

Articulate

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MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR UPSC CSE



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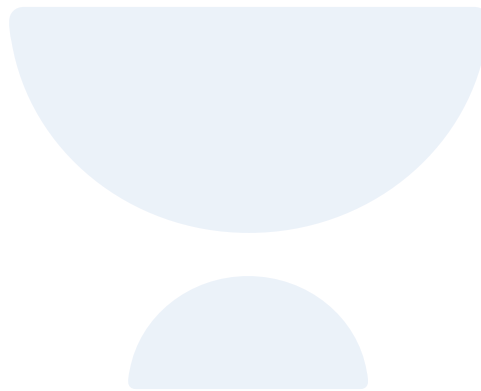
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*Source: The Indian Edtech Story, Q1 2022 Round-Up by Markelytics.

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POLITY IN NEWS: 2023 - FEBRUARY

CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES / PARLIAMENT

RIGHTS ISSUES

FEDERAL ISSUES

ELECTIONS

JUDICIARY

GOVERNANCE

MEDIA REGULATION/ SOCIAL MEDIA

LEARN POLITY FROM THE BEST EDUCATORS

The image shows a Zoom meeting interface. The main window displays a slide titled "A. V. DICEY" with handwritten notes. The slide lists three principles proposed by A.V. Dicey: 1. Absolute supremacy of Law, 2. Equality before law, and 3. Predominance of legal spirit. Handwritten notes include "KEY TO THE LAW", "LEX REX", "AM = freedom", and "Constitution". Below the slide is a book cover for "Introduction to the Study of THE LAW OF THE CONSTITUTION" and a logo for "Rule of Law". A QR code is overlaid on the bottom left of the screen. To the right, a chat window is visible with messages from participants like Shalinee, Rishabh Gaur, and others. A red button labeled "JOIN NOW" is positioned at the bottom right of the screen.

Chat

Only for students enrolled in plus course. MORE

hahah

Shalinee
Sir 3 wala nhi smjh aaya

Rishabh Gaur
yes sir

Utkarsh Mishra
Hahaha

Prince Mishra
Hahahahahaha

Harshit Goel
ji sir

Rashmi Yadav
Y sir

PushKr Choudhary
yes sir. clear

Sushant kumar
hahahaha JUMP TO LATEST

Scan QR Code

JOIN NOW



Constitutional Issues / Parliament

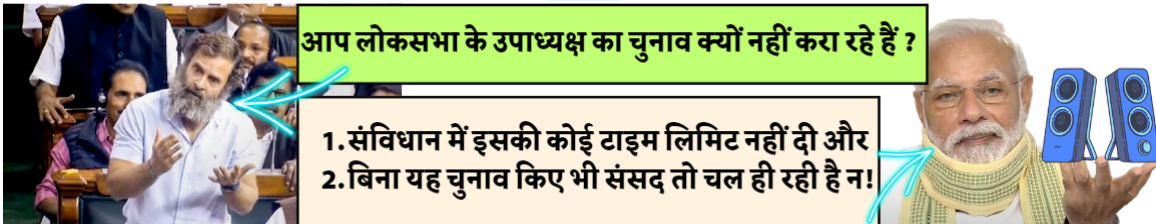
Vacant Deputy Speaker Post- Govt not keen to fill up

The Post of Deputy Speaker:

Constitutional Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 93: the Lok Sabha shall have a Speaker and Deputy Speaker. • Article 178 creates the same positions for Legislative Assemblies of States.
Election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Constitution does not lay down a specific time frame. • It is held “on such date as the Speaker may fix”. (Rule 8 of The Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha).
Duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To perform duties of the office of the Speaker when it is vacant. (Article 95) • The speaker resigns by writing to the Deputy Speaker.
Powers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as the Speaker when presiding over a sitting of the House. • Deputy Speaker is not subordinate to the Speaker. • He is directly responsible to the House.

Why in the news?

The Supreme Court issued notices to the Center and five states for not electing Deputy Speaker in the Lok Sabha and in their respective legislatures, as it is “against the letter and spirit of the Constitution”.



Opinion of the Union Government:

- There is no “immediate requirement” for a Deputy Speaker as “bills are being passed and discussions are being held” as usual in the House.
- A panel of nine members selected from different parties is also present, and they act as chairpersons to assist the Speaker to run the House.

The intervention of the judiciary:

- Courts usually don’t intervene in the procedural conduct of Parliament.
- **Article 122:** “The validity of any proceedings in Parliament shall not be called in question

on the ground of any alleged irregularity of procedure.”

