

Designing Rupee Notes

❖ Context

- Recently, several Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders asked the government to put **pictures of Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Ganesh** on currency notes in order to bring “prosperity” to the country.

❖ Deciding Bank Notes and Coin Appearance

- **Changes in the design and form** of bank notes and coins are decided by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the **central government**.
- Changes in the design of coins are the **prerogative of the central government**.

❖ RBI's Roles in Issuing Notes

- The central bank internally **works out a design**, which is put before the **RBI's Central Board**.
- **Section 22 of The Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934** :
 - It gives RBI the “sole right” to issue banknotes in India.
- **Section 25 of The Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934** :
 - It states that the design, form, and material of bank notes shall be such as may be approved by the Central Government after consideration of the recommendations made by the [RBI's] Central Board.
- **The RBI's Department of Currency Management** :
 - It has the responsibility of **administering the core function of currency management**.
 - If the **design of a currency note** has to change, the department works on the design and submits it to RBI, which recommends it to the central government.
 - The government gives the final approval.
- **Printing Presses**:
 - Two of India's currency note **printing presses (in Nasik and Dewas)** are owned by the Government of India.
 - Two others (**in Mysore & Salboni**) are owned by the RBI through its wholly owned subsidiary, Bharatiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran Ltd (BRBNML).

❖ Decision on the Minting of Coins

- The **Coinage Act, 2011** gives the **central government the power to design and mint coins** in various denominations.
- In the case of coins, **the role of the RBI is limited** to the distribution of coins that are supplied by the central government.
- Coins are **minted in four mints** owned by the Government of India in **Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Noida**.

❖ Types of Notes Issued So Far

- **Ashoka Pillar Banknotes**:
 - The first banknote issued in independent India was the Re 1 note issued in 1949.
 - It had the **symbol of the Lion Capital** of the Ashoka Pillar at Sarnath in the watermark window.
- **Mahatma Gandhi (MG) Series, 1996**:
 - All the banknotes of this series bear the portrait of Mahatma Gandhi on the obverse (front) side.
- **Mahatma Gandhi series, 2005**:
 - The “MG series 2005” notes were issued in denominations of Rs 10, Rs 20, Rs 50, Rs 100, Rs 500, and Rs 1,000.
 - The Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes of this series were withdrawn w.e.f. the midnight of November 8, 2016.
- **Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series, 2016**:
 - These notes **highlight the cultural heritage and scientific achievements** of the country.
 - Banknotes in this series in denominations of Rs 2000, Rs 500, Rs 200, Rs 100, Rs 50, Rs 20, and Rs 10 were introduced.

GM Mustard

❖ Context

- The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) has recommended the environmental release of the genetically modified (GM) mustard variety DMH (**Dhara Mustard Hybrid**)-11.



❖ Key Highlights

- The regulatory clearance for GM mustard means the crop is fit for environmental release.
- Mustard is cultivated by around 6 million farmers in around 6.5-7 million hectares of land across the states of **Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh**.
- **DMH-11** has been shown to deliver 30 per cent higher yields than existing varieties.
- The average yield of existing mustard varieties is around 1,000-1,200 kilograms per hectare, while the global average is over 2,000-2,200 kgs.

❖ Significance

- This will address several problems related to low production and yield that arise from the narrow variability of Indian mustard germplasm, **lack of hybridisation**, and infestation of biotic and abiotic stresses.



- The technology would enable **efficient breeding** of better hybrids of mustard that could increase yields and boost resistance to diseases.

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Blue Flag' Certification

❖ Context

- Recently, two Indian beaches, **Minicoy Thundi beach and Kadmat beach**, located in Lakshadweep, have received the International eco-label 'Blue Flag'.

❖ Key Highlights

- With the new additions, **the number of beaches** of India certified under the Blue Flag Certification **is twelve**.
- **The other Indian beaches in the blue list are** - Shivrajpur-Gujarat, Ghoghla-Diu, Kasarkod and Padubidri-Karnataka, Kappad-Kerala, Rushikonda- Andhra Pradesh, Golden-Odisha, Radhanagar- Andaman and Nicobar, Kovalam in Tamil Nadu & Eden in Puducherry beaches.
- **About The Two Beaches:**
 - **The Thundi Beach :**
 - It is one of the **most pristine and picturesque beaches** in the Lakshadweep archipelago where white sand is lined by turquoise blue water of the lagoon.
 - It is a **paradise for swimmers and tourists alike**.
 - **The Kadmat Beach :**
 - It is **popular with cruise tourists** who visit the island for water sports.
 - It is a **paradise for nature lovers** with its pearl white sand, blue lagoon waters, its moderate climate & friendly locals.

