

# CIVIL SERVICES MONTHLY

OCTOBER 2021



ONE STOP SOLUTION FOR CIVIL SERVICES

**Registering a political party**

**Right to Protest**

**Section 125 CrPC**

**GIFT City a reinsurance hub in the making**

**Global pact on minimum corporate tax**

**Palk Bay scheme**

**Hybrid immunity**

**Indian Space Association (ISpA)**

**Pinaka, Smerch and BrahMos**

**China- Taiwan Issue**

**Second phase of SBM-U and AMRUT**

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# Polity & Governance

## Loss of Citizenship in India

**News context:** Recently, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has simplified the process for Indians who want to renounce their citizenship.

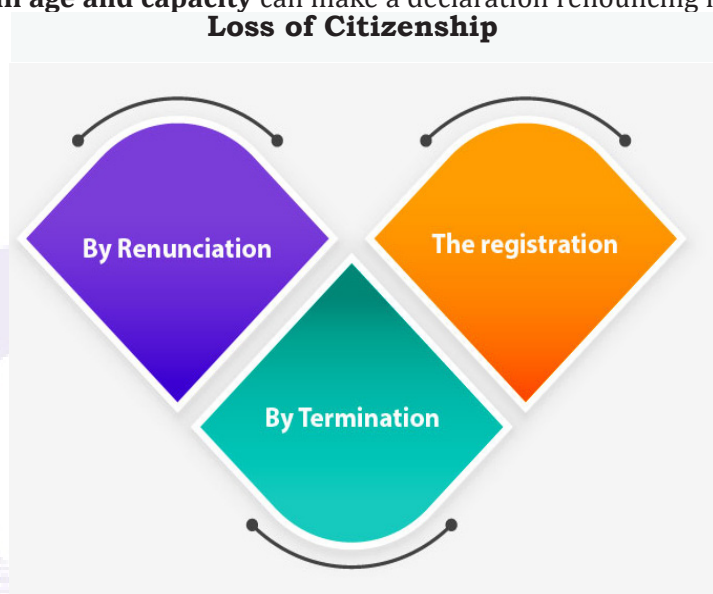
### Key Details

- **Over 6.7 lakh Indians** renounced their citizenship between 2015-19.
- Once a copy of the form had been received, the entire process for issuance of renunciation certificate would take **60 days** after verification of documents.

### About 'Loss of Citizenship'

The **Citizenship Act (1955)** prescribes three ways of losing citizenship whether acquired under the Act or prior to it under the Constitution.

- **By Renunciation:** Any citizen of India of **full age and capacity** can make a declaration renouncing his Indian citizenship.
  - o Upon the registration of that declaration, that person ceases to be a citizen of India.
  - o However, if such a declaration is made **during a war** in which India is engaged, its registration shall be withheld by the Central Government.
  - o **Section 8(1):** When a person renounces his Indian citizenship, every minor child of that person **also loses Indian citizenship**.
  - o However, when such a child attains the age of eighteen, he may resume Indian citizenship.
- **By Termination:** When an Indian citizen voluntarily acquires the citizenship of **another country**, his Indian citizenship automatically terminates.
  - o This provision, however, does **not apply during a war** in which India is engaged.
- **By Deprivation:** It is a compulsory termination of Indian citizenship by the Central government, if:
  - o Citizen has obtained the citizenship by fraud.
  - o Citizen has shown **disloyalty** to the Constitution of India.
  - o Citizen has **unlawfully traded** or communicated with the enemy during a war.
  - o Citizen has, **within five years** after registration or naturalisation, been **imprisoned in any country for two years**.
  - o Citizen has been **ordinarily resident out of India for seven years** continuously.



## Collegium system

**News context:** The government had so far cleared seven of the 106 names recommended as High Court judges by the Supreme Court Collegium.

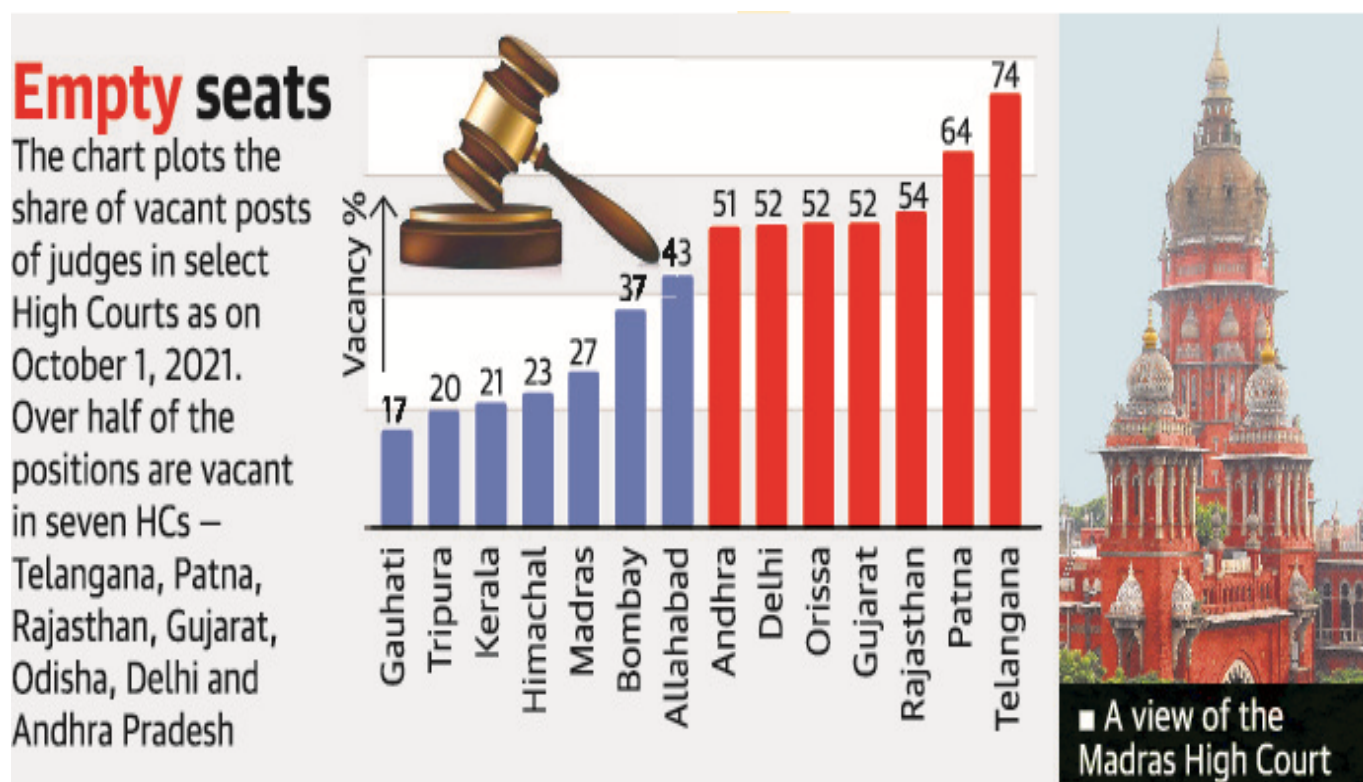
### About Collegium system

- The Collegium of judges is the **Supreme Court's invention**.
- It is **not mentioned** in the **Constitution**.
- Constitution says judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts are appointed by the President and speaks of a **process of consultation**.

- In effect, it is a system under which judges are **appointed by an institution comprising judges**.

## Evolution of Collegium System

- First Judges Case (1981)** ruled that the “consultation” with the CJI in the matter of appointments must be full and effective.
  - However, it rejected the idea that the CJI’s opinion, albeit carrying great weight, should have primacy.
- Second Judges Case (1993)** introduced the Collegium system, holding that “consultation” really meant “concurrence”.
  - It added that it was not the CJI’s individual opinion, but an institutional opinion formed in consultation with the two senior-most judges in the Supreme Court.
- In the **Third Judges Case (1998)**, the Supreme Court expanded the Collegium to a five-member body, comprising the **CJI and four of his senior-most colleagues**.



## Procedure followed by the Collegium

### CJI & SC Judges

- The President of India appoints the CJI and the other SC judges.
- Appointment of CJI:** Outgoing CJI recommends his successor.
  - In practice, it has been strictly by **seniority** ever since the **supersession controversy** of the **1970s**.
  - Union Law Minister forwards the recommendation to the PM who, in turn, advises the President.
- For other judges:** The proposal is initiated by the CJI.
  - The CJI **consults the rest of the Collegium members**, as well as the senior-most judge of the court hailing from the High Court to which the recommended person belongs.
- The consultees must **record their opinions in writing** and it should form part of the file.
- The Collegium sends the recommendation to the Law Minister, who forwards it to the PM to advise the President.
- The Chief Justice of High Courts is appointed as per the policy of having Chief Justices from outside the respective States.
  - The Collegium takes the call on the elevation.

### High Court judges

- High Court judges are recommended by a Collegium comprising the **CJI and two senior-most judges**.
- The **proposal**, however, is initiated by the **Chief Justice of the High Court** concerned in consultation with two senior-most colleagues.

- The recommendation is sent to the Chief Minister, who advises the Governor to send the proposal to the Union Law Minister.

### Role of Collegium in transfers

- **Article 222:** Provides for the **transfer** of a judge from one High Court to another.
- When a CJ is transferred, a replacement must also be simultaneously found for the High Court concerned.
- There can be an **acting CJ in a High Court** for not more than a month.
- In matters of transfers, the **opinion of the CJI "is determinative"**, and the consent of the judge concerned is not required.
- However, the CJI should take into account the **views of the CJ of the High Court** concerned and the views of one or more SC judges who are in a position to do so.
- All transfers must be made in the **public interest**, that is, **"for the betterment of the administration of justice"**.

### Registering a political party

**News context:** Former Punjab CM Amarinder Singh announced he will be forming his own political party in Punjab.

### Registering a political party

- **Article 324 and Section 29A of RPA, 1951:** Any party **seeking registration** has to submit an application to the Election Commission within a **period of 30 days** following the date of its formation.
  - o Registration of all political parties is governed by the provisions of **Section 29A of the RPA, 1951.**
- Applicant is asked to publish a **proposed party name** in two national daily newspapers and two local daily newspapers.
- It provide **two days for submitting objections**, if any, with regard to the proposed registration of the party before the Commission **within 30 days** from the publication.
  - o **Notice for publication** is also displayed on the website of the Election Commission.
- An **application for registration** has to be sent by **registered** post or presented personally to the Secretary to the Election Commission within 30 days following the date of formation of the party.

- o It must be accompanied by a **demand draft for Rs10,000.**
- o It also needs to include a printed copy of the memorandum, rules and regulations or constitution of the Party.
- o There should be a specific provision in the Constitution of the party regarding **organizational elections** at different levels and the periodicity of such elections and **terms of office** of the office-bearers of the party.
- o It also needs to have the **latest electoral rolls** in respect of at least 100 members of the party to show that they are registered electors.
- o It would also need an affidavit duly signed by the President or General Secretary of the party and individual affidavits from at least 100 members of the party would also be needed to ensure that they are not a member of any other political party registered with the Commission.

### Is it necessary to register with the EC?

- It is **not mandatory** to register with the EC but registering as a political party with the EC has its **advantage** in terms of intending to avail itself of the provisions of the **RPA, 1951**, (relating to registration of political parties).
- Candidates set up by a political party registered with the EC will **get preference** in the matter of **allotment of free symbols** vis-à-vis purely independent candidates.
- These registered political parties, over course of time, can get recognition as a **'state party'** or a **'national party'** subject to the fulfilment of the conditions prescribed by the Commission in the **Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.**
  - o Party recognised as a 'state party': It is entitled for exclusive allotment of its reserved symbol to the candidates set up by it in the state in which it is so recognized.
  - o Party is recognised as a 'national party': It is entitled for exclusive allotment of its reserved symbol to the candidates set up by it throughout India.
- Recognised 'state' and 'national' parties need only one proposer for filing the nomination. These are also entitled for:
  - o Two sets of electoral rolls free of cost
  - o Telecast facilities over state-owned Akashvani/Doordarshan during the general elections.



## Pegasus panel

**News context:** Recently, the Supreme Court appointed an expert technical committee overseen by former SC judge R.V. Raveendran to examine allegations that the Centre used Israeli software Pegasus to spy on citizens.

### TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** Regarding enactment or amendment of law and procedures on surveillance, and to secure improved right to privacy.
- 2** Regarding enhancing and improving cyber security of nation and its assets.
- 3** To ensure prevention of invasion of right to privacy, other than lawfully, by State and/or non-State entities using such spyware.
- 4** Regarding establishment of a mechanism to flag suspicion of illegal surveillance of devices.
- 5** Regarding setting up a well-equipped independent premier agency to investigate cyber security vulnerabilities and cyberattacks, and assess cyberattack threats.
- 6** Regarding any *ad hoc* arrangement for protection of citizen's rights until Parliament is able to fill the lacunae.
- 7** On any ancillary matter the Committee may deem fit and proper. (From SC order, edited)

### What is 'Pegasus' controversy?

- Pegasus is a spyware developed by NSO Group, an Israeli surveillance firm.
  - It helps spies hack into phones.
  - It can infect a device without the target's engagement or knowledge.
- In July 2021, Amnesty International, along with 13 media outlets across the globe released a report on how the spyware was used to snoop hundreds of individuals, including Indians.

### Right to Protest

**News Context:** The Supreme Court said farmers had the right to protest, but roads cannot be blocked indefinitely (impeding the right of citizens to commute without hindrance).

### Background

The ruling came after a petition was filed in the SC highlighting problems caused by the protests which led to the roadblock and traffic problems.

### Right to Protest

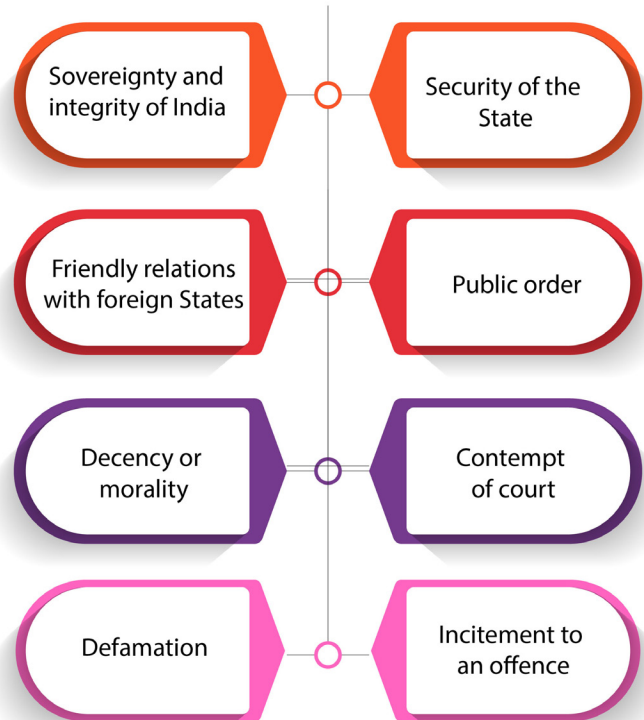
The right to protest involves the exercise of two fundamental rights: freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution and the freedom to assemble peacefully under 19 (1) (b).

- **Article 19(1)(a):** The Right to free speech and expression transforms into the right to freely express an opinion on the conduct of the government.
- **Article 19(1)(b):** The Right to association is required to form associations for political purposes. These can be formed to collectively challenge government decisions.

## Restriction on Right to Protest

**Article 19(2) and 19 (3)** imposes reasonable restrictions on the right to freedom of speech and expression. These reasonable restrictions are imposed in the interests of the following:

### Reasonable Restrictions



## Good Governance Practices

**News Context:** FinMin said, the advice given by company secretaries to businesses will make a lot of difference as only "well-managed" companies following good governance practices (transparency and better compliance) are attracting investors.

- For a company to flourish and expand in its area of operation, the role of company secretary to make it easy, to make it ready for the company to follow the guiding principles, is going to make a lot of difference.

### Good Governance

Good Governance is the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in a manner that promotes the rule of law and the realization of human rights (civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights).

### Importance of Good Governance

- Governance helps you to always act in the best interests of the business.
- It can improve the performance of business, help in becoming more stable and productive, and unlock new opportunities.
- It can reduce risks, and enable faster and safer growth.

## What Constitutes Good Governance

- Participation
- Consensus oriented
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Responsive
- Effective and efficient
- Equitable and inclusive
- Follows the rule of law

### Elements of Good Governance

01

The existence of effective mechanisms

02

Processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests

03

Exercise their legal rights

04

Meet their obligations and mediate their differences.

## Electoral Bonds

**News Context:** In an analysis of income and expenditure of regional political parties, the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) said, fourteen regional parties received donations through electoral bonds worth Rs 447.49 crore in 2019-20.



## Electoral Bond

- Electoral Bond would be a bearer instrument in the nature of a Promissory Note and an interest free banking instrument. A citizen of India or a body incorporated in India will be eligible to purchase the bond.

- Electoral bond would be issued/purchased for any value, in multiples of `1,000, `10,000, `1,00,000, `10,00,000 and `1,00,00,000 from the specified branches of the State Bank of India (SBI).
- The purchaser would be allowed to buy electoral bond(s) only on due fulfilment of all the extant KYC norms and by making payment from a bank account.
- The electoral bonds are available for purchase for 10 days in the beginning of every quarter. The first 10 days of January, April, July and October has been specified by the government for purchase of electoral bonds.

## ADR

- The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) is an Indian non-partisan, non-governmental organization which works in the area of electoral and political reforms.
- ADR is striving to bring transparency and accountability in Indian politics and reducing the influence of money and muscle power in elections.
- ADR came into existence in 1999.

## Right to Information

**News Context:** Over 2.2 lakh RTI appeals remain pending at the Central and State Information Commissions.

- More worrying is that 9 out of 29 information commissions (31%) are functioning without a chief information commissioner.
- The CIC has no chief, and only five commissioners.
- Under the law, every commission should have a chief and up to 10 commissioners.

## Key Findings

- Maharashtra had the highest number of pending appeals, with over 59,000 cases, followed by Uttar Pradesh (47,923) and the CIC (35,653).
- At the current rate of disposal, the Odisha Commission would take more than seven years to dispose of all pending complaints, while the CIC would take more than two years.
- Odisha is functioning with just four commissioners, while Rajasthan has only three.
- Jharkhand and Tripura have no commissioners at all.

- The report found that the Government officials face hardly any punishment for violating the law.
- Penalties were imposed in only 2.2% of cases that were disposed of, despite previous analysis showing a rate of about 59% violations which should have triggered the process of penalty imposition.

## Right to Information Act

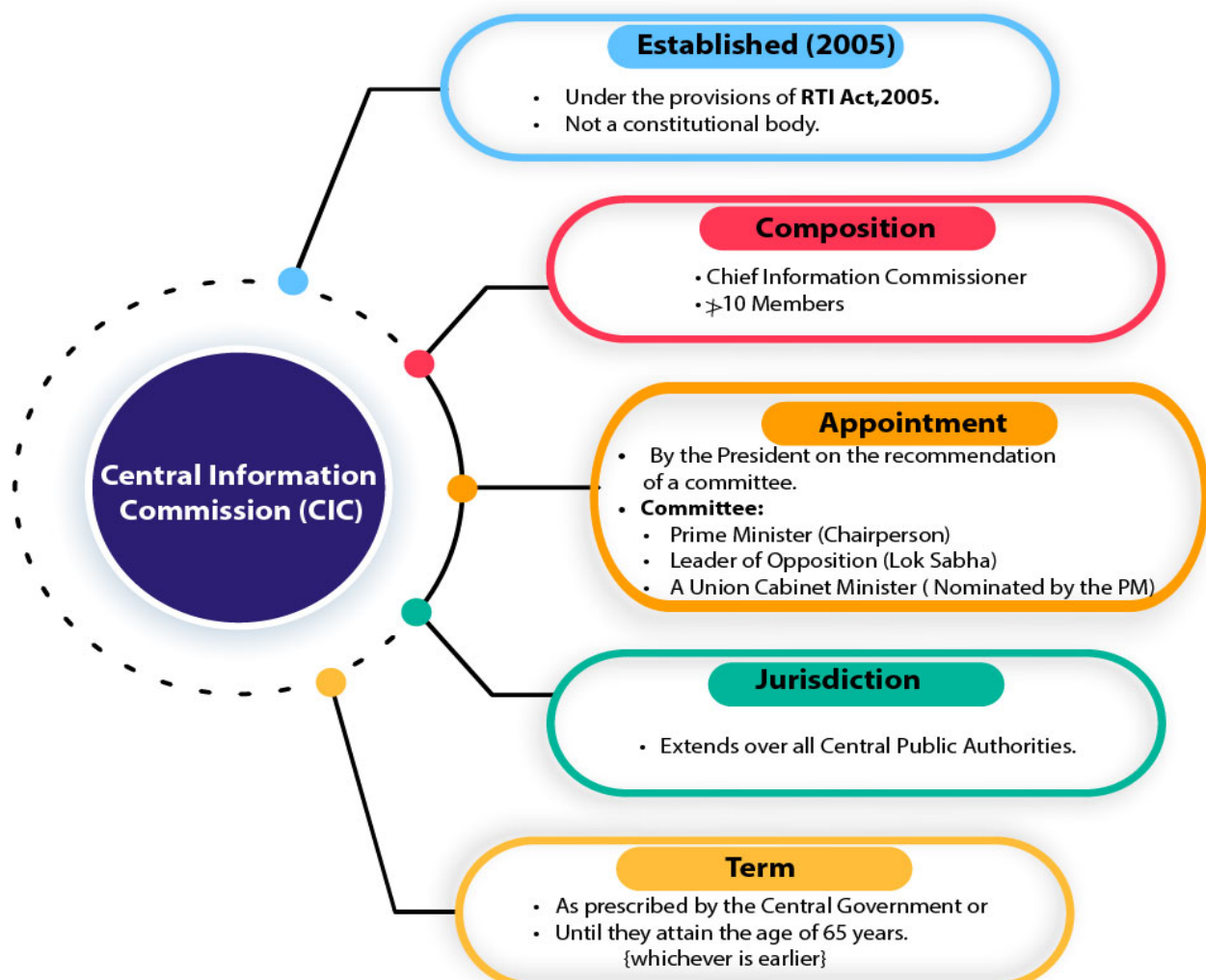
- RTI is an act of the Parliament of India which sets out the rules and procedures regarding citizens' right to information. It replaced the former **Freedom of Information Act, 2002**.
- Under the provisions of RTI Act, any citizen of India may request information from a "public authority" which is required to reply expeditiously or within thirty days.
- In case of matter involving a petitioner's life and liberty, the information has to be provided **within 48 hours**.

## Central Information Commission (CIC)

- The CIC was established by the Central Government in 2005, under the provisions of the **Right to Information Act (2005)**. It is **not a constitutional body**.
- It consists of a Chief Information Commissioner and not more than ten Information Commissioners.
- They are appointed by the President on the recommendation of a committee consisting of the Prime Minister as Chairperson, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister.
- The jurisdiction of the Commission extends over all Central Public Authorities.
- The Chief Information Commissioner and an Information Commissioner shall hold office for such term as prescribed by the Central Government or until they attain the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.

## State Information Commission

- It is constituted by the State Government.
- It has one State Chief Information Commissioner (SCIC) and not more than 10 State Information Commissioners (SIC) to be appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the Appointments Committee headed by the Chief Minister.





## Personal Data Protection Bill

**News Context:** The Joint Parliamentary Committee on Personal Data Protection (PDP) Bill of 2019 is likely to adopt a resolution on including non-personal data as well.

- The inclusion of provisions for non-personal data will mostly be done on the basis of the recommendations of the Ministry committee.
- Following the changes, the new Bill is likely to be called just the Data Protection Bill of 2021 instead of Personal Data Protection Bill.

### Applicability

The Bill governs the processing of personal data by:

1. Government
2. Companies incorporated in India
3. Foreign companies dealing with personal data of individuals in India

### Personal Data

- Personal data is data which pertains to characteristics, traits or attributes of identity, which can be used to identify an individual.
- This includes financial data, biometric data, caste, religious or political beliefs, or any other category of data specified by the government, in consultation with the Authority and the concerned sectoral regulator.

### Rights of the individual

The Bill sets out certain rights of the individual, includes:

- Obtain confirmation from the fiduciary on whether their personal data has been processed.
- Seek correction of inaccurate, incomplete, or out-of-date personal data.
- Have personal data transferred to any other data fiduciary in certain circumstances.
- Restrict continuing disclosure of their personal data by a fiduciary, if it is no longer necessary or consent is withdrawn.

### Data Protection Authority

The Bill sets up a Data Protection Authority which may

- Take steps to protect interests of individuals
- Prevent misuse of personal data
- Ensure compliance with the Bill

### Sharing of non-personal data with government

The central government may direct data fiduciaries to provide it with any:

- Non-personal data
- Anonymised personal data (where it is not possible to identify data principal) for better targeting of services.

## Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989

**News Context:** The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) extended the validity of documents related to Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989 till 31 October, 2021, in view of Covid-19 pandemic.

### Key Features of the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2019

- The bill seeks to amend the act to provide road safety.
- The Act provides for grant of licenses and permits related to motor vehicles, standards for motor vehicles, and penalties for violation of these provisions.
- The central government will develop a scheme for cashless treatment of road accident victims during golden hour.
- The Bill requires the central government to constitute a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund, to provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in India.
- The Bill allows the central government to order for recall of motor vehicles if a defect in the vehicle may cause damage to the environment, or the driver, or other road users.
- The central government may develop a National Transportation Policy, in consultation with state governments.
- The Bill provides for a National Road Safety Board, to be created by the central government through a notification.
- The Bill defines aggregators as digital intermediaries or market places which can be used by passengers to connect with a driver for transportation purposes (taxi services).

### Need of the amendment

- India sees more than five lakh road accidents a year leading to 1.5 lakh deaths.
- The amendment is based on the recommendations of the Group of Transport Ministers (GoM) of States constituted by the Union Ministry to address the issue of road safety.

### Issues and challenges

- Road transport being a subject on the Concurrent List, State governments are also free to make their own laws and rules.

- With already existing fund for compensation in hit and run accidents, the purpose of the new Accident Fund is unclear.
- States also have concerns about their powers being curtailed via amendment.
- State governments will issue licenses to taxi aggregators as per central government guidelines. Currently, state governments determine guidelines for plying of taxis. There could be cases where state taxi guidelines are at variance with the central guidelines on aggregators.

## Section 125 CrPC

**News Context:** In a matrimonial dispute, a father cannot be absolved of all the responsibilities to meet the education expenses of his son just because he may have attained the age of majority.

### Comments from Delhi High Court

- The court cannot shut its eyes to the reality that simply attaining the age of a major (18+) does not translate into an understanding that the major son is earning sufficiently.
- It places the entire burden on the mother to bear the expenses of education without any contribution from the father.
- The purpose of Section 125 CrPC is to ensure that the wife and the children of the husband

are not left in a state of destitution after the divorce.

- The husband must carry the financial burden of making certain that his children are capable of attaining a position in society wherein they can sufficiently maintain themselves.
- The mother cannot be burdened with the entire expenditure on the education of her son just because he has completed 18 years of age.
- The court further said that a father is bound to compensate the wife who, after spending on children, may "hardly be left with anything to maintain herself".

### Human rights

It is basic rights without which there is no human existence mean.

### National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), 1983

- **Organization:** 5 member body, headed by chairperson.
- **Chairperson:** Retired CJI or serving or retired judge of Supreme Court.
- **Member:** Chairperson of national minority, backward, Sc and ST.

# Economy

## Guidelines for hydro power projects to get budgetary support

**Newscontext:** The Union power ministry issued guidelines for under-construction hydro power projects to receive budgetary support on expenses incurred on flood moderation infrastructure and associated roads and bridges.