- However, experts opine that the constitution does not envisage such a delay, and the court is right to act.

News Source: Indian Express

Parliament Records Expunction and Article 105

Why in news?

Portions of the Congress leader’s speech delivered in Lok Sabha have been expunged (removed) from the records of Parliament by the orders of the Speaker.



इसे संसद के रिकॉर्ड से हटा देंगे हम



Expunging and its rules:

- Under **Article 105(2) of the Constitution**, MPs can't be held liable in court for speeches during Parliamentary proceedings but they are subjected to disciplinary rules.
- Rule 380 and Rule 381 ("Expunction") of the **Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business** in Lok Sabha empower the Speaker to decide what parts of speech or text are unparliamentary and should be expunged.
- Expunged portions can no longer be found in the records of Parliament.
- They can no longer be reported by media

houses, but they may have been heard during the live telecast of the proceedings.

- However, the growth of social media and instant messaging has made it difficult to enforce expunction orders.

More about the news:

- Opposition leader wrote a letter to the Vice President of India regarding exclusion of parts of speech from Motion of Thanks to President.
- Certain allegations made in the house by opposition leaders were removed from the official record.



हम राष्ट्रपति के धन्यवाद प्रस्ताव (Motion of Thanks) के भाषण के हिस्से में कुछ बदलाव चाहते हैं



Key Provisions of Article-105:

- **Article 105** is related to the powers and privileges of the Houses of Parliament and of the members and committees.
- This privilege is also available to the Attorney General of India or a Minister who is not a member of the House.
- **Article 121** prohibits any discussion in Parliament regarding the "behaviour of any

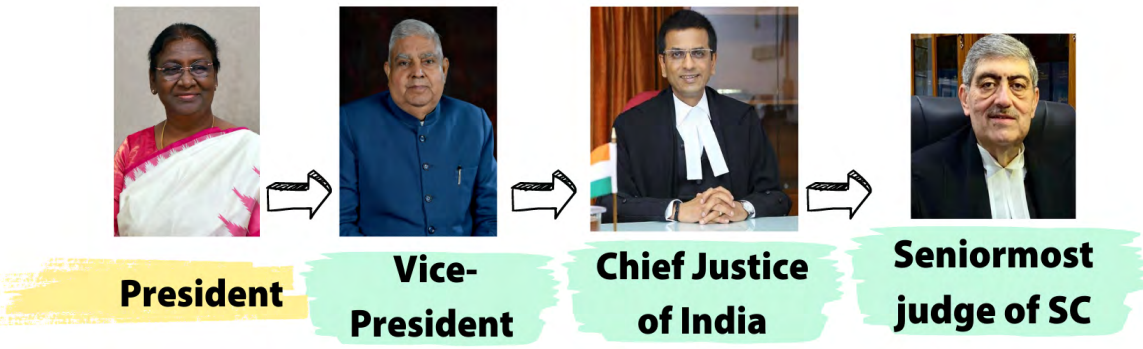
Judge of the Supreme Court or of a High Court".

- **The Government of India Act of 1935** introduced this clause in India.
- No person shall be so liable in respect of the publication by or under the authority of either House of Parliament of any report, paper, vote, or proceedings.

Source: The Indian Express



Designated Survivor to replace USA President



Why in news?

A senior US official **Marty Walsh** was chosen as “**Designated Survivor**” to take charge in case any unforeseen disaster comes for the **State of the Union Address in the USA** where almost all the top leaders of USA are present.

What is the State of the Union Address?

As per the US Constitution, the President informs the Congress about the works and developments in the country, and recommends measures which he feels necessary.

- It considers the theoretical possibility of a catastrophic disaster at the venue of the State of the Union Address, which is attended by nearly every top official and judge.
- A designated survivor ensures continuity of government in case of such a disaster.
- So basically Designated Survivor can be understood as one person who is selected to lead the government of USA if whole top leadership is wiped out in any natural disaster or attack etc.

News Source: Indian Express

More about the Designated Survivor:

New Legislation

AMASR (Amendment) Bill - redefining Ancient Monuments

AMASR (Amedment) Bill:
प्राचीन स्मारकों की व्याख्या में बदलाव करेंगे





About the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (1958):

- Provides for the preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites.
- Archaeological Survey of India(ASI) functions under the provisions of this act.
- Bans construction work in a ‘prohibited area’ of **100 meters** around a monument.
- Examples of ancient monuments of national importance: Ajanta Caves, Taj Mahal, Sanchi Stupa, etc.

Why in the news?

