

Election Commissioner (EC) of India

❖ Context

➤ Recently, **Arun Goel** assumed charge as the **new Election Commissioner (EC)** of India.

Election Commission

● About

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) is an **autonomous and permanent constitutional body**
- It is responsible for **organizing free and fair elections** in the Union and States of India.
- The Constitution grants the ECI with the power of **direction, superintendence, and control of elections to Parliament, state legislatures, the office of president of India and the office of vice-president of India.**

● Powers and Responsibilities

- Determining the **Electoral Constituencies' territorial areas** throughout the country.
- Preparing and periodically **revising electoral rolls and registering all eligible voters.**
- **Notifying the schedules and dates** of elections and **scrutinizing nomination papers.**
- **Granting recognition** to the various political parties and **allocating them election symbols.**
- The Commission also has **advisory jurisdiction** in the matter of post-election disqualification of sitting members of Parliament and State Legislatures.
- It **issues the Model Code of Conduct** in elections for political parties and candidates.

● Composition

- A chief election commissioner (CEC) and Other election commissioners (EC) (the **number is to be decided by the President** from time to time Art 324)
- Tenure- **Six years or up to the age of 65 years** whichever is earlier.

● Appointment of Election Commissioners

- **Article 324 (2)** specifies that the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners will be **appointed by the President.**
- This is **subject to Parliamentary law** (if such law exists).
- In the absence of such a law, the President has been making appointments as per the **recommendations of the Prime Minister.**

● CEC and EC

- Though the Chief Election Commissioner is the chairman of the election commission, his **powers are equal** to the other election commissioners.
- All the **matters in the commission** are **decided** by the **majority** amongst its members.
- The Chief Election Commissioner and the two other election commissioners **receive equal salary, allowances and other benefits.**
- They **enjoy the same status** and receive salary and perks as available to **Judges of the Supreme Court** of India.

● Removal

- The CEC can be removed from office only through a process of **removal similar to that of a Supreme Court Judge by Parliament.**
- The President of India can remove the other officers on the Chief Commissioner's recommendation.

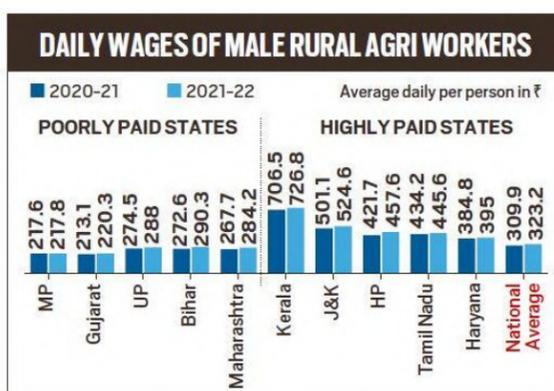
Handbook of Statistics on Indian States 2021-22

❖ Context

➤ The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** had released a handbook of statistics on Indian states.

Key highlights

Rural Wages



- **Kerala** (₹837.3), Jammu & Kashmir (₹519) and Tamil Nadu **top** (₹478) in the daily wage rate for workers.
- The **national average is Rs 323.2.**
- In the case of agricultural and non-agricultural

Investments

- Industrialised states **Gujarat and Maharashtra** are **front-runners** in attracting investments, followed by Karnataka.

Population & Density

- **UP, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar** remained the most populous states in the country.
- **Density** of population remains the highest in the **national capital region (NCR)** followed by **Chandigarh.**

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segments too, for which data is available, **Kerala was the top payer** followed by Himachal Pradesh, while **Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat remained the lowest payers.**

- **Karnataka** topped the total installed capacity of grid-interactive renewable power of all the states of the country, followed by **Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan.**

News in Between the Lines

Arittapatti Biodiversity Heritage Site



❖ Context

- Recently, The **Tamil Nadu government** notified 193.215 hectares of area spread across **Arittapatti and Meenakshipuram villages** in Madurai district as '**Arittapatti Biodiversity Heritage Site**' under the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002.**