### Key Details

- **Objective of the budgetary support (BS):** To reduce the tariffs of electricity produced from these projects by excluding the expenses that are

Budgetary Support (BS) on expenses incurred on flood moderation

**Guidelines for hydro power projects to get budgetary support**

**Objective:** To reduce the tariffs of electricity produced from these projects.

BS for Enabling Infrastructure roads/ bridges (on a case-to-case basis)

Support only for projects which started after 8th Mar 2019

Conventional & pumped hydro power projects >25 MW are classified as a renewable energy source.

not directly related to power generation.

- o It will ensure that the consumers are charged cost related to power components only.
- **BS for Flood Moderation:** It shall be released after appraisal of each project on a case-to-case basis by the public investment board or the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.
- **BS for Enabling Infrastructure i.e., roads/ bridges:** It will also be calculated on a case-to-case basis. The limit of this component would be:
  - o Rs 1.5 crore per MW for projects up to 200 MW.
  - o Rs 1 crore per MW for projects of more than 200 MW capacity.
- The support shall be provided only for projects which started construction March 2019.
- The government had also classified conventional hydropower and pumped hydro projects greater than 25 MW as a renewable energy source, making them eligible for more affordable renewables-only financial support.
- **Recently approved projects:**
  - o 210 MW Luhri Stage-I hydro-electric project (Himachal Pradesh)
  - o 850 MW Ratle hydro-electric project on the river Chenab (Jammu and Kashmir)

## India's WTO proposal

**News context:** Recently, India submitted a proposal at WTO regarding fisheries subsidies.

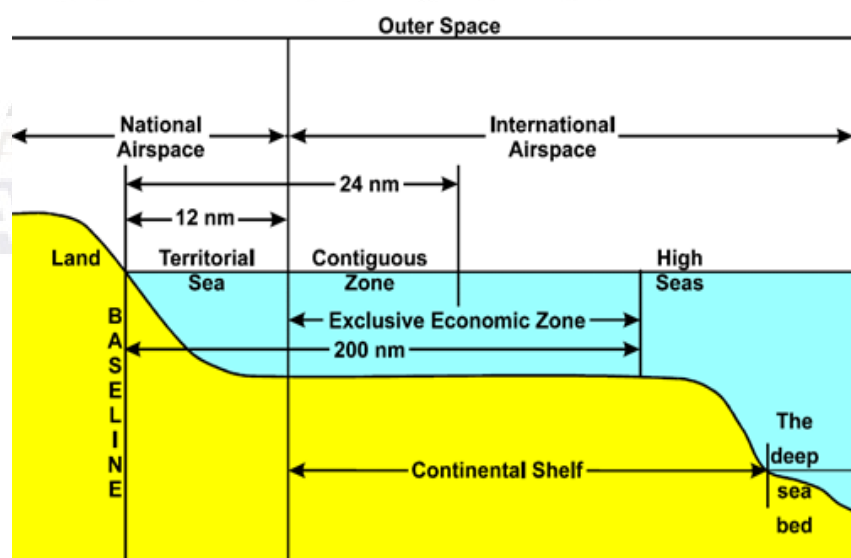
### Key Details

#### India's proposals

- A member country of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) can provide subsidies to its fishermen if it maintains stocks at a biologically sustainable level.
- A country engaged in distant water fishing (beyond 200nm from its sea shores) cannot provide fishery subsidies for 25 years from the date of entry into force of the fisheries subsidies agreement.
  - o The suggestion is based on FAO's code of conduct (1995) for responsible fisheries.
  - o It has recognised the issues of overfishing and depletion of fish stocks.
- Countries engaged in fishing in the high seas will have to declare certain details within 90 days after the agreement comes into force.
- **Aim:** To discipline subsidies with the overall objective to have sustainable fishing and to eliminate IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing subsidies and prohibit subsidies contributing to overcapacity and overfishing.

#### Issue with distant water fishing:

- Distant water fishing is a major problem when it comes to maintaining fish stocks at sustainable levels.
- Such activities lead to depletion of fish stocks in the oceans.
- This happens because of use of highly mechanised vessels or boats for industrial fishing.
- Three areas of fishing
  - o Territorial waters (12 nautical miles from the sea shore)
  - o EEZ (exclusive economic zones - 200 nautical miles)
  - o High seas.



- There are certain developed countries which go into high seas for exploiting the fishing stock.

**Note:** In the WTO, member countries negotiate through a text to finalise an agreement.

### **GIFT City a reinsurance hub in the making**

**News context:** IFSCA announced a new liberal regulatory regime for facilitating the formation of various international and Indian insurance businesses in GIFT City

#### **New Regulations**

- IFSCA has notified the regulations for setting up IFSC Insurance Offices (IIOs) and IFSC Insurance Intermediaries Offices (IIIOs).
- These will help India to develop a global reinsurance hub in the country.
- It will compete with offshore financial centres like Singapore, Dubai and Hong Kong, which currently dominate the insurance business in Asia.
- Even non-insurance entities can incorporate public companies in IFSC and undertake insurance or reinsurance business.
  - o Similarly, Indian insurance companies can set up subsidiaries to work as IIO.
- Foreign intermediaries will also be allowed to set up IIOs alongside IRDAI registered intermediaries.
- In case of subsidiaries, new insurance or reinsurance companies will require a paid-up capital (as per Insurance Act, 1938) of Rs 100 crore for insurance and Rs 200 crore for reinsurance.
- No onshore assigned capital will be required for foreign insurers or foreign reinsurers setting up IIOs as branches.
- No onshore solvency requirement for IIO in the IFSC.

### **GIFT City**

GIFT is being developed as a global financial and IT Services hub, a first of its kind in India.

It is designed to be at or above par with globally benchmarked financial centres.

It is akin to a foreign jurisdiction on Indian soil.

**Purpose:** To develop a world class smart city that becomes a global financial hub with the development of an International Financial Services Centre (IFSC).

Sops provided to IFSC are also very significant such as:

- 100% income-tax exemption for 10 out of the 15 years with a lower MAT
- zero capital gains tax
- lower withholding tax
- No CTT, STT, GST and stamp duty.

International Financial Services Centre Authority (IFSCA) is India's first single regulator for the Gujarat-based International Financial Services Centre (IFSC).



**India's Tea exports****Government****Securities****Acquisition**

**News context:** Recently, exports of tea from India registered a fall of about 14.4% in the first seven months of 2021 compared with the same period last year.

**Tea**

- It is the dried leaf of a bush.
- It contains caffeine, tannin and theine (stimulants).
- Tea is indigenous to China.
  - o Introduced by the British in India (1840).
- 1st commercial tea plantations were set up in Assam (upper Brahmaputra valley).
- Tea Plantation regions in India:
  - o Assam, West Bengal (Darjeeling), Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur
  - o Nilgiri, Cardamom, Palani and Anaimalai hills in TN, Kerala and Karnataka
  - o Dehra Dun, Almora and Garhwal districts of Uttarakhand and in Kangra Valley and Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh.
- Green tea is produced in Kangra valley of Himachal Pradesh.
- Conditions for Growth: Tropical and sub-tropical climates.
  - o Deep and fertile well-drained soil, rich in
- Largest production in India: Assam (51%), West Bengal (23%)

**Programme (G-SAP)**

**News context:** Recently, RBI said that it was halting its bond buying under the G-Sec Acquisition Programme (GSAP) for now.

- It stressed that the measure had succeeded in ensuring adequate liquidity and stabilising financial markets.

**What is G-SAP?**

- G-SAP is in a way an OMO but there is an upfront commitment by the central bank to the markets that it will purchase bonds worth a specific amount.
  - o **OMOs:** The purchase and sale of government securities (G-Secs) by the RBI on behalf of the government.
- **Aim:** To enable a stable and orderly evolution of the yield curve amidst comfortable liquidity conditions.
- The idea is to give a comfort to the bond markets i.e. G-SAP is an OMO with a 'distinct character'.
- **Its working:** Under this, the RBI can purchase bonds worth a specific amount, which reduce the uncertainty and allow investors to bid better in the scheduled auction with a pre-decided calendar set by the RBI.
  - o Thrives well in hot and humid climate.
- Temperatures >35°C and below 10°C are

harmful for the bush.

- o It is a shade-loving plant.
- o Tea bushes require warm and moist frost-free climate all through the year.
- o Stagnant water or waterlogging is injurious to its roots.

**That's why it is grown on hill slopes.**

### Export-Import & Production

- Largest tea exporters: China, Sri Lanka, Kenya and India
- Major importers of Indian tea: Russia, U.K., the USA

### Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI)

**News context:** DRI is pursuing further leads in connection with the 3,000 kg heroin seizure at the port in Gujarat's Mundra recently.

#### About DRI

- It is India's apex anti-smuggling intelligence, investigations and operations agency.
- It is India's apex agency which enforces the prohibition of the smuggling of items including drugs, gold, diamonds, electronics, foreign currency, and counterfeit Indian currency.
- It functions under the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs in the Ministry of Finance.

### Spectrum

**News context:** Recently, the Telecom Ministry is engaged in discussions with regulator TRAI to work

out ways for optimum utilisation of spectrum.

#### More about the news

- Demand for satellite-based and terrestrial telecom services have put unprecedented demands on radio spectrum.
- In particular, the C band and the Ka band frequencies are needed for both space-based as well as terrestrial telecommunications services.

#### What is spectrum?

- Devices such as cellphones and wireline telephones require signals to connect from one end to another.
  - o These are carried on airwaves.
  - o These must be sent at designated frequencies to avoid any kind of interference.
- Just like all the publicly available assets within the geographical boundaries of the country, the Union government also owns airwaves.
- Central government through the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) auctions these airwaves from time to time to sell these assets to companies.
- These airwaves are called spectrum.
- It is a "finite resource" and needs optimum utilization.
- It is subdivided into bands which have varying frequencies.
- All these airwaves are sold for a certain period of time, after which their validity lapses, which is generally set at 20 years.

### Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)

It is a **regulatory body** set up by the Government of India under section 3 of the **TRAI Act, 1997**.

It is the regulator of the **telecommunications** sector in India.

#### It consists of:

- Chairperson
- Not more than two full-time members
- Not more than two part-time members

TRAI Act was amended in 2000, establishing a **Telecommunications Dispute Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT)** to take over the adjudicatory and disputes functions from TRAI.



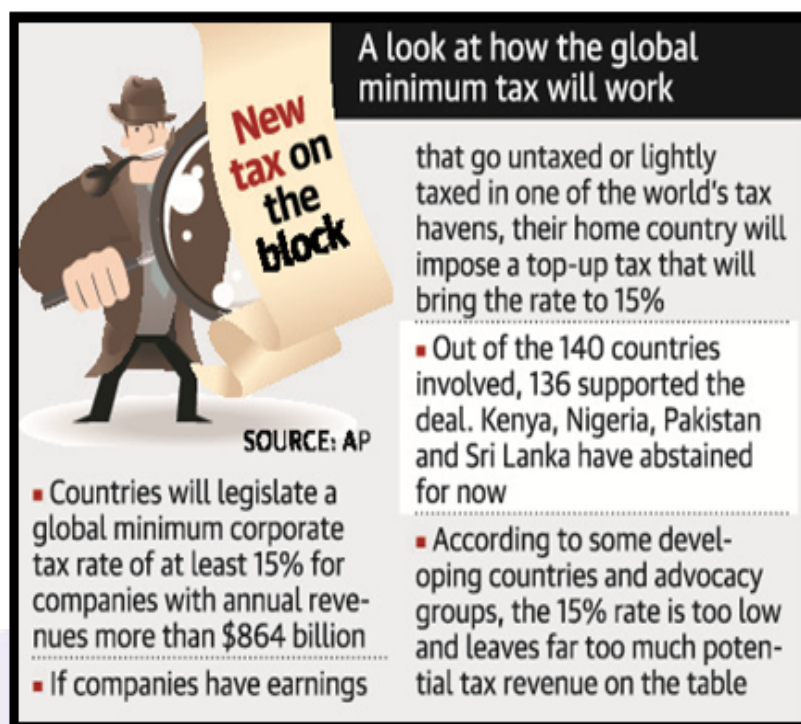
## Global pact on minimum corporate tax

**News context:** Recently, a global deal to ensure big companies pay a minimum tax rate and make it harder to avoid taxation has been agreed.

- OECD has been leading these talks.

### About Global pact

- Aim: To ensure big companies pay a minimum tax rate of 15% and not avoid taxation.
- It would even the playing field workers and taxpayers of the world.
- It will prevent large firms from booking profits in low-tax countries like Ireland regardless of where their clients are.
- It requires countries to remove all digital services tax and other similar measures and to commit not to introduce such measures in the future.
  - India may have to withdraw equalisation levy if global minimum tax deal comes through.
- Out of the 140 countries involved, 136 supported the deal.
  - Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan and Sri Lanka abstaining for now.
- It would cover 90% of the global economy.
  - India may have to withdraw equalisation levy if global minimum tax deal comes through.
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### Concerns regarding the pact

- Some developing countries seeking a higher minimum tax rate say their interests have been sidelined to accommodate the interests of richer countries.
- There was also dissatisfaction among some campaign groups such as Oxfam which said the deal would not end tax havens.

### About Equalisation levy

- India imposed an equalisation levy of 6% in 2016, on online advertisement services provided by non-residents.
  - This was applicable to Google and other foreign online advertising service providers.

### Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

- It is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 38 member countries.
- India is not a member of this organization.
- **Aim:** To stimulate economic progress and world trade.
- Founded: 1961
- Headquarters: Paris, France
- Generally, OECD members are high-income economies with a very high HDI and are regarded as developed countries.
- It is an official UN observer.

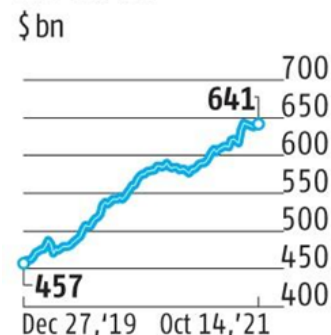
- From April 1, 2020, Government expanded its scope by imposing a 2% equalisation levy on digital transactions by foreign entities operating in India or having access to the local market.

## India's forex reserves

**News Context:** The country's foreign exchange reserves rose by \$1.492 billion to reach \$641.008 billion.

- The high was mainly on account of increase in the foreign currency assets (FCAs).
- The value of the country's gold reserves rose by \$128 million to \$37.558 billion.
- Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.
- The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) declined by \$21 million to \$19.247 billion.
- The country's reserve position with the IMF rose by \$6 million to \$5.231 billion.

## UP & UP



### Points to remember

- India's forex reserves comprise foreign currency assets (FCAs), gold reserves, SDRs and the country's reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- In India, Foreign Exchange Reserves are the foreign assets held or controlled by the country central bank.
- The reserves are made of gold or a specific currency.
- They can also be special drawing rights and marketable securities denominated in foreign currencies like treasury bills, government bonds, corporate bonds and equities and foreign currency loans.

### Significance of rising forex reserves:

- The rising forex reserves give comfort to the government and the RBI in managing India's external and internal financial issues.
- It serves as a cushion in the event of a Balance of Payment (BoP) crisis on the economic front.
- The rising reserves have also helped the rupee to strengthen against the dollar.
- Reserves will provide a level of confidence to markets and investors that a country can meet its external obligations.

### Importance of Foreign Reserves

**1.** All international transactions are settled in US dollars and, therefore, required to support India's imports. More importantly, they need to maintain support and confidence for central bank action, whether monetary policy action or any exchange rate intervention to support the domestic currency.

**2.** It also helps to limit any vulnerability due to sudden disturbances in foreign capital flows, which may arise during a crisis.

**3.** Holding liquid foreign currency provides a cushion against such effects and provides confidence that there will still be enough foreign exchange to help the country with crucial imports in case of external shocks.

## Palk Bay scheme

**News context:** The Union Government is considering increasing the unit cost of deep-sea fishing vessels under the Palk Bay scheme to make it more attractive to fisherfolk.

### About Palk Bay scheme

- **Launched:** 2017
- It is being financed by the Union and the State Governments with beneficiary participation.
- It envisaged the provision of 2,000 vessels in three years to the fishermen of the State and motivates them to abandon bottom trawling.

### Marine Fisheries Bill

- It proposes to grant licenses to fish in the EEZ, to only those vessels which are registered under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958.
- It puts the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) in charge of Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS).
- It nationalizes India's EEZ and prohibits fishing by foreign fishing vessels.
- It proposes punishments for fishermen:
  - o Breaching the EEZ without a licence
  - o Not complying with ICG orders
  - o Obstructing ICG officials
- This bill is drafted in the absence of any law to regulate fishing activity taking place beyond 12 nautical miles from the shore.
  - o Up to 12 nm, the State laws were in place.

## Private Equity Fund

**News Context:** India Media Entertainment Fund (IMEF) is raising money, which will provide both equity as well as instruments like non-convertible debentures (NCD) to companies in the content, distribution platform and services areas.

### Private Equity Fund

- A private equity fund is a collective investment scheme used for making investments in various equities and debt instruments.
- It is an alternative form of private financing, away from public markets, in which funds and investors directly invest in companies.
- These are easy access to alternate forms of capital for entrepreneurs and company founders and less stress of quarterly performance.

### Advantages of PE

- It is favored by companies because it allows them access to liquidity as an alternative to conventional financial mechanisms (high interest bank loans).

- Certain forms of private equity, such as venture capital, also finance ideas and early stage companies.
- In case of delisted companies, private equity financing can help them to growth strategies away from the glare of public markets.

### Disadvantages of PE

- It can be difficult to liquidate holdings in private equity because, unlike public markets, a ready-made order book that matches buyers with sellers is not available.
- Pricing of shares for a company in private equity is determined through negotiations between buyers and sellers and not by market forces.
- The rights of private equity shareholders are generally decided on a case-by-case basis through negotiations instead of a broad governance framework that typically dictates rights for their counterparts in public markets.

### Types of Private Equity Funds

1. **Venture Capital:** Venture capital funds are pools of capital that typically invest in small, and emerging businesses that are expected to have high growth potential but have limited access to other forms of capital.
2. **Buyout or Leveraged Buyout (LBO):** Leveraged buyout funds invest in more mature businesses, usually taking a controlling interest. LBO funds use extensive amounts of leverage to enhance the rate of return.

## DIPAM

**News Context:** The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), which oversees the disinvestment policy, is now planning to cede management control over a dozen public sector enterprises in the next six months.

### About DIPAM

- The Department of Disinvestment has been renamed and restructured as the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management or 'DIPAM' but it continues to function under the Ministry of Finance.
- DIPAM has been made the nodal department for the strategic stake sale in the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs).
- Aim of DIPAM: Efficient management of centre's investments in equity including its disinvestment in central public sector undertakings (CPSU).



- **Mandate:**
  - o Advise the government in matters of financial restructuring of CPSUs.
  - o Attracting investment through capital markets.
  - o Addressing issues such as capital restructuring, dividend, bonus shares, etc.

## Disinvestment and Strategic Disinvestment



### The main objectives of disinvestment in India are:

- To reduce the financial burden of the sick, loss-making PSU's on the Government
- To improve public finances
- To introduce competition and market discipline
- To fund growth, social sector welfare
- To encourage a wider share of ownership
- To depoliticize non-essential services

### Points to remember

In 1996, the Government of India set up a Disinvestment Commission under the Ministry of Industries; the mandate of the commission was to assess the viability and advise the Government on disinvesting various PSE's through market development and diversifying transfer of ownership of the PSU's for five-ten years period.

### Blending 20% ethanol with petrol

**News Context:** India is planning to use surplus rice, besides sugarcane, to meet its biofuel target of blending 20% ethanol with petrol.

### Plan to promote ethanol

- The food department is planning to divert 17 million tonnes of surplus rice to produce ethanol.
- This is in addition to the 2 million tonnes of sugar which is already being diverted to produce ethanol.
- India is estimated to achieve about 8.5% blending with petrol by this year, which it plans to increase to a mandatory 20% blending by 2025.

- The plan is to divert its excess sugar production to produce ethanol, 3.5 million tonnes in 2021-22 and 6 million tonnes the next year, in addition to grains like rice, corn, and barley.

### How would this benefit the country?

- According to Niti Aayog, a successful biofuels programme can save India's \$4 billion every year by lowering import of petroleum products.
- Ethanol is less polluting and offers equivalent efficiency at a lower cost than petrol.
- The Centre expects that rising production of grains and sugarcane and feasibility of making vehicles compliant to ethanol-blended fuel makes its biofuels policy a strategic requirement.

## What are the unintended effects of the policy?

- Increasing reliance on biofuels can push farmers to grow more water-intensive crops like sugarcane and rice, which currently use 70% of the available irrigation water, negating some positive impact on the environment of using more ethanol.
- The move could impact India's hunger situation by limiting the coverage of the food security schemes.

## How will it impact crop diversification?

- The biofuels policy stresses on using less water-consuming crops, farmers prefer to grow more sugarcane and rice due to price support schemes.
- Growing more of them can lead to an adverse impact in water-stressed areas in states.
- Diversion of sugar could be used as a temporary measure to reduce excess stocks.

## What about food security?

Experts say, it is unethical to use edible grains to produce ethanol where hunger is rampant. India, with 14% of its population undernourished and more than one-third of its children stunted, ranks 94th out of 107 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2020.

Although about 80 crore people are now receiving subsidized food grains, calculations show that over 10 crore eligible households are still excluded. Diversion of mass consumption grains can also push food prices up.

## RBI Monetary Policy

**News Context:** The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee has kept the repo rate unchanged at 4%.

### Details

- Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has decided to continue with the accommodative stance as long as necessary to support growth.
- The marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the bank rate remain unchanged at 4.25% and the reverse repo rate also remains unchanged at 3.35%.
- RBI has retained real GDP growth projection at 9.5% in 2021-22 consisting of 7.9% in Q2; 6.8% in Q3; and 6.1% in Q4 of 2021-22.
- Real GDP growth for Q1:2022-23 is projected at 17.2%.
- CPI inflation at 5.3% in August registered a moderation for the second consecutive month and a decline of one percentage point from its level in June 2021.

- The CPI inflation is projected at 5.3% for 2021-22: 5.1% in Q2, 4.5% in Q3; 5.8% in Q4 of 2021-22, with risks broadly balanced.

## Reasons for unchanged

- Impact of COVID-19 on the economy.
- Elevated global crude oil and other commodity prices.
- Acute shortage of key industrial components and high logistics costs.

## Economy in recovery mode

High frequency indicators for Q2:2021-22 suggest that economic recovery has gained momentum:

- Supported by ebbing of infections
- The robust pace of vaccination
- Expected record kharif foodgrains production
- Government's focus on capital expenditure
- Benign monetary and financial conditions
- Buoyant external demand

## Monetary Policy

- Monetary policy refers to the policy of the central bank – in matters of interest rates, money supply and availability of credit.
- It is through the monetary policy, RBI controls inflation in the country.
- RBI uses various monetary instruments like REPO rate, Reverse Repo rate, SLR, CRR etc to achieve its purpose.

## Objective of Monetary Policy

The main objective of monetary policy is to maintain price stability while keeping in mind the objective of growth as price stability is a necessary precondition for sustainable economic growth.

## Monetary Policy Report

It is published by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of RBI. It is a statutory and institutionalized framework under the RBI Act, 1934, for maintaining price stability, while keeping in mind the objective of growth.

## Monetary Policy Committee

- It is a committee constituted by the Central Government and led by the Governor of RBI. It was formed with the mission of fixing the benchmark policy interest rate (repo rate) to restrain inflation within the particular target level.
- The RBI governor controls the monetary policy decisions with the support and advice of the internal team and the technical advisory committee.

## Retail inflation falls to 4.35%

**News Context:** Retail inflation declined to 4.35 percent in September, mainly due to lower food prices.

- RBI has projected the CPI inflation at 5.3 percent for 2021-22: 5.1 percent in the second quarter, 4.5 percent in third; 5.8 percent in the last quarter of the fiscal.

### Key Findings

- As per the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the inflation in the food basket eased to 0.68 percent in September 2021.
- While vegetables recorded a negative inflation of 22.5%, price rise in oils and fats remained sticky at 34.2% and in the range of 7% to 8.75% for key protein sources such as pulses, eggs and meat.
- Core inflation which doesn't include food and fuel price trends, remained elevated at 5.8% for the third month in a row.
- Food prices' trajectory will continue to remain important as some vegetable prices have reversed direction and sequentially picked up in October.
- Manufacturing grew 9.7%, electricity by 16% and mining output rose a sharp 23.6% in August, but each of these sectors had recorded negative growth rates in 2020.
- The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) actually declined in August from July.
- The improvement was limited to primary goods and consumer non-durables, with all the other categories reporting a moderation in growth in August.

### Retail Inflation

- The CPI monitors retail prices at a certain level for a particular commodity; price movement of goods and services at rural, urban and all-India levels.
- The change in the price index over a period of time is referred to as CPI-based inflation, or retail inflation.
- Inflation is usually caused by one of two factors ~ demand or input cost. Excess demand can put pressure on prices to increase. The other possibility is the cost of inputs (labor, utilities, rent, etc.)

## Free trade agreements

**News Context:** India to start talks for three more free trade agreements, which reflects growing interests among key economies in bolstering their trade engagement.

- India currently had negotiations with Australia, the UK, the UAE and the EU for free trades (FTAs).

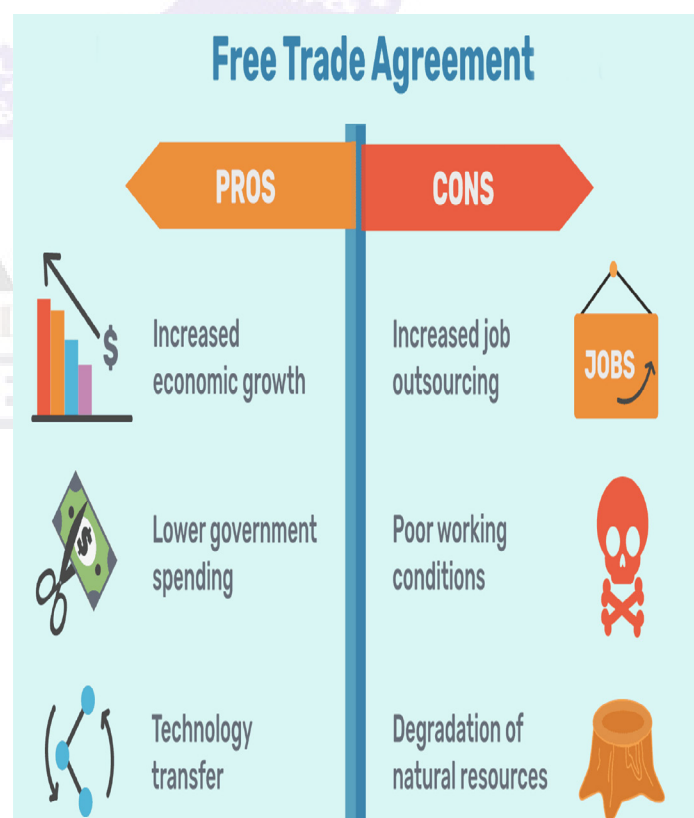
### Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

- A free trade agreement is a pact between two or more nations to reduce barriers to imports and exports among them.
- Under a free trade policy, goods and services can be bought and sold across international borders with little or no government tariffs, quotas, subsidies, or prohibitions to inhibit their exchange.

### Types

There are two types of trade agreements - bilateral and multilateral.

- Bilateral trade agreements occur when two countries agree to loosen trade restrictions between the two of them, generally to expand business opportunities.
- Multilateral trade agreements are agreements among three or more countries, and are the most difficult to negotiate and agree.





## The Economics of Free Trade

Free trade on the international level allows businesses in each country to focus on producing and selling the goods that best use their resources while other businesses import goods that are scarce or unavailable domestically.