The government is set to re-introduce the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) (Amendment) Bill in Parliament.

Proposed provisions in the bill:

- A new definition of ‘monument’ may be introduced.
- Redefining the phrase ‘national importance’ of any monument for better clarity.
- **Proposed changes in 100 year benchmark:**

Before	After
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presently, one criterion is that a monument has to be at least 100 years old. • However, most ‘100-year-old monuments’ are from the British era, which are not actually ‘ancient’. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So, this benchmark may be increased.

• Prohibition on construction activity:

Before	After
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a uniform limit of 100-metre radius prohibited area around all monuments. • An area up to 200-metre radius beyond the prohibited area is demarcated as a regulated area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility may be introduced. • Instead of a single limit, site-specific limits may be introduced depending upon needs at every monument. • Year: So, this benchmark may be increased.

Denotification of monuments:

- As of now, the Act provides for the de-notification of a monument if it ceases to be of national importance.
- The ASI has 3,695 centrally protected monuments under its watch.
- With the above changes, many monuments are likely to lose protection under ASI.

News source: Indian Express

Draft Geo-heritage Sites and Geo-relics Bill



हम भौगोलिक स्मारक, गुफाओं और भूगर्भीय विरासत की रक्षा करेंगे



Geo Heritage

- Geoheritage sites are defined as sites containing geo-relics and geological structures including caves, natural rock-sculptures of national and international interest.

What is Geo Relics?

- A geo-relic is defined as any relic or material of geological significance or interest, like sediments, rocks, minerals, meteorites, or fossils.
- There are 32 geo-heritage sites spread across 13 states in India.
- Example: the Volcanogenic bedded Barytes of Mangampeta in the Cuddapah district of Andhra Pradesh, the Akal Fossil Wood Park in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, etc.

Why in the news?

The Ministry of Mines notified draft Geo-heritage Sites and Geo-relics (Preservation and Maintenance) Bill.

Need of the Bill:

- Despite identifying important sites, there are concerns over their preservation.
- The sites are increasingly threatened by the natural causes of decay.
- Population pressure and changing social and economic conditions are aggravating the situation.

Criticism of the Bill:

- The GSI has been given sweeping powers under the bill for site identification.
- When the Union govt tries to do land acquisition it causes problems with the local community.

News Source: Indian Express

Rights Issues

Child Marriages in Assam

Why in news?

Assam arrested over 3000 people in cases related to child marriages under the provisions of **POCSO Act and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act**.

About the acts:

POCSO Act, 2012

- It **criminalises sexual abuse** of children **under the age of 18**.
- In case of **child marriage**, the Posco Act is triggered if the bride is **below the age of 14**.
- It recognises non-bailable, cognisable offence which means that the police can make an arrest without warrant.

Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

- The Act fixes **18 years** as the minimum marriage age **for women**, while for **men it is 21 years**.
- It **forbids child marriages** in India for all its citizens.
- It has **provisions for punishment** of 2 years or fine up to 1 lakh rupees or both.
- The PCMA Amendment Bill 2021 seeks to increase the minimum age of marriage of females to 21 years.



Reasons for Child Marriages:

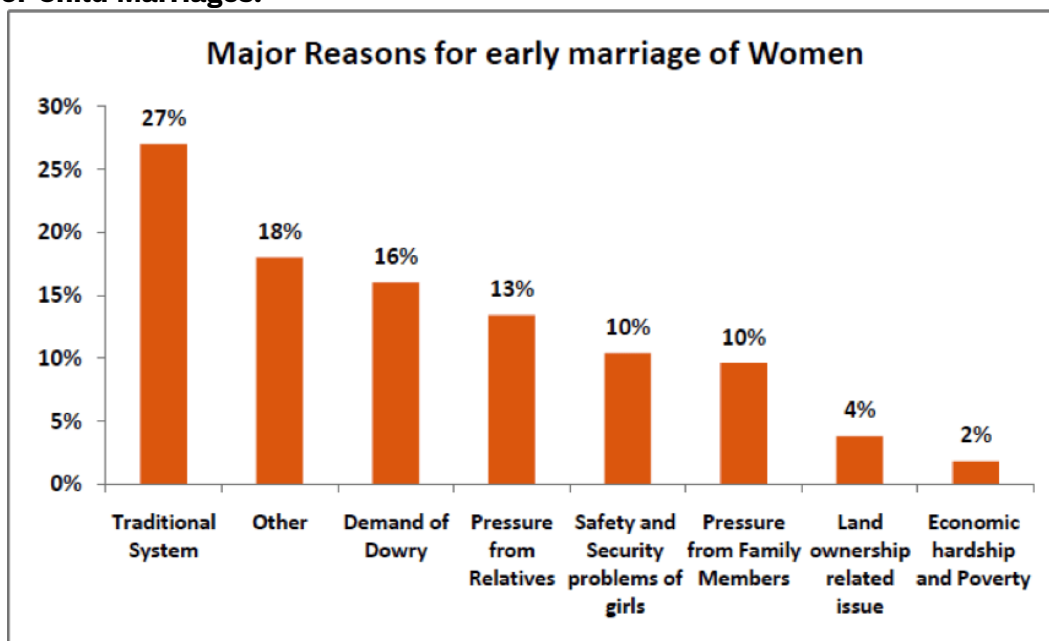


Image Source: Factly.in

- 40% of the world's child marriages take place in India according to the National Family Health Survey.
- India has the 14th highest rate of child marriage in the world, according to the International Center for Research on Women.

Concerns associated with such steps:

- It may shift all the activities underground, making children more unsafe.
- Sole breadwinners of their families have been arrested leading to crisis in the family.
- Opposition parties have termed the police action as steps to "terrorise people".

Steps Taken to reduce Child Marriage in India:

- Framing laws against child marriages and strict implementation.
- Increasing access to girls' education and providing young women with economic opportunities.
- Enabling NGOs and civil society organisations for outreach, education and last mile connectivity.

News Source: Indian Express

Special Marriage Act

Why in the news?

Bollywood actress Swara Bhaskar married recently under the provisions of the Special Marriage Act 1954.

What is the Special Marriage Act?

- It is a law that governs a civil marriage where the state sanctions the marriage rather than religion.
- This enables inter-faith or inter-caste marriages.
- The persons do not have to give up their religious identity or undergo conversion.

Applicability and conditions:

- Extends to all people irrespective of religion.
- Age limit is 21 years for males and 18 years for females.
- Parties to the marriage have to give a notice to a 'Marriage Officer' in the district.
- At least one of the parties must have resided for at least 30 days immediately preceding the notice in the same district.
- Upon completion of procedures, they will be given a certificate of marriage.

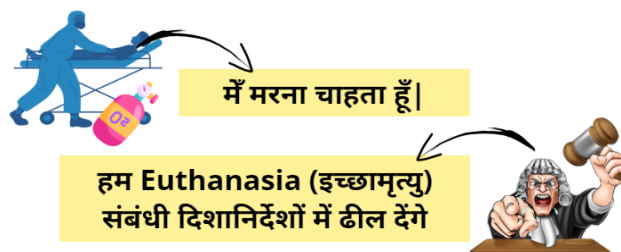


Other notable features:

- Once a person gets married under SMA, he/she is considered **severed from the family** in terms of rights like the **right to inheritance** means a person can no longer claim inheritance in family property etc.
- It **forbids polygamy (more than one spouse/marriage)** and declares a marriage null and void if either party has a living spouse already.

News source: Indian Express

Euthanasia Guidelines by Supreme Court



Definitions:

Euthanasia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice where a person deliberately ends their life. It is often done to get relief from incurable diseases and end pain or suffering.
Active Euthanasia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of substances or lethal injections to end life, i.e. an 'active attempt to end life'.
Passive Euthanasia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal of life support systems that were essential for survival.
Living Will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written document that specifies the action to be taken in case the person is unable to take their own decisions in future.

Why in the news?

The Supreme Court has relaxed certain guidelines for 'advance medical directive' that it earlier gave in 2018 concerning passive euthanasia.

Developments in India:

- **1994:** constitutional validity of Section 309 of the IPC (criminalises attempt to suicide) was questioned. The Supreme Court suggested removing the provision from IPC.

- **1996:** SC overturned above decision. Right to Life (Article 21) doesn't include right to die. It also recommended legislation in the matter.
- **2011:** SC allowed passive euthanasia for Aruna Shanbaug on a situational basis.
- **2018:** Supreme Court in Common Cause vs. Union of India allowed passive euthanasia and laid down guidelines, pending legislation by Parliament.
- **2023:** Earlier guidelines are relaxed due to cumbersome procedures.