❖ Key Highlights

- This is the **first Biodiversity Heritage Site (BHS)** notified in Tamil Nadu.
- The village Arittapatti consists of a chain of **seven barren granite hillocks.**
- Arittapatti, known for its ecological and historical significance, **houses around 250 species of birds**, including three important raptors — the Laggar Falcon, the Shaheen Falcon and Bonelli's Eagle.
- It is also **home to wildlife** such as the Indian pangolin, slender loris and pythons.
- One of the water bodies, **Anaikondan Lake**, was built during the reign of **Pandys** in the 16th century in Arittapatti.
- **Significance**
 - This notification will **strengthen the biodiversity conservation efforts** with the participation of local communities.
 - This will also help to **preserve the rich biological and historical repository** of the area.
- **Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS)**
 - Biodiversity heritage sites are **well-defined areas that are unique, ecologically fragile ecosystems** with high diversity of wild and domesticated species, presence of rare and threatened species, and keystone species.
 - The purpose of declaring BHS is to enhance the quality of life of the local communities through conservation measures.

Olive Ridley Sea Turtles



❖ Context

- Pairs of Olive Ridley sea turtles have begun emerging on the sea waters off **Gahirmatha** along the Odisha coast, marking the commencement of the annual mass nesting of these endangered marine species.

❖ Key Highlights

- Gahirmatha in Kendrapara district, **150 km from the state capital Bhubaneswar**, is the **world's largest rookery** for Olive Ridley sea turtles.

❖ Olive Ridley Turtle

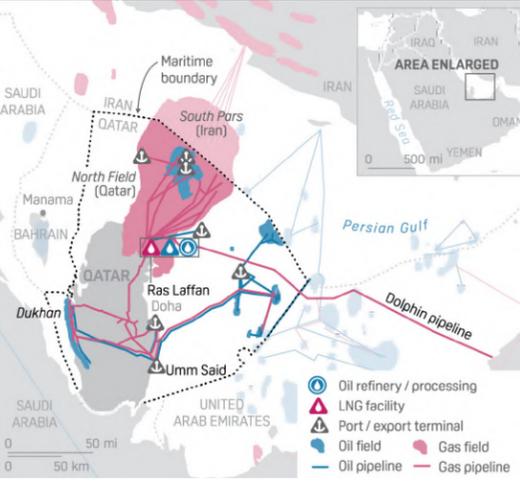
- They are the **smallest and most abundant** of all sea turtles found in the world.
- They are **carnivores** and get their name from their olive colored carapace.
- They are best known for their **unique mass nesting called Arribada**, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ They can be found in warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans and the Odisha's Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary is known as the world's largest rookery (colony of breeding animals) of sea turtles. ❖ Protection Status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule 1 ■ IUCN RedList: Vulnerable ■ CITES: Appendix I
<p style="text-align: center;">National Suicide Prevention Strategy</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recently, The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare announced a National Suicide Prevention Strategy. ❖ Key Highlights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In India, more than one lakh lives are lost every year to suicide, and it is the top killer in the 15-29 years category. ➤ The suicide rate has increased from 10.2 to 11.3 per 1,00,000 population. ➤ The most common reasons for suicide include family problems and illnesses, which account for 34% and 18% of all suicide-related deaths. ❖ National Suicide Prevention Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This is the first of its kind in the country, with time-bound action plans and multi-sectoral collaborations to achieve reduction in suicide mortality by 10% by 2030. ➤ While the strategy is in line with the WHO's South East-Asia Region Strategy for suicide prevention, it says it will remain true to India's cultural and social milieu. ➤ Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To establish effective surveillance mechanisms for suicide within the next three years. ■ To establish psychiatric outpatient departments that will provide suicide prevention services through the District Mental Health Programme in all districts within the next five years. ■ To integrate a mental well-being curriculum in all educational institutions within the next eight years. ■ It envisages developing guidelines for responsible media reporting of suicides, and restricting access to means of suicide.
<p style="text-align: center;">World Fisheries Day</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recently, Department of Fisheries celebrated 'World Fisheries Day' in Daman on 21 November, 2022. ❖ Key Highlights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ World Fisheries Day is celebrated on 21st November every year. ➤ It started in 1997 where "World Forum of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers" met at New Delhi leading to formation of "World Fisheries Forum" with representatives from 18 countries and signed a declaration advocating for a global mandate of sustainable fishing practices and policies. ➤ Objective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To demonstrate solidarity with all fisher folk, fish farmers and concerned stakeholders throughout the world. ➤ Significance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The event draw attention to overfishing, habitat destruction and other serious threats to the sustainability of our marine and freshwater resources.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The celebrations serve to focus on changing the way the world manages global fisheries to ensure sustainable stocks and healthy ecosystems.
<p>Standard for reviews on e-commerce</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Department of Consumer Affairs is bringing out a standard framework for publishing product reviews for e-commerce platforms. ❖ Key highlights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It will be titled Indian Standard (IS) 19000:2022 'Online Consumer Reviews – Principles and Requirements for their Collection, Moderation and Publication'. ➤ The framework is meant to safeguard and protect consumer interest from fake and deceptive reviews on e-commerce platforms. ➤ It has been prepared by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). ➤ Once made mandatory, a consumer may submit grievances to the National Consumer Helpline, Consumer Commissions, or the CCPA, against misleading reviews. ➤ The standard also provides for methods for verification of the review author through email address, identification by telephone call or SMS. ➤ Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is the national standard body of India established under the BIS Act 2016 under the administrative control of the Department of Consumer Affairs.
<p>North Field</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Qatar signs world's 'longest' gas supply deal with China. ❖ Key highlights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The state energy company will send four million tonnes of liquefied natural gas annually from its new North Field East project. ➤ Qatar's North Field is the largest non-associated natural gas field in the world, with recoverable reserves of more than 900 trillion standard cubic feet (tscf), or approximately 10% of the world's known reserves. ➤ This makes Qatar the world's largest holder of proven gas reserves after Russia and Iran. ➤ It lies off the north-east shore of the Qatar peninsula in Persian Gulf and covers an area of more than 6,000 square kilometres, equivalent to about half the land area of the State of Qatar. ➤ The South Pars(Persian)/North Dome field is the world's largest natural gas field with ownership of the field shared between Iran and Qatar.
<p>India-EU TTC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) and the European Union (EU) signed an agreement on cooperation in areas such as high performance computing (HPC), climate modelling and quantum technologies, building on the Trade and Technology Council (TTC). ❖ Key highlights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ India-EU TTC was launched in April this year. ➤ It is a strategic mechanism that was set up to address the challenges of ensuring trusted technology and security in the wake of rapid geopolitical changes. ➤ It gives India access to advanced technologies and allows the two sides to set standards in crucial areas such as 5G, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, climate modelling and health-related technology.

