Scalable.
- Raising Complaint from Mobile App directly.

Why In Broadcast

The Centre is launching a unique initiative of setting up women-only courts at the village level as an alternate dispute resolution forum for issues like domestic violence, property rights and countering the patriarchal system.

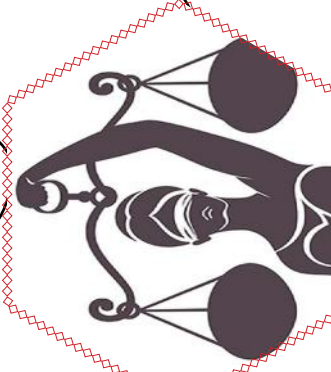
Focus on Areas

The matters redressed through these Lok Adalats will be related to

- Family affairs.
- Matrimonial disputes.
- Bigamy.
- Succession.
- Motor vehicle accident disputes related to labour.

Inspiration

The scheme takes inspiration from the Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalats [People's Court of Women] which were run by the National Commission for Women (NCW) till 2014-15.



Nari Adalat

Aim

The Nari Adalat though does not hold any legal status, has its primary focus on reconciliation, grievance redressal and creating awareness of rights and entitlements.

Composition

- The Nari Adalat of each village would have 7-9 members – half of which would be the elected members of the gram panchayat and the other half women with social standing like teachers, doctors and social workers – who would be nominated by the villagers.
- Members known as Nyaya Sakhis [legal friends] will be nominated or selected by the gram panchayat.
- The head of Nari Adalat called the Mukhya Nyaya Sakhi [chief legal friend] will be chosen among the Nyaya Sakhis.
- The tenure of the head will be generally six months after which a new one will be selected.

Ministry Incharge

The scheme would be run by the Ministry of Women and Child Development under the Sambal sub-scheme of Mission Shakti, which is dedicated to strengthening women's safety, security and empowerment.

Other Ministries Involved

- Ministry of Panchayati Raj
- Ministry of Rural Development
- Common Service Centres (CSCs) run by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

Standard Operating Procedures

Detailed Procedures for all states have been prepared and will be released to ensure uniformity and effective functioning of Nari-Adlat.

About

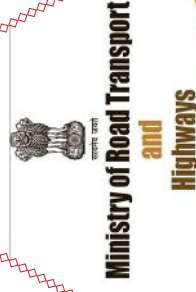
An apex organisation under the Central Government, is entrusted with the task of formulating and administering, in consultation with other Central Ministries/Departments, State Governments/UT Administrations, organisations and individuals, policies for Road Transport, National Highways and Transport Research.

Related Organizations

- Indian Roads Congress (IRC)
- Central Road Research Institute (CRRI)
- Central Institute of Road Transport (CIRT)
- Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI)

Autonomous Bodies/Societies /Public Sector Undertakings

- National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)
- Indian Academy of Highway Engineers (IAHE)
- National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (NHIDCL)



Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

Wings

- Roads Wing
- Road Transport Wing
- Finance Wing
- Administration Wing
- International Cooperation Wing
- Toll & Coordination Wing
- Land Acquisition Wing
- Parliament Wing
- Transport Research Wing

Vision

To have a sustainable, efficient, safe and internationally comparable quality of road infrastructure in general and National Highways infrastructure in particular to achieve enhanced connectivity, quick mobility to a level which accelerate socio-economic development.

Mission

- Development of National Highways (NHs) Network in the country into a road network of international standards for uninterrupted flow of traffic with enhanced safety features.
- Enhanced connectivity for remote far flung and isolated areas, including North-East Region (NER), Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas including Tribal areas.
- Evolving policies for efficient and safe transportation through the Road Network and facilitating their implementation.
- Establish arrangements for review of Road Transport requirements keeping in view the long term perspective.
- Evolve regulations for safer, fuel efficient and cleaner automobiles in alignment with international standards.
- Improving road safety scenario in the country especially on National Highways.
- Promoting IT for facilitating online services to the stakeholders
- Strengthening public transport system.
- Reducing carbon footprint of road transport.
- Promote electric mobility through incentives and regulations.
- Alternative mobility solutions for inaccessible areas.

Why In Broadcast

Severe sand and dust storms (SDS) are becoming increasingly common, with UN climate experts attributing the rise to human-driven causes such as climate change and unsustainable farming practices. To combat this, the UN has designated 12 July its first-ever International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms.

United Nations Action

The UNGA, stressed the need for cooperation at the global and regional levels, with a view to preventing, managing and mitigating the effects of SDS through the enhancement of early warning systems and the sharing of climate and weather information to forecast SDS.

SDGs

- Goal 1: No poverty
- Goal 2: Zero hunger
- Goal 3: Good health and well-being
- Goal 4: Quality education
- Goal 5: Gender equality
- Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation
- Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy
- Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth
- Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- Goal 10: Reduced inequality
- Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities
- Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production
- Goal 13: Climate action
- Goal 14: Life below water

International Day of Combating Sand & Dust Storms



Sand and Dust Storms

- Sand and dust storms usually occur when strong winds lift large amounts of sand and dust from bare, dry soils into the atmosphere.
- Over the last decade, scientists have come to realize the impacts on climate, human health, the environment and many socio-economic sectors.

Key Facts

- Approx. 2 million tonnes of sand and dust enter the atmosphere annually.
- SDS mostly occur in dry and desert regions but can be carried long distances to impact regions much further away.
- Dust particles, circulated by SDS, provide nutrients to marine ecosystems, but can also contribute to coral mortality and hurricane formation.
- SDS can cause respiratory diseases, heart disorders, and eye and skin irritation and can also spread other diseases, such as meningitis.
- Aviation and ground transportation can be disrupted by SDS.
- Agricultural practices and productivity can be impacted by SDS, which can also contribute to desertification processes.
- Sustainable water and land management practices can decrease the impacts of SDS.

Impact of SDS on SDGs

- In resolution 70 / 195 adopted in 2015, the United Nations General Assembly recognised that SDS pose a great challenge to the sustainable development of affected countries and regions.
- According to the UN, these directly affect and pose severe challenges to achieving 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

- Goal 15: Life on land
- Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions
- Goal 17: Partnership for the goals

Why In Broadcast

A study released by the Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA) & Oxford Economics, has projected a shortfall of 67,000 workers (technicians, computer scientists, and engineers) by 2030 and a gap of 1.4 million workers in the broader US economy.

Why the Opportunity

The demand for semiconductors is projected to increase significantly by 2030, and semiconductor companies are ramping up production to keep pace. India, with its engineering talent, if trained properly, can fill this void.