❖ About Blue Flag Certification

- The Blue Flag tag or Blue Flag certification is **one of the world's most recognised voluntary eco-labels**.
- It was **started in France in 1985** and in areas out of Europe in 2001.
- It is awarded to beaches, marinas and sustainable boating tourism operators.
- The certification is **awarded by** the Denmark-based non-profit **Foundation for Environmental Education or FEE**.
- It is **awarded annually** to beaches and marinas in FEE member countries.
- The Blue Flag beaches are considered the **cleanest beaches in the world**.
- Around fifty countries currently participate in the program, and over **4,000 beaches**, marinas, and boats have this certification.

Sandalwood Spike Disease

❖ Context

- Sandalwood Spike Disease (SSD) is posing a severe threat on the Commercial Cultivation of Sandalwood according to the recent studies.

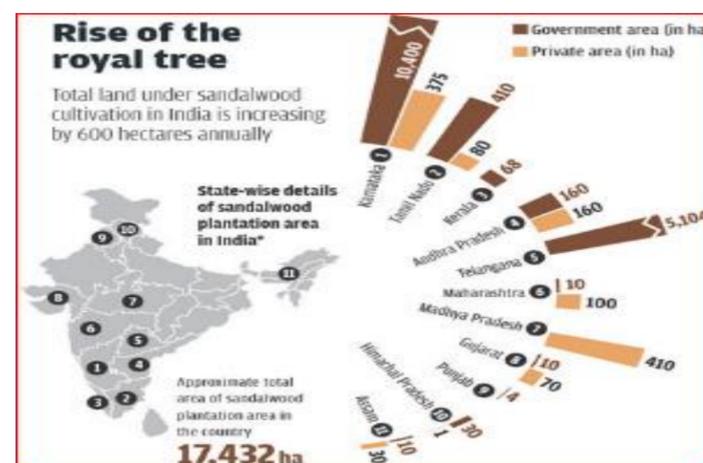


❖ Key Highlights

- The disease is one of the most destructive diseases of Sandal tree – an economically important tree and is prevalent in the areas wherever Sandal trees are grown. Significantly the disease is confined to India and Indonesia.
- Two types of symptoms are produced. The common symptom called the **'rosette spike'** is characterised by severe reduction in leaf size and reduction of internodes.
- This results in crowding of leaves on leaf bearing branches.
- The other symptom called **'pendulous spike'** is due to continuous apical growth of individual shoots without proper thickening and results in drooping of shoots.
- **Causal Organism:** MLO(Mycoplasma like organisms) is the causal organism. MLO size in the host ranges from 60-750 nm.
- **About Indian Sandalwood**
 - **Santalum album**. Linn commonly known as East Indian sandalwood or chandan belongs to the family Santalaceae.
 - It is highly valuable and becoming endangered species.
 - It is distributed all over the country and more than 90% lies in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu covering 8300 sq kms.

❖ Habitat

- It occurs from coastal dry forests up to **700 m elevation**.
- It normally grows in sandy or stony red soils, but a wide range of soil types are inhabited.
- This habitat has a temperature range from **0° C to 38° C** and annual rainfall between **500 and 3000 mm**.



Districts as Export Hub

❖ Context

- With exports facing global headwinds, the Union Budget is likely to announce a ₹2,500 crore scheme to develop 50 districts as export hubs.

❖ Key Highlights

- The programme will help domestic producers in these districts to scale up manufacturing and find potential buyers outside India.



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- Under the proposed scheme, the government will select 50 districts through a challenge, and they will receive ₹50 crore each.
- The districts will be assessed on parameters such as plans for exports, efforts to plug infrastructure and logistics gaps, and cluster approach to exports.



- As it will be a centrally sponsored scheme, the **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)** has proposed that the Centre pays 60% of the estimated cost, with the rest borne by the respective states.
- This means that the Centre will likely allocate ₹1,500 crore for the programme.
- The Centre will receive applications from the states, and evaluation and scoring will be done by a technical advisory agency.
- Only those districts having a robust plan will make it to the list.
- ❖ **Significance**
- 'District as an Export Hub' will be a game changer for exports.
- "Districts are the production centres, and focussing on them to address supply-side challenges will go a long way in boosting and felicitating exports.
- It's a more granular approach of moving from states to districts, which will reap huge dividends.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)



❖ Context

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is gravely concerned about escalating violence in Myanmar.