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- This is the **first such trade and technology council set up by India with any of its partners. For the EU, it is only the second such body**, following the first one set up with the US.
- The council will comprise **working groups led or co-led by relevant departments**, services or agencies to operationalise the political decisions into deliverables.
- The **EU is India's third-largest trading partner**, accounting for 11.1% of total Indian trade, after China at 12% and the US at 11.7%.
- The EU is the **second-largest destination for Indian exports** (14% of the total) after the US.



❖ Context

- Ukraine has announced plans to raise transit fees for Russian oil running through the Druzhba pipeline to the EU.

❖ Key highlights

- Druzhba Pipeline is **one of the biggest crude oil pipeline networks** in the world.
- The total length of the pipeline system including all its branches is around **5500 km**.
- The official beginning of the Druzhba network is in **Almetyevsk in Russia**, where pipelines carrying crude oil from Siberia, the Urals and the Caspian Sea meet.
- It runs to **Mozyr in Belarus**, where it splits into a **northern and a southern branch**.
- The **northern branch** continues via Belarus and Poland to Germany.
- The **southern branch** runs through Ukraine, splitting in Uzhgorod into **Druzhba 1** continuing to Slovakia (where it splits again and goes to the Czech Republic in one branch and Hungary in another) and **Druzhba 2** continuing to Hungary.
- The current capacity of Druzhba is 1,2–1,4 million barrels a day, with the possibility to increase up to 2 million barrels a day.

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