Opportunities Galore

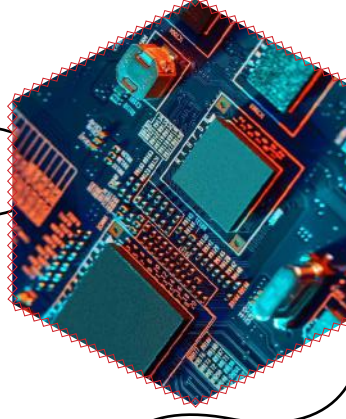
The chip-making industry is a huge; resource-intensive that requires highly skilled workers at every step of the process, right from chip design and manufacturing to testing and packaging. Few areas required talent are:

Fabless:

- According to industry experts, India currently has around 125,000 engineers with a bachelor's, master's or PhD degree working in various aspects of chip design and development.
- Typically, a B.Tech in Electronics and Communication Engineering (ECE) or Electronics, MTech in VLSI Design, or PhD in Semiconductor Technology, Material Science, or Chemical Engineering, is required to work in firms engaged in VLSI (very large-scale integration) design.

ATMP:

- Once a chip is printed, it has to be tested and packaged before it can be shipped to manufacturers.
- Given the low investments required in building ATMP facilities, India is expected to see a boom in their construction, both from local and MNC players.
- In ATMP plants, Integrated Circuit (IC) packaging/testing engineers, with a



India: Semiconductor Talent Supplier for the World

Demand

- Semiconductor talent is already in short supply.
- With more fabrication plants, coming up, the situation is expected to get worse by the end of 2023.
- Deloitte estimates that the global semiconductor workforce pegged at more than 2 million direct employees in 2021, will need to grow by more than 1 million by 2030, adding more than 100,000 workers annually.
- It is this demand for talent that India can cater to with its engineering students.

background in electrical or electronics engineering or material science are the core requirements.

- In India, semiconductor ATMP is expected to have a much larger base than chip manufacturing.
- In terms of remuneration, ATMP outfits in India pay between Rs 7 and 14 lakh per annum, whereas global firms pay between RS 20-55 lakh per annum.

Foundry:

- The chip industry is projected to invest more than \$500 billion globally to set up 84 chip-making facilities between 2021 and

2023, per the World Fab Forecast report by global industry association SEMI.

- These foundries would require process engineers to conduct and manage the whole process of manufacturing wafers/chips, improve process flow, evaluate and manage risks and issues, conduct detection and monitoring analysis, and implement new processes.
- III. The foundry ecosystem offers a multidisciplinary set of jobs to everyone, from diploma holders to engineering graduates and students with science-related qualifications.

Why In Broadcast

The Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill, 2023 was passed by the Lok Sabha within 20 minutes of it being tabled in the Parliament on July 26, 2023.

Balancing forest conservation and economic activities

Ensuring balance between forest conservation and economic activities:

- The 1980 Act was enacted to curb deforestation. Hence, diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes requires the prior approval of the central government.
- Further, the activities allowed in forests (without such prior approval) are related to the conservation and management of forests and wildlife.
- However, there may be a need to balance economic benefits of such activities with that of conserving forests.

Purpose of zoo inside forest is unclear:

- The Bill also exempts zoos from requiring prior approval under the 1980 Act.
- The Supreme Court (2023) has remarked that they do not appreciate the necessity of having a zoo inside tiger reserves or national parks.



The Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill, 2023

Highlights of the Bill

- The Bill amends the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 to make it applicable to certain types of land.
- These include land notified as a forest under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 or in government records after the 1980 Act came into effect.
- The Act will not be applicable for land converted to non-forest use before December 12, 1996.
- It also exempts certain types of land from the purview of the Act. These include land within 100 km of India's border needed for national security projects, small roadside amenities, and public roads leading to a habitation.
- The state government requires prior approval of the central government to assign any forest land to a private entity. The Bill extends this to all entities, and allows the assignment to be made on terms and conditions specified by the central government.
- The Bill also allows running zoos, safaris and eco-tourism facilities.

Key Features

- **Land under the purview of the Act:** The Bill provides that two types of land will be under the purview of the Act:
 - » Land declared/notified as a forest under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 or under any other law, or
 - » Land not covered in the first category but notified as a forest on or after October 25, 1980 in a government record.
- **Exempted categories of land:** The Bill exempts certain types of land from the provisions of the Act, such as forest land along a rail line or a public road maintained by the government providing access to a habitation, or to a rail, and roadside amenities up to a maximum size of 0.10 hectare.
- **Assignment/leasing of forest land:** Under the Act, a state government requires prior approval of the central government to assign forest land to any entity not owned or controlled by government.
- **Permitted activities in forest land:** The Act restricts the de-reservation of forests or use of forest land for non-forest purposes. Such restrictions may be lifted with the prior approval of the central government.

Why In Broadcast

Recently, Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe held an all-party meeting to discuss the issue of Tamil reconciliation and welfare. This comes days after his visit to India, during which Prime Minister Narendra Modi conveyed to him the need to “ensure a life of dignity” for the Tamil community in SL.

Why is the 13th Amendment significant?

- Till date, the 13th Amendment represents the only constitutional provision on the settlement of the long-pending Tamil question.
- In addition to assuring a measure of devolution, it is considered part of the few significant gains since the 1980s, in the face of growing Sinhala-Buddhist majoritarianism from the time Sri Lanka became independent in 1948.



13th Amendment to Sri Lanka's Constitution

What is the legislation?

- The 13th Amendment to Sri Lanka's constitution was made after the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President J R Jayawardene, on July 29, 1987, in Colombo.
- It attempted to resolve Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict that had aggravated into a full-fledged civil war, between the armed forces and the LTTE.
- The 13th Amendment, which led to the creation of Provincial Councils, assured a power sharing arrangement to enable all nine provinces in the country, including Sinhala majority areas, to self-govern.
- Subjects such as education, health, agriculture, housing, land and police are devolved to the provincial administrations.
- But because of restrictions on financial powers and overriding powers given to the President, the provincial administrations have not made much headway.
- In particular, the provisions relating to police and land have never been implemented.
- Initially, the north and eastern provinces were merged, and had a North-Eastern Provincial Council, but the two were de-merged in 2007 following a Supreme Court verdict.

Why is it Contentious?

