

Zorawar

❖ Context

- The Indian Army is prioritising the procurement of the indigenous Indian light tank, aptly named 'Zorawar', for deployment in the mountains.



❖ Key Highlights

- It will have equal firepower as the present tank, including missile firing. The power to weight ratio will make it very agile.



- Zorawar is designed to operate in **varying terrain from high altitude** areas and marginal terrains to island territories.
- It will be highly transportable for rapid deployment to meet any operational situation, and feature niche technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), drone integration, active protection systems, and a high degree of situational awareness.

❖ Significance

- The heavy tanks were primarily designed for operations in the plains and in desert terrains, and face certain limitations at high altitudes or when deployed in the marginal terrain of the **Rann of Kutch**.
- It is therefore an operational necessity to procure a lighter tank to overcome these limitations, and design and develop it indigenously.
- China has inducted a large number of state-of-the-art medium and light tanks. This increased threat on the northern borders is likely to remain a threat in the foreseeable future.

South Indian Tea

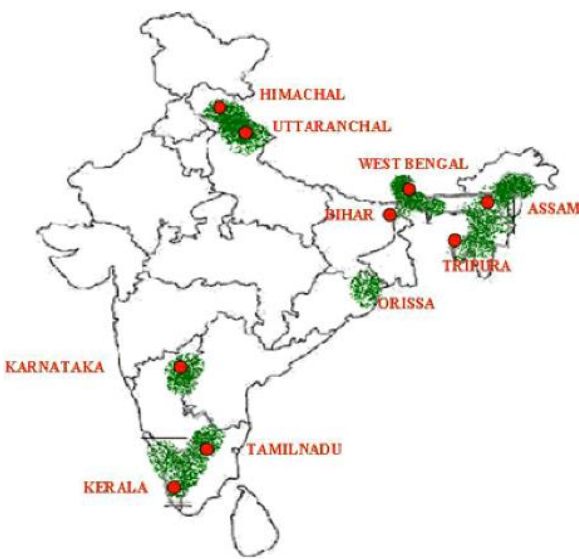
❖ Context

- The declining trend in Sri Lankan orthodox tea production is likely to benefit South Indian crop further.



❖ Key Highlights

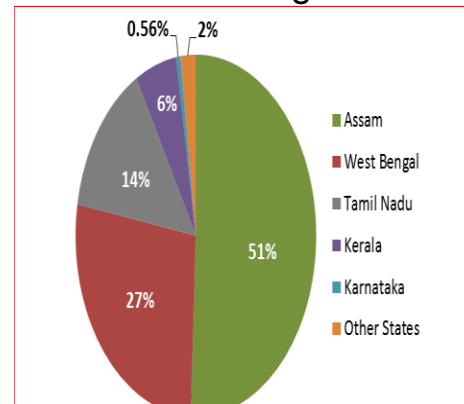
- India has an opportunity to further penetrate into global markets
- Sri Lankan orthodox tea production declined during the January-July period with a deficit of 35 million kg at 153 million kg compared to 188 million kg in the corresponding period of last year.



- **Orthodox tea:** It refers to **loose-leaf tea that is produced using traditional (or orthodox) methods of tea production**, which involve plucking, withering, rolling, oxidation/fermentation and drying.
- **CTC or Crush-Tear-Curl production:** All 5 steps of Orthodox processing are performed, but much more rapidly & in a **limited fashion**. CTC was invented specifically for the black tea industry, in an effort to save time.

❖ Key Hurdles

- India cannot produce **35 million kg** of orthodox tea in excess because of the **limited production** capacities in manufacturing units.



- Factories are not equipped to have dual manufacturing processes due to the huge financial outlay.

- India is traditionally consuming CTC in which **80 per cent** of the domestic consumption is absorbed easily by the market.

India - Tanzania Defence Task Force

❖ Context

- In an important development from India's strategic perspective, India and Tanzania have agreed to set up a task force in defence.



❖ Key Highlights

- Both the countries have agreed to the formation of a task force to prepare a five-year future roadmap for enhancing defence cooperation.
- There was review on the existing military-to-military activities and discussion on ways to enhance cooperation in all domains with a focus on defence industry cooperation.

❖ Significance

- China has already been **spreading its influences** in the African Continent and East Africa in particular.
- This region of the Western Indian Ocean and East Africa is strategically important for India from the economy, trade and business point of view as almost **60% of our trade comes from this side**.

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- The countries like Kenya and Tanzania have understood the **negative effect of the Chinese support** thus there is a backlash and it is the right time to regain our older ties.
- During the Covid pandemic, India has assisted the countries like Mozambique, Mauritius, Seychelles and other island nations too in the Western Indian Ocean hence India has **incredible amount of soft power** in this region.



Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana

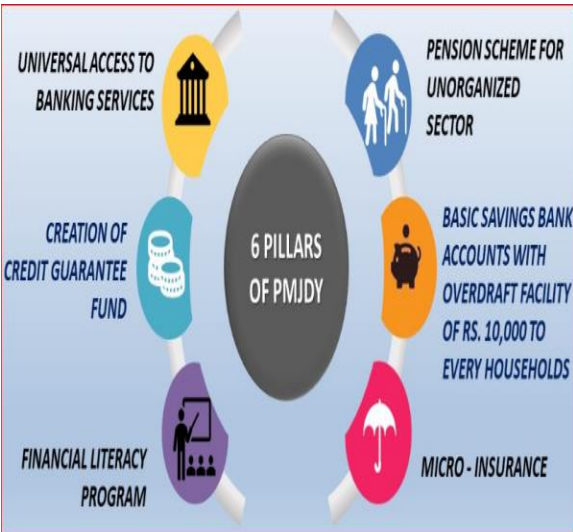
❖ Context

- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana PMJDY, the National Mission for Financial Inclusion completed eight years of successful implementation recently.



❖ Key Highlights

- The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana has a structured monitoring mechanism from Central to District level.
- At the Centre, **Finance Minister** is the Mission head along with a Steering Committee and a Mission Director.



- The programme is monitored at State level by a **State Implementation Committee** and in the districts by a District Implementation Committee.
- More than **46.25 crore** beneficiaries banked under PMJDY since inception, amounting to over one lakh 73 thousand crore rupees.

- **56%** Jan-Dhan account holders are women and **67%** of Jan Dhan accounts are in rural and semi-urban areas.
- **31.94 crore RuPay** cards have been issued to PMJDY account holders.
- Financial inclusion is a major step towards inclusive growth which ensures the overall economic development of marginalised sections of society. The underlying pillars of PMJDY, namely,
 - Banking the Unbanked,
 - Securing the Unsecured, and
 - Funding the Unfunded

❖ Significance

- It provides a platform for universal access to banking facilities with at least one basic banking account for every household, financial literacy, and access to credit, insurance and pension facility.

Swarm Drones

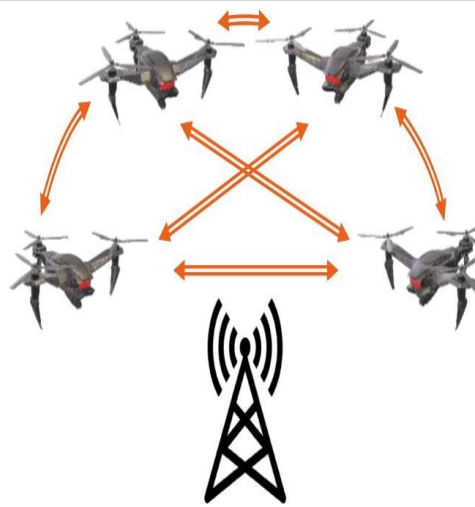
❖ Context

- Recently Indian Army has procured Swarm Drones from two Indian startups.



❖ Key Highlights

- Swarm drones being inducted into the mechanised forces, duly embracing the niche & disruptive technologies, will provide an edge to Indian Army in meeting future security challenges.
- A swarm drone system consists of a number of small drones which are AI enabled and capable of communicating with the control station as well as among themselves and provide asymmetric capabilities for taking out frontline assets of the adversary.



- The application of swarm drones in recent conflicts worldwide especially Armenia, Azerbaijan, Syria and strike on oilfields in Saudi Arabia and ongoing war in Ukraine have highlighted their potency in modern warfare.
- The recent incidents along the borders have seen a noticeable increase in drone related incidents along our borders.

Section 123 of RPA, 1951

❖ Context

- The Supreme Court has referred **petitions seeking ban on freebies** distributed by political parties before elections to a three judge bench which will reconsider the SC's 2013 judgement.

❖ S Subramaniam Balaji vs State of TN (2013)

- The two judge bench had observed that the promises in the election manifesto cannot be construed as 'corrupt practice' under Section 123 of RP Act.



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❖ Section 123 of the Act

- The corrupt practices in relation to election have been defined in this section.
- **Bribery:** It is any **gift, offer or promise** by a **candidate** or his **agent** or by **any other person** with the consent of a candidate or his election agent of any gratification, to any person whomsoever, with the object, directly or indirectly of inducing a person to withdraw or not to withdraw from being a **candidate** at an election or an **elector** to vote or refrain from voting at an election.
- **Undue influence:** Any direct or indirect interference or attempt to interfere on the part of the candidate or his agent, or of any other person with the consent of the candidate or his election agent, with the free exercise of any electoral right.
- The **appeal** by a candidate or his agent to **vote or refrain from voting for any person on the ground of his religion, race, caste, community or language** or the use of, or appeal to religious symbols or the use of, or appeal to, national symbols, such as the national flag or the national emblem. The **promotion of, or attempt to promote, feelings of enmity or hatred** between different classes of the citizens of India on grounds of religion, race, caste, community, or language, by a candidate or his agent.