### Way ahead

Balanced FTAs are expected to enable the country to achieve sustained growth rates in exports in the coming years. Already, India has set an ambitious merchandise export target of \$400 billion for FY22, against \$291 billion in FY21.

## Capital Expenditure (CapEx)

**News Context:** The fiscally prudent states have stepped up its spending exercise on Capital Content of the Expenditure (CAPEX) in a way that it would have a multiplier effect on the economy and would prompt other states to increase their own capital expenditures.

- State Finance Principal Secretary has been focusing on quality expenditure and utilization of more funds for permanent assets creation.
- The budgetary focus is on enhancing capital spending; hence State government is placing more and more funds for CAPEX.

### Highlights

- Odisha, a fiscally-prudent State is paying a greater attention for social sectors like healthcare, education and livelihood care.
- The RBI is monitoring the State Governments' expenditure and advising time to time for enhancing spending in social sector and infrastructure development.
- The gap in the education and healthcare facilities is something which needs to be significantly stepped up, both at the central government level.
- Automation would also render low-skilled workers jobless.
- The debt to GSDP (gross state domestic product) ratio of all states before the pandemic was 26 per cent, but there was a wide divergence.
- Debt to GSDP ranged from 17 per cent to 42 per cent across states. While the low debt to GSDP ratio in some developed states is commendable.

## Capital Content of the Expenditure (CapEx)

- CapEx are funds used by a company to acquire, upgrade, and maintain physical assets such as property, plants, buildings, technology, or equipment.
- It is considered a capital expenditure when the asset is newly purchased or when money is used towards extending the useful life of an existing asset, such as repairing the roof.

- Capital expenditures contrast with operating expenses (opex), which are ongoing expenses that are inherent to the operation of the asset.

## Formula and Calculation of CapEx

$\text{CapEx} = \Delta \text{PP\&E} + \text{Current Depreciation}$

where:

$\text{CapEx} = \text{Capital expenditures}$

$\Delta \text{PP\&E} = \text{Change in property, plant, and equipment}$

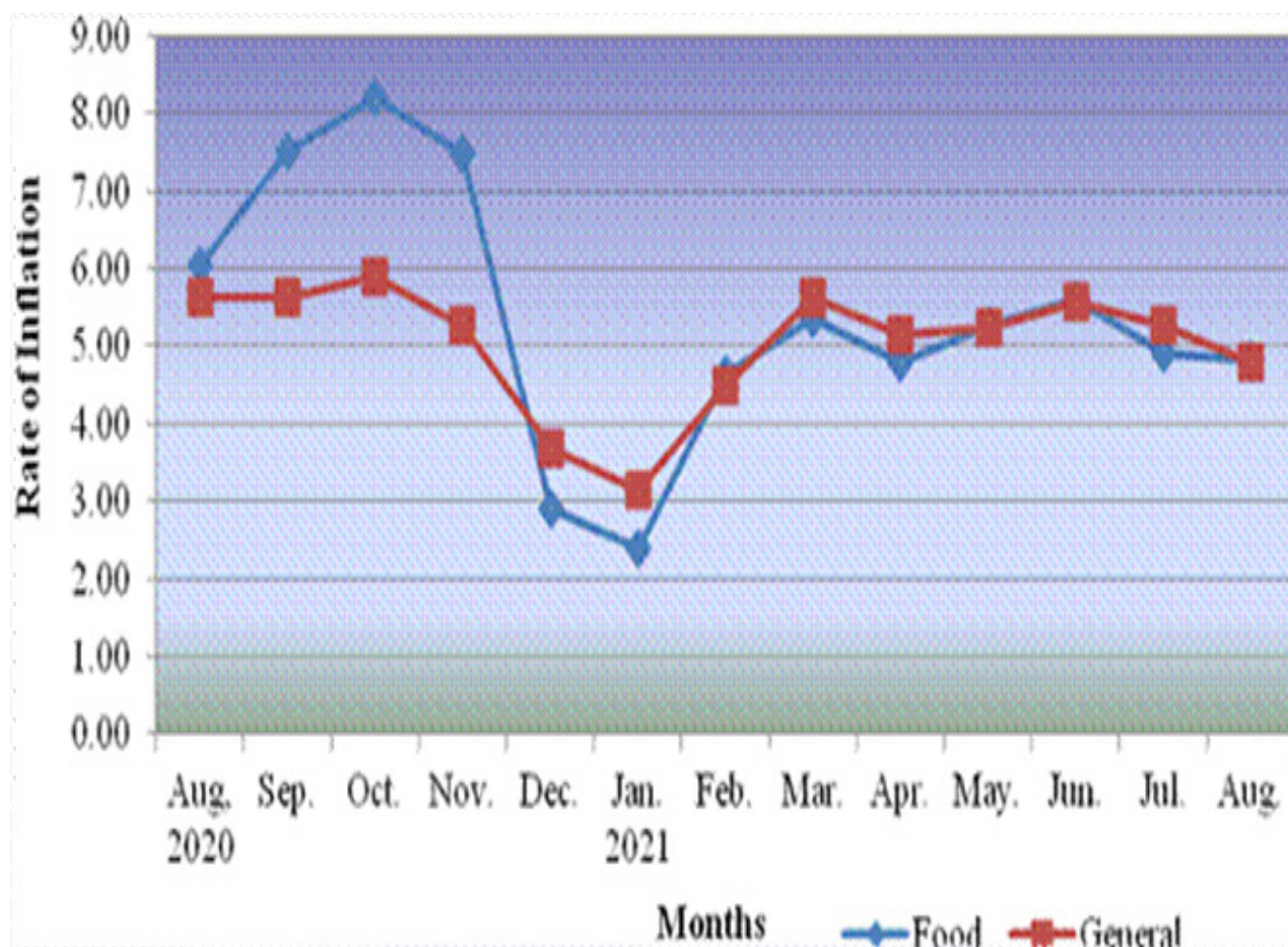
## Gross state domestic product

- GSDP is a measure in monetary terms, the sum total volume of all finished goods and services produced during a given period of time, usually a year, within the geographical boundaries of the State, accounted without duplication.
- SDP is always calculated or estimated in monetary terms, and is instrumental in the evaluation of per capita income.

## Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (2016=100) – August, 2021

**News Context:** The All-India CPI-IW for August, 2021 rose by 0.1 point. On 1-month percentage change, it increased by 0.16 per cent with respect to previous month.

- All-India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (2016=100) for August, 2021 increased to 123.0 points compared to 122.8 points for July, 2021.
- Year-on-year inflation for the month stood at 4.79% compared to 5.27% for the previous month.
- Labour Bureau has been compiling Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers every month on the basis of retail prices, and is released on the last working day of succeeding month.
- At item level, Cow Milk, Dairy Milk, Mustard Oil, Palm Oil, Soyabean Oil, Almond, Sugar-white, Tea Leaf, Cooking Gas, Hospital/ Nursing Home Charges, Petrol for Vehicle, Toilet Soap, etc. are responsible for the rise in index.
- General inflation for August, 2021 went down to 4.79 per cent compared to 5.27 per cent of previous month.
- Food inflation also moderated to 4.83 per cent from 4.91 per cent in the previous month.



### India's Gold Exchange

**News Context:** India has a demand for 800-900 tonnes of gold annually. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has come out with a proposal for a gold exchange.

- India is a big importer, but has no large liquid spot market for price discovery.

### How will gold be traded in the new framework?

- Investors can trade in electronic gold receipts (EGRs) on existing stock exchanges as well as the proposed gold exchange.
- EGRs will be issued against physical gold. An investor can deposit physical gold in vaults and get EGRs issued against it.
- The EGRs will be of denominations such as 1kg, 100gm, and 50gm.

### How does the gold exchange function?

- The gold exchange would be a national platform for buying and selling EGRs with underlying standardized gold in India.
- It would also create a national pricing structure for gold.

### Who will bear the charges for storing EGRs?

- The holders of EGRs will bear the storage charges. This can make the EGRs more expensive than keeping gold at home.

- One EGR can be interchanged for another.

### How will EGRs be taxed?

- EGRs will be treated as security under the Securities Contract Act and will be subject to Securities Transaction Tax. Goods and services tax will only be levied on investors who wish to convert their EGRs into physical gold.
- This confers an advantage to EGRs over physical gold or even digital gold, which are subject to 3% GST.

### Global Trade Forecast

**News Context:** The World Trade Organization (WTO) is predicting global merchandise trade volume growth of 10.8% in 2021—followed by a 4.7% rise in 2022.

### Highlights

- Due to a lower base, year-on-year growth in the second quarter of 2021 was 22%, but the figure is projected to fall 6.6% in the fourth quarter, because of the rapid recovery in trade in the last two quarters of 2020.
- Reaching the forecast for 2021 only requires quarter-on-quarter growth to average 0.8% per quarter in the second half of this year, equivalent to an annualized rate of 3.1%.



**Key Facts**

- WTO projects export volume growth in 2021 at 8.7% in North America, 7.2% in South America, 9.7% in Europe, 0.6% in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), 7% in Africa, 5% in West Asia, and 14.4% in Asia.
- Imports in 2021 are set to grow by 12.6% in North America, 19.9% in South America, 9.1% in Europe, 13.1% in the CIS, 11.3% in Africa, 9.3% in West Asia, and 10.7% in Asia.
- Exports and imports of least developed countries (LDCs) will increase by an estimated 5.3% and 5.5%, respectively, in 2021.
- India's merchandise exports during the first half of this fiscal year jumped 56.92% to a record \$197 billion. The country has set a target of \$400 billion for merchandise exports for FY22.
- As per the International trade body, risks to forecast remain on the downside, including spikes in inflation, longer port delays, higher shipping rates, and extended shortages of semiconductors, with supply side disruptions being exacerbated by the rapid and unexpectedly strong recovery of demand in advanced and many emerging economies.

**World Trade Organisation**

It is an intergovernmental organization that regulates and facilitates international trade between nations. Governments use the organization to establish, revise, and enforce the rules that govern international trade.

**100% FDI in telecom**

**News Context:** The government allows 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in all kinds of telecom services and infrastructure providers through automatic route.

- Earlier, 100 per cent of FDI was allowed, of which 49 per cent of investment was permitted through automatic route.
- The amendment has been made in both old telecom licences in the UASL (Unified Access Services licences) category and new licences that were started in 2012- Unified Licence (UL) category.

**FDI in automatic route**

Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) can be made under two routes—Automatic Route and Government Route. Under the Automatic Route, the foreign investor or the Indian company does not require any approval from RBI or Government of India for the investment.

**Significance**

- It will promote ease of doing business in the industry.
- The move will provide relief for Vodafone Idea, to raise funds from overseas to support its business.
- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) slashed performance and financial bank guarantee requirements of telecom operators by 80 per cent.

**Telecommunications**

- The telecommunications sector consists of companies that transmit data in words, voice, audio, or video across the globe.
- Telecom equipment, telecom services, and wireless communication are the three basic sub-sectors of telecommunications.

**For the Better**

Changes were part  
of Sept 15 reforms

Any FDI from a country India  
shares land border with, to  
still be first approved by govt



Prior to this,  
FDI up to **49%**  
in telecom  
was under  
automatic route

Performance BGs will be submitted  
separately for each service/service  
area for a maximum of **₹44 cr**  
before signing license agreement.  
This amount was **₹220 cr** earlier

Financial BGs, the  
licensee shall submit  
separately for  
each service and  
service area for the  
amount, subject to a  
maximum of **₹8.8 cr**;  
this was **₹44 cr** earlier



## Vehicle Scrapping Policy

**News Context:** The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways issued a list of incentives and disincentives pertaining to the Vehicle Scrapping Policy.

- These incentives and disincentives are aimed at encouraging the vehicle owners to discard their old and polluting vehicles.

**Aim:** To reduce India's impact on the environment by isolating and recycling cars that don't meet pollution standards.

### Incentive

- Owners of the vehicle will get a scrap value which will be equivalent to 4 per cent to 6 per cent of the ex-showroom price of the new vehicle that they would be purchasing.
- There will be zero registration fees for new vehicle purchased if the owner shows a certificate of deposit.
- State governments have been asked to offer concessions on motor vehicle tax. The concessions include up to 25 per cent for non-transport vehicles and up to 15 per cent for transport vehicles.
- Vehicle manufacturers have been advised to provide 5 per cent discount on purchase of new vehicle against certificate of deposit.

### Disincentives

- Increase in the fee for conducting fitness test and renewal of fitness certificate for motor vehicles more than 15 years old.
- Increase in the fitness certification fee for transport vehicles more than 15 years old.
- Increase in the renewal of registration fee for personal vehicles (non-transport vehicles) more than 15 years old.

### When will the policy come into effect?

- Personal vehicles that are older than 20 years will be de-registered from June 1, 2024 if they fail the automated fitness test or their registration certificates have not been renewed.
- Heavy commercial vehicles older than 15 years will be de-registered from April 1, 2023.

### Background

Presenting the Union Budget 2021-22, FinMin announced a voluntary vehicle scrapping policy to phase out old and unfit vehicles.

## Geospatial Energy Map of India

- It is launched by NITI Aayog.

**News context:** NITI Aayog and ISRO develops a Geographic Information System (GIS) Energy Map of India.

### Advantages:

- It provides a holistic picture of all energy resources of country.
- It visualise energy installations such as:
  - o Conventional power plants, Oil and gas wells.
  - o Petroleum refineries, coal fields and coal blocks.
  - o District-wise data on renewable energy power plants.
  - o Renewable energy resource potential etc.
- It will identify and locate all primary and secondary sources of energy and their transportation networks.
  - o It will provide a comprehensive view of energy production and distribution in a country.

## Power Ministry: New rules to ensure sustainability

**News Context :** The ministry of power announced new rules to ensure sustainability in the economic viability of the power sector.

### Details

- New rules will also ease the financial stress of various stakeholders.
- It will also ensure timely recovery of costs incurred in the electricity generation.
- It will promote clean energy for ensuring the suitability and meet commitment made by India towards climate change.
- India has also announced international commitment to set up 175 GW of RE capacity by 2022 and 450 GW by 2030.

### Acts

The Ministry has notified new rules under Ministry of Power under Electricity Act, 2003. The rules comprise of:

- The rules include Electricity (Timely recovery of costs due to Change in Law) Rules, 2021. The other rule is Electricity (Promotion of generation from renewable sources of energy by addressing Must Run and other matters) Rules, 2021.



## Significance of new rules

New rules will help in achieving the goal of RE generation. Rules will also help in ensuring that the consumers get green and clean power. They will also secure a healthy environment for future generation.

## PM Economic Advisory Council reconstituted

### News Context

Government of India reconstituted the seven-member Economic Advisory Council (EAC) to the prime minister. The new council has been reconstituted for a period of two years.

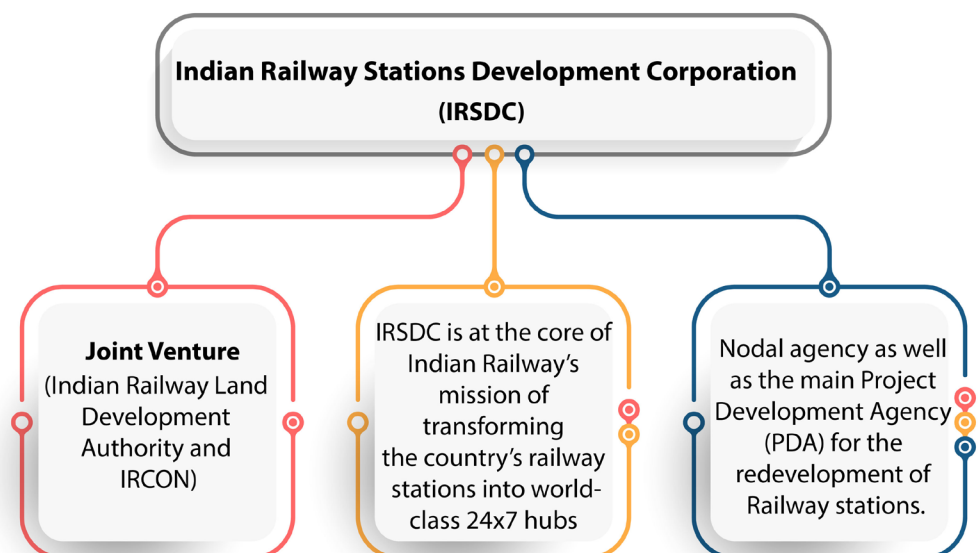
- Bibek Debroy will be the chairman of council.

### Council's responsibilities

- The Council has to analyse any issue, economic or otherwise, referred to it by the prime minister and advising him thereon.
- The Council must address issues of macroeconomic importance.
- Council may attend to any other task, as PM will assign from time to time.

### IRSDC

- IRSDC is the joint venture company between the Indian Railway Land Development Authority and IRCON.
- IRSDC is at the core of Indian Railway's mission of transforming the country's railway stations into world-class 24x7 hubs and is the nodal agency as well as the main Project Development Agency (PDA) for the redevelopment of Railway stations.



## Economic Advisory Council

- Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (PMEAC) is a non-constitutional, non-permanent and independent body constituted to give economic advice to the Government of India, specifically the Prime Minister.
- The council serves to highlight key economic issues facing the country to the government of India from a neutral viewpoint.
- It advises the Prime Minister on economic issues like inflation, microfinance, and industrial output.

## Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation (IRSDC) to be dissolved

News Context: Based on the recommendation of Principal Economic Advisor of Finance Ministry, the Indian Railways has ordered to dissolve Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation (IRSDC).

- The stations managed by IRSDC shall be handed over to respective Zonal Railways and all the projects related documents shall be handed over to respective Zonal Railways by IRSDC.
- Indian Railways Organisation for Alternative Fuel (IROAF) was shut down on September 07, 2021.

## Push for Financial Inclusion

**News context:** The Centre has asked public sector banks (PSBs) to target financial inclusion, expand pension and insurance coverage and, use financial technology to extend credit to borrowers through co-lending arrangements.

- Banks have been given an outline by government, from financial inclusion to signing co-lending agreements with non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and microfinance institutions (MFIs).

### Key Points

- Open Jan Dhan Yojana Account who do not have a bank account and above the age of 21 years.
- State-owned lenders have to provide RuPay cards to 100 per cent account holders under the PMJDY in metro and urban areas, and 90 per cent account holders in semi-urban and rural areas.
- For operative PMJDY accounts, banks have been asked to cover every household under the PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), the PM Suraksha Bima Yojana, and the Atal Pension Yojana (APY).
- PSBs have been asked to identify beneficiary farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme and provide them Kisan Credit Cards.

### Co-Lending Model

- The government has asked state-owned banks to enter into co-lending arrangements with NBFCs and MFIs.
- As NBFCs and MFIs have a far better reach in rural areas, such lenders will on-board borrowers, and finance loans.
- Then, banks will sign an agreement with NBFCs and reimburse NBFCs about 80 per cent of the loan amount.
- The remaining 20 per cent of the loan amount will be retained by such non-bank lenders in their books.

### Financial Inclusion (FI)

- Financial inclusion is a method of offering banking and financial services to individuals.
- It aims to include everybody in society by giving them basic financial services regardless of their income or savings.
- It focuses on providing financial solutions to the economically underprivileged.
- It is the process of ensuring access to financial products and services needed by vulnerable groups at an affordable cost in a transparent manner by institutional players.
- The concept of financial inclusion was first introduced in India in 2005 by the Reserve Bank of India.

### Objectives of FI

- A basic no-frills banking account for making and receiving payments
- Saving products (including investment and pension)
- Simple credit products and overdrafts linked with no-frills accounts
- Remittance, or money transfer facilities
- Micro insurance (life) and non-micro insurance (life and non-life)
- Micro pension

### Importance of FI

- Financial inclusion strengthens the availability of economic resources and builds the concept of savings among the poor.
- Financial inclusion is a major step towards inclusive growth.
- It helps in the overall economic development of the underprivileged population.
- Financial inclusion is needed for the uplift of the poor and disadvantaged people by providing them with the modified financial products and services.

### NBFC

- Nonbank financial companies (NBFCs), are financial institutions that offer various banking services but do not have a banking license.
- Generally, these institutions are not allowed to take traditional demand deposits—readily available funds, such as those in checking or savings accounts—from the public.
- NBFCs are not subject to the banking regulations and oversight by federal and state authorities adhered to by traditional banks.
- Investment banks, mortgage lenders, money market funds, insurance companies, hedge funds, private equity funds, and P2P lenders are all examples of NBFCs.

### Microfinance Institutions

Microfinance institutions (MFIs) are financial companies that provide small loans to people who do not have any access to banking facilities. The definition of “small loans” varies between countries. In India, all loans that are below Rs. 1 lakh can be considered as microloans.

### Krishi Udan 2.0 scheme

#### News Context

The Ministry of Civil Aviation launched “Krishi Udan 2.0 scheme”.



- Under “Krishi Udan 2.0 scheme”, cargo-related infrastructure will be built in airports of hilly, tribal, and north-east regions.
- Such infrastructure will help in assisting farmers to transport agriculture products.

### Aim

- The scheme has been launched with the aim of channelising the immense potential of Indian agriculture with logistical help of civil aviation in a bid to achieve the goal of doubling farmers’ income.
- It will also help in alleviating wastage of farm produce and increase its value.

### Krishi UDAN and UDAN 2.0

- Krishi UDAN was launched in August 2020, on international and national routes to assist farmers in transporting agricultural products so that it improves their value realisation.
- Krishi UDAN 2.0 will focus on transporting perishable food products from the hilly areas, northeastern states and tribal areas.

### Cargo terminals

- Under the scheme, cargo terminals will be established at the airports in Agartala, Dibrugarh, Srinagar, Hubballi, Dimapur, Jorhat, Imphal, Silchar, Lilabari, Lucknow, Tirupati, Tezpur, Tirupati and Tuticorin by 2022.
- In between 2022-23, cargo terminals will be established at airports in Ahmedabad, Jharsuguda, Bhavnagar, Mysore, Kozhikode, Rajkot, Puducherry, and Vijayawada.

### SAKSHAM Centres launched under DAY-NRLM

#### News Context

Ministry of Rural Development launched 152 SAKSHAM centres under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM). These centres were launched as a part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

### SAKSHAM Centres

- Centre for Financial Literacy & Service Delivery (CFL&SD) would act as one stop solution/single window system for basic financial needs of Self-Help Group (SHG) households in rural areas.
- The main objective of the center is to provide financial literacy & facilitate delivery of financial services (savings, credit, insurance, pensions etc.) to SHG members and rural poor.
- SHG network, largely at the level of the Cluster Level Federations (CLFs), with the help of trained Community Resource Persons (CRPs).
- A mobile & web-based application called “SAKSHAM Application” has also been developed.

### Antyodaya Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Yojana

- DDAY is a scheme for helping the poor by providing skill training. It replaces Aajeevika.
- The objective of the scheme is to train 0.5 million people in urban areas per annum.
- Its aim is to eliminate rural poverty through the promotion of multiple livelihoods and improved access to financial services for the rural poor households across the country.

### National Rural Livelihood Mission

- NRLM is a poverty alleviation project implemented by Ministry of Rural Development.
- This plan is focused on promoting self-employment and organization of rural poor.
- The basic idea behind this program is to organize the poor into SHG (Self Help Groups) groups and make them capable for self-employment.

# Science & Technology

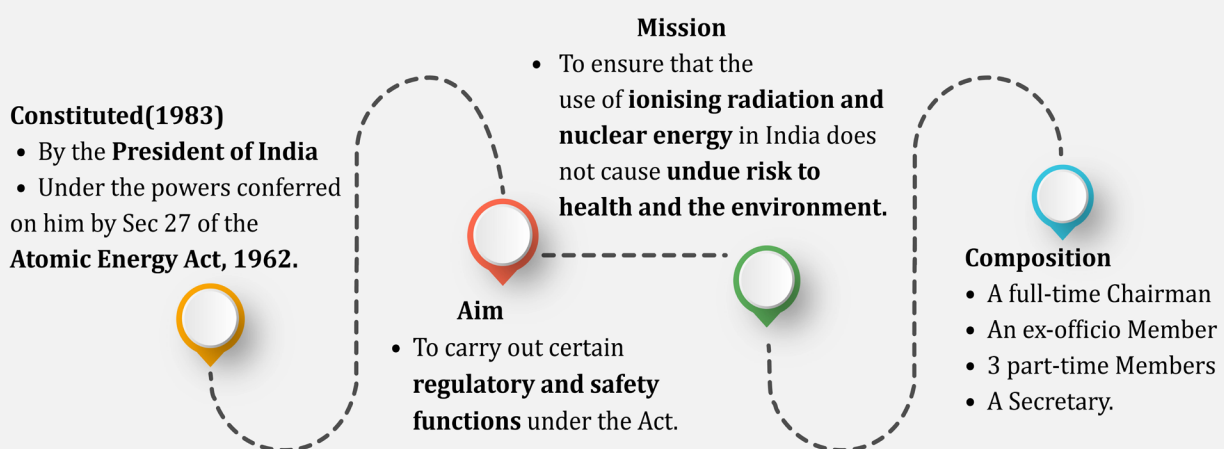
## Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project

**News context:** The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has granted consent for the establishment of Away From Reactor spent fuel storage for the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project's units 3 and 4.

### Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project (Tamil Nadu)

- The largest nuclear power plant in India.
- It was the outcome of a 1988 inter-governmental agreement between the erstwhile Soviet Union and India.
- It became operational in 2013.

## Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB)

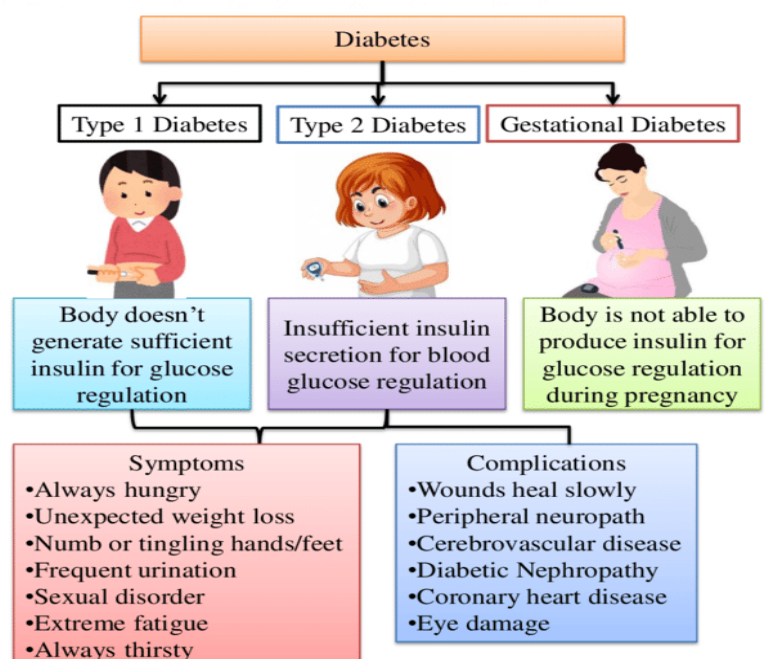


## BP, cholesterol control key for Type1 diabetics

**News context:** According to a study, control of blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol is essential for survival and a good quality of life among Type 1 diabetics (T1D).

### Key Details of the Study

- It found that survivors had better glycemic and blood pressure control, more favourable lipid profiles and lower prevalence of complications compared to non-survivors.
- The survivors also had better height and weight parameters compared to the other group.
- Individuals with T1D have increased morbidity and excess premature mortality compared to those without diabetes.
  - o Their life expectancy is reduced by an estimated 15-20 years, even with the life-saving insulin to their assistance.