- The 13th Amendment carries considerable baggage from the country's civil war years.
- It was opposed vociferously by both Sinhala nationalist parties and the LTTE.
- The former thought it was too much power to share, while the LTTE deemed it too little.
- A large section of the Sinhala polity, including the leftist-nationalist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) which led an armed insurrection opposing it, saw the Accord and the consequent legislation as an imprint of Indian intervention.
- Though signed by the powerful President Jayawardene, it was widely perceived as an imposition by a neighbour wielding hegemonic influence.
- The Tamil polity, especially its dominant nationalist strain, does not find the 13th Amendment sufficient in its ambit or substance.
- However, some including the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) which chiefly represented the Tamils of the north and east in Parliament in the post-war era until its setback in the recent polls see it as an important starting point, something to build upon.

Mains Special: Important Questions based on Economy & Agriculture

1. Explain how the Production Linked Incentive scheme and the national infrastructure plan will bring about a virtuous cycle of growth in industry?

Among several sectors, the manufacturing sector was hit by pandemic-induced disruptions, shrinking by 7% in 2020-21. In response, the government implemented a series of measures aimed at alleviating supply-side bottlenecks, increasing demand, and improving infrastructure.

Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme:

1. The PLI is an old and popular tool with governments to spur production of goods that the country sees as necessary for social good, taxes, or employment-generation reasons.
2. Recently, the Indian government identified 13 priority sectors where PLI schemes will be launched. It is applicable to sectors like pharmaceuticals, solar modules, electronics, automobiles etc.
3. It gives incentive to manufacturers to achieve economies of scale. Larger scale of production will make manufacturers and exporters more price competitive in global markets and resilient to external shock.
4. It will help in expansion of small enterprises in order to overcome the "dwarf" phenomenon that has long inhibited the growth of MSMEs.
5. It will generate also generate employment which will further have positive effect on the economy.

However, there are some issues with the production linked incentive scheme like industries believe that not enough incentive has been given under the scheme.

National Infrastructure Plan-

1. Infrastructure is the back bone for any economy. The extent and quality of infrastructure determines the ability of the country to utilize its comparative advantage and enables cost competitiveness. Given the strong backward and forward linkages and the positive externalities that infrastructure generates, it can be a vehicle for social and economic transformation.
2. Several initiatives such as the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), National Monetization Plan (NMP), PM GATI Shakti etc, have been taken to propel the infrastructure investment.
3. An integrated logistics ecosystem built on the basis of sturdy infrastructure will cut down the logistics cost for industries.
4. It will also assist the local producers to expand their business through exports and e-commerce for which last mile multi modal connectivity is

crucial.

5. In order to achieve the GDP of \$5 trillion by 2024-25, India needs to spend about \$1.4 trillion over these years on infrastructure.

The economic survey for 2021-22 predicts a strong recovery in the industrial sector following the pandemic. The government's various supply-side measures and reforms for industry and infrastructure will set in motion a virtuous cycle of growth in industry and the economy.

2. Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) has been held as one of the most sustainable methods of agricultural production. What is Zero Budget National Farming? Is it feasible for India to adopt ZBNF on wide scale? Comment in the light of recent report by Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF), popularized by Maharashtrian agriculturist and Padma Shri recipient Subhash Palekar, refers to the process of raising crops without using any fertilizers and pesticides or any other external materials. The term 'Zero Budget' means the zero cost of production of all crops. ZBNF guides the farmers in practicing sustainable farming that helps in retaining soil fertility to ensure chemical-free agriculture and ensure low cost of production (zero-cost).

Benefits of ZBNF:

- i) ZBNF processes require 50-60 per cent less water and less electricity (than non-ZBNF) for all the selected crops.
- ii) ZBNF reduces methane emissions significantly through multiple aeration.
- iii) It also has the potential to avoid residue burning by practicing mulching.
- iv) The cost of cultivation is lower in ZBNF. Thus increasing farmers income.

However, an expert committee of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has stated that large scale adoption of Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) would result in 'tremendous reduction' in production of agricultural crops thus comprising India's food security.

In place of ZBNF, the ICAR committee has recommended adoption of an integrated production system through usage of farm practices such as -

- Conservation agriculture through usage of farmyard manure,
- Inter-cropping,
- Crop diversification, and
- Integrated nutrient management for improving soil health.

ZBNF adoption on a large scale could have a negative influence on farmer income and food security. So it is necessary to conduct a proper scientific confirmation of ZBNF's effectiveness.

3. IPCC report has estimated that the combined effect of agricultural activities is approximately one-fifth of the greenhouse effect caused by human action. What measures can be adopted to make agriculture more sustainable?

Agriculture is both a cause and victim of climate change. Agricultural and allied activities such as rice cultivation, rearing of domestic animals and biomass burning account for 22–46% of the global methane concentration.

Among these activities, paddy fields are the most important source, accounting for 15–20% of the world's total methane emission caused due to human activities.

Measures to make agriculture more sustainable:

- Farmers must experience an immediate benefit if they are going to change their practice. Only then can it be sustainable in the long term.
- In order to be attractive, sustainable practices need to be technically as well as economically efficient. Intermediate technological solutions such as light machinery and affordable tools can encourage small-scale farmers to test them.
- Research and technical extension staff need additional resources to reach more farmers, and they need more training on 'non-conventional' farming methods and on innovative ways to share their knowledge.
- The impact of government, academia, civil society and technical agencies such as FAO should be amplified by fostering synergies, making interventions more consistent and avoiding duplication of efforts.
- Policy makers and agricultural institutions must focus on adjusting and implementing policies to reduce the barriers that impede farmers' ability to successfully transition to sustainable practices.

As populations grow and the climate crisis intensifies, sustainable agricultural practices are essential to mitigate negative environmental impacts and increase the efficiency of food systems. Addressing technical and financial constraints is important, but policy coherence is essential for scaling-up.

4. One of the pillars of Union Budget 2022-23 is 'Inclusive Development'. Analyse the measures proposed in the Budget 2022-23 to

achieve inclusive growth and development in India?

Inclusive development is a development that includes marginalised people and sectors in social, political and economic processes for increased human well-being, social and environmental sustainability, and empowerment. Budget 2022-23 seeks to realise 'Antyodaya' se 'Sarvodaya' thorough 'Inclusive development' pillar.