- The propagation of the practice or the commission of **sati** or its glorification by a candidate or his agent.
- The publication of any **statement** of fact which is **false**, and reasonably calculated to **prejudice the prospects of another candidate's election**.
- The hiring or use of any vehicle for the free conveyance of any elector to or from any polling station.
- Assistance (other than the giving of vote) from any person in the service of the Government.
- **Booth capturing** by a candidate or his agent or other person.

❖ Section 99 and 8A of the Act

- The **High Court** makes an order under Section 99 deciding whether corrupt practice has been committed at an election.
- Under **Section 8A**, the order is communicated to the President who decides on disqualification of the person who committed the corrupt practice.
- The **maximum period** for which the person can be disqualified is **six years**.
- However, the **President** before making any decision should refer to the **Election Commission (EC)** and act according to the EC's opinion.

News in Between the Lines

Dugong



❖ Context

- A new study suggests that the dugong has become **the first large vertebrate to go functionally extinct in China's coastal waters** in South China Sea.

❖ Key Highlights

- **"Functional extinction"** means that even if some dugongs are still alive off China's coast, their numbers are too small to maintain a viable population.
- Dugongs are occasionally entangled in fishing nets. The seagrass that they eat has degraded over the years.
- Marine mammals, including dugongs, first evolved in the **Eocene Epoch**, around 54 million to 34 million years ago, particularly in the extensive shallow sea stretching from the Pacific to the present-day Mediterranean.
- Dugongs belong to the **Sirenia**, a biological order that includes the dugong and three extant species of **manatees**. All four are known colloquially as "sea cows," but the **dugong is the only one that lives exclusively in salt water**.
- It is also the **world's only fully vegetarian marine mammal**.
- **Australia has the world's largest population of dugongs today**.
- Dugongs are protected in **India** and occur in Gulf of Mannar, PalkBay, Gulf of Kutch and Andaman and Nicobar islands. **Their population in India has now reduced to about 200 individuals**.

Getting India to Net Zero Report



❖ Context

- The report was released by former Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd & others.

❖ Key Highlights

- India will require an **economy-wide investment of \$10.1 trillion** from now if it is to achieve its **net-zero emissions target by 2070**.
- The investment required will be **\$13.5 trillion** if the target is to be met by **2050**.
- Achieving net-zero by 2070 would **boost annual GDP by up to 4.7% by 2036** and create as many as **15 million new jobs by 2047**.
- India could peak in emissions as soon as 2030.

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SRSDV



❖ Context

- Ludhiana based **Punjab Agricultural University (PAU)** has finally decoded the mystery behind paddy dwarfing.

❖ Key Highlights

- Scientists blame it on '**Southern Rice Black-Streaked Dwarf Virus**' (SRBSDV), named after Southern China where it was first reported in 2001.
- This is the **first time that SRBSDV has been found in Punjab.**
- The incidence of stunting was more pronounced in early sown paddy crops, irrespective of the variety.
- The SRBSDV is transmitted by **white-backed plant hopper (WBPH).**
- In addition to rice, SRBSDV also infects different weed species as nymphs of WBPH can transmit the virus more efficiently as compared to adults.
- The long-distance transmission of this virus may occur through WBPH migrating with the typhoons and strong convection winds.

Awaas+



❖ Context

- The UP's request of approving 13 lakh houses under the Awaas+ list of PMAY-G has been turned down by the Centre.

❖ Key Highlights

- The request was in addition to the 11.66 lakh houses approved as per the "Awaas+" list in 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- The Centre had launched the **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana- Gramin (PMAY-G)** in 2016 with the aim to provide houses to all in rural areas by **2022 (later extended till 2024)**, and set a target of construction of **2.95 crore houses.**
- The **2.15 crore beneficiaries** were identified using specified parameters, from the database of the **Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011.**
- The remaining **80 lakh beneficiaries** were identified by the **Union Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)**, through the states and Union territories, via a survey of households who were not covered in the SECC 2011 using a **mobile application - 'Awaas+'.**

CAPI



❖ Context

- In recent meetings held at the Cabinet Secretariat attended by statistical department and Union Labour Ministry representatives, discussions converged on the need to **improve the frequency of the labour market data**, especially in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.

❖ Key Highlights

- It has been noted that there is considerable **time lag** in the release of the official **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** as against privately-conducted surveys such as the one brought out by Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) weekly, monthly, daily.
- The **National Statistical Office (NSO)** under the Ministry of Statistics of Programme and Implementation (MoSPI) conducts the PLFS for rural and urban areas.
- **Labour data for rural areas is published annually, while that for urban areas is released every quarter.**
- There is a **gap of at least a year in the release of the annual PLFS report.**
- The MoSPI, cited the glitches in the software application - **Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI)**, developed by the World Bank (WB) and database-related issues for the delay.
- Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) is a **face-to-face data collection method** in which the interviewer uses a tablet, mobile phone or a computer to record answers given during the interview.
- The Ministry then **discontinued the WB's CAPI** application and in late **2018 had to resort to the conventional paper-assisted personal interview** mode for PLFS.

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