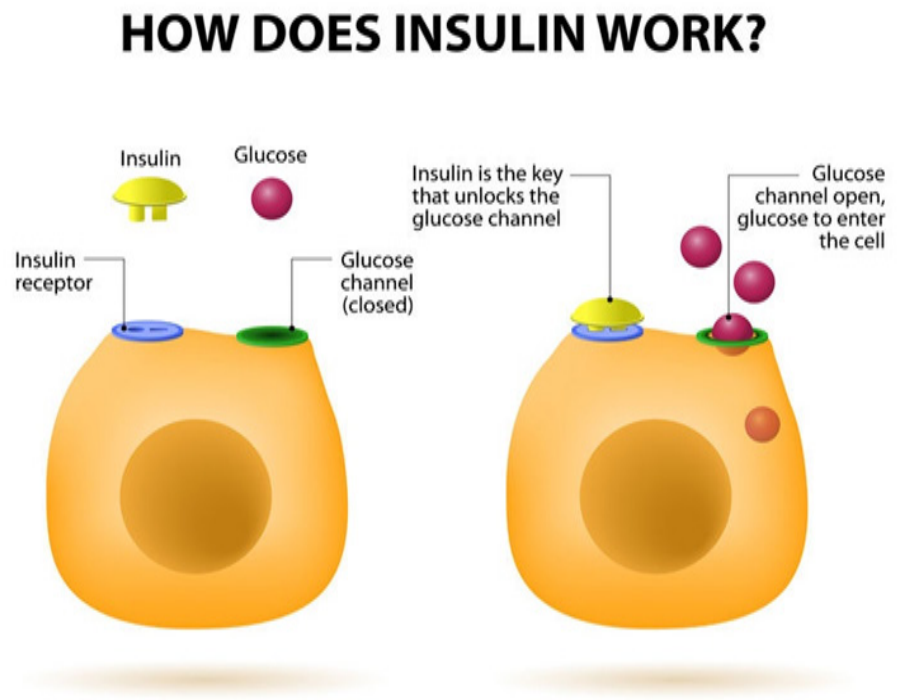
- o However, long-term survival with T1D is possible.
- Note: India is home to more than 95,000 children with T1D, reported to be the highest in the world.
- Refer to adjacent infographic for knowing about types of Diabetes.

### Larger role of insulin

**News context:** Recently, researchers have uncovered how insulin amounts shape the flow of information through the signalling network.

#### About Role of Insulin

- Insulin is a hormone secreted by the  $\beta$  cells of the pancreas.
- It is commonly associated with an ability to regulate glucose metabolism.
- It plays a larger role and helps in growth and maintenance of tissues.
- Insulin signaling: It is an important mechanism in the cell.
  - o It is a series of biochemical reactions that convey information about availability of insulin and the necessity to regulate the glucose in the blood.
- o There are two main pathways for insulin signalling, named AKT and ERK, which together balance metabolism and growth.
- o These specifically control storage of glucose in the liver and also stimulate glucose transport in skeletal muscle and fat.



### Genetically modified (GM) rice

**News context:** A French manufacturer of rice flour claimed that it had found unauthorised GM rice in a consignment of rice imported from India.

#### About GM rice

- GM foods are derived from plants whose genes are artificially modified, usually by inserting genetic material from another organism, in order to give it a new property.
- o **New properties such as:**
  - o Increased yield
  - o Tolerance to a herbicide
  - o Resistance to disease or drought
  - o To improve its nutritional value.
- Best known variety of GM rice is golden rice, which involves the insertion of genes from:



- o A plant (both daffodils and maize have been used)
- o A soil bacterium to create a grain that is enriched with Vitamin A.
- India has approved commercial cultivation of only one GM crop, Bt cotton.
  - o However, confined field trials have been allowed for at least 20 GM crops.

**Note:** In 2012, the European Commission had issued a notification to the Commerce Ministry regarding an allegation of GM contamination of basmati rice from both Indian and Pakistani suppliers.

### India's Rice Export (Refer infographics)

- India is the world's top rice exporter.
- Biggest importers of basmati: West Asian nations, the U.S. and the U.K.
- Majority of non-basmati: African countries and neighbours Nepal and Bangladesh.



### Hybrid immunity


**News context:** A study has shown that a combination of natural infection with a single dose of vaccine provides greater immunity than either natural infection without vaccination or full vaccination in infection-naïve individuals.

### What is 'Hybrid immunity'?

## Risky gamble

### What is the best way to acquire immunity to SARS-CoV-2?

- **Hybrid immunity** refers to a combination of natural infection with a single dose of vaccine
- Several studies now show that hybrid immunity provides greater protection than natural infection without vaccination or full vaccination alone
- Fully vaccinated people without prior infection showed a steeper decline in **neutralising antibodies over a period of three to seven months than those with prior infection**



infection with vaccination mainly resulted in a transient benefit to **antibody titers with little-to-no long-term increase in cellular immune memory**

- The immunological advantage from hybrid immunity **arises mostly from memory B cells which evolve in the lymph nodes**
- The bulk of antibodies after infection or vaccination decline after a short while, however, the **memory B cells get triggered on subsequent infection or vaccination**

- A study published in Science observed that boosting of pre-existing immunity from prior



## Indian Space Association (ISpA)

**News context:** Recently, Prime Minister of India launched the Indian Space Association (ISpA).

### About Indian Space Association (ISpA)

- It is an industry body consisting of various stakeholders of the Indian space domain.
- **Goal:** To supplement the government's efforts towards making India a global leader in commercial space-based excursions.
- The members of the organisation include government bodies such as ISRO and private telecom companies.

### Significance of ISpA

- Ever since the US-USSR space race began,

governments across the world have poured millions of dollars to push the envelope in term of exploring the edges of the space.

- With time, governments and its agencies collaborated to explore newer planets and galaxies in search of life forms that exist outside Earth.
- In the recent past, private sector companies such as Elon Musk's SpaceX etc. have taken the lead in spaceflight.
- So far, state-run ISRO has been at the centre and front of India's progress in space exploration.
- Several private sector companies, however, have shown an interest in India's space domain, with space-based communication networks coming to the fore.

# Environment & Geography

## Designating East Antarctica and the Weddell Sea as MPAs

**News context:** India has extended support for protecting the Antarctic environment and designating East Antarctica and the Weddell Sea as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

- The proposal to designate East Antarctica and the Weddell Sea as MPAs was first put forth to the CCAMLR in 2020 but could not reach a consensus at that time.

### Key Details

- India supports sustainability in protecting the Antarctic environment.
- Two proposed MPAs are essential to regulate illegal unreported and unregulated fishing.
- India urged the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) member countries to ensure that India remains associated with the formulation, adaptation and implementation mechanisms of these MPAs in future.

- First time India is considering co-sponsoring an MPA proposal at the CCAMLR and getting aligned with countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Korea, New Zealand, South Africa and the USA, which are also proactively considering supporting the MPA proposals.

- India's decision to support these proposals is driven by conservation and sustainable utilization principles and adhering to the global cooperation frameworks (such as Sustainable Development Goals, UN Decade of Oceans, Convention on Biodiversity, etc.) to which India is a signatory.

- India's Antarctica expedition: India had embarked on Antarctic expedition in 1981, through the Southern Indian Ocean sector.
  - o Till date, India had completed 40 expeditions with plans for the 41st expedition in 2021-22.
  - o India has solidified its interests in upholding its Antarctic vision.

**CCAMLR (1982)**

An international treaty to manage Antarctic fisheries to preserve species diversity and stability of the entire Antarctic marine ecosystem.

**India** has been a **permanent member** of the CCAMLR since 1986.

Work pertaining to the CCAMLR is coordinated in India by the Ministry of Earth Sciences through its attached office, the Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (CMLRE) in Kochi, Kerala.

**MPA**

It is a marine protected area that provides protection for all or part of its natural resources.

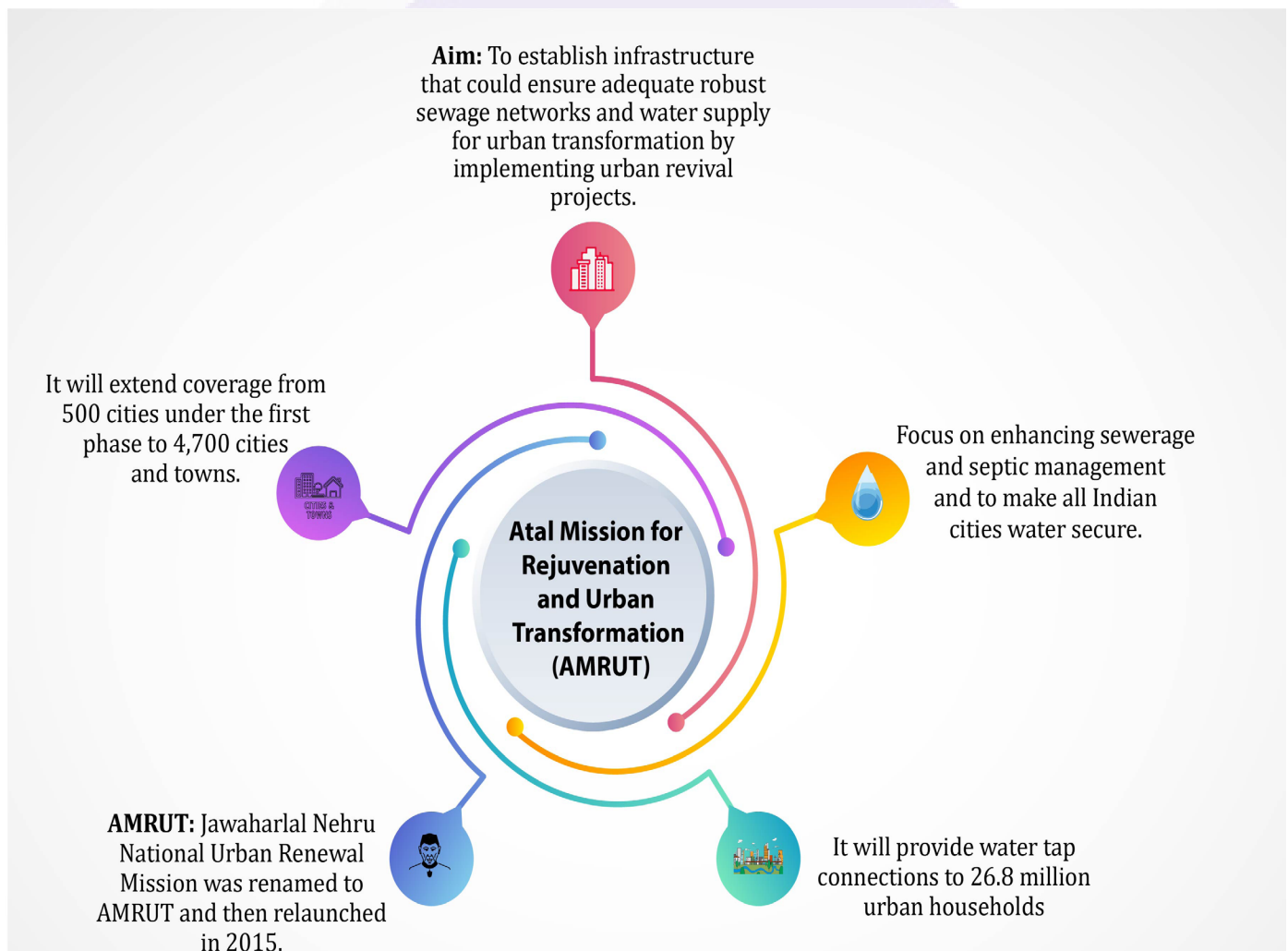
Certain activities within an MPA are limited or prohibited to meet specific conservation, habitat protection, ecosystem monitoring, or fisheries management objectives.

**Second phase of SBM-U and AMRUT**

**News context:** Recently, government has announced the second phase of Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) and the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), with a fresh promise to make India's cities clean.

**SBM-U 2.0**

- Focus on foolproof waste management.
- Focus on process to remove all legacy dump sites.
- **Sanitation protocols:** All statutory towns will become at least ODF+.
  - All cities with less than 1 lakh population would be ODF++.
- Additionally, around 350,000 individual, community and public toilets will be constructed.
- **SBM:** To accelerate the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to put focus on sanitation, the Swachh Bharat Mission was launched on 2nd October 2014.



## Global Agricultural Productivity (GAP) Report

**News context:** According to GAP Report, Global agricultural productivity is not growing as fast as the demand for food, amid the impact of climate change.

- The report was released in conjunction with the World Food Prize Foundation's annual conference.

### Report's key highlights

Total factor productivity (TFP) It tracks changes in how efficiently agricultural inputs such as land, labour, fertiliser, feed, machinery and livestock are transformed into outputs like crops, livestock and aquaculture products.

#### Its growth is influenced by:

- o Climate change, weather events
- o Changes in fiscal policy, market conditions
- o Investments in infrastructure
- o Agricultural research and development.
- Total factor productivity (TFP) is growing at an annual rate of 1.36% (2020-2019).
- This is below the GAP Index that has set an annual target of 1.73% growth to sustainably meet the needs of consumers for food and bio-energy in 2050.
- Climate change has already reduced productivity growth globally by 21% since 1961.
  - o In the drier regions of Africa and Latin America, climate change has slowed productivity growth by as much as 34%.
- o Middle-income countries including India, China, Brazil and erstwhile Soviet republics continued to have strong TFP growth rates.
- o India's average annual TFP growth rate is 2.81% and output growth is 3.17% (2010-2019).

### Total factor productivity (TFP)

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- o Changes in fiscal policy, market conditions
- o Investments in infrastructure
- o Agricultural research and development.

## Recommendations

- o Invest in agricultural research and development
- o Embrace science-and-information-based technologies
- o Improve infrastructure for transportation, information and finance
- o Cultivate partnerships for sustainable agriculture, economic growth and improved nutrition
- o Expand and improve local, regional and global trade
- o Reduce post-harvest loss and food waste

## Species in News

### Migratory Amur falcons

- Recently, the migratory Amur falcons arrived in Manipur for the annual stopover.
- These visit Manipur every year from breeding grounds in China and Russia before beginning their onward voyage to Africa for the winter.
- Its hunting was punishable under the Manipur Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- IUCN Status: Least Concern



### Brow-antlered deer (Sangai)

- Population of the brow-antlered deer stood at fewer than 300 in its natural habitat (Keibul Lamjao National park).
- It is found only in Manipur.
- It is the state animal of Manipur.
- **Protection**
  - o IUCN Status: Endangered
  - o Schedule-1 of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972



### Trigonopterus corona

**News context:** Recently, museum scientists have discovered 28 new species of beetles on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi.

#### About Trigonopterus corona

- One of species of beetles has been named Trigonopterus corona.
- It is not the only insect species to be named after the pandemic.





**Other species named after corona**

- A new species of caddisfly (a moth-like insect) named *Potamophylax coronavirus* (Kosovo).
- Out of six new species of Brazilian wasps, one was named *Allorhagas quarentenus*, a reference to the quarantine.
- Out of five new wasp species discovered in Mexico, one named as *Stethantyx covida* (Zookeys).

**India weighs 'net zero' target**

**News context:** Senior officials recently said that India has not entirely ruled out the possibility of agreeing to a "net zero" climate target.

**What is 'Net-zero' target?**

- Net-zero (also referred to as carbon-neutrality) does not mean that a country would bring down its emissions to zero.

- It is a state in which a country's emissions are compensated by absorption and removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.
  - Absorption can be increased by creating more carbon sinks such as forests.
  - Removal requires futuristic technologies such as carbon capture and storage.
- Therefore, it is even possible for a country to have negative emissions, if the absorption and removal exceed the actual emissions.
- Note: Bhutan which is often described as carbon-negative because it absorbs more than it emits.
- All countries announcing 'Net-zero' target by 2050 will mean a chance of restricting the average temperature rise to 1.5 °C, provided emissions fall to around 45% of the 2010 levels by 2030.

**Road to net zero** | In 2015, over 190 countries committed to limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Countries such as the U.K. and France have already enacted laws to achieve net zero target by 2050. This has put pressure on India, the third-largest emitter, which has not been in favour of committing to a deadline

■ Net zero means committing to a year beyond which emissions will be balanced by taking an equivalent amount of greenhouse gases from the air

■ India has maintained that committing to a target will require

retiring coal plants and fossil fuel use overnight and even then, it will not guarantee that temperature rise stays below 1.5°C

■ India says that future net zero promises are hollow as countries responsible for the climate crisis have not delivered on previous promises

■ India argues that countries clamouring for net zero will continue to pollute on a per capita basis way beyond their fair share





**Net-zero' targets vis-à-vis India**

- Net-zero emission means deep and significant cuts to fossil fuel use that can affect the development trajectory of India and other developing countries.
  - o For India to achieve the net zero target even by 2070, usage of coal, especially for power generation, will need to peak by 2040 and drop by 99% between 2040 and 2060.
  - o The consumption of crude oil across sectors will need to peak by 2050 and fall substantially by 90% between 2050 and 2070.
- **India's stand:** It will abandon the use of fossil fuels but only gradually because it cannot compromise on development, which is now primarily reliant on coal.
  - o Net zero target goes against the core principle of "common but differentiated responsibility".
  - o Developed nations make good their previous commitments. Such as:
    - o An annual \$100 billion to developing countries for mitigating the impacts of climate change.
    - o Facilitating technology transfer and putting in place a tangible market-based mechanism to activate the moribund carbon credit markets.

**India is the world's third largest emitter.**

India's average per capita emissions was 1.96 tons/person/annum, the EU's was 8.4 and the United States was 18.

**India's NDCs (2015)**

- To increasing the share of non-fossil fuel sources to 40%.
- To reduce its emissions intensity per unit of GDP by nearly 33-35% of 2005 levels.
- To create a carbon sink of 2.5-3 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent.

**Tsugaru Strait**

**News context:** Recently, Russia and China hold first joint patrol in western Pacific Ocean. A group of vessels sailed through the Tsugaru Strait

**Location of Tsugaru Strait**

- It separates Japan's Honshu Island and its northern island of Hokkaido.
- It connects the Sea of Japan with the Pacific Ocean.



**Australia's 2050 net zero emission target**

News context: Recently, Australia has announced that it will achieve net zero emissions by the year 2050.

**Other countries who have already announced their net-zero targets**

- New Zealand in 2019: It said that target would be achieved by 2050 or sooner.
- **The UK:** It has said that it will source all of its electricity from renewable sources by the year 2035.
- **The US:** It said that it will halve its emissions by 2030.

**About Australia's net zero target (Long-Term Emissions Reduction Plan)**

- It focuses on technology with the aim of driving down cost of low emissions technology.
  - o *E.g.:* clean hydrogen, low cost solar, energy storage and low emissions steel and aluminium
- It involves deploying these technologies at scale, helping regional industries in exporting lower emission fuels such as LNG and uranium.
- It provides for working with other countries to decarbonise the world's economy.

**Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI)**

**News context:** Environmental think tank Council on Energy, Environment and Water has carried a first-of-its-kind district-level climate vulnerability assessment, or CVI.

- Under it, CEEW has analysed 640 districts in India to assess their vulnerability to extreme weather events such as cyclones, floods, heatwaves, droughts, etc.

**About CVI**

- **It measures:**
  - o Exposure: Whether the district is prone to extreme weather events.
  - o Sensitivity: Likelihood of an impact on the district by the weather event
  - o Adaptive capacity: What the response or coping mechanism of the district is?
- It helps map critical vulnerabilities and plan strategies to enhance resilience and adapt by climate-proofing communities, economies and infrastructure.
- It looks at the combined risk of hydro-met disasters, which is floods, cyclones and droughts, and their impact.
- It does not take into consideration other natural disasters such as earthquakes.

**Its significance**

- India is the 7th most vulnerable country with respect to climate extremes.
- Extreme weather events have been increasing in the country such as:
  - o Supercyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal
  - o Landslides and floods in Uttarakhand and Kerala
- Three out of four districts in India are extreme event hotspots.
  - o 40% of the districts exhibiting a swapping trend i.e. traditionally flood-prone areas are witnessing more frequent and intense droughts and vice-versa.
- IPCC states that every degree rise in temperature will lead to a 3% increase in precipitation.

**Findings of CVI**

- Most vulnerable states: Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Bihar
- Least vulnerable states: Kerala, Tripura and West Bengal are the
- 27 Indian states and UTs are vulnerable to extreme climate events.
- 463 districts out of 640 are vulnerable to extreme weather events.
- More than 80% Indians live in districts vulnerable to climate risks.
  - o 17 of 20 people in India are vulnerable to climate risks.
  - o 60% of Indian districts have medium to low adaptive capacity in handling extreme weather events.
- North-eastern states are more vulnerable to floods.
- South and central are most vulnerable to extreme droughts.
- 59% districts in the eastern and 41% in western states are highly vulnerable to extreme cyclones.

**DAP 'shortage'**

**News context:** An acute shortage of di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) in Haryana has seen desperate farmers organising protests.

**What is DAP?**

- DAP fertiliser has to be sprinkled at the time of sowing crops like mustard and wheat.
- It is made from two common macronutrients:
  - o Phosphate

- o Nitrogen
- It is popular because of its relatively highest concentration of phosphate and nitrogen content coupled with its excellent physical properties.
  - o It is highly soluble and thus dissolves quickly in soil to release plant-available phosphate and ammonium.
- DAP releases free ammonium.
  - o Nitrogen in the ammonium form resists leaching and is a slower release form of nitrogen.
  - o Free ammonium gives a higher pH reaction immediately around the granule.

### Proposed amendments to the Forest Conservation Act

**News context:** Recently, the Union environment ministry has come out with a consultation paper on amending the Forest Conservation Act 1980.

#### About proposed amendment

- It proposes to exempt certain categories of infrastructure project developers from approaching the Centre for permission to use forest land for non-forestry purposes.
  - o For instance, it has proposed absolving agencies involved in national security projects, border infrastructure projects, land owned by the Railways or the Road Transport Ministry that was acquired before 1980 or when the Act came into force.
- It proposed some provisions where the penalties of non-compliance could include jail terms, but the overall tenor of the proposal is to make it a little easier to use forest land for non-forestry purposes.

#### About Forest Conservation Act, 1980

- This act came into force to address deforestation.
- Indian Forest Act, 1927 allowed the colonial British administration to control the extraction of timber and not aimed at preserving forests or addressing deforestation.
- While States had already notified forest land, the FCA made it necessary:
  - o To get the Centre's permission for using such forest land for "non-forestry purposes"
  - o To create an advisory committee to recommend such re-classification.

### Previous amendments to the FCA

- Till 1996, State Governments, UT Administrations and Central Government used to apply the provisions of the Act only to:
  - o Forests notified under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 or any other local law
  - o Forests which were under the management or control of the Forest Department.
- However what constituted a "forest" was dramatically expanded following a SC judgment (1996).
- **Now, "forest" also included:**
  - o All areas recorded as "forest" in any government record, irrespective of ownership, recognition and classification;
  - o All areas that conformed to the "dictionary" meaning of "forest", and
  - o All areas which are identified as "forest" by an expert committee constituted by the SC following the 1996 order.
- **This judgment also paved the way for:**
  - o Calculating the economic value of the portion of forest being razed for development work that had to be paid by project proponents.
  - o Creation of a compensatory afforestation fund.
  - o Providing non-forestry land in lieu of the diverted forest.

### Reasons behind the proposed amendments

- State is committed to a principle of increasing forest cover, and this makes it harder to access land for infrastructure projects by States and private entities.
  - o India's target: At least 33% of India's geographical area under forest and tree cover.
  - o Currently, forest cover is around 22%.
- Just because increasing core forest land is increasingly hard, the mode of expansion includes expanding the notion of what constitutes forest land.
- Thus, even degraded lands and even commercial plantations or regions with trees of a certain canopy cover and density count as "forest".
- Through the years, this has given rise to multiple instances of litigation, as well questions on the legal definition of "forest".



**'Podu' land issue**

- Telangana government has decided to move landless, non-tribal farmers engaged in shifting cultivation inside forests to peripheral areas as it looks to combat deforestation.
- Tribal farmers who have been traditionally cultivating for decades will not be affected by this drive against illegal encroachers.
  - Government has, in fact, given land ownership titles to tribals.
- Non-tribal farmers can apply to the state government to allocate them land outside the forests.

**Different terms for shifting Cultivation**

Country or Region	Shifting Cultivation
Indonesia, Malaysia	Ladang
Java	Jumar
Vietnam	Ray
Thailand	Tam-ray, Rai
Laos	Hay
Philippines	Hanumo
Sri Lanka, Japan	Chena
Korea	Karen
Burma	Taungya
India	Bewar, Dhya, Dippa, Erka, jhum, Kumri, Penda, Pothu, Podu

**List of States emitting fine particulate matter**

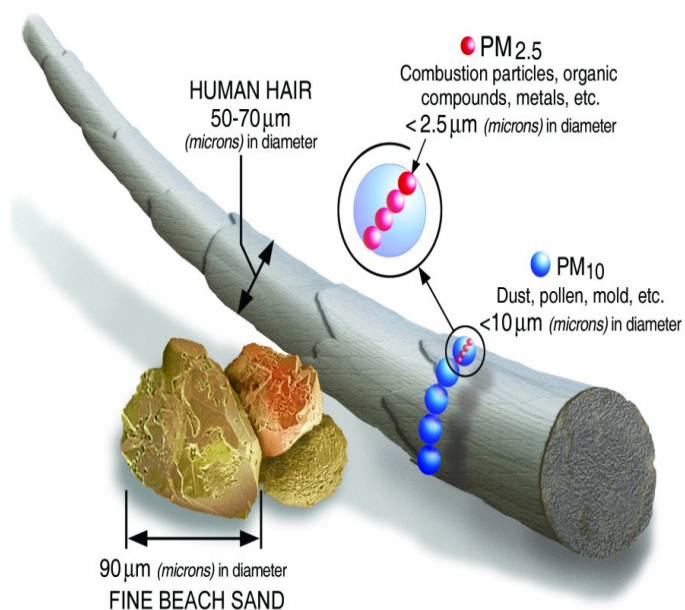
**News context:** Uttar Pradesh is the largest emitter of PM<sub>2.5</sub>, according to an analysis by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW).

- PM<sub>2.5</sub> is the class of particulate matter considered most harmful to health.

**Key Highlights**

- The Council looked at five of the most reliable data sources that have tracked and measured the quantum and sources of air pollution in India.
- High emissions from U.P. were largely due to a significant share of PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions from solid-fuel use in households.
  - Other top polluters: Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha, West Bengal, MP, Bihar, TN, and RJ.

- Lowest emitters of PM<sub>2.5</sub>: J&K, HP, Uttarakhand, and the N-E states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram

**What is 'particulate matter' (PM)?**

- This term is used for a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air. Particle pollution includes:
  - PM<sub>10</sub>:** Inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 10µm and smaller.
  - PM<sub>2.5</sub>:** Fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5µm and smaller.
- Average human hair is about 70µm in diameter, making it 30 times larger than the largest fine particle.

**National Clean Air Campaign (NCAP)**

**Aim:** To achieve 20% to 30% reduction in Particulate Matter concentrations by 2024.

Base year for the comparison: 2017

It is a long-term, time-bound, national level strategy to tackle the air pollution problem across the country in a comprehensive manner.

**Agalega Island**

**News context:** Development of a military facility on North Agaléga Island.

- It is part of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) initiative.
- Mauritius is the part of this initiative.

**About Agalega Island**

- It is located in Indian Ocean 1,000 kilometers north of Mauritius island.





### Mullaperiyar Dam

News context: Supreme Court has asked supervisory committee of the dam to set maximum water level at dam.

### About Mullaperiyar Dam

- It is located in the upper reaches of the river Periyar.
  - o This river flows into Kerala after originating in Tamil Nadu.
- The reservoir is within the Periyar Tiger Reserve.
- It is operated and maintained by Tamil Nadu.

### What is the dispute?

- For Kerala, where it is situated, the dam presents a threat to lakhs living downstream.
- For Tamil Nadu, which controls the dam, the water it provides is the lifeline of people in five districts.