Budgetary provisions under 'Inclusive development' pillar and their significance:

1. Agriculture:

- a. Enhanced procurement making **2.37 lakh crore** direct payment of MSP to 163 lakh farmers. This will help doubling farmer's income.
 - b. A comprehensive scheme to boost domestic oilseed production. Critical for reducing oil related inflation.
 - c. Promotion of post-harvest value addition, consumption and branding of millets. Ensuring development of dryland farming and other marginalised region.
 - d. 'Kisan drones' for crop assessment, spraying of insecticides, digitization of land records etc.
2. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
 - a. Udyam, e-Shram, National Career Service and ASEEM portal to be interlinked for ease of access as well ease of doing business.
 - b. Emergency Credit Linked Guarantee Scheme to be extended up to March 2023 and cover is also expanded.
 - c. RAMP programme with an outlay of 6000crs to help MSME sector become more resilient, competitive and efficient.
 3. Skill development – Digital Ecosystem for Skilling and Livelihood (DESH-Stack-e portal) to be launched to empower citizens through online skilling, re-skilling and up-skilling.
 4. Education – emphasis on more inclusive digital education through measures like
 - a. Expansion from 12 to 200 channels under PM e-Vidya scheme.
 - b. High quality e-content delivery through digital teachers.
 - c. Digital University** for world-class quality universal education with personalised learning experience to be established.
 5. Health – Enhancing inclusivity health ecosystem with schemes like
 - a. National Tele Mental Health programme for quality mental health counselling and care.
 - b. Integrated benefits to women and children through Mission Shakti, Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0.

6. Ensuring inclusive development of marginalised section and regions through schemes like Har Ghar Nal se Jal (3.8crs household-2022-23), PM-DeVINE (for North east Region), Aspirational Blocks Programme, Vibrant Villages programme etc.

Development must be by the people (more participative), of the people (health, education, skills) and for the people (happiness, well-being, increase in income). The above budgetary will ensure that the same is ensured in India's development during 'Amrit Kaal'.

5. Recent budgetary trends of the Government of India show high level of fiscal deficit and financing them through traditional method is becoming difficult. How far do you agree that monetising deficit and issuing sovereign bonds in international markets can serve as an alternative source of deficit financing?

When the economy has fiscal deficit, it spends more money than it brings in through taxes and other sources of revenue. Large fiscal deficits in India over the past few years have led to significant surplus demand in the economy. This led to inflation or a significant increase in the general level of prices. India's fiscal deficit for 2021-22 was 6.71% of GDP.

Traditional Method of financing fiscal deficit:

The financing of fiscal deficit is known as deficit financing. There are majorly 3 ways by which government finances its deficit.

1. Borrowing from market/public
2. Withdrawing cash balances held with RBI
3. Borrowing from RBI

Traditionally, government of India has resorted to domestic borrowing, without going for external sources. Generally, government refrain from borrowing from RBI as it may lead to increase in money supply which turn leads to inflationary conditions. This is not the case with borrowing with public domestically as it has no effect on the supply of money. While borrowing from domestic market also have limitations due to limited fiscal spaces.

Newer ways to finance fiscal deficit:

From past few years government has been pushing towards borrowing foreign currency to finance the fiscal deficit. However, later the plan was dropped owing to currency risks. There are various benefits of borrowing from foreign market:

1. Sovereign foreign borrowing in international markets would help in attracting more foreign capital and pushing up domestic investment beyond what India saves.
2. The risk-free rate can serve as a benchmark

for dollar borrowing by Indian corporates. It can help reduce the cost of capital for both governments and corporates.

3. Foreign borrowing is critical if the government is to meet its target of Rs 100 lakh crore of infrastructure investment, and build a \$5 trillion economy.

However, this could lead to a balance of payments crisis, currency depreciation and greater difficulty in paying back the loan.

In recent times government has been talking about monetisation of deficit. Monetisation of deficit refers to purchase of government bond by the RBI to help finance the Centre's spending needs. While direct monetisation refers to a scenario where a central bank prints currency to the tune of accommodating deficit spending by the government.

This approach of monetisation is favoured by Modern Monetary Theory. It argues that government should spend 'today' and tax 'tomorrow' to drain out excess money from the economy (due to increase in liquidity owing to monetisation). However, such monetisation requires government to remove the constraints of capital, labour, skills and technology to ease the inflationary condition.

As covid has rung loud alarms about the weaknesses in the economy, the government will need to work on multiple dimensions. India can reap from these approaches if there is 'trust' in the institutions to make productive spending decisions with higher growth multiplier effects.

6. Describe the salient features of World Bank Assisted 'Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance' – RAMP scheme. To what extent will it supplement the existing government schemes in ameliorating the challenges faced by MSME sector?

Covid-19 pandemic has broken down the spine of MSME sector in India. Recognising this and other existing challenges of the MSME's as highlighted in **U K Sinha committee** report, government has decided to launch World Bank assisted central sector scheme, RAMP.

Salient features of RAMP scheme:

1. Cooperation and coordination of all the States/UTs in the spirit of federalism for the preparation of Strategic Investment Plans (SIPs) for targeted intervention in identified MSME sectors.
2. SIPs will identify key constraints and gaps, set milestones and project the required budget for identified priority sectors.
3. Establishment of an apex National MSME Council for overall monitoring and policy

review.

4. Being a central sector scheme, entire funding from Union Government, including loan of Rs. 3750 crore from World Bank.
5. Funds would flow from RAMP into the Ministry's budget against Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs) to support on-going programmes of ministry.
6. Focus is on improving market access and competitiveness.

Role of RAMP scheme in supporting MSMEs:

1. Impact enhancement of existing MSME schemes by addressing the generic and Covid related challenges to MSMEs.
2. Will improve access to credit for MSMEs, as credit access is a criterion in DLIs. This is critical given the fact that only 17% of MSMEs have access to formal credit system (Economic Survey).
3. Strengthening institutions and governance though National MSME Council (based on U K Sinha Committee recommendation).
4. It will help to address the issue of delayed payment to MSMEs and subsequent working capital shortage.
5. Higher impact of the schemes may usher in higher formalization of MSMEs, currently 86% of manufacturing MSMEs are unregistered (U K Sinha Committee).
6. It will also help to increase the share of skilled workforce, market access and technological upgradation.

Thus RAMP scheme will help unleash the potentials of MSMEs, 'growth engine' of Indian economy, **contributing about 30% of country's GDP**. It will also help in realising the goal of AtmaNirbhar Bharat by fostering innovation and enhancement in industry standards.

7. The ongoing crisis in Sri Lanka has a strong economic cause, list out the major economic factors that led towards such crisis. Suggest measures to avert such a crisis to emerge in India.

Sri Lanka, which in the 1970s was being hailed as a development success story for a low-income nation, is now mired in a financial and economic disaster, its worst yet since independence in 1948.

Major economic factors that led towards such crisis:

- Sri Lanka's average GDP growth rate almost halved after 2013 as global commodity prices fell, exports slowed down and imports rose.
- Reckless borrowing by government which even exceeded the GDP of the country.
- Tourism was a primary source of income for

the country and it got two successive blows in the form of a terrorist attack on the occasion of Easter and the Covid-19 pandemic.