❖ Key Highlights

- **ASEAN** is a political and economic union of 10 member states in Southeast Asia.
- ASEAN's primary objective is to accelerate economic growth and through that social progress and cultural development.
- A secondary objective is to promote regional peace and stability based on the rule of law and the principle of UN Charter.
- With some of the fastest growing economies in the world, ASEAN has broadened its objective beyond the economic and social spheres.
- The motto of ASEAN is "**One Vision, One Identity, One Community**".
- **ASEAN Secretariat** – Indonesia, Jakarta.
- The ten ASEAN countries are - Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand & Vietnam

❖ India and ASEAN

- India **is not** a member of ASEAN as it is Southeast Asian countries organisation.
- But in 1992 India became sectoral dialogue partner and then in 1996 **full dialogue partner**.
- Also there is **ASEAN +1** organisation which includes ASEAN countries and India for economic cooperations.
- ASEAN is strategy partner of India since 2012.



News in Between the Lines

Shri Vijay Vallabh Surishwar Ji



❖ Context

- Prime Minister was recently addressing a gathering on the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of Shri Vijay Vallabh Surishwar Ji.

❖ Key Highlights

- Vallabhsuri was born on 26 October 1870 at Vadodara, Gujarat. He was named Chhagan. Vallabhsuri placed emphasis on education and inspired Jains to build more educational institutions.
- He is well known as the founder of Shree Parshwanath Jain Vidyalaya in 1927 at Varkana Village in Pali district of Rajasthan.

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HAWK Air Defense Equipment



❖ Context

- The **United States** is considering retrieving older **HAWK** air defense equipment from storage to send to Ukraine.

❖ About HAWK

- HAWK, short for '**Homing All the Way Killer**', entered service with the **US Army in 1959**, during the Vietnam war.
- It is a **mobile air defense system** and medium-range surface to air missile.
- The **maximum target** interception range is **40 km** with a **maximum interception altitude** of **18 km**. It **underwent upgrades over the decades** that followed, including a major one in 1971 that produced the so-called I-HAWK (or improved HAWK), with a kill probability of 85%.
- The HAWK system was the predecessor to the PATRIOT missile defence system that Raytheon built in the 1990s.
- The HAWK interceptor missiles **would be an upgrade to the Stinger missile system**, which is a smaller, shorter-range air defence system.
- US forces **largely stopped using HAWK** from the early years of the new century.

Satellite Phones



❖ Context

- Recently, a **senior executive of Saudi Aramco** was arrested and jailed in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district for using an **unauthorised satellite phone**.

❖ Key Highlights

- It's **not legal to carry satellite phone in India** unless you have permission.
- He was arrested under sections of the **Indian Telegraph Act** and the **Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act**.

❖ About Satellite Phones

- Satellite connectivity **relies on satellites** - rather than cell phone towers, which provide connectivity to regular cell phones.
- Satellite phones **work in remote areas** where there are no cell phone towers and therefore, no cellular connectivity.
- Satellite (or sat) phones **usually cover most of the planet with fairly robust connectivity**.
- There are a **few well known satellite connectivity providers**. These are Iridium, Inmarsat, Thuraya and Globalstar.
- **Each sat phone device works only with a specific provider** - which means a Thuraya phone will not work on the Iridium network.

Samriddhi 2022-23



❖ Context

- Recently, Delhi Lieutenant Governor launched the '**SAMRIDDI 2022-23**' which is a one-time property tax amnesty scheme.

❖ Key Highlights

- SAMRIDDI stands for **Strengthening and Augmentation of Municipal Revenue for Infrastructure Development**.
- This scheme **will allow residential property owners to pay only the current and previous five years' principal property tax**.
- **Commercial property owners** can pay the principal amount for the **last six years** and receive a waiver on past pending dues, including penalty and interest.
- **Significance :**
 - Tax liability is waived, which means **more money in the hands of taxpayers and more revenue for MCD**.
 - It **increases the tax base** and act as an enabler for MCD to build a proper tax database by being more pragmatic about the enforcement of its long-pending tax dues.
- **Property tax :** It is the **annual amount paid by a landowner to the local government** or the municipal corporation of his area.
 - The property **includes all tangible real estate property**, his house, office building and the property he has rented to others.
 - Central government properties and vacant property are generally exempt.

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