# Defence & Security

## Pinaka, Smerch and BrahMos

**News context:** Recently, the Pinaka and Smerch rocket systems as well as BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles have been deployed closer to the LAC.



### Smerch rocket system

- Smerch is procured from Russia.
- It is the longest range conventional rocket system in the Army's inventory.
  - o Range: 90 km

### Pinaka rocket system

- It is a multi-barrel rocket system (MBRL) system.
- It is indigenously designed and developed by the DRDO.
- Range: 38 km

### BrahMos missiles

- These are designed, developed and produced by BrahMos Aerospace, a joint venture company set up by DRDO and Mashinostroyeniya of Russia.

## Agni-5

**News context:** India successfully test-fires Agni-5 missile.

### Agni-5 missile:

- Agni 5 is India's long-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile.
- It has range of 5000 km.
- Agni 5 ballistic missile was tested for the first time by the user agency, the Strategic Forces Command.
- It is nuclear capable missile and can carry a warhead of around 1,500 kg.
  - o It has a launch weight of 50,000 kg.

- It is a cruise missile i.e. it can be guided towards a pre-determined land- or sea-based target.
- With a capability to attain speeds of Mach 2.8, BrahMos is classified as supersonic cruise missile.
- **Range:** over 290 km

## Heaviest propellant tank delivered to ISRO

**News context:** The heaviest semi-cryogenic propellant tank (SC120- LOX) ever fabricated by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has been delivered to the ISRO.



### About SC120- LOX

- It is the semi cryo-liquid oxygen (LOX) tank.
- It is the first developmental welded hardware.
- It is a part of the SC120 stage intended for payload enhancement by replacing the L110 stage in existing Mk-III launch vehicle.

**Note:** In 2020, HAL had delivered the biggest ever cryogenic liquid hydrogen tank (C32-LH2).

## AGNI-5 MISSILE

- ▶ Agni 5 is India's long-range **surface-to-surface ballistic missile**.
- ▶ It has range of **5000 km**.
- ▶ Agni 5 ballistic missile was tested for the first time by the user agency, the **Strategic Forces Command**.
- ▶ It is nuclear capable missile and can carry a warhead of around **1,500 kg**.
- ▶ It has a launch weight of **50,000 kg**.





**Importance for India:**

- Strategic Force Command, which is a joint tri-services command, responsible for India's nuclear weapon.
  - o Successful test is in line of India's 'credible minimum deterrence' which works on 'No First Use' policy.

**ICBM: it has range over 5,500 km.**

**Hypersonic technology**

**News context:** China has test fires hypersonic missile recently.

**News in detail:**

- China's tested hypersonic missile, which circled the earth before moving towards its target, missing it by two dozen miles.
  - o A hypersonic glide vehicle is launched by a rocket which moves in the Earth's lower orbit, at more than 5 to 25 times the speed of sound.
  - o It is nuclear capable.
- China denied the report, and claimed as "spacecraft" and not a missile.

**Note:** It raised the concerns for the neighbouring countries like India and other rival countries such as U.S.A.

**Defence public sector undertakings (DPSUs)**

**News Context:** India gets seven new state-run defence firms replacing the Ordnance Factory Board (dissolved on October 1).

- The objective of this restructuring is
  - o To transform ordnance factories into productive, and profitable assets
  - o Improve expertise in product range
  - o Increase competitiveness
  - o Improve quality
  - o Enhance cost-efficiency
  - o Ensure self-reliance in defence preparedness

**The seven new DPSUs are as follows:**

1. **Advanced Weapons and Equipment India (AWE) Limited:** AWE India is based in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. According to a media report,

the firm has got defence orders worth ₹4066 crore. It is involved in the manufacturing of small arms and weapons for the armed forces and police.

2. **Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (AVANI):** The same report notes that AVANI has been given a contract for defence goods worth ₹30,025 crore, the highest among all the seven new DPSUs. The company is located in Chennai.
3. **Gliders India Limited (GIL):** This company, too, is has its registered address in Kanpur. GIL is involved in the manufacture of textiles.
4. **India Optel Limited (IOL):** Headquartered in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, IOL is involved in the manufacturing of electrical machinery and apparatus.
5. **Munitions India Limited (MIL):** The entity is based in Pune, Maharashtra, and works to manufacture general purpose machinery.
6. **Troop Comforts Limited (TCL):** The company manufactures wearing apparel, except those made of fur. Like AWE India and GIL, the headquarters of TIL, too, is in Kanpur.
7. **Yantra India Limited (YIL):** According to a report, YIL has inherited OFB assets worth ₹11,000 crore. It is based out of Nagpur, Maharashtra, and manufactures components such as shells of ammunitions.

**AT A GLANCE**

<b>PEOPLE EMPLOYED:</b>	<b>PRODUCTION:</b>
76,000 across 41 Ordnance Factories (OFs)	₹11,500 cr of defence stores annually
<b>PER CAPITA PRODUCTION:</b>	<b>WHAT GOVT WANTS:</b>
₹15 lakh a year	Good production volumes

**7 NEW DEFENCE PSUs**

1. **Munitions India:** A grouping of 12 OFs that produced explosives and ammunition
2. **Armoured Vehicles Nigam:** The 5 OFs that built vehicles
3. **Advanced Weapons and Equipment India:** The 5 OFs which made weapons and equipment
4. **Yantra India:** Formed by combining the 8 OFs that produced metals and steels
5. **Troop Comforts**
6. **India Optel**
7. **Gliders India**

Note: The remaining 11 OFs have been turned into the last 3 PSUs  
COMPILED BY BHASWAR KUMAR

**Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)**

OFB is an organisation working under the Department of Defence Production (DDP) of Ministry of Defence (MoD). There were 41 Indian Ordnance Factories which now have been converted into 7 Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs).



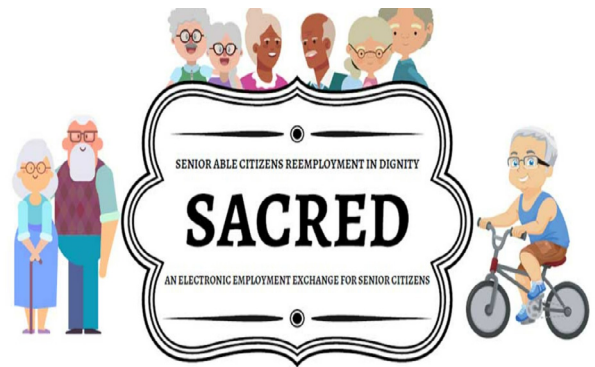
# Social Issues

## Senior Able Citizens for Re-Employment in Dignity (SACRED) Portalw

**News context:** Recently, government launched the Senior Able Citizens for Re-Employment in Dignity (SACRED) portal to connect senior citizens with job providers in the private sector.

### Key Details

- It is a first-of-its-kind dedicated employment exchange.
- It is developed by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- Citizens above 60 years of age can register on the portal and find jobs and work opportunities.
- As per Census 2011, India has an elderly population of 10.38 crore.
  - This constitutes about 8.6% of the total population.
  - Based on the rate of growth, the population of the elderly in India is projected to reach about 14.9% of the total population by 2036.
- The UNGA had adopted a resolution to observe October 1, 1999 as the International Day of Older Persons and since then, it is celebrated every year.



### Challenges of an ageing population

- To ensure timely and proper medical care to the elderly.
- Protecting the rights of the elderly.
- Preventing their neglect and abuse by their children and relatives.

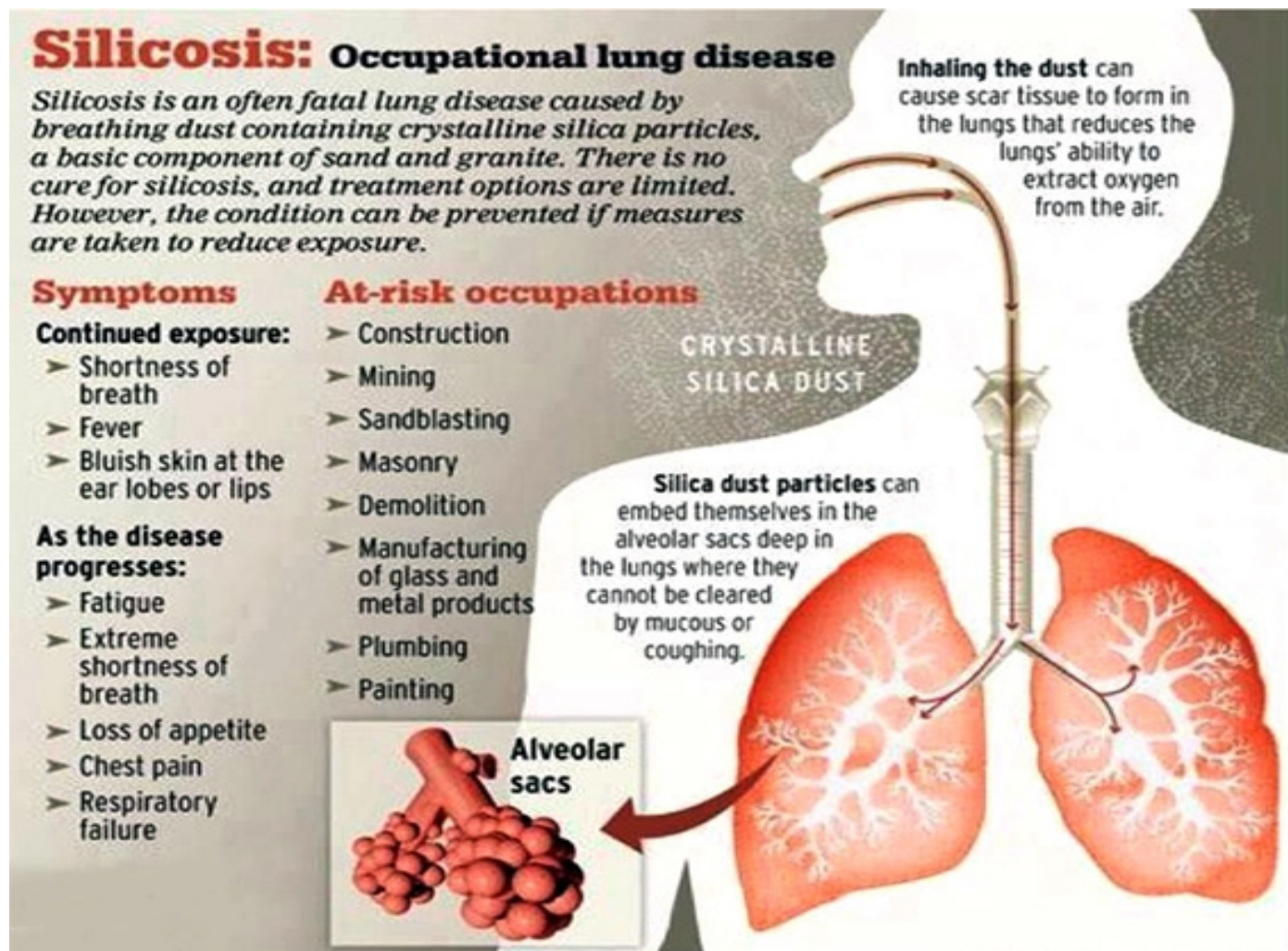
## Silicosis Prevention Policy

**News Context:** Workers engaged in mines, construction and factories in India were silently dying of exposure to dust.

- Rajasthan, with the top-most share of over 17% in value of mineral production in the country, was the first to notify silicosis as an 'epidemic' in 2015, under the Rajasthan Epidemic Diseases Act, 1957.
- In 2019, it announced a formal Pneumoconiosis Policy, only next to Haryana.

### Silicosis

- Silicosis is part of the pneumoconiosis family of diseases.
- Silicosis is a lung disease caused due to breathing of crystalline silica which is obtained from drilling, cutting, chipping, grinding soil sand and Granite.
- Silica is a substance naturally found in certain types of stone, rock, sand and clay.
- Once inside the lungs, it causes swelling (inflammation) and gradually leads to areas of hardened and scarred lung tissue (fibrosis).
- Those who work in factories related to the mining like coal, hard rock mining, sand blasting, stone cutting, Quarrying, glass manufacturing, ceramics work, tunnel work, steel industry work and construction work are the worst sufferers of this disease.
- Long term exposure to silicon crystal can lead to lung cancers, pulmonary tuberculosis, pneumoconiosis



### Facts

- Nearly 10 million workers in India are at risk of silicosis, mainly the workers from construction and mining.
- The states like Gujarat, Rajasthan, Pondicherry, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Orissa are most prevalent to silicosis.

### Symptoms

- The symptoms of silicosis can take few weeks to many years after exposure to silica.
- Cough is an early symptom then chest pain and breathing difficulty are the symptoms of silicosis.
- Some other symptoms are fever, weight loss and fatigue.

### Treatment and Prevention

- It is incurable disease and prevention is the only best to avoid it.
- It can lead to permanent disability.
- Silicosis can be prevented by limiting exposure to silica.
- Can prevent by limiting exposure to silica containing dusts.

- Employer must provide correct equipment and safety kit for protection.
- Workers are responsible for taking care of themselves.
- Need to get regular health checkup for the workers.
- Monitor for Symptoms and Signs of lung diseases.
- Acute silicosis needs to treat with lung transplantation and steroids.
- Early vaccination, watching for the development of TB, other infections, avoiding further exposure to silica and educating about these diseases can play a crucial role.

### Challenges

Silicosis is more prevalent in the unregulated and informal sectors, the Factory Act of India, 1948 does not included these informal and unregulated sectors.

### Working conditions:

- No worker is required to work more than 48 hours in a week.
- There should be a weekly holiday, compensatory leave for working on holiday. Not to work more than 9 hours in a day.



**Health:**

- Factory should be clean, having proper drainage system, lighting, ventilation, temperature, adequate drinking water, sufficient latrine availability which all are easy access to every employee.

in any emergency like fire.

- Early warning alarms

**Welfares:**

- Providing rest rooms, lunch rooms, crèches, first aid appliances and Shelters.

**Safety:**

- Young persons are not allowed to work with dangerous machinery.
- Machinery should be fenced.
- Should be proper firefighting equipment.
- Workers should be trained to save themselves

**Penalties:**

- Violation of Act treated as offence and penalized with imprisonment or fine or both.
- The Indian Factory Act, 1948 looks after the working conditions of workers, health, safety and annual leaves thereby providing special provisions for the workers.

**Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020**

- It is a code to consolidate and amend the laws regulating the Occupational safety and health and working conditions of the persons employed in an establishment.
- The Act replaces 13 old central labour laws.

**Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS)**

- The Directorate General of Mines Safety is an agency of the India which administers the provisions of the government of India Mines Act, 1952 and, the Rules and Regulations framed there under. As per Constitution of India, occupational safety, welfare and health of workers employed in mines (coal, metalliferous and oil-mines) are the concern of the Central Government, under the Union Ministry of Labour & Employment.
- The directorate carries out the mandates of the Mine Act at all mining and mineral processing operations in the India, regardless of size, number of employees, commodity mined, or method of extraction.
- The organization has its headquarters at Dhanbad (Jharkhand) and is headed by Director-General of Mines Safety.

**Indian women's movement**

**News Context:** At a time when the women's movement is missing, it's important to remember that some of our existing spaces exist because of the actions of Kamla Bhasin and others like her.

**Kamla Bhasin**

- Kamla Bhasin (24 April 1946 – 25 September 2021) an activist, poet and writer who was an early leader of the women's movement in India.
- Ms. Bhasin used poetry, songs, slogans, speeches and books to raise awareness of gender issues and to campaign against patriarchy and violence.
- She co-founded several women's groups to address issues like women's health and education and violence against women, both in rural and urban areas.
- She developed and conducted training programs devoted to social justice, sustainable living and human rights.
- She wrote dozens of books, poems and songs

that simplified concepts of feminism and patriarchy for people of all ages.

- Bhasin studied first in her homeland, Rajasthan, then at the University of Munster in Germany.
- She began her career as a lecturer at the Orientation Center of the German Foundation for Developing Countries in Bad Honnef and went on to work for the United Nations from 1976 to 2001, supporting innovative NGO initiatives.
- She wrote extensively for newspapers on the impact of development programs on people in the rural hinterlands of India.
- She wrote more than 200 songs, many during feminist workshops, which have been sung at protests and events across South Asia.
- She co-founded Jagori, a pioneering women's collective in 1984 with six compatriots from the women's movement.
- She also created the renowned South Asian feminist organization Sangat—the South Asian Network of Gender Activists and



Trainers—that works on many issues related to gender and class equality, democracy, diversity, human rights, and communal harmony

- In 2002 Bhasin quit her job at the United Nations to work full-time with the underprivileged in her homeland.

### **Demand for the constitutional ‘Right to Health for all’**

**News Context:** Covid-19 pandemic has exposed our health-care systems and given life to the demand for the constitutional ‘Right to Health for all’. This can be done by providing the fundamental Right to Health to the people.

### **Why there is a need for a constitutional “Right to Health for all”?**

Understand this under three categories of citizens: farmers and unorganised workers, women and children.

#### **1. Farmers**

- They are the primary protectors of our fundamental right to life, yet majority remain at a loose end when it comes to their own rights and well-being.
- During severe illness, generations of farmers, unorganized labors, migrant and seasonal workers are thrown into bondage and debt by having to pay for medical costs.
- Employment benefit schemes do not reach them.
- The implementation of the right to health can provide simple, transparent and quality health care.

#### **2. Women**

- The taboos and patriarchal expectations surrounding women health led to immense avoidable suffering.
- Social and economic challenges prevent them from openly accessing the little care that is available.
- A ‘Right to Health’ would mean that services reach the woman where and when she needs them.

#### **3. Children**

- A large number of children who belong to the poorest and most marginalised communities of our country grow up working in hazardous situations be it fields, mines, brick kilns or factories.
- They are either not enrolled in schools or are not able to attend it due to the pressing financial needs of the family — often because of unexpected out-of-pocket medical expenses.

### **Conclusion**

- A constitutional ‘Right to Health’ will transform the health and well-being of our people.
- It will also act as a leap for the economic and developmental progress of the nation.
- The vision for Ayushman Bharat will be strengthened with a constitutional ‘Right to Health’.
- The financial security that will come with the constitutional ‘Right to Health’ will be seen as a measurable impact on family savings, greater investment, and jobs creation.

### **Issue of Target Killing in J&K**

**News Context:** The NHRC has issued notices to the Jammu and Kashmir government and police over the spate of targeted killings of civilians from minority communities.

- The NHRC issued notices after taking suo motu cognisance of media reports.

#### **Suo motu cognizance**

A Suo Moto cognizance is a Latin term which means an action taken by a government agency, court or other central authority on their own apprehension.

#### **Details**

- Targeted killings of those who are not Kashmiri Muslims is an attempt to keep non-Muslims out of the Valley.
- Amid a series of targeted killings, terror group Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) has warned that more such attacks could take place in the Valley.
- ISKP’s sleeper cell is spread across Jammu and Kashmir.

#### **Impact**

- The incidents of killing of civilians allegedly by the terrorists are a serious threat to the democracy of the country and people’s right to life, liberty, equality and dignity.
- It is a gross violation of human rights of minority communities.

### **Islamic State – Khorasan Province**

- ISKP is an affiliate of the Islamic State (IS) active in South Asia and Central Asia.
- ISKP has been active in Afghanistan and its area of operations includes Pakistan, Tajikistan and India where they claimed attacks, as well as Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Bangladesh where individuals have pledged allegiance to it. ISKP and the Taliban consider each other enemies.

## National Human Rights Commission

- NHRC of India is a Statutory public body constituted on 12 October 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Ordinance of 28 September 1993.
- The NHRC-India is responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights, defined by the Act as "Rights Relating To Life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India".

## Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission

**News Context:** The ABDM is an initiative to maintain health records of citizens in a digital format so that these can be easily accessed by doctors.

- The government plans to allot every citizen a 14-digit health ID card.

### Details

- The ID can also be made by self-registration on the portal or by downloading the ABDM Health Records app.
- The beneficiary will also set up a Personal Health Records (PHR) address for the issue of consent, and for future sharing of health records.

### Challenges/ Concerns

- Privacy of the data, medical records contain very sensitive and private information.
- The exact mechanics of how this would be ensured are unclear.
- India do not have a data protection law; the Personal Data Protection Bill is yet to be passed.
- Fears that the records could be leaked, sold or otherwise misused.

## Ayushman Bharat

- Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, also referred to as Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Scheme, is a national public health insurance fund of the Government of India.
- It aims to provide free access to health insurance coverage for low-income earners.
- The programme is part of the Indian government's National Health Policy.
- National Health Authority as an organization to administer the program.
- It is a centrally sponsored scheme and is jointly funded by both the union government and the states.

## Same-sex relations and society

**News Context:** National Medical Commission (NMC) emphasizing the need to avoid derogatory references to the LGBTQIA+ community in medical textbooks.

- Teaching methods has underscored the value of institutional awareness on issues concerning queer and trans people.
- The advisory came after the Madras High Court voiced concern over "unscientific and derogatory information" in some textbooks.

### Comments from NMC

- The NMC cautioned medical universities, colleges and other institutions to avoid such references while teaching subjects relating to gender.
- The institutions were also asked not to approve books with such references, while textbook authors were instructed to amend what has been written on issues such as virginity and homosexuality.

## National Medical Commission

- NMC is an Indian regulatory body which regulates medical education and medical professionals. It replaced the Medical Council of India on 25 September 2020.
- The Commission grants recognition of medical qualifications, gives accreditation to medical schools, grants registration to medical practitioners, and monitors medical practice and assesses the medical infrastructure in India.

## LGBT community

- The LGBT community (also known as the LGBTQ+ community, GLBT community, or the gay community) is a loosely defined grouping of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, LGBT organizations, and subcultures, united by a common culture and social movements.

# International Relations

## Indo-U.S. Industrial Security Joint Working Group

**Why in News:** Recently, India and the United States have agreed in principle to establish a Indo-U.S. Industrial Security Joint Working Group.

### Key Points

- Rationale behind setting up of this group: To align the policies and procedures expeditiously that will allow the defence industries to collaborate on cutting edge defence technologies.
- This was agreed during the recent Industrial Security Agreement summit held between the two sides in New Delhi.
  - o It was organised to develop protocol for exchanging classified information between the defence industries of both the nations, the statement noted.

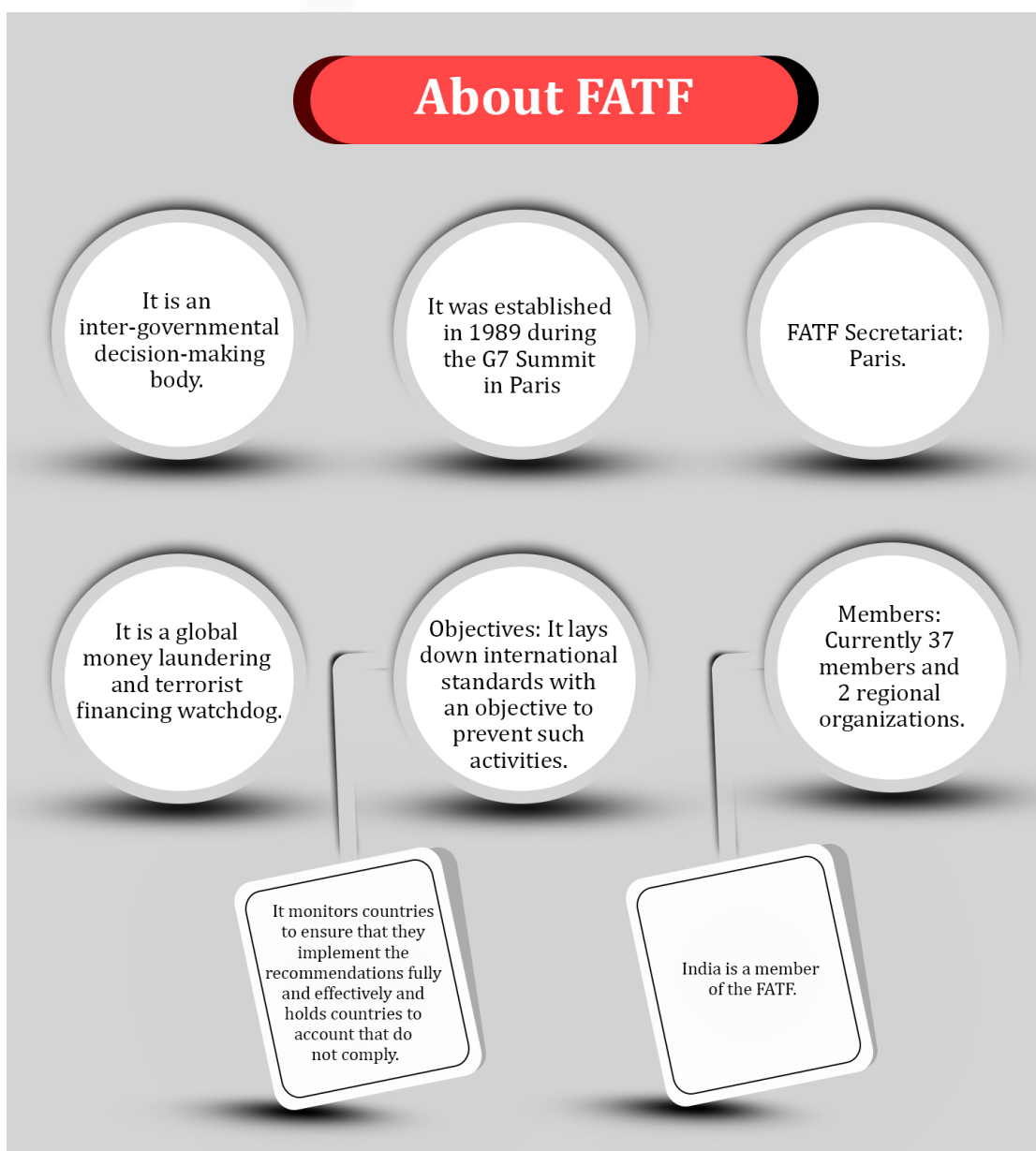
## FATF retained Pakistan on 'grey list'

**News context:** Pakistan was once again retained on the 'grey list' following the conclusion of the latest FATF plenary.

- FATF also announced the 'greylisting' of Jordan, Mali and Turkey.

### Background

- Pakistan was first put on the list in 2008, removed in 2009 and then again remained under increased monitoring from 2012 to 2015.
- In June 2018, FATF placed Pakistan on the 'grey list' of jurisdictions under increased monitoring.





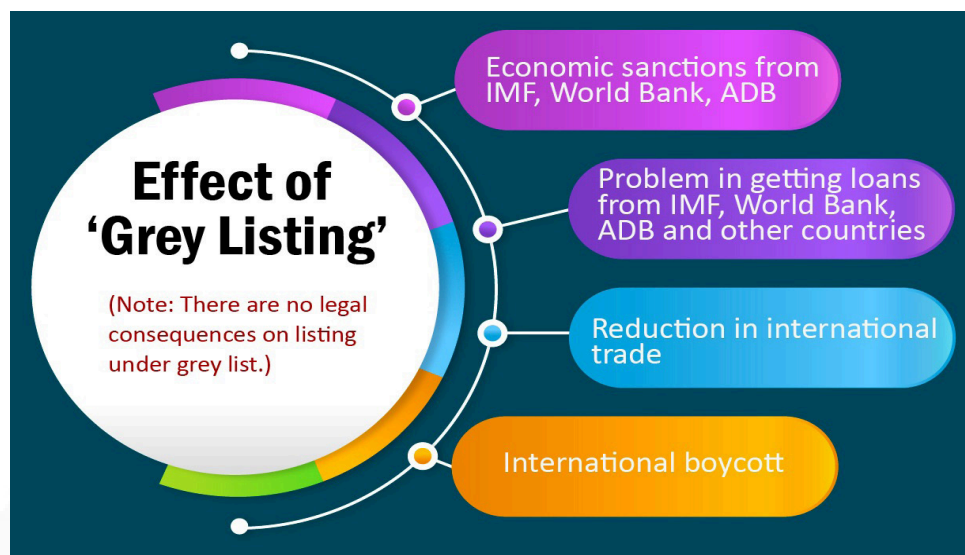
**FATF lists**

- **Black List:** Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are put in the blacklist.
  - o These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities.
- **Grey List:** Countries that are considered safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering are put in this list.
  - o This serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.