- The government's ban on the use of chemical fertilisers in farming has further aggravated the crisis by dampening agricultural production.
- Lower tax rates and wide-ranging SoPs for farmers by the new government further exacerbated the problem.
- Decline in foreign exchange - it dropped from over \$7.5 billion in 2019 to around \$2.8 billion in July 2021.

Measures that can avert such a crisis to emerge in India:

- Limiting the proportion of borrowings in the central budget should be the utmost priority.
- No country can sustain the basic needs of its population by moving away from its primary sector like agriculture and promoting sectors heavily dependent on foreign income like tourism.
- Populist policies implemented with the sole goal to win the election can make people happy in short term, it is not sustainable in the longrun.
- Ensure that the returns from any massive infrastructure investment are adequately assessed and are backed by support from the countries with whom India has genial foreign relations.
- Diversification of economy is very important, especially post-pandemic and now due to the Russia-Ukraine war.

The government should take measures for economic recovery of the country as soon as the shortage of certain essential commodities ends. Government can raise domestic tax revenue and shrink government expenditure to limit borrowing and should take tough measures for restructuring the administration of concessions and subsidies.

8. What is Private Final Consumption Expenditure? Why it is one of the most important components of India's GDP?

The Private final consumption expenditure (PFCE) is defined as the expenditure incurred by the resident households and non-profit institutions serving households (NPISH) on final consumption of goods and services, whether made within or outside the economic territory. Personal consumption has long been the main component of India's GDP and a continued strong engine of GDP growth.

Private Final Consumption Expenditure

(PFCE) is most important components of India's GDP:

- It is a general consensus that the economic growth in developing countries is necessarily consumption-led instead of production/investment-led. Therefore, PFCE is important for India's GDP.
- In India, the PFCE accounts for 55-56% of all national GDP in a year and is the biggest driver of economic growth.
- PFCE also indirectly influences the next biggest driver of GDP — the Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF). This is a measure of the money spent by businesses when they make investments, and it accounts for 33% of all GDP.
- If consumer demand slows down, it robs businesses of any incentive to boost productive capacities by making fresh investments. Just boosting investments—without regard for demand—will not make sense.
- The weighty role of private consumer demand in boosting the GDP makes it the most important factor determining India's economic fortunes.

Private consumption depends largely on income growth and its distribution. Therefore, it would be useful to focus on further supporting income and employment levels for the MSMEs and informal sectors of the economy which have a higher propensity to consume.

9. Illustrate the reasons for a recent ban on exports of wheat from India? What would be the implications of the ban on the Indian and global consumers as well as the Indian farmers and agri-exports?

India is the world's second largest producer of wheat. But most of it is consumed domestically and as such India accounts for less than 1% of global wheat trade. Despite such a low share in global trade India's wheat export ban has unsettled global market.

Reasons for wheat export ban from India:

- 1. Soaring global wheat prices** have put pressure on food security of India as well as of neighbouring and other vulnerable nations (also the justification given by DGFT).
- 2. Russia-Ukraine war** restricted the export of wheat from these two countries, together accounting for about 29% of global wheat trade. This has led to doubling of global wheat prices.
- 3. Rising inflation**, wholesale – around 14.5% in April as well as retail – around 7.8% (April 2022) in India.
- 4. Low yield and production** due to heat-wave

experienced in March-April 2022.

- 5. Dip in procurement by Food Corporation of India (FCI)** due to reasons like low yield, private player offering price higher than MSP, holding of stocks etc. This adversely affects India's buffer stock.

Impacts of wheat export ban from India:

- 1. On domestic consumer –**
 - a. Greater availability means moderating of prices in Indian market, giving relief to domestic consumer.
 - b. Shields Indian consumer from global wheat price rise.
 - c. Availability of sufficient wheat with FCI would ensure access of grains to masses through PDS. Thus ensuring food security.
- 2. On global consumers –**
 - a. Increased inflationary pressure due to rising wheat prices.
 - b. Possible shortages in some countries which rely on Indian exports like UAE.
- 3. On Indian farmers and agri-exports:**
 - a. Lack of international market access would mean **reduced price realisation** for farmers, currently getting price only 105 higher than MSP.
 - b. This would mean reduced farmer's income, thus a hurdle to the goal of doubling farmer's income.
 - c. This consumer biased export measure adversely affects the credibility of India's agri-export policy.
 - d. India probably lost the opportunity to create some space in global agri-trade share and realise its target of 10 million tonnes of wheat export this fiscal.

Considering above and other geopolitical impacts it would be prudent for India to lift the ban as soon as possible. It could certainly calibrate the exports through measures like **Minimum export price**. This would be a win-win situation for India's grain diplomacy as well as farmers.

10. 'India has a rich and diversified livestock wealth', explain the significance of livestock wealth for small and marginal farmers? Also enumerate the measures taken by the government to promote livestock sector.

According to 20th Livestock census-2019, India has total livestock population of 535.78 million consisting of diverse animals like cattle, buffalo, goats, pigs etc. Together they supplement the income of roughly 1.5 crores farmers, including small and marginal farmers, in India.

Livestock wealth a boon for small and marginal farmers:

- 1. Income of the small and marginal farmers**

(86% of total farm households) from their small landholding. Livestock **supplements income** of the farmers.

2. Livestock acts as **buffer against economic shocks**, like drought, crop failure etc.
3. Livestock provide food as well as nutrition security, being important source of nutritious food like milk, meat etc.
4. Provides critical and cheap alternative to costly market based inputs like **drought** for ploughing on small plots, their dung can be used for bio-fertilizer.
5. Mixed agriculture involves both the growing of crops and raising of livestock, this not only complements each other but also increases the **resilience of farmers**.
6. Can act as **regular source of cash income** for the cash stripped small and marginal farmers.
7. Also provides cheap alternate source of energy, for ex – Gobar gas.
8. They also provide raw materials for food processing industries, thus facilitating their establishment in adjoining areas and **reducing pressure on land**.

Government **measures to promote** livestock sector include:

1. **National Livestock Mission** for quantitative and qualitative improvement in livestock production and capacity building of all stakeholders.
2. National Programme for Bovine breeding and dairy development.
3. Promotion to infrastructure through funds like Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund.
4. **Rashtriya Gokul Mission** for development and conservation of indigenous cattle breeds.
5. Establishment of **Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog** to organise animal husbandry on modern scientific lines.
6. National Mission for animal disease Control, for ex- food and mouth disease which is prevalent among cattle.

Thus promotion of Livestock rearing among Small and Marginal farmers can sustainably increase the economic capability and resilience of these farmers. This will ensure '**Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas**' – inclusive development of all.