**Effect of 'grey listing'**

Although no legal consequences follow grey listing, it is understood that the countries in the grey list may face:

- Economic sanctions from IMF, World Bank, ADB
- Problem in getting loans from IMF, World Bank, ADB and other countries
- Reduction in international trade
- International boycott

**China's new land border law and Indian concerns**

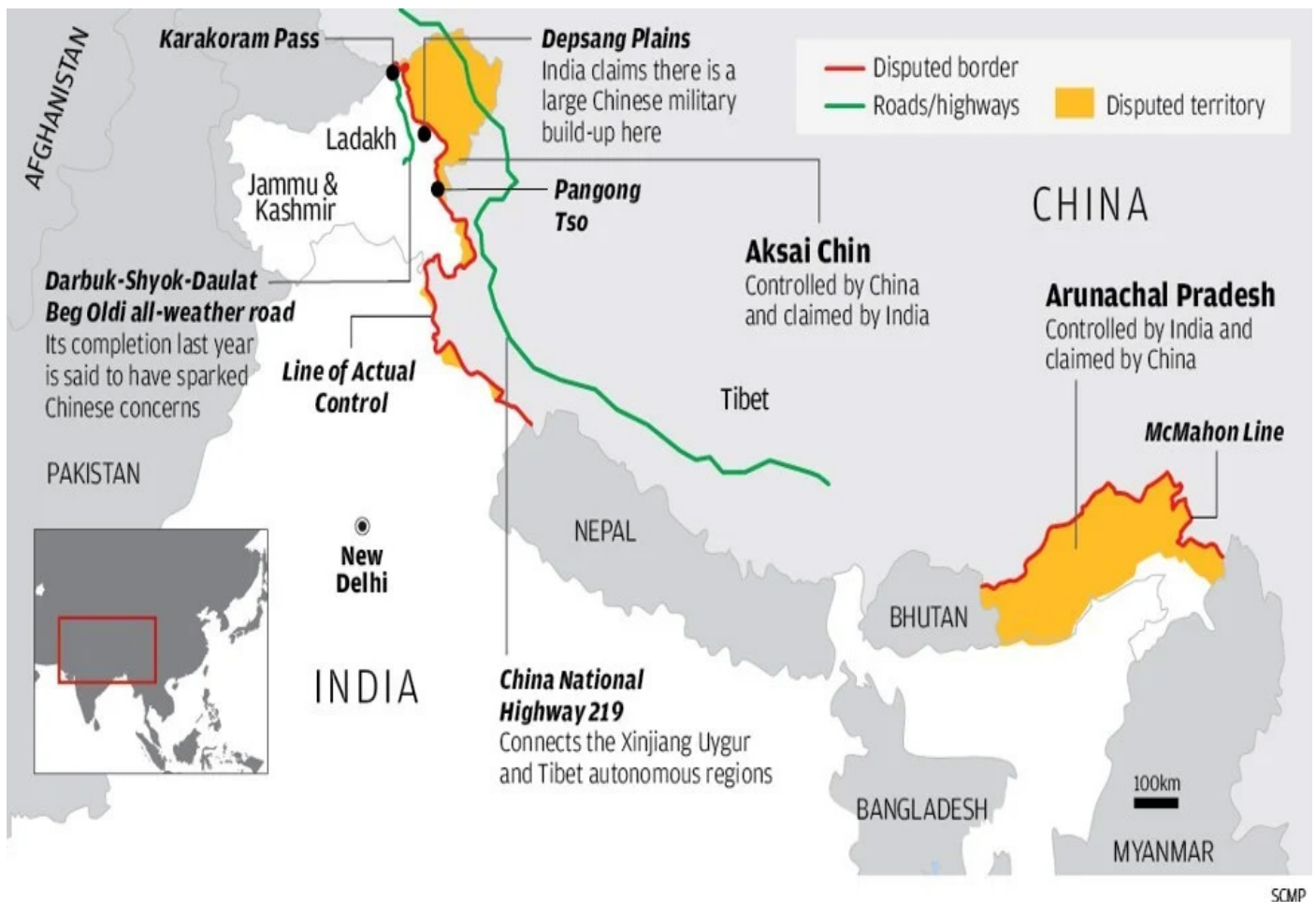
**News context:** Recently, China has passed a new land law for the "protection and exploitation of the country's land border areas".

**Key Highlights of Chinese law**

- It asks the state to take measures to safeguard territorial integrity and land boundaries and guard against and combat any act that undermines these.
  - o For the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China are sacred and inviolable.
- **The state can take measures to:**
  - o Strengthen border defence
  - o Support economic and social development as well as opening-up in border areas
  - o Improve public services and infrastructure in such areas
  - o Encourage and support people's life and work there
  - o Promote coordination between border defence and social, economic development in border areas
- It suggests a push to settle civilians in the border areas.
- It asks the state to:
  - o Follow the principles of equality, mutual trust, and friendly consultation.
  - o Handle land border related-affairs with neighbouring countries through negotiations to properly resolve disputes and longstanding border issues.

**Concern of neighboring countries including India**

- China has unresolved border disputes with India and Bhutan. The law would formalise some of China's recent actions in disputed territories with both India and Bhutan.
  - o E.g.: PLA's massing of troops in forward areas along the India border.
  - o Multiple transgressions across the LAC.
  - o Construction of new "frontier villages" along the border with Bhutan.



### India-Sri Lanka fisheries conflict

**News context:** Recently, NFF has urged the Centre to initiate dialogue between fisher representatives of India and Sri Lanka in the wake of recent rise in the incidents of incarceration of Indian fishermen by the neighbour's navy.

#### What is the conflict?

#### National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF)

It is registered under the Trade Union Act of India.

It is the only national federation of state level small and traditional fish workers' unions of India.

It has affiliated organizations in all the coastal states

and UTs of the Indian mainland.

It fights to protect the life and livelihood of the fishing communities and its basic source.

As a major partner, it is associated with the international movement of the fishing communities led by World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP).

- Fishermen from Indian side continue to sail towards Talaimannar and Katchatheevu coasts, a region famous for rich maritime resources in Sri Lanka.
- Rich maritime resources in this oceanic region had triggered a proliferation of fishing trawlers in Tamil Nadu coast.

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- Access of Indian fishermen to Sri Lankan waters was easier at the time of Sri Lankan civil war.
  - Sri Lanka remained preoccupied with its war against the LTTE.
  - Its northern province and maritime boundaries nearby were never tightly guarded as a result.
  - Few incidents of arrests of Indian fishermen in the nearly 30 years of war.
- **After end of civil war (2009):** Arrests and attacks increased on Indian fishermen as they continued entering Lankan waters because of depletion of marine resources on the Indian side.
- **Katchatheevu island issue:** In 1974, the island was ceded to Sri Lanka after an agreement was signed by Indira Gandhi between the two countries without consulting the Tamil Nadu government.
  - This allows Indian fishermen access to Katchatheevu for rest, for drying of nests and for the annual St Anthony's festival but it did not ensure the traditional fishing rights.
- **Proliferation of trawlers in Indian coast:** Trawlers are mechanised boats with highly exploitative fishing nets unlike most of the poor fishermen in Sri Lankan coast who use traditional fishing methods.

### China's land borders

- China shares its 22,457-km land boundary with 14 countries including India.
- It has 3rd longest border with India, after with Mongolia and Russia.
- Unlike the Indian border, however, China's borders with these two countries are not disputed.
- Only other country with which China has disputed land borders is Bhutan (477 km).

### G20 meeting on Afghanistan

**News context:** Recently, Prime Minister of India has attended an extraordinary virtual meeting of G20 leaders on Afghanistan.

- Italy is the current chair of G20.
- Indonesia will host the G20 in 2022, followed by India in 2023.

### Group of Twenty - G20

- The premier forum for international cooperation on the most important aspects of the international economic and financial agenda.
- It brings together the world's major advanced and emerging economies.
- The G20 comprises:
  - Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, EU, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, UK and USA.
- G20 Countries together represent around:
  - 90% of global GDP.
  - 80% of global trade.
  - Two thirds of the world's population.
- It has met every year since 1999 and since 2008 has included a yearly Leaders' Summit, with the participation of the respective Heads of State and Government.
- The preparatory process for the G20 Summit is conducted through the established Sherpa and Finance tracks that prepare and follow up on the issues and commitments adopted at the Summits.

### Bhutan- China Border Dispute

**News context:** Recently, Bhutan and China signed an agreement on a three-step roadmap to help speed up boundary talks.

#### Key Details

- The boundary-talks process has been delayed for 5 years.
  - Due to the Doklam standoff (2017).
  - By the pandemic.
- The timing of the agreement is particularly significant for India, given the border talks on their 17-month old standoff at the Line of Actual Control appear to have hit an impasse.

### China- Bhutan border dispute

- China and Bhutan became neighbours in 1951 when China conquered Tibet.
  - Since then China has steadily made claims to significant portions of land within Bhutan.
  - These claims are based on its supposed claims over Tibet.
- When China's Qing dynasty ruled over Tibet in the 18th C, the latter itself held suzerainty over Bhutan (allegedly).
  - This historical vassalage chain forms the basis of China's claims in Bhutan.
- Traditionally China's territorial claims in Bhutan include
  - Areas in Jakurlung and Pasamlung valleys in the north.



- o Areas of Doklam, Sinchulung, Dramana and Shakhatoe in west.
- In 2020, China unexpectedly and unilaterally added the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary in the eastern district of Trashigang to the list of disputed areas.

### India-China & Doklam

- Doklam affords India a major strategic terrain advantage over China.
- It allows India a launchpad for major offensive or counter-offensive against China from Sikkim.
- In case, China acquires Doklam,
  - o India would lose the above-mentioned advantage.
  - o It would also allow China a direct foothold to strike at the Siliguri Corridor.



### North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO)

**News context:** Russia is suspending its mission to NATO.

#### About NATO (Founded: 1949)

- It is an intergovernmental military alliance between 28 European countries and 2 North American countries.
- It implements the North Atlantic Treaty (Washington Treaty).
- It was established by the United States, Canada, and several Western European nations to provide collective security against the Soviet Union.
- Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium.
- A "NATO decision" is the expression of the collective will of all 30 members since all decisions are taken by consensus.

### India- Denmark summit

**News context:** Recently, India and Denmark signed two agreements on research in climate change at the India-Denmark summit.

- This was the first summit-level visit to India since the COVID pandemic.



### IEA invited India to become full-time member

**News context:** Recently, International Energy Agency (IEA) has invited India to become its full-time member.

- India is the world's third-largest energy consumer.

#### More on the news

- If this proposal is accepted, India will require to raise strategic oil reserves to 90 days requirement.
  - India's current strategic oil reserves equal 9.5 days of its requirement.

#### About IEA

- It is a Paris-based autonomous intergovernmental organization.

- It was established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1974 in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis.
- It is made up of 30 member countries and 8 associate nations.
- Eligibility criteria for becoming a IEA member:
  - A member country must maintain "crude oil and/or product reserves equivalent to 90 days of the previous year's net imports.
  - Government must have immediate access to this reserve (even if it does not own them directly) and could be used to address disruptions to global oil supply.



- o A member has to show “a demand restraint programme to reduce national oil consumption by up to 10%.”
- India became its associate member in 2017.

## China- Taiwan Issue

**News Context:** China shows force against Taiwan by sending jets into their zone.

### About China-Taiwan

- China has claimed Taiwan through its “One China” policy since the Chinese civil war.
  - o It has vowed to bring it under Beijing’s rule, by force if necessary.
- While Taiwan is self-governed and de facto independent, it has never formally declared independence from the mainland.
- Under the “one country, two systems” formula, Taiwan would have the right to run its own affairs.
  - o A similar arrangement is used in Hong Kong.
- Presently, Taiwan is claimed by China, which refuses diplomatic relations with countries that recognize the region.

### Indo- Taiwan relations:

- Although they do not have formal diplomatic ties, both countries have been cooperating in various fields.
- Since 2010, India has refused to endorse the “one-China” policy.

## Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

**News context:** The Conference on Disarmament (CD) is being held in Geneva.

### More about the news

- India expressed deep concern over the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems that could endanger peace and security.
- India supports the full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
- It emphasises the strengthening of the OPCW to fulfill its important mandate.

### External auditor for OPCW:

- In April 2021, India’s CAG has been chosen as the external auditor by the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for a 3-year term starting 2021.
- India was also selected as the member of the executive council of the OPCW representing Asia group for another two-year term during the OPCW conference.

### Executive Council

- It is the governing body of the OPCW.
- It consists of 41 OPCW Member States that are elected by the Conference of the States Parties and rotate every two years.
- Each Member State has the right, on a rotating basis, to serve on the Executive Council.

### OPCW (1997)

It is an international organization established by the CWC to implement and enforce the terms of the CWC.

It was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2013**.

**Chemical Weapons Convention:** A multilateral treaty banning chemical weapons and requiring their destruction within the stipulated time. It became effective from April 1997.

## Interpol (International Criminal Police Organization)

**News context:** Interpol has launched an online campaign to apprise people of major cyberthreats.

### About Interpol

- An international organization to facilitate worldwide police cooperation and crime control.
- **HQ:** Lyon, France.
- It is world’s largest international police organization.
- **Members:** 194.
- Interpol was conceived during the first International Criminal Police Congress in 1914.



- It was founded in September 1923 as International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC).
- It was renamed as Interpol in 1956
- It provides investigative support, expertise, training to law enforcement worldwide.
- It focuses on 3 major areas of transnational crime:
  - o Terrorism, Cybercrime, Organized crime.
- **It also works on following fields:**
  - o Crimes against humanity, Child pornography.
  - o Drug trafficking and production, Political Corruption.
  - o Intellectual property infringement, White-collar Crime.
- **Official Languages:** Arabic, English, French, Hindi, Spanish.

### UN Peacekeeping Forces

**News Context:** 836 Indian troops were awarded UN medal for serving with UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan.

#### About UN Peacekeepers

- It is an instrument developed to help countries torn by conflict to create conditions for lasting peace.
- It is a joint effort of:
  - o Department of Peace Operations.
  - o Department of Operational Support.
- Peacekeeping missions are under UN Security Council.
- UN peacekeepers are referred as Blue Berets or Blue Helmets.
  - o Because of their light blue berets or helmets.
- **It includes:** Soldiers, Police Officers, Civilian Personnel.
- 3 basic principles of UN peacekeepers:
  - o Consent of the parties.
  - o Impartiality.
  - o Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate.

### Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB)

**News Context:** Seychelles' TIWB programme with India.

#### About TIWB

- **It is joint initiative of:**
  - o UNDP
  - o Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- **Objective:** To share tax audit knowledge and skills with tax administrations in developing countries.
  - o To promote audit and audit-related skills related to specific international tax matters.
  - o To develop general audit skills within developing tax administrations.
- **Benefits:**
  - o It will aid Seychelles in strengthening tax administration by transferring technical skills to its tax auditors.

### CAATSA

**News context:** Recently, the US has indicated that it might reconsider slapping sanctions on the Indian government when India takes delivery of S-400 Triumf anti-aircraft missile systems.

#### About S-400 air defence missile system

- The S-400 Triumf is a mobile, surface-to-air missile system (SAM).
- It is designed by Russia.
- It is considered much ahead of the US-developed Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD).

### Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)

- It is a U.S. federal law that imposes economic sanctions on Iran, Russia and North Korea.
- **Enacted:** 2017
- It includes sanctions against countries that engage in significant transactions with Russia's defence and intelligence sectors.

**Probable sanctions**

- Prohibition on loans to the sanctioned person.
- Prohibition of Export-Import bank assistance for exports to sanctioned persons.
- Prohibition on procurement by US Government to procure goods or services from the sanctioned person.
- Denial of visas to persons closely associated with the sanctioned person.

**Rohingya Issue**

**News context:** Bangladesh is planning to send Rohingya refugees to a remote island- Bhasan Char.

**Bhasan Char Island**

- It is specifically developed to accommodate 1,00,000 of the 1 million Rohingya who have fled from neighbouring Myanmar.

**About Rohingyas**

- These are a Muslim ethnic minority group.
- They were not granted full citizenship by Myanmar.
- They were classified as “resident foreigners or associate citizens”.

**OECD/ G20 Inclusive Framework**

**News context:** Two-pillar solution under the OECD/ G20 Inclusive Framework will be delivered to the G20 Finance Ministers meeting and G20 Leaders Summit.

- Countries are aiming to sign a multilateral convention during 2022, with effective implementation in 2023.

**Key Details**

- India has already joined the G20-OECD inclusive framework deal.
- This deal seeks to reform international tax rules and ensure that multinational enterprises pay their fair share wherever they operate.
- It has been signed by 130 countries and jurisdictions, representing more than 90% of global GDP.

**What are two pillars of OECD/ G20 Inclusive Framework?**

- **Pillar I:** Dealing with transnational and digital companies.

- o It ensures that large multinational enterprises, including digital companies, pay tax where they operate and earn profits.

- **Pillar II:** Dealing with low-tax jurisdictions to address cross-border profit shifting and treaty shopping.

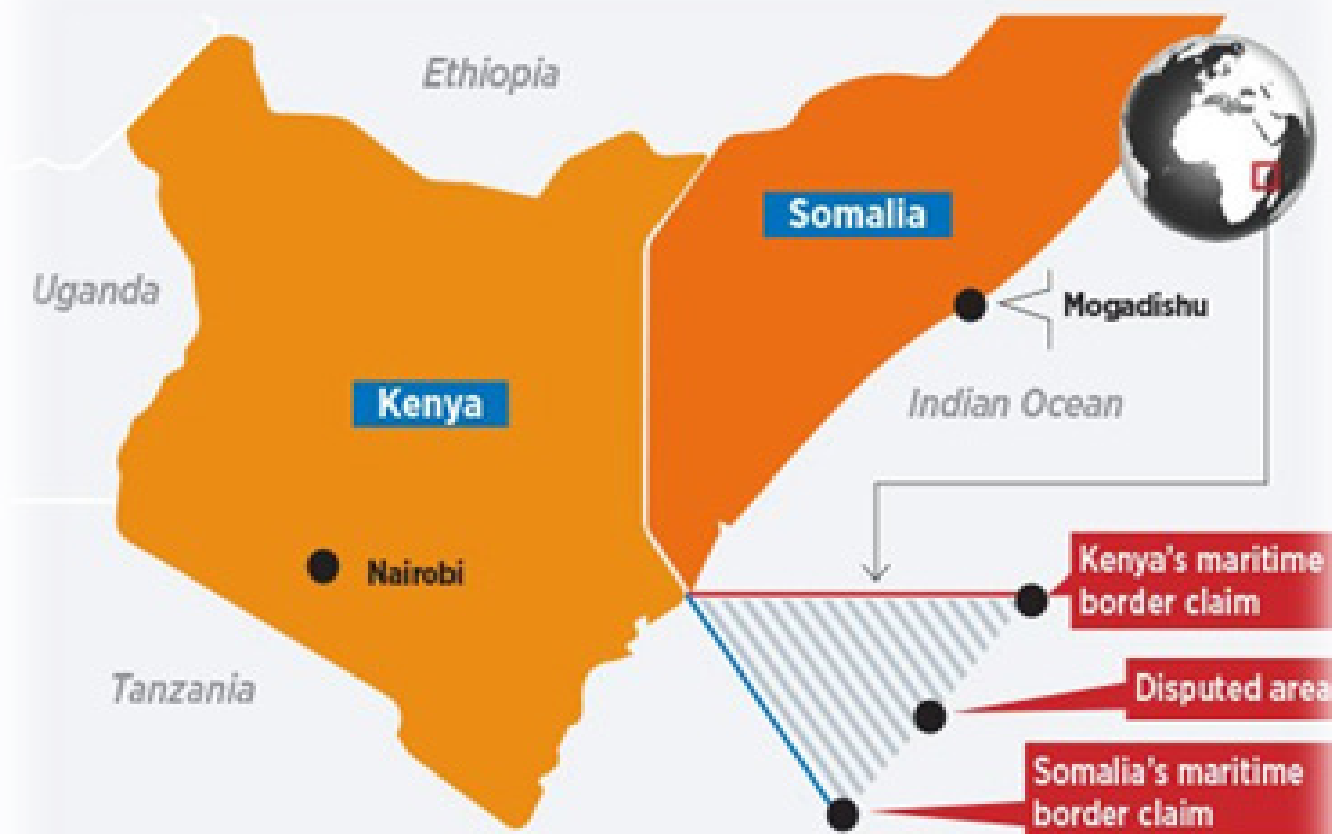
- o It seeks to put a floor under competition among countries through a global minimum corporate tax rate, currently proposed at 15%.

**Indian Ocean Border Disputes between Kenya & Somalia**

**News context:** Kenya rejected the jurisdiction of the UN International Court of Justice (ICJ) on its dispute with Somalia.

**About the issue**

- Main point of disagreement between the two countries is the direction in which their maritime boundary in the Indian Ocean should extend.
- **Argument of Somalia:** Sea border should be an extension of the same direction in which their land border runs as it approaches the Indian Ocean, i.e. towards the southeast.
- **Argument of Kenya:** Territorial southeast border should take a 45 degree turn as it reaches the sea, and then run in a latitudinal direction, i.e. parallel to the equator.
  - o Such an arrangement would be advantageous for Kenya, whose coastline of 536 km is more than 6 times smaller than Somalia's (3,333 km).
- **Importance of this area:** This disputed triangular area is around 1.6 lakh sq km large, and boasts of rich marine reserves.
  - o It is also believed to have oil and gas deposits.



### International Court of Justice (ICJ) (1945)

- **Established:** By the United Nations charter
- It is the principal judicial organ of the UN.
- It is situated at the Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands).
- Unlike the six principal organs of the United Nations, it is the only one not located in New York (USA).
- It settles legal disputes between States and gives advisory opinions in accordance with international law, on legal questions referred to it by authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies.
- **Structure:** The Court is composed of 15 judges, who are elected for terms of office of nine years by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council.

### Kalapani Dispute

**News context:** Nepalese political parties have a general consensus over the fact that Kalapani in Uttarakhand is part of Nepal's sovereign territory.

#### Location of Kalapani

- It is in the easternmost corner of Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district.
- It shares a border on the north with the Tibet Autonomous Region of China and Nepal in the east and south.
- It is wedged in between Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani.
- Currently, the area is in India's control but Nepal claims the region because of historical and cartographic reasons.

### Reasons behind the dispute

- Kalapani region derives its name from the river Kali.
- Nepal's claims to the region is based on this river as it became the marker of the boundary of the kingdom of Nepal following the Treaty of Sugauli.
  - **Treaty of Sugauli:** Between Gurkha rulers of Kathmandu and the East India Company after the Anglo-Nepal War (1814-16).
- According to the treaty, Nepal lost the regions of Kumaon-Garhwal in the west and Sikkim in the east.
- As per Article 5, the King of Nepal gave up his claims over the region west of the river Kali which originates in the High Himalayas and flows into the great plains of the Indian subcontinent.



- According to the treaty, the British rulers recognised Nepal's right to the region that fell to the east of the river Kali.

### Current issues

- According to Nepal's experts, the east of the Kali river should begin at the source of the river. The source according to them is in the mountains near Limpiyadhura, which is higher in altitude than the rest of the river's flow.
- Nepal claims that a land mass, high in the mountains that falls to the east of the entire stretch starting from Limpiyadhura downwards, is theirs.
- India on the other hand says the border begins at Kalapani which India says is where the river begins.
- The dispute is mainly because of the varying interpretation of the origin of the river and its various tributaries that slice through the mountains.
- While Nepal's claim of the territory east of Kali is based on the Limpiyadhura origin, India says the river actually takes the name Kali near Kalapani.

### Enriched uranium produced by Iran

**News context:** Iran has produced more than 120 kilograms of 20% enriched uranium.

About the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) (2015)

- Under it, Iran agreed a long-term deal on its nuclear programme with a group of world powers known as the P5+1 - the US, UK, France, China, Russia and Germany.
- Under the accord, Iran agreed to limit its sensitive nuclear activities and allow in international inspectors in return for the lifting of crippling economic sanctions.
- In 2018, the U.S. unilaterally pulled out of the deal under then-President Donald Trump, but Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia have tried to preserve the accord.
- Under the deal with world powers, the other signatories were to provide Iran with 20% enriched uranium needed for its research reactor.
- Under the terms of the nuclear deal, Iran was prohibited from enriching uranium above 3.67% with the exception of its research reactor activities

### Goal of uranium enrichment

- Uranium contains a rare radioactive isotope, called U-235.
  - It can be used to power nuclear reactors at low enrichment levels and to fuel nuclear bombs at much higher levels.
- The goal of uranium enrichment is to raise the percentage levels of U-235, which is often done through the use of centrifuges — machines that spin a form of unrefined uranium at high speeds.

### India gets re-elected to UNHRC

**News context:** India gets re-elected to UN Human Rights Council for 6th term with overwhelming majority.

- Human Rights Council candidates are elected in geographical groups to ensure even representation.

### What is UNHRC?

- It was reconstituted from its predecessor organisation, the UN Commission on Human Rights to help overcome the "credibility deficit" of the previous organisation.
- HQs:** Geneva, Switzerland.
- Composition:** UNHRC has 47 members serving at any time with elections held to fill up seats every year, based on allocations to regions across the world to ensure geographical representation.
  - Each elected member serves for a term of three years.
- Countries are disallowed from occupying a seat for more than two consecutive terms.

### International Solar Alliance General Assembly

**News context:** The 4th general assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), is being held virtually.

### What is ISA Assembly?

- It is the apex decision-making body of International Solar Alliance (ISA), in which each member country is represented.
- It makes decisions concerning the implementation of the ISA's Framework Agreement and coordinated actions to be taken to achieve its objectives.

### International Solar Alliance (2015)

- HQs:** Gurugram, Haryana.
- It is an alliance of more than 122 countries initiated by India.

- It is a coalition of solar resource rich countries lying fully or partially between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn to specifically address energy needs by harnessing solar energy.
- The Paris Declaration establishes ISA as an alliance dedicated to the promotion of solar energy among its member countries.

## International Monetary and Financial Committee

**News context:** Recently, International Monetary and Financial Committee meeting was held recently.

### Key Details

- The meeting was attended by Governors/Alternate Governors representing 190-member countries of the IMF.
- The discussions at the meeting centered on “vaccinate, calibrate and accelerate” which is the theme of the Managing Director’s Global Policy Agenda.

### About IMFC

- It advises and reports to the IMF Board of Governors on the supervision and management of the international monetary and financial system, including on responses to unfolding events that may disrupt the system.
- Although the IMFC has no formal decision-making powers, in practice, it has become a key instrument for providing strategic direction to the work and policies of the Fund.
- **Composition:** It has 24 members, drawn from the pool of 187 governors.
  - Its structure mirrors that of the Executive Board and its 24 constituencies.
  - As such, the IMFC represents all the member countries of the Fund.
- **Functions:** The IMFC meets twice a year, during the Spring and Annual Meetings.

## New Quad

**News context:** First virtual summit of the foreign ministers of the US, India, Israel and UAE was recently held.

### More about the news

- At the end of the meet, the four nations agreed to form a new international economic forum to utilise the “unique array of capabilities, knowledge and experience” that each offers.