11. **The transformative approach for economic growth and sustainable development is driven by seven engines, expected to pull forward the economy in unison. Give an account of the 7 engines envisaged in PM Gati Shakti. Comment upon the importance of each engine for Indian economy.**

PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan is a

transformative approach which will boost economic growth and sustainable development. It will encompass the seven engines for economic transformation, seamless multimodal connectivity and logistics efficiency.

The focus will be on planning, financing through innovative ways, use of technology, and speedier implementation.

Seven engines of PM Gati Shakti and their importance for Indian economy:

1. Roads:

- Roads are the arteries through which the economy pulses.
- Road infrastructure is central to India's productivity and the competitiveness of sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing.
- Roadways are very important for the development of hilly regions as they are not fit for the construction of railways.

2. Railways:

- Railway serves as the most economical mode of transport among the prevailing travel modes in India.
- Indian railway is one of the largest employment providers in India.
- It is six times more energy-efficient than road and four times more economical.

3. Airports:

- Airports serve as a growth pole, spurring expansion throughout the region as a result of spillover and trickledown effects.
- Air transport is free of physical barriers and widely used during disasters because trains and roads are ineffective for rescue operations.

4. Ports:

- Water transport is an easy and cheap means of exports and imports of heavy items. It is in this context that the role of ports becomes all the more important.
- Port is a place in a waterway where a ship can stop for loading and alighting goods.
- Ports are the nodal points for land and sea trades.

5. Mass Transport:

- Mass transport allows for more efficient movement of people along the same transit channel.
- Increase the number of productive man-hours in large metros such as Bengaluru, Delhi, etc.
- Due to the growing rate of urbanization the importance of mass transportation is increasing day by day.

6. Waterways:

- Water transport system ensures

mobility and connectivity and generating employment at the grassroots with lesser environmental footprint and cost.

- It also reduces time, cost of transportation of goods and cargos, as well as congestion and accidents on highways.

7. Logistics Infrastructure:

- It create a plethora of job opportunities. According to a report by BusinessLine, the logistic sector is expected to create 3 million new jobs by 2022.
- The logistics industry's development brought a global competitive advantage to the transportation sector.

Infrastructure is the lifeline of any economy and therefore it needs specialized attention. PM Gati Shakti is a step in the right direction. However, it needs to address structural and macroeconomic stability concerns, emanating from high public expenditure.

12. Data from International Labour Organisation suggest that India's employment to population ratio (over the age of 15) has steadily dropped from 55% in 2005 to 43% in 2020. Explaining the reasons for this decline and also suggest some measures to increase the employment to population ratio.

Recent reports like that of ILO as well as Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy suggests that millions of Indians are not able to find job, particularly women. People are exiting the labour force entirely. An LPR of 40 per cent means that over 60 per cent of the employable workforce are not even looking for work.

Labour participation rate is a measure of the country's working-age population, which is either working or actively seeking work.

Reasons for decline:

Immediate causes:

1. People are dropping out of labour force because they are disappointed with the failure to find jobs at all.
2. Bad situation in the job market leading people not to find job of their choice. It is truer in the case of graduates and postgraduates because there is a total mismatch between education and job industry.
3. Some people opting out of labour force may find it more lucrative to start their own business.
4. Recent Covid 19 pandemic and associated lockdown has hit the economy hard and this also created a huge pressure on the labour market.
5. Closure of micro and small enterprises

like tailoring, beauty parlours, stationary shops, among others during the COVID-19 pandemic has also resulted in people quitting the labour force.

6. A lot of people have also moved from regular and even casual employment to some form of self-employment, like agriculture.

Systemic issues

1. Low share of manufacturing sector in the overall GDP of India. Manufacturing sector is prime job creator in any economy.
2. There has been a steady decline in India's female labour force, which is one of the major reasons cited for low LPR. Due to discrimination between men and women, women are first to lose their job.
3. One of the reasons is that a large number of young people of 15-19 age group are enrolled in schools and colleges and are not inclined towards taking jobs.
4. The skill set required for the structural changes in the economy is in mismatch with the present skill set of labour force.

Steps to increase the employment population ratio:

1. Focusing on the job generating sectors like leather and textile. Also, there could be decentralisation of industries so that people of every region get employment.
2. Increase the investment in education and health that will educate the workers, impart useful skills and make them healthy.
3. Roll out policies that aims to provide stabled and well-paying jobs. Employment security needs to be provided especially in the informal employment.
4. Minimising the gender-based discrimination in the labor market which will encourage women to participate in the labour market.
5. India also needs to rethink the traditional industry led growth. Agriculture sector could also be a huge employment generator if suitable steps are taken.
6. Using information technology to integrate the industry, academia and labour.

India is a society of "young people". With a demographic profile of 65 per cent of the population below 35 years of age. Therefore, it is of huge importance for India to reap the benefits arising out of its demographic transition. Thus, we need immediate action towards the employment situation in India, else the same dividend may turn into disaster.

MCQs Based on Current Affairs

1. Consider the following statements regarding with Brucellosis:

1. Brucellosis is a contagious zoonotic bacterial infection that is usually transmitted from the cattle.
2. This is an airborne infection and transmission from human to human is very common in the South Asian region.
3. This is endemic to rural India and causes huge economic loss into the animal husbandry sector.
4. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research's Indian Veterinary Research Institute (ICAR-IVRI) recently has developed a vaccine for Brucellosis prevention in dairy sector.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1, 2 and 4 B. 1, 3 and 4 only
C. 1 and 3 only D. All of the above.

Ans. B

2. Consider the following statements:

Statement-I: India has launched a platform with Indonesia named as India-Indonesia Economic and Financial Dialogue in the G20 meeting.

Statement-II: Indonesia is the largest trading partner of India in the ASEAN region.

- A. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
B. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
C. Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
D. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct

Ans. A

3. Consider the Following statements related to Advance Authorisation Scheme:

1. This scheme aims to allow duty free imports which are directly incorporated into export products.
 2. This scheme has been implemented by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade.
 3. It would result into shorter turnaround time for exporters and deduce the compliance burden.
 4. This scheme is aligned to one of the four pillars mentioned in Foreign Trade Policy-2023.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1, 2 only B. 1, 3 and 4 only

- C. 1 and 3 only

- D. All of the above.

Ans. B

4. Consider the statement regarding with Comprehensive and Progressive Trans Pacific Partnership (CPTPP):

1. The CPTPP is a free trading bloc of all 11 countries located in Indo-Pacific region.
2. It is established in 2016 by U.S.A. to promote the free market economy in the region.
3. It also serves as a strategic military alliance for the purpose of maritime security.
4. Recently United Kingdom has officially joined this agreement to access the trade market of 500 million people.