### About the group

- The group is being dubbed the ‘New Quad’ or the ‘Middle-Eastern Quad’ on the lines of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD).
- **Objectives:** The group is intended as an “international economic forum” that will work on furthering the economic and political ties between the four countries.

### Benefits of the new Quad

- Beyond trade, there is potential for India, UAE and Israel to collaborate on many areas.
  - **E.g:** from semiconductor design and fabrication to space technology.
- With the new alliance, India can use this platform to harness various opportunities like Big data, AI, Quantum computing, export its products in their market etc.
- The group will help to focus on non-military issues like trade, energy, and environment and on promoting public goods.
- Four countries have a “unique set of capabilities, knowledge, and experience” that can be used to create a new network of cooperation.

## WHO’s emergency approval of vaccine

### News Context:

- WHO’s, pre-qualified or Emergency Use Listing (EUL) approval for for Bharat Biotech covid-19 vaccine(Covaxin) is moving according to the procedure and the Indian government’s pushing it for fast approval.

### Issues in approval:

- Delay in emergency use authorisation is caused by WHO’s demand of extra clarification on Covaxin from Bharat Biotech.
- According to WHO, it is waiting for an additional information from the company before evaluating the vaccine.

### Necessity of WHO’s approval:

- It recognized the vaccine as fully vaccinated people across the world.
  - Vaccinated people can travel to countries that permit entry of fully vaccinated people.
  - Vaccine can be exported to those countries, who use WHO approved vaccine.

### WHO’s Emergency Use List (EUL):

- It is risk-based procedure for assessing and listing unlicensed vaccines, therapeutics and in vitro diagnostics.
  - With aim of faster relief to people affected by a public health emergency.

**Eligibility criteria:**

- Serious disease which have serious consequences or immediately life threatening.
  - o It has the potential of causing an outbreak, epidemic or pandemic.
  - o Its treatment oriented product is reasonable to consider the product for an EUL assessment.
  - o For Example there is no licensed products for the indication or for a critical subpopulation (children/old age population).
- Existing products have not been successful in eradicating the disease or preventing outbreaks.
- Manufactured product should be in compliance with current Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).
  - o In case of medicines Quality Management System (QMS), in case of vaccines and IVDs functionality.
- The applicant completes the development of the product (validation and verification of the product, in the case of IVDs) and apply for WHO prequalification once the product is licensed.

- o It will be given to Pakistan by Chinese banks.

**India's concerns:**

- It passes through PoK, belongs to India.
- CPEC aims to secure and shorten its supply lines through Gwadar with an enhanced presence in the Indian Ocean.
  - o It will undermine India's influence in the Indian Ocean.
- There is possibility of transformation the Pakistan economy that at the end create more problem for India.
- Collusion between both the countries will create bigger threat for India.

**Israel- Palestine issue:****News Context:**

- Israeli government has approved more than 1,300 new housing units in the occupied West Bank.
  - o The move are new put ideological considerations of the government and tensions reduction has put aside.

**China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)****News Context:**

- CPEC Authority chief has accused the U.S. for sabotaging the multi-billion dollar project, the economic lifeline of Pakistan.

**Background:**

- Pakistan is the 7th largest recipient of Chinese overseas development financing.
  - o It consists of 71 projects worth \$27.3 billion.
  - o Collectively known as CPEC.

**About:**

- CPEC is the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)
  - o Project was launched in 2015.
  - o It is pet project of Chinese President Xi Jinping.
  - o Aimed at enhancing Beijing's influence around the world through China-funded infrastructure projects.
- The 3,000 km-long CPEC consists of highways, railways, and pipelines.
- CPEC aims at linking Gwadar in South Western Pakistan to China's North Western Xinjiang region through a vast network of highways and railways.
- The proposed project will be financed heavily-subsidised loans.

**Historical Background:**

- The conflict is more than 100 years old, between Jews and Arabs over a piece of land, between Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.
- Between 1882 to 1948, Jews around the world gathered in Palestine.
  - o In 1917 Ottoman Empire fall after World War-I and UK got control over Palestine, resulted into fast settlement.
  - o The land was inhabited by a Jewish minority and Arab majority.
- The Balfour Declaration was passed after British control.
  - o Aiming to establish home for the Jews in Palestine.
  - o At that time Arabs were in majority in Palestine.
  - o Jews favored the idea while the Palestinians rejected it.
  - o Holocaust ignited further demand of a separate Jewish state.
- Both Jews and Arabs claimed Palestine to be their natural home. The international community supported the Jews.
- In 1947, the UN voted as separate Jewish and Arab states from Palestine, with Jerusalem as an international city.



- That plan was accepted by Jewish leaders but rejected by the Arab side and never implemented.

### Creation of Israel:

- In 1948 Britain lifted its control over the area and Jews declared Israel as a country.
  - Resulted into armed conflict between Jews and Arabs.
- The neighbouring Arabs also invaded the area, which thrashed by the Israeli troops.
  - Resulted into flee of thousands of Palestinians, and called Al-Nakba, or "Catastrophe".
- Israel had gained maximum control over the territory after this came to an end.
  - Jordan then seized control over a part of the West Bank, and Egypt occupied Gaza.
- Jerusalem was divided between Israel in the West and Jordan in the East.
  - However, no formal peace agreement was signed.
- Israeli forces captured East Jerusalem and the West Bank.
  - Parts of Syrian Golan Heights, Gaza and the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula also captured in 1967.

### Present status:

- Israel still occupies the West Bank
  - Although it pulled out of Gaza.
  - UN still regard the land as part of occupied territory.
- Israel claims the whole Jerusalem as its capital.
  - Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state.
- Tensions escalated over Israel's actions concerning Al-Aqsa mosque in East Jerusalem.

### West Bank

- It is a landlocked territory near the Mediterranean coast of Western Asia, bordered by Jordan in the east.
  - It separated by the Green Line from Israel on the south, west and north.
  - The West Bank also contains a significant section of the western Dead Sea shore. disputed settlements: Who lives there?
- The West Bank was captured by Jordan after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, Israel reoccupied it in Six Day War of 1967.
  - In the war, Israel defeated the combined forces of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan.

- Over 4 lakh Israeli settlers many of them religious Zionists also claim a Biblical birthright over this land. Who live here, along with some 26 lakh Palestinians.
- The territory is still a point of contentious.
- Israel allowed settlement for Jewish people after 1967 war.
  - Palestinians consider the West Bank illegally occupied Palestinian land.

### Legality of settlements:

- The UNGA, the UN Security Council, and the International Court of Justice assumes West Bank settlements as violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.
- Under the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949), an occupying power it revealed that it can't vacate own civilian population
- International Criminal Court say that, "such transfers constitute war crimes, as "extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly".

### Afghan facing acute food crisis:

#### News context:

Executive director of the World Food Programme is in the view that Afghanistan is on the brink of one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

#### Issue:

- Taliban has taken full control of Afghanistan. People left without jobs and incomes.
  - Over 22 million Afghans will suffer food insecurity, will force them to choose between migration and starvation.
- Migrant problem likely to arise in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan etc
- Taliban resurgence will revive extremism in the region, and will create safe sanctuary for Let, ISIS etc.
- Civil war in Afghanistan will lead to a refugee crisis in Central Asia and beyond.
- Instability will create seaports accessibility problem of the Indian ocean.
- Afghanistan instability will break bridge between Central Asia and the rest of the world.

### Importance of India's engagement with Taliban:

- India's huge investments(\$3 billion) in Afghanistan, and for security India should engage with all parties in Afghanistan.
- Taliban engagement with Pakistan deeply works against India.

- India's sideline will left Russia, Iran, Pakistan and China to shapers of Afghanistan's political and geopolitical destiny, which will be detrimental to Indian interests.
- The U.S. announcement, to form "Quad" on regional connectivity between U.S.-Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan concerned India.
- India's effort to trade with Afghanistan Via Chabahar port in order to increase the economy on scale will be impacted.

### Demand of time:

- Urgent need for collective action to safeguard of civilians by checking violence by Taliban.
- Collective cooperation in maintaining stability in the region.
- Unified action for the refugee crisis if it arises.
- Indian engagement with Taliban to maintain peace with immediate neighbours.

### South China Sea Dispute:

#### News context:

China has called ASEAN countries on code of conduct framework for expedition in the South China Sea.

#### Background:

- Next year is the 20th anniversary of Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC).

- o China wishes to work with ASEAN countries to mark the occasion with commemorative activities.

#### About:

- In November 2002, China and the ten ASEAN countries signed the non-binding Declaration of Conduct (DoC) of Parties in the South China Sea.
- Parties tries to make conduct binding among the state.
- That conduct will promote peace and stability in the region.

#### Issues:

- China has overlapping territorial claims with several Southeast Asian states in the South China Sea.
- China claims almost all of the resource-rich sea, which is in the major shipping sea lane,
  - o China competing for claims with Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.
- China is deploying a range of military hardware, including anti-ship missiles and surface-to-air missiles there,
  - o That ignored a 2016 international tribunal decision that declared its historical claim over most of the waters is without basis.

#### South China Sea

- The South China Sea is an arm of western Pacific Ocean in Southeast Asia.
- It is connected by Taiwan Strait with the East China Sea and by Luzon Strait with the Philippine Sea.
- **Bordering states & territories:** the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China (Taiwan), the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam.



#### Importance:

- Strategic importance- connecting link between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean (Strait of Malacca).
- According to the United Nations Conference on Trade And Development (UNCTAD) one-third of the global shipping passes through it, carrying trillions of trade which makes it a significant geopolitical water body.

#### Contesting Claims Over Islands:

- The Paracel Islands are claimed by China, Taiwan and Vietnam.
- The Spratly Islands are claimed by China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Brunei and Philippines.
- The Scarborough Shoal is claimed by the Philippines, China and Taiwan.

**Note:** Since 2010, China has been converting uninhabited islets into artificial islets to bring it under UNCLOS (For example, Haven Reef, Johnson South Reef and Fiery Cross Reef) which may increase further tension among the states.

## Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB):

### News Context:

- AIIB is in the view of funding both societal and climate-resilient infrastructure in India in the coming years, and cautioned for the balance between both.

### AIIB:

- It is multilateral development bank with aim to improve social and economic growth of Asia and beyond.
- It has 57 founding members. Headquartered in Beijing.
- The bank started functioning after 25 December 2015, (agreement come into force) after ratifications of 10 members states.

### Membership:

- There are more than 100 members now.

### Voting Rights:

- China is the largest shareholder with 26.61 % voting shares in the bank followed by India (7.6%), Russia (6.01%) and Germany (4.2 %).
- The regional members hold 75% of the total voting power in the Bank.

### Organs of AIIB:

- Board of Governors, consists of one Governor and one Alternate Governor appointed by each member country.
  - Governors and Alternate Governors serve at the pleasure of the appointing member.
- Board of Directors:
  - Non-resident Board of Directors is responsible for the direction of the Bank's general operations, exercising all powers delegated to it by the Board of Governors.
- International Advisory Panel:
  - The Bank has established an International Advisory Panel to support the President and Senior Management on the Bank's strategies and policies as well as on general operational issues.

## International Finance Corporation (IFC):

### News Context:

IFC stake in Federal Bank Ltd. has made commitment to no new coal financing.

### Issues:

- IFC had demanded 7th largest commercial bank of India to stop coal financing in July 2021.
  - The bank is a key lender to firms such as Jindal Steel Works (JSW) Energy Ltd and Adani Power Rajasthan Ltd.
  - There are possibility that it will impact India's energy production.

## International Finance Corporation (IFC):

- It is an international financial institution that offers investment, advisory, and asset management services.
  - By financing it encourage private sector development in developing countries.
- It is a member of the World Bank Group.
  - Headquartered in Washington, D.C., United States.
- It was established in 1956 as the private sector arm of the World Bank Group.
  - Aiming at advance economic development by investing in strictly for-profit and commercial projects that support for poverty reduction and promote development.
- The IFC is owned and governed by its member countries,
  - but has its own executive leadership and staff that conduct its normal business operations.
- It is a corporation whose shareholders are member governments that provide paid-in capital and which have the right to vote on its matters.

### Roles and functions:

- Since 2009, the IFC has focused on a development goals such as increase sustainable agriculture opportunities, improve healthcare and education, increase access to financing for microfinance and business clients, advance infrastructure, help small businesses grow revenues, and invest in climate health etc.

## UN Human Rights Council

**News Context:** India was re-elected to the UN Human Rights Council for the 2022-24 term.

- India got 184 votes in the 193-member assembly, while the required majority was 97.



- India's current term was set to end on December 31 2021.

### United Nations Human Rights Council

- UNHRC is a United Nations body whose mission is to promote and protect human rights around the world.
- The headquarters of the Council is in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The Council investigates allegations of breaches of human rights in United Nations member states, and addresses thematic human rights issues such as freedom of association and assembly, freedom of expression, freedom of belief and religion, women's rights, LGBT rights, and the rights of racial and ethnic minorities.
- The members of the Council shall serve for a period of three years and shall not be eligible for immediate re-election after two consecutive terms.
- The membership is based on equitable geographical distribution, and seats are distributed among regional groups Group of African States (13), Group of Asia-Pacific States (13), Group of Eastern European States (6), Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (8) and Group of Western European and other States (7).

### Trouble in Bangladesh

**News context:** The UN, the U.S. and India have condemned incidents of violence against Bangladesh's Hindu minority community during Durga Puja.

### Conflict

- The mob violence has begun in Comilla, in Chittagong district, where an image showing disrespect to the Quran was circulated (incident of 'desecration' of a Quran at a Durga Puja).
- As a result, several major mob attacks on Hindu temples and homes belonging to the minority community.
- Bangladesh's PM has promised strict action.

### India's response

- The Indian High Commission in Dhaka was in touch with law and order officials at the Centre.

- It has stepped in to meet the members of Bangladeshi Hindu community, including representatives from the ISKCON group that was attacked.
- India has raised its voice against the majoritarian violence against Bangladesh's Hindu minority community.
- The Indian government has also praised the authorities for moving quickly to take control of the situation.

### Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2021

**News context:** The 17th edition of the India-U.S. bilateral exercise took place in Alaska, U.S.

- It is the only India-U.S. service exercise continuing in bilateral format.

### India-USA military cooperation

- The Indo-U.S. defence ties have been on an upswing in the last few years.
- 2016:** The U.S. had designated India a "Major Defence Partner".
- Two countries have also signed key defence and security pacts:

o **Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) signed in 2016:** It allows both militaries to use each other's bases for repair and replenishment of supplies as well as provides for deeper cooperation.

o **COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement) signed in 2018:** It provides for interoperability between the two militaries and provides for the sale of high-end technology from the U.S. to India.

- Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) signed in 2020:** It provides for sharing of high-end military technology, logistics and geospatial maps between the two countries.

# History & Culture

## Vanniyar community

**News context:** PMK founder has told Madras HC that Vanniakula Kshatriyas are the most backward among the Most Backward Communities (MBCs).

- Therefore, the State legislature had provided them 10.5% internal reservation in education and government employment.

## About Vanniyar community

- Vanniyars are one of the largest and most consolidated backward communities in Tamil Nadu.
- They had raised massive protests in the mid-1980s demanding reservation in the state and in central services.
  - o The Vanniyars declared an agitation in 1987, which turned violent.
- Their movement was backed by the Justice Party as well as the Self-Respect Movement.

## Future-proofing Langa-Manganiyar heritage

**News context:** Rich history and traditional knowledge, the ballads, folklore and songs of the Langa-Manganiyar artistes are being preserved through an initiative for documentation and digitisation.

## Key Details

- The Langas and Manganiyars are hereditary communities of Muslim musicians mostly from western Rajasthan and Pakistan's Sindh.
- The music of the two marginalised communities was supported by wealthy landlords and merchants before Independence.

## Chola inscriptions

### Thenneri inscriptions, Kancheepuram

- These lay down qualifications for candidates to village administrative committees (perumkuri sabai).
- These also shed light on how farm produce was taxed.
- Kanthaleeswarar temple and Abathsahaswarar temple are on the banks of the 3.80-km-long Thenneri.
  - o They were constructed by Sembian Mahadevi, the grandmother of Chola King Rajaraja, in memory of her son Uthama Chola.

- o The inscriptions are on the walls of the Kanthaleeswarar temple.

### Uthiramerur inscriptions, Kancheepuram

- These provide details of 'Kudavolai system' which provides for election of members to annual committee ('variya'), garden committee, tank committee and other committees for 30 wards.

## Also note

- Perumpanattrupadai, a Sangam-era literary work, refers to the king who created the lake as 'Thondaiman Ilanthiraiyan'.
- Kaasakudi copper plates of the Pallava period refer to the lake as 'Thiraiyan Eri'. Over centuries, it has become Thenneri.
- Village meetings took place in the front hall of the Vijayanarayana Perumal temple during the reign of Rajaraja.
  - o The temple is known as Mummudi Chola Vinnagaralvar.
- The lake had close association with the Varadharaja Perumal temple of Kancheepuram.

## Mahabahu Brahmaputra River Heritage Centre

**News context:** Recently, a British-era bungalow on a hillock that used to be the 17th century military office of the Ahom rulers has been converted into a heritage centre depicting life along the Brahmaputra River.



### About Mahabahu Brahmaputra River Heritage Centre

- It is a Scottish-type wooden bungalow on Guwahati's Barphukanar Tila, meaning Barphukan's Hillock.
- It was built by Captain Archibald Bogle who was posted as the Assistant Commissioner and Collector of Kamrup district in the 1850s.
  - o Barpukhan was a post equivalent to Governor General created by Ahom king Pratap Simha or Susengpha (1603-1641).

- The hillock (Mandrachal) by the Brahmaputra, was from where Ahom General Lachit Barpukhan launched the Battle of Saraighat in 1671 to inflict the most crushing defeat on the Mughals.
  - o Saraighat is regarded as the "greatest naval battle ever fought in a river".
- Post-Independence, it continued to be the Deputy Commissioner's Bungalow until 2011.

## Neo-Buddhist movement

### News context:

Recently P.M modi inaugurated airport at Kushinagar, where he focussed aspects of Buddhism in Indian culture and society.

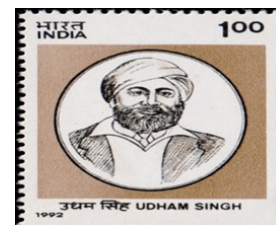
### Movement:

- In modern time before 14 October 1956, the followers of Buddhism in India were an insignificant number.
  - o Babasaheb Ambedkar embraced Buddhism in a grand ceremony at Nagpur, Maharashtra, with millions of his followers.
  - o The step save the Buddhism from verge of extinction in India.

- o Most of the follower of Neo Buddhist movement are from untouchable Hindu adopted the Buddhism.
- o This movement often conflict with Hinduism dominated by Brahmanical cast.

### Udham Singh

- He shot dead Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, which is believed to be behind Jaliyawala Bagh massacre.
  - o Who was later endorsed by Brigadier-General Dyer, the perpetrator of the killings.
- Udham Singh's lifelong association with the Ghadar Party.
- He was also part of British Indian Army in Mesopotamia in 1919.
- He was also active member of HSRA.
- He was born on 26 December 1899 at Sunam, Sangrur district of Punjab and hanged on July 31, 1940.



## Government Schemes

### Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM-MITRA) Parks

**News Context:** The Union Cabinet approved the setting up of seven Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks.

- The mega parks scheme will include brownfield and greenfield projects.
- Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Assam, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana have expressed interest in developing Textile parks.

#### Brownfield and Greenfield projects

- Brownfield projects are projects where some work has already been made. Site is already partly developed with required infrastructure.
- Greenfield project starts from scratch. The site is not developed and required infrastructure for the project is normally not present.



**Highlights**

- PM MITRA will offer an integrated textiles value chain right from spinning, weaving, processing/dyeing and printing to garment manufacturing at one location.
- Of the park's area, 50% would be for manufacturing, 20% for utilities, and 10% for commercial development.

**Why do we need Textile parks?**

- While cotton grown in Gujarat and Maharashtra, spinning takes place in Tamil Nadu and processing happens in Rajasthan and Gujarat.
- The NCR, Bangalore and Kolkata are key for garnering whereas exports are done from Mumbai and Kandla.
- Each Park will generate 1 lakh direct and 2 lakh indirect employment.
- An integrated textile value chain at one location in the country will also help in reducing the logistics cost of the industry.

**National Food Security Mission (NFSM) - Oil Seed and Oil Palm Scheme**

**News Context:** Under a special program by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, seed mini-kits, consisting of seeds of high yielding varieties of productivity more than 20 quintals per hectare, will be distributed free of cost in 343 identified districts of the country.

- This will increase production and productivity.
- Helpful in increasing the income of the farmers.

**Objective:** The objective of the Seed Mini Kit program is to polarize new varieties with high yield potential and other useful features.

**Highlights**

- The program has been started under the National Food Security Mission (NFSM) - Oil Seed and Oil Palm Scheme.
- The program covers various districts of states like Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura.

- Each district will be given 15 thousand to 20 thousand seed mini-kits.
- In addition to the regular programme, three TL hybrid high yielding varieties of mustard have been selected for seed mini kit distribution.
- The selected varieties are JK-6502, Champion and Dawn.

**Hybrid seed**

- In agriculture and gardening, hybrid seed is produced by cross-pollinated plants. It is one of the main contributors to the dramatic rise in agricultural output during the last half of the 20th century.
- The alternatives to hybridization are open pollination and clonal propagation.
- Hybrids are chosen to improve the characteristics of the resulting plants, such as better yield, greater uniformity, improved color, disease resistance.

**National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm**

The National Development Council (NDC) in its 53rd meeting held on 29th May, 2007 adopted a resolution to launch a Food Security Mission comprising rice, wheat and pulses to increase the annual production of rice by 10 million tonnes, wheat by 8 million tonnes and pulses by 2 million tonnes by the end of the Eleventh Plan (2011-12). Accordingly, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, 'National Food Security Mission' (NFSM), was launched in October 2007.

- Aims to harness domestic edible oil prices that are dictated by expensive palm oil imports.
- To raise the domestic production of palm oil by three times to 11 lakh MT by 2025-26.
- This will involve raising the area under oil palm cultivation to 10 lakh hectares by 2025-26 and 16.7 lakh hectares by 2029-30.

# Miscellaneous

## Ministry of Earth Sciences

**News context:** Recently, the government has appointed M. Ravichandran as Secretary to the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

### About MoES

- It was formed in 2006 from a merger of the:
  - India Meteorological Department (IMD)
  - National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF)
  - Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune
  - Earth Risk Evaluation Centre (EREC)
  - Ministry of Ocean Development
- Function:** To look after Atmospheric Sciences, Ocean Science & Technology and Seismology in an integrated manner.

## Ministry of Ocean development

- Government created a Department of Ocean development (DoD) (1981) as a part of Cabinet Secretariat.
  - It was kept directly under the charge of PM of India.
- 1982:** It became a separate department.
- 2006:** It was made a separate Ministry called Ministry of Ocean development.

## Azadi@75

**News context:** Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of history of India.

- Main focus:** Atmanirbhar Bharat.

## Phalke Award

**News context:** Rajnikanth was conferred Dadasaheb Phalke Award for year 2019.

It is part of National film festival award.

## National film festival, 1954:

- It has been administered by International Film Festival of India and Indian Panorama.
- Note:** Dhundiraj Govind Phalke (Dadasaheb Phalke) is known as 'Father Indian cinema'.
  - His debut film: Raja Harishchandra was 1st Indian movie released in 1913.

## Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award

**News context:** Martin Scorsese and Istevan Szabo to get this award.

## Global hunger index 2021

- News context:** India ranks 101 out of the 116 countries.
  - It is designed to measure and track hunger at global, regional, national levels.
- India score of 27.5, (Under serious hunger category).

### Concerns raised by Indian government:

Ignored reality and published report solely based on basis of FAO estimate on proportion of undernourished population.

### Methodological issues:

- There were 13 factors that were "completely ignored".
  - These include:
    - Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojna (PMGKAY).
    - Atmanirbhar Bharat Scheme.
    - Increase in MNREGA wages.
- Note:** It is prepared by European NGOs of Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe

## Kushinagar airport, UP

**News context:** It comes under UDAN regional connectivity scheme.

- It is hub of Buddhist tourist circuit

## Kushinagar

- Buddha delivered his last sermon and attained Mahaparinirvana (salvation) in 483 BC and was cremated at Rambhar Stupa.

## Ship-to-Ship operation of LPG

**News context:** It was undertaken at Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port.

### Advantages:

- It will help time of container to unload even before the port.
- It will save docking time.

## World Mental Health Day, 10 October

- It was 1st celebrated in 1992.
- It was initiated by World Federation for Mental Health.
- Campaign slogan: Mental health care for all: let's make it a reality.

## High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for Nature and People

**News context:** India officially joined it.

- o It is a group of more than 70 countries.
- o It encouraging the adoption of the global goal to protect 30x30.
- o It means agreement will protect at least 30% of world's land and ocean by 2030.
- HAC members is mix of global north and south, European, Latin American, Africa, Asian countries.
- o India is 1st in BRICS to join HAC.

## Agreement on 'Sustainability and Value Addition in Cotton Economy'

**News context:** Textiles Ministry signed MOU with GIZ to implement it.

- It is to increase cotton production at least on 90,000 hectare.
- o Major Cotton producing states: Maharashtra, Gujarat, MP, Tamil Nadu.

## EXERCISE MITRA SHAKTI

**News Context:** 8th EDITION of INDIA – SRI LANKA JOINT exercise held at AMPARA SRI LANKA.

- **Focus:** Counter-terrorism operations in a semi urban/rural environment under UN.

## Commercial use of AAI land

**News context:** The government is considering legal amendment to increase commercial exploitation of land owned by Airports Authority of India (AAI).

**Advantage:**

- About 55,000 hectares of land will be used for commercial purpose.
- AAI will increase earning from the land use.

## FAO's food price index

**News Context:** According to United Nations Food agency, world food prices rose to reach a 10-year peak. On a year-on-year basis, prices were up 32.8% in September.

- Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) food price index, tracks international prices of the most globally traded food commodities.

## Key Findings

- The FAO Food Price Index (FFPI) averaged 130.0 points in September 2021, up 1.5 points (1.2 percent) from August and 32.1 points (32.8 percent) from the same month last year.

- The latest rise of the FFPI was largely driven by higher prices of most cereals and vegetable oils.
- Dairy and sugar prices were also firmer, while the meat price sub-index remained stable.
- The FAO's cereal price index rose by 2.0% in September from the previous month.
- World vegetable oil prices were up 1.7% on the month and showing a year-on-year rise of about 60%.
- Palm oil prices climbed on robust import demand.
- Global sugar prices rose 0.5% in September.

## FAO's Food Price Index

- It was introduced in 1996.
- It helps in monitoring developments in the global agricultural commodity markets.
- The FAO Food Price Index (FFPI) is a measure of the monthly change in international prices of a basket of food commodities.
- It measures changes for a basket of cereals, oilseeds, dairy products, meat and sugar.
- Base Period: 2014-16.

## Food and Agriculture Organization

- The FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security.
- Its goal is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives.
- With over 194 member states, FAO works in over 130 countries worldwide.
- It helps governments and development agencies coordinate their activities to improve and develop agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and land and water resources.

## National Jal Jeevan Mission

- It provides safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections by 2024 to all households across rural India.
- It comes under Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation under Ministry of Jal Shakti.

## National Jal Jeevan Mission

**News Context:** A multi-disciplinary team from National

## Jal Jeevan Mission visits Rajasthan.

- State will be discussed to understand the ground situation and assess the State's preparedness to meet the saturation deadline for ensuring 100% tap water supply to all rural households.



- Rajasthan plans for 100% tap water connection to all rural households by 2024.

### Jal Jeevan Mission

- JJM, is envisioned to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections by 2024 to all households in rural India.
- JJM focuses on integrated demand and supply-side management of water at the local level.
- The Mission is based on a community approach to water and includes extensive Information, Education and Communication as a key component of the mission.

### Objectives of the mission

- To provide Functional Tap Connection (FHTC) to every rural household.
- To prioritize provision of FHTCs in quality affected areas, villages in drought prone and desert areas, Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) villages, etc.
- To provide functional tap connection to Schools, Anganwadi centres, GP buildings, Health centres, wellness centres and community buildings.
- To monitor functionality of tap connections.
- To promote and ensure voluntary ownership among local community by way of contribution in cash, kind and/ or labour and voluntary labour (shramdaan)
- To assist in ensuring sustainability of water supply system, i.e. water source, water supply infrastructure, and funds for regular O&M.
- To empower and develop human resource in the sector such that the demands of construction, plumbing, electrical, water quality management, water treatment, catchment protection, O&M, etc. are taken care of in short and long term.
- To bring awareness on various aspects and significance of safe drinking water and involvement of stakeholders in manner that make water everyone's business.

### Components under JJM

- Development of in-village piped water supply infrastructure to provide tap water connection to every rural household.
- Development of reliable drinking water sources and/ or augmentation of existing sources to provide long-term sustainability of water supply system.
- Wherever necessary, bulk water transfer, treatment plants and distribution network to cater to every rural household.

- Technological interventions for removal of contaminants where water quality is an issue
- Retrofitting of completed and ongoing schemes to provide FHTCs at minimum service level of 55 lpcd;
- Greywater management.
- Support activities, i.e. IEC, HRD, training, development of utilities, water quality laboratories, water quality testing & surveillance, R&D, knowledge centre, capacity building of communities, etc.
- Any other unforeseen challenges/ issues emerging due to natural disasters/ calamities which affect the goal of FHTC to every household by 2024, as per guidelines of Ministry of Finance on Flexi Funds.

### Kamdhenu Deepawali 2021 campaign

**News Context:** Kamdhenu Deepawali campaign launched to promote Cow Entrepreneurship and Cow based Panchgavya products.

- This Eco-friendly campaign will also help Gaushalas to become Self Sustainable.

### Highlights

- Campaign launched to manufacture and market more than 100 Crore Cow dung based Deepak lamps and Laxmi-Ganesh Idols.
- The Gomaya (cow dung) lamps made by Cow Entrepreneurs and Cow owners will save the environment.
- Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog and many volunteer organizations provided trainings.
- More than 300 items are getting made by Panchgavya from Cow. This includes Deepawali items like – Deepak, Lamps, Candles, Sambrani cup, Havansamagri, Dhoopbatti, incense sticks, Hard board, Wall piece, Laxmi-Ganesh idols etc made up of Cow dung.

### Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog

- Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog is an agency under the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying) established for the protection of cows.
- It was constituted in 2019.
- It is a high-powered permanent body to formulate policies and to provide directions for the implementation of schemes related to cattle.
- It functions as an integral part of Rashtriya Gokul Mission.

**Air India Specific Alternative Mechanism (AISAM)**

**News context:** Recently, Air India Specific Alternative Mechanism (AISAM) met to take a decision on the winning bidder for Air India.

**What is AISAM?**

- AISAM is the name given to the Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by the Home Minister.
- It includes Finance Minister, Commerce Minister and Aviation Minister.

**Nobel Prizes 2021****Prize in Physiology/Medicine**

**Davud Julius**  
(American, 66)



**Ardem Patapoutian**  
(Armenian - American, 54)

For discovering the mechanism through which body senses hot or cold touch, and changes in pressure.

Working independently, they identified specific molecules that sense temperature or pressure changes.

Possible therapeutic uses in a wide range of diseases, and in pain relief

**Nobel Prize in Chemistry**

**Benjamin List**  
(German, 53)



**David MacMillan**  
(Scottish, 53)

Discovered a new set of organic catalysts that are cheaper and greener than existing metal - based or enzyme - based catalysts

Catalysts are substances that accelerate a chemical reaction without themselves getting involved

Huge possibilities in the pharmaceutical industry

## Prize in Physics

**Syukuro Manabe**  
(Japanese - American, 90)



**Giorgio Parisi**  
(Italian, 73)

**Klaus Hasselmann**  
(German, 90)

Manabe showed how carbon dioxide and water vapour lead to global warming

Hasselmann proved that human activities made global

Parisi helped understand complex systems which have high randomness or disorder. Eg: weather and climate phenomena

## Nobel literature prize

**Abdulrazak Gurnah**  
(Tanzanian writer)



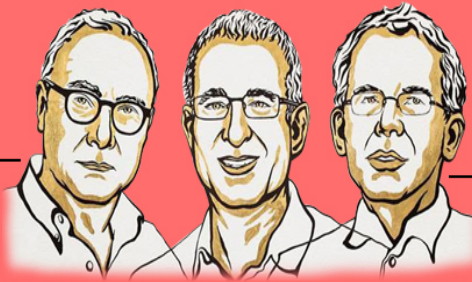
He was recognized for his “uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugee.”

Gurnah was awarded for his works that explore the legacies of imperialism on uprooted individuals.



## Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences

David Card



Guido W. Imbens

Joshua D. Angrist

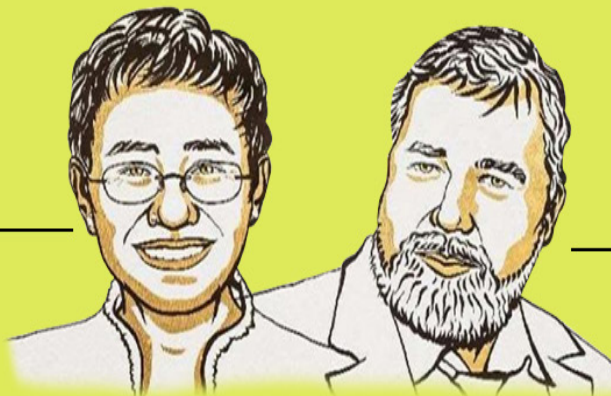
"For his empirical contributions to labour economics"

"For their methodological contributions to the analysis of causal relationship"

**Note:** Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences is often incorrectly referred to as the Nobel Prize in Economics.

## The Nobel Peace Prize

Maria Ressa



Dmitry Muratov

"For their efforts to safeguard freedom of expression, which is a precondition for democracy and lasting peace"

# Editorials

## India's coal crisis

**News context:** A number of states are highlighting concerns about blackouts as a result of the coal shortage.

### Reasons behind the shortage of coal

- **Increased power demand:** Because the economy has recovered from the effects of the pandemic.
- **Rise in international prices:** Because of a shortage in China.
  - o Because of this sharp fall in imports.
- Low accumulation of stock by thermal power plants.
- Heavy rains in coal bearing areas had also led to a slowdown in the supply of coal to thermal plants.



● Coal-fired plants make up nearly 70 per cent of India's power source mix

● On October 1, the Power Ministry said that the 135 thermal power plants in the country had only an average of about four days of coal stocks left



## Impact of this shortage

- If industries face electricity shortages, it could delay India's economic reopening.
- Some businesses might downscale production.
- India's population and underdeveloped energy infrastructure will mean the power crisis could hit long and hard.

## How is the government addressing this situation?

- Power, coal and railways ministries are monitoring the coal supplies to thermal plants.
  - These have taken steps to increase the daily shipments of coal to power generators.
- Government has permitted power generators using local coal to use up to a 10% blend of imported coal to boost coal stocks.

## Way Ahead

According to experts, power demand is expected to moderate with the onset of winter. They also expect the coal stock situation at power plants to further improve in the coming days with the government efforts to scale up supplies.

- State-run Coal India and NTPC Ltd. are working to raise output from mines.
- India will need to amp its imports, despite the financial cost.
- Mining of raw coal is nearly monopolized by public sector companies (CIL) that are not run primarily for profits. Doors for private sector entry must be open in time being.

## Gati Shakti National Master Plan

Gati Shakti, a Rs 100 lakh crore national master plan, will bring synergy to create a world class, multi-modal transport network in India. It will employ modern technology and the latest IT tools for coordinated planning of infrastructure.

- Under a digital platform, it brings 16 ministries together for integrated planning and coordinated implementation of infrastructure connectivity projects.
- Project ensures seamless connectivity and movement of goods and people to enhance the ease of living and doing business in the country.
- The platform will provide high resolution satellite images, infrastructure, utilities, administrative boundaries, land and logistics.

## Aim

It aims to lend more speed (Gati) and power (Shakti) to projects by connecting all concerned departments on one platform.

## Need of the programme

India needs to increase both manufacturing and exports. Every product that is sold globally from India is attached to India.

## It will bridge the gap:

- Between macro planning and micro implementation.
- Problems of lack of coordination and advance information.
- Ensuring coordination between planning and implementation of the projects at various levels.
- Monitoring of mega projects.

## How will Gati Shakti work?

- There will be an Integrated Multimodal Network Planning Group (NPG) which will be entrusted with unified planning and integration of proposals as well as connectivity projects which are not part of the current master plan.
- The National Networking Group will consist of experts from all the stakeholder departments.
- The Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade will be the nodal agency.
- The group will be responsible for sharing their specific Action Plans for 2020-21 to 2024-25 with each other for facilitating integration of networks, enhancing optimisation through modification / expansion / new network creation to avoid duplication of works.

A Giant Stride in India's  
\$5 Trillion Economy Goal

## Gati Shakti National Master Plan

Multimodal Connectivity  
Infrastructure to various  
Economic Zones

Targets upto 2024-25 for Ministry of  
Shipping



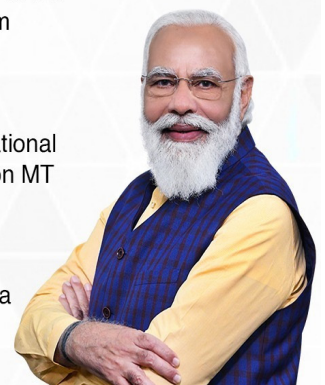
Increase in Cargo capacity at the  
Ports to 1,759 MMTPA from  
1,282 MMTPA in 2020



Cargo movement on all National  
Waterways will be 95 million MT  
from 74 million MT in 2020



Cargo movement on Ganga  
to be increased from 9 to  
29 million MT





**Way Ahead**

- Infrastructure development will play an important role in India's aim to become a \$5 trillion economy.
- India is seeking the use of innovative technology and materials in road construction and is open to adopting guidelines for use of new materials and technology.

**Failing on food**

The Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment (POSHAN Abhiyaan) renewed till 2025-26. The recent data on child malnutrition underscore the value of good school meals.

**Findings of National Family Health Survey-5 (Phase 1):**

- 22 states and UTs were surveyed.
- Childhood stunting rose in 13 States.
- High prevalence of anaemia among children and women.

- Wasting (low weight-for-height) was a serious concern in 12 States.
- Stunting has gone up from 19.7 per cent to 23.4 per cent in Kerala.
- Telangana too shows the increase in stunting from 28 per cent to 33.1 per cent.
- Tripura was "the worst-performing state" where the figure went up from 24.3 per cent to 32.3 per cent. Sikkim was the only Northeastern state to show an improvement and had the lowest rate of stunting at 22.3 per cent.
- Karnataka shows improvement where wasting has come down by 6.6 per cent, however, Kerala showed deterioration from 16.1 per cent to 19.7 per cent.
- Bihar's underweight situation is improved from 43.9 per cent to 41 per cent.

**National Family Health Survey**

- It is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India.
- The survey provides state and national information for India on fertility, infant and child mortality, the practice of family planning, maternal and child health, reproductive health, nutrition, anaemia, utilization and quality of health and family planning services.

**Nutrition is judged on three factors:**

- Stunting
- Wasting
- Under Nourishment

**Key Suggestions**

Renewed nutritional plan should introduce a greater diversity of diets that compensates for micronutrient and protein deficiency.

**About POSHAN**

The Abhiyan was launched to combat malnutrition and to improve nutritional outcomes for children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers. It is a commitment to good health and well-being of girls and women.

**Rechristened Mount Harriet**

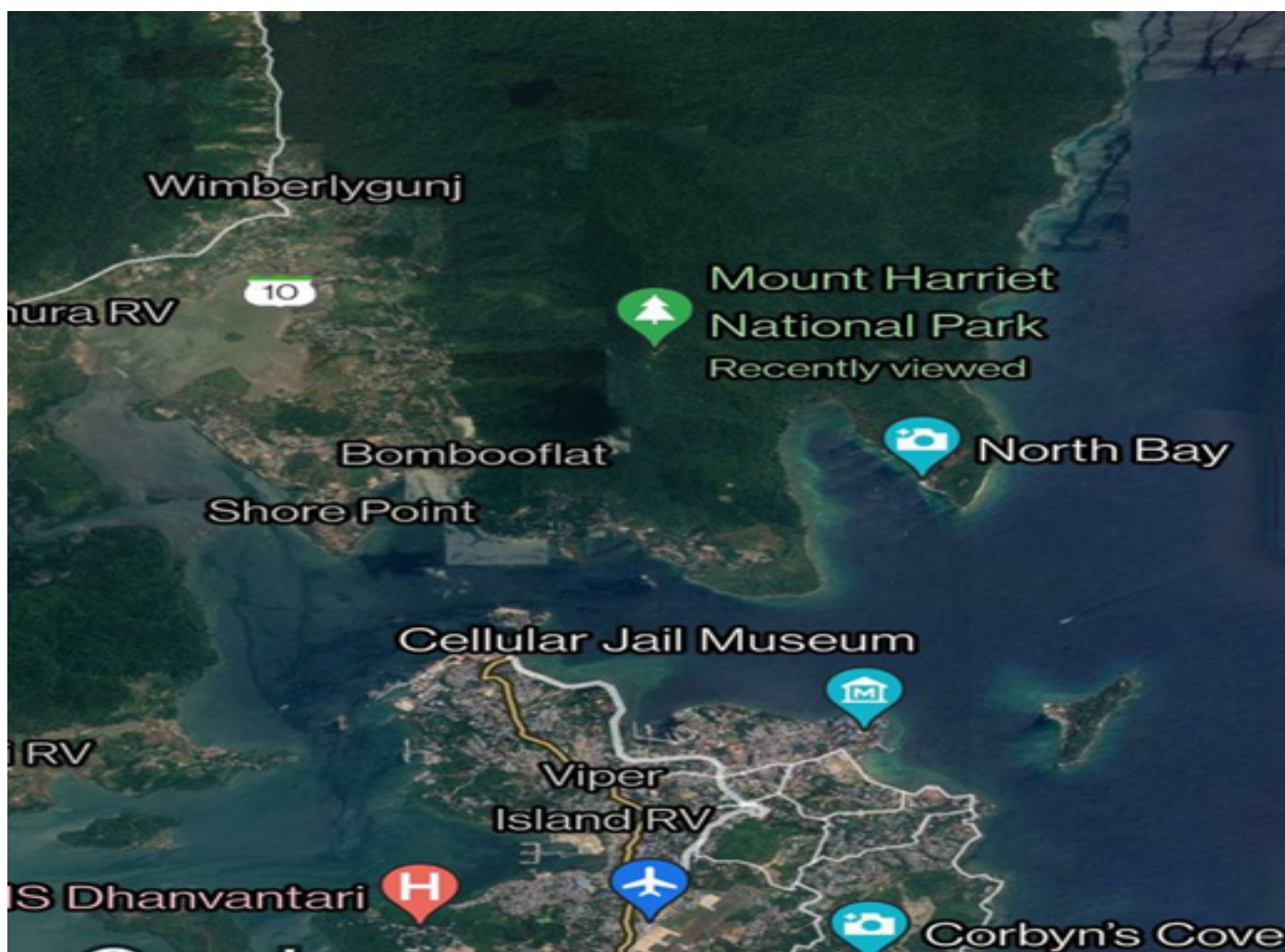
The Centre has rechristened Mount Harriet, a historical tourist spot in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, as 'Mount Manipur'. The Centre will also assist the Manipur government in constructing a memorial site at Mount Manipur in Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

- Mount Harriet is a hillock in what is now the Ferragunj tehsil of South Andaman district.
- Mount Harriet is the third highest peak in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- It was served as the summer headquarters of the Chief Commissioner during British Raj.

**Manipur's connection to Mount Harriet**

- After the Anglo-Manipur War of 1891 (fought between the kingdom of Manipur and the British), several Manipuris were exiled to the British penal colony in the Andaman Islands.
- Manipur war hero Yubraj Tikendrajit and General Thangal were publicly hanged in Fida, Imphal. After that, King Kulachandra, his brother and other 21 prisoners were kept on Mount Harriet (Since the cellular jail (Kalapani) was yet to be built).

- The 23 are considered war heroes in Manipur. That is why Mount Harriet is an important symbol of the Anglo-Manipur War of 1891.
- The war led to Manipur officially becoming a princely state under the indirect rule of the British crown.



### IMF outlook and status of jobs

The IMF unveiled its 2nd World Economic Outlook (WEO). The WEO reports are significant because they are based on a wide set of assumptions about a host of parameters — such as the international price of crude oil — and set the benchmark for all economies to compare one another with. The IMF comes out with the WEO report twice every year - April and October.

### What does the World Economic Outlook address?

- Analyzes key parts of the IMF's surveillance of economic developments and policies in its member countries.
- Projects developments in the global financial markets and economic systems.
- Highlights the risks and uncertainty that could threaten growth.

### Key Takeaways

- The global economic recovery momentum had weakened due to the pandemic-induced supply disruptions.

- IMF was most concerned about the increasing inequality among nations.
- The dangerous divergence in economic prospects across countries remains a major concern.
- Aggregate output for the advanced economy group is expected to regain its pre-pandemic trend path in 2022 and exceed it by 0.9 per cent in 2024.
- Aggregate output for the emerging market and developing economy group (excluding China) is expected to remain 5.5 per cent below the pre-pandemic forecast in 2024.

### Reasons for the slowdown

1. Large disparities in vaccine access.
2. Differences in policy support.

### Major Highlights

- Employment around the world remains below its pre-pandemic levels.
- IMF has suggested that India's economic recovery is gaining ground.

- Some sectors such as the IT-services sectors have been practically unaffected by Covid, while the e-commerce industry is doing brilliantly.
- India reflects jobless growth.
- India is witnessing a K-shaped recovery. That means different sectors are recovering at significantly different rates.

### International Monetary Fund (IMF)

- IMF is an organization of 189 member countries, the most powerful countries in the global economy have the most voting power.
- The IMF was conceived at a UN conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, United States, in July 1944.
- Countries were not eligible for membership in the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) unless they were members of the IMF.
- It provides financial assistance to member countries with balance of payments problems.
- It oversees the international monetary system and monitors the economic and financial policies of its member countries.
- It provides technical assistance and training to central banks, finance ministries, tax authorities, and other economic institutions.

### Objectives

- Foster global monetary cooperation
- Secure financial stability
- Facilitate international trade
- Promote high employment and sustainable economic growth
- And reduce poverty around the world

### Arctic melt

#### According to a study:

- If carbon emissions continue at current levels, Arctic summer ice will disappear by 2100.
- The shrinkage of ice could lead to the disappearance of polar bears and seals by 2100.
- The Arctic Sea ice reached its minimum extent, coming in at 4.72 million square miles.

#### How summer sea ice affects marine ecosystem

- During summers when some of the ice melts, winds and currents carry it for great distances, mostly carried into the Arctic's farthest-north coasts (Greenland and the Canadian islands). This results in a rich marine ecosystem.
- Algae grow on the Arctic ice which feeds tiny animals, this, in turn, feeds fish, which again, in turn, feeds seals, this then feeds polar bears at the top chain.

#### Implications

- Under Low-emissions Scenario: By 2050, at least some seals, bears and other creatures may survive. These species currently exist under similar summer conditions along western Alaska and parts of Hudson Bay.

- Under higher-Emissions Scenario: By 2100, even the locally formed ice will disappear in summer. With no summer ice anywhere, there will be no ice-dependent ecosystems.

### Sea Ice

- Sea ice is simply frozen ocean water. It forms, grows, and melts in the ocean. Sea ice is found in remote polar oceans.
- In contrast, icebergs, glaciers, ice sheets, and ice shelves all originate on land.

### Importance of sea ice

- Sea Ice occurs primarily in the polar regions, influences our global climate.
- Sea ice has a bright surface, much of the sunlight that strikes it is reflected back into space. As a result, areas covered by sea ice don't absorb much solar energy, so temperatures in the polar regions remain relatively cool.
- If gradually warming temperatures melt sea ice over time, fewer bright surfaces are available to reflect sunlight back into space, more solar energy is absorbed at the surface, and temperatures rise further. This chain of events starts a cycle of warming and melting.



- Sea ice also affects the movement of ocean waters. When sea ice forms, most of the salt is pushed into the ocean water below the ice, some salt may become trapped in small pockets between ice crystals. Water below sea ice has a higher concentration of salt and is more dense than surrounding ocean water, and so it sinks. In this way, sea ice contributes to the ocean's global "conveyor-belt" circulation.

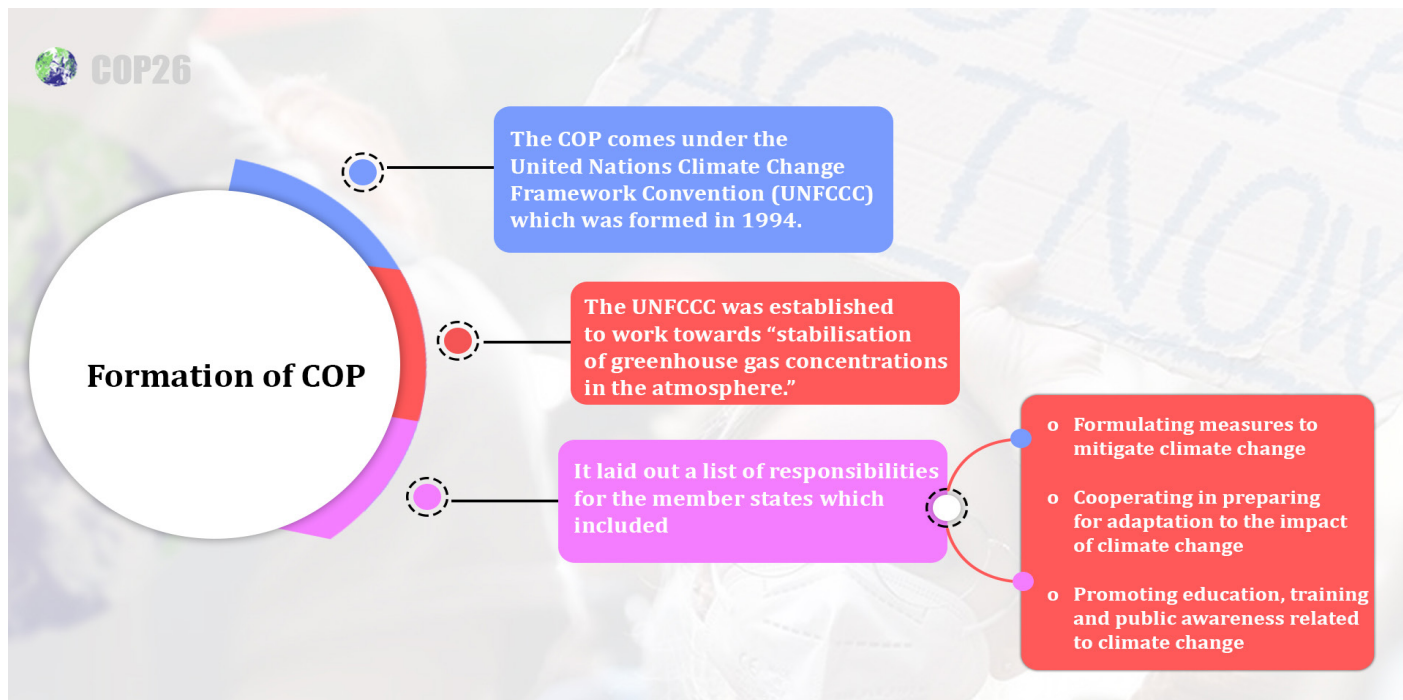
## 26th Conference of Parties (COP)

The UK will host the COP 26 UN Climate Change

Conference from October 31 to November 12 in the Scottish Event Campus in Glasgow.

### COP

- It is a pivotal movement for the world to come together and accelerate the climate action plan.
- The COP is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention.
- The COP meets every year, unless the Parties decide otherwise.
- The first COP meeting was held in Berlin, Germany in March, 1995.



### COP26 goals

According to the UNFCCC, COP26 will work towards four goals:

- Secure global net-zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach.

Countries are being asked to come forward with ambitious 2030 emissions reductions targets. To deliver on these stretching targets, countries will need to:

- accelerate the phase-out of coal
- curtail deforestation
- speed up the switch to electric vehicles
- encourage investment in renewables.

- Adapt to protect communities and natural habitats

The climate is already changing and it will continue to change. At COP26 we need to work together to enable and encourage countries affected by climate change to:

- protect and restore ecosystems
- build defences, warning systems and resilient infrastructure and agriculture to avoid loss of homes, livelihoods and even lives

- Mobilise finance

To deliver on our first two goals, developed countries must make good on their promise to mobilise at least \$100bn in climate finance per year by 2020.

- Work together to deliver

### At COP26 we must:

- finalise the Paris Rulebook (the detailed rules that make the Paris Agreement operational)
- accelerate action to tackle the climate crisis through collaboration between governments, businesses and civil society.

### New Tiger Reserve

National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) declare the combined areas of the Guru Ghasidas National Park and Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary as a Tiger Reserve.

The new Reserve will be the fourth Tiger Reserve in Chhattisgarh. The other three are Udanti-Sitanadi, Achanakmar, and Indravati Reserves.

- The Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary was identified as part of the Sarguja Jashpur Elephant Reserve in 2011.
- The Guru Ghasidas National Park used to be part of the Sanjay National Park in undivided Madhya Pradesh.
- Guru Ghasidas National Park was the last known habitat of the Asiatic cheetah in the country.

### Significance

- Turning Guru Ghasidas into a Tiger Reserve connects Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh and provides a corridor for tigers to move between the Bandhavgarh and Palamau Tiger Reserves.
- Boramdeo connects the Indravati Tiger Reserve in Chhattisgarh with the Kanha Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh.

### National Tiger Conservation Authority

- The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has been constituted under section 38 L (1) of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
- It was established in December 2005, after recommendations from Tiger Task Force, constituted by the Prime Minister, for reorganised management of Project Tiger and the many Tiger Reserves in India.
- Tiger Protection Program (known as Project Tiger) was started in 1973, by Indian government in co-operation with WWF. The 'Project Tiger' is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS).

### Components of the Tiger Conservation plan

**Core Zones-** These zones include the protected areas that act as a natural state of the ecosystems in the biosphere reserves. There is no presence of settlement inside these zones. Core areas are where the actual forest exists and the natural resources are strictly protected by the government.

**Buffer Zones-** The areas adjoining the core zones. They witness human interference. There is co-existence of tigers and humans in these zones (villages). A buffer zone does not have a status of a national park or a sanctuary, it is considered a multiple-use area. These areas absorb the effects of poaching.

### Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972

- It is an act enacted for protection of wild animals, birds and plants. It extends to the whole of India. Its primary aim is to curb the illegal trade in wildlife and the derivative parts. The act also provides the ecological and environmental security of the country.

### Benefits of Tiger Reserves

01

The carbon is absorbed by the forest vegetation (largely by the forests in Tiger Reserves) and so the forests become crucial for the atmosphere as well.

02

A healthy tiger population is an indication of a well-balanced ecosystem as they are at the top of the food chain.

03

The evapotranspiration process from the trees results in a marginal increase in rainfall.

04

The forest acts as a storage of water and prevents run-off and erosion of the topsoil during rainfall. The root system of vegetation grown on it facilitates infiltration of water.

05

The trees in the forests of tiger reserves act as catchment areas. They absorb the water and release the same slowly and gradually.









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