Which of the statements given above are not correct?

- A. 1, 2 and 3
B. 1, 3 and 4 only
C. 1 and 3 only
D. All of the above.

Ans. A

5. Which of the Countries are the members of CPTPP:

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Australia | 2. Brunei |
| 3. Chile | 4. Mexico |
| 5. Malaysia | 6. Indonesia |
| 7. Japan | |

Choose the correct code-

- A. 1, 2, 3, 7 only
B. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 only
C. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 only
D. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7

Ans. D

6. The Batagaika Crater was recently in news. Consider the following statements regarding with it-

1. It is the world's largest permafrost crater located in the central part of Siberian region.
2. The scientists have found the evidence of megaslumps in this crater.
3. Permafrost region acts as reflector for solar radiation and also traps the harmful greenhouse gases beneath it.
4. Most of the permafrost region is found in the northern hemisphere.

How many of these sentences are correct?

- A. Only two B. Only three
C. Only one D. Only four.

Ans. B

7. Consider the following statements:
1. Nari Adalat launched by the central Government under the ministry of rural Development.
 2. It would be launched at the Village level.
 3. Scheme will commence in 50 villages each in Assam and Jammu and Kashmir.
- Which of the above statement is/are correct?
- A. Only 1
 - B. 1 and 2 only
 - C. 2 and 3 only
 - D. all of the above

Ans. C

8. Consider the following statements:
1. Rajasthan Minimum bill seeks to cover the entire adult population.
 2. Under this all families of the state get guaranteed employment of 155 days.
 3. The aged, disabled, Widows and single women get a minimum pension of Rs. 1500 per month.
- Which of the above statement is/are correct?
- A. Only 1
 - B. only 2 and 3
 - C. Only 1 and 3
 - D. None of the above

Ans. A

9. Consider the following statements:
1. As per the new guidelines for designation of senior advocates in the Supreme Court the minimum age of senior advocate designation will be 42 years.
 2. Former Judge can apply for this designation no matter of they are engaged elsewhere.
 3. These guidelines will supersede the earlier guideline issued by the court in 2016.
- Which of the above statement is/are correct?
- A. 1, 2 and 3
 - B. 2 and 3
 - C. 1 and 3
 - D. None of the above

Ans. D

10. Consider the following statements:
1. Power finance corporation (PFC) become first member from India to Asia transition finance study group (ATFSG).
 2. It was announced during the G20 summit in Goa.
 3. ATFSG is an Initiative of Germany.
- Which of the above statement is/are correct?
- A. Only 3

- B. only 1 and 2
- C. Only 1 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Ans. B

11. With reference to Jan Vishwas Bill 2023, consider the following statements-
1. Under this, an attempt has been made to decriminalize 183 offenses of 42 Acts.
 2. Under this bill, there will be an increase of 10 percent in every 1 year in fines and penalties.
- Which of the above statement is/are correct?
- A. 1
 - B. 2
 - C. 1 and 2
 - D. None

Ans. A

12. Consider the following statements
1. The National Tiger Conservation Authority has a target of bringing 50 cheetahs from Namibia in the next 5 years.
 2. Kuno river is a tributary of Mahanadi.
- Which of the above statement is/are correct?
- A. 1
 - B. 2
 - C. Both 1 and 2
 - D. None

Ans. A

13. Which one is correct about the tank method being reported in the news?
1. Tankai method is an ancient shipbuilding technique.
 2. In this method, instead of wooden planks, nails are used for construction.
- Choose the correct statement with the help of Islamic principles.
- A. Only 1
 - B. Only 2
 - C. 1 and 2 Both
 - D. Neither 1 nor 2

Ans. C

14. Consider about Namda art which was in news recently-
1. Namda is a type of traditional Kashmiri dress.
 2. The design consists of flowers, leaves, buds and fruits.
 3. It was introduced to the Kashmiris by a Sufi saint named Shah-e-Hamdan.
- With the help of the above statements, choose the correct statement -
- A. 1 and 2 only
 - B. 2 and 3 only
 - C. 1, 2 and 3
 - D. 1 and 3 only

Ans. B

15. Consider the following statements in the context of Local Currency Settlement:

1. In a first of its kind, it was signed between India and France.
2. While streamlining cross-border transactions, it will also facilitate the transfer of remittances.

Which of the following is/are true?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Ans. B

16. Consider the following statements in reference to the UN report on women

1. It has been prepared by combining the data of Global Gender Gap Index and Women's Empowerment Index.
2. According to the report, less than 50% of women across the world could realise their full potential.
3. Only Nordic countries have achieved complete women empowerment and gender parity.

How many statements are correct?

- A. Only 1 statement
- B. Only 2 statements
- C. All the three statements
- D. None

Ans. D

17. Recently, the Maputo protocol completed two decades since its adoption in 2003. Consider the following statements regarding Maputo Protocol:

1. It defines the rights of child labours and bonded labours working in the diamond mines of Africa.
2. The protocol is legally binding and is one of the fastest human rights treaties to come into force.

Which of the following options is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both
- D. None of the above

Ans: B

18. Consider the following statements with respect to Maputo Protocol

1. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly in the year 2012 to provide a legal framework for women's rights in Africa.

2. As per the latest report on Maputo protocol, it has been found that participation of women in labour force has increased significantly.

3. As per the report about 10 million girls are at risk of becoming child brides by 2030.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. Only three
- D. None of the above

Ans: A

19. Consider the following statements with respect to synthetic cells

1. A synthetic cell is an artificially created cell designed to imitate natural cells using non-living materials. They consist of essential components like cellular machinery and synthetic genetic material that does not exist in nature.

2. Recently it has been demonstrated that synthetic cell with minimal genome could evolve under constricted environment.

Which of the following options is correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both
- D. None of the above

Ans: C

20. Mycoplasma mycoides JCVI-syn3B, a minimized version of the bacterium M. mycoides. Consider the following statement:

1. Mycoplasma mycoides JCVI-syn3B is the first synthetic organism created by J. Craig Venter Institute, California.

2. At 493 genes, the minimal genome of M. mycoides JCVI-syn3B is the smallest of any known free-living organism.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are incorrect?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both
- D. None

Ans: D

21. Consider the following statements:

1. Candida auris is a species of bacteria that can cause serious and potentially life-threatening infections in humans. It is considered a superbug because it has developed resistance to many antibiotics.

2. Candida auris has also been discovered on the surface of stored apples, in tidal marshes, and in environments with extremely high

salinity.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both
- D. None

Ans: B

22. Consider the following statements:

1. Superbugs are multidrug resistant organisms develop resistance against commonly used antibiotics making traditional treatments completely ineffective.
2. Recently, superbugs have been found in the ear canal of stray dogs in New Delhi citing risks for disease transmission to humans.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are not correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both
- D. None

Ans: D

23. Consider the following statements:

1. Endometriosis is a respiratory disease commonly found among women with prolonged exposure to chemical fumigants.
2. In India, about 42 million women are affected by this condition.
3. Recently, it was demonstrated that bacterial infection could lead to endometriosis in women.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 3 only

Ans: B

24. Consider the following statements regarding Mhadei sanctuary:

1. Mhadei sanctuary is at the fringes of the Nagarhole National Park, Karnataka and is located in the lush green forest of Western Ghats.
2. The sanctuary features dense semi evergreen forests with some evergreen species and rare endemic orchids and is renowned for its sacred groves.

Which of the above statements is true?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both
- D. None

Ans: D

25. Consider the following statements:

1. Project Tiger is a tiger conservation programme launched on April 1, 1973 by the Government of India in cooperation with WWF.
2. National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is the statutory authority that provides recommendation to notify an area as Tiger Reserve. Recommendations of NTCA are binding on the states.
3. The state is the final authority that gives approval for notifying an area as Tiger Reserve.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct??

- A. 2 and 3 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3 only

Ans: D

26. Consider the following statements regarding geological time scale:

1. The Anthropocene epoch, coined by Nobel laureate Paul Crutzen and biology professor Eugene Stoermer in 2000, represents the current geological time interval marked by significant human-induced changes in the Earth's ecosystem.
2. The geologic time scale provides the official framework for our understanding of Earth's 4.5-billion-year history. It is categorized into eons, epochs, eras, periods, and ages.
3. Currently, we live in the Meghalayan Age which began about 11,700 years ago after the last ice age.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. Only three
- D. None of the above

Ans: C

27. Consider the following statements:

1. The division of earth's geological time scale is based on fossil records and principle of faunal succession.
2. Great acceleration is the term used to define the catastrophe that marked the doom of dinosaurs in Jurassic age due to an accelerating meteorite.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are incorrect?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both
- D. None

Ans: A

20Years
of Trust

Success is Our Tradition
4500+ Selections in IAS & PCS



ADMISSIONS OPEN FOR Offline / Online Courses

GENERAL STUDIES | CSAT | OPTIONAL SUBJECTS
MAIN TEST SERIES FOR IAS & PCS

Looking to crack **UPSC, UP-PSC & BPSC Civil Services Examination**. Look no further than Dhyeya IAS! Our comprehensive preparation program offers everything you need.



Expert lectures from experienced subject specialists



Dedicated mentors to guide you through every step of the process and answer your questions



Special lectures from top experts in the field



Holistic PMI (Prelims, Mains, and Interview) tests to prepare you for every stage of the exam



Complete coverage of current affairs to keep you up-to-date on the latest news and trends



Daily answer writing practice with expert guidance

Join the many successful candidates who have benefited from Dhyeya IAS's proven approach for **UPSC, UP-PSC & BPSC Civil Services Examination**. *Contact us today to learn more*

FOR OFFLINE COURSES, CALL RESPECTIVE CENTRE

Available Optional Subjects

- HISTORY
- POLITICAL SCIENCE & IR
- GEOGRAPHY
- SOCIOLOGY

UPSC PRELIMS & MAINS TEST SERIES
(OFFLINE & ONLINE)

UP-PCS PRELIMS & MAINS TEST SERIES
(OFFLINE & ONLINE)

BPSC PRELIMS & MAINS GS & OPTIONAL TEST SERIES
(OFFLINE & ONLINE)

FORTNIGHTLY AVAILABLE PERFECT 7 MAGAZINE FOR COMPREHENSIVE COVERAGE OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR ONLINE COURSES CALL 9205274741 / 42





DHYEYA IAS®
most trusted since 2003

20 Years
of Trust

Success is Our Tradition

4500+ SELECTIONS IN IAS & PCS



₹ 55



dhyeyaias.com

Face to Face Centres

North Delhi : A 12, 13, Ansal Building, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi - 110009, Ph: 9205274741/42/44 | **Laxmi Nagar** : 1/53, 2nd floor, Lalita Park, Near Gurudwara, Opposite Pillar no.23, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi - 110092, Ph: 9205212500/9205962002 | **Greater Noida** : 4th Floor Veera Tower, Alpha 1 Commercial Belt., Greater Noida, UP - 201310, Ph: 9205336037/38 | **Prayagraj** : II & III Floor, Shri Ram Tower, 17C, Sardar Patel Marg, Civil Lines, Prayagraj, UP - 211001, Ph: 0532-2260189/8853467068 | **Lucknow (Aliganj)** : A-12, Sector-J, Aliganj, Lucknow, UP- 226024, Ph: 0522-4025825/9506256789 | **Lucknow (Gomti Nagar)** : CP-1, Jeewan Plaza, Viram Khand-5, Near Husariya Chauraha, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, UP - 226010, Ph: 7234000501/ 7234000502 | **Lucknow (Alambagh)** : 58/1, Sector-B Opposite Phoenix Mall Gate No. 3, L.D.A Colony, Alambagh Lucknow., Ph: 7518373333, 7518573333 | **Kanpur** : 113/154 Swaroop Nagar, Near HDFC Bank, Kanpur, UP - 208002, Ph: 7887003962/7897003962 | **Gorakhpur** : Narain Tower, 2nd floor, Gandhi Gali, Golghar, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh 273001, Ph: 7080847474 | **Bhubaneswar** : OEU Tower, Third Floor, KIIT Road, Patia, Bhubaneswar, Odisha -751024, Ph: 9818244644/7656949029

Dhyeya IAS Now on Telegram



We're Now on Telegram

Join Dhyeya IAS Telegram Channel from the link given below

["https://t.me/dhyeya_ias_study_material"](https://t.me/dhyeya_ias_study_material)

You can also join Telegram Channel through Search on Telegram
"Dhyeya IAS Study Material"

Join Dhyeya IAS Telegram Channel from link the given below

https://t.me/dhyeya_ias_study_material

नोट : पहले अपने फ़ोन में टेलीग्राम App Play Store से Install कर ले उसके बाद लिंक में क्लिक करें जिससे सीधे आप हमारे चैनल में पहुँच जायेंगे।

You can also join Telegram Channel through our website

www.dhyeyaias.com

www.dhyeyaias.com/hindi



Address: 635, Ground Floor, Main Road, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi 110009
Phone No: 9205274741, 9205274742, 9205274744