Changes brought by the Supreme Court:

Requirement	2018 guidelines	2023 relaxed guidelines
Countersign by Judicial Magistrate of First Class	• Yes	• No; a gazetted officer can also sign
Medical boards formed	• Two; separate by hospital and collector	• Two; both by hospital
Experience of Medical Board members	• Min. 20 yrs	• Min. 5 yrs
Time limit for decision by board	• Not specified	• 48 hrs
Appeal to High Court by kin	• No	• Yes



A global perspective:

Country	Provision
USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variation across states; Washington, Oregon, and Montana etc. allow euthanasia
UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Euthanasia Illegal, equivalent to manslaughter
Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Euthanasia banned, but assisted dying in presence of doctor allowed
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal to allow for mentally ill patients; Decision pending
Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Euthanasia allowed

News Source: Indian Express

Menstrual Leave in Spain

Why in the news?

Spain has become the first European country to introduce paid menstrual leaves.

More about the policy:

- Women will get monthly paid leaves of three to five days after showing a doctor's note.
- The government will pay the bills to employers for this leave.
- Free menstrual hygiene products would be made available in educational centres, prisons, and social centres, as per the law.

Initiatives in other countries:

- Japan, Zambia, Taiwan and Indonesia have some similar policies.
- Scotland passed a bill giving legal right to **free access to sanitary products** in public buildings.
- New Zealand had announced free sanitary products for all schoolgirls to address 'period poverty'.
- Many states in India, like Rajasthan and Karnataka are providing free sanitary napkins to women and girls.
- Jan Aushadhi Suvridha sanitary napkins** are provided by the Union government.

Period poverty concept

- It refers to the lack of access to safe, hygienic and affordable menstrual products.
- As per UNICEF, period poverty can lead to severe physical health problems, stigma and gender discrimination.

News source: Indian Express

Federal Issues

Visakhapatnam as A.P. Capital

Why in the news?

The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh declared that Visakhapatnam would shortly become the capital city of the state.

A timeline of events:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh bifurcated into Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. |
|-------------|---|



2020- 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was bickering among parties over the issue of single or multiple capitals. • The matter went to High Court and ultimately Supreme Court.
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supreme Court stayed the High Court order for developing Amaravati as the only capital. • Andhra Pradesh CM announced intent to go ahead and develop Visakhapatnam as Capital. • Home Ministry responded in Parliament that Amaravati is still the capital of Andhra Pradesh as per the A.P. Reorganisation Act, 2014, which had been notified by the State government in 2015. • It further said that the proposal of multiple capitals has not been consulted with the Union Government.



Practical problems in this model:

- **No guaranteed development:** The Assembly meets only after gaps of several months and by itself does not raise economic activity.
- **Logistics challenge:** Coordinating between seats of the legislature and executive in separate cities.
- **Huge costs on exchequer:** Visakhapatnam is 700 km from Kurnool, and 400 km from Amaravati, incurring huge movement.

Other examples of multiple/ decentralized capital cities:

In India:

Maharashtra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mumbai and Nagpur (which holds the winter session of state assembly)
Himachal Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shimla and Dharamshala (the winter capital).
Jammu & Kashmir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Srinagar is the summer capital, whereas Jammu is the winter capital.



Globally:

South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretoria (Legislative), Cape Town (Executive), Bloemfontein (Judicial)
Bolivia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sucre (Legislative), La Paz (Executive)
Benin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Porto Novo (Official Capital), Cotonou (Judicial seat)
Cote D' Ivory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yamoussoukro(Official capital), Abidjan (Seat of the executive)

News Source: The Hindu

Sikkimese-Nepalese as Persons of 'Foreign Origin'

Why in the news?

There have been protests in Sikkim after a recent SC judgement referred to Sikkimese-Nepalis as people of "foreign origin".

What was the case?

Before	After
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before this judgement, the tax exemption excluded "old Indian settlers", who had permanently settled in Sikkim before the merger of the state into the Indian union on April 26, 1975. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Supreme Court held that the benefit of tax exemption shall be extended to all Sikkimese people. (Association of Old Settlers of Sikkim vs Union of India).

What did SC do after this?

- The court agreed to delete the portion "persons of foreign origin settled in Sikkim like the Nepalis" from the verdict.
- However Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta urged the court to delete the entire sentence.

History of Sikkim:

1642-1890	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sikkim was a Buddhist kingdom under the Namgyal-Chogyal dynasty.
1890-1947	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sikkim became a British protectorate, and was gradually granted more sovereignty over the next few decades.
1947-1975	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India became independent and the popular vote in Sikkim rejected joining the Indian Union. • So India continued a special protectorate status for Sikkim.
1975- present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Prime Minister of Sikkim appealed to the Indian Parliament for Sikkim to become a state of India. • It became the 22nd state via the 36th Amendment Act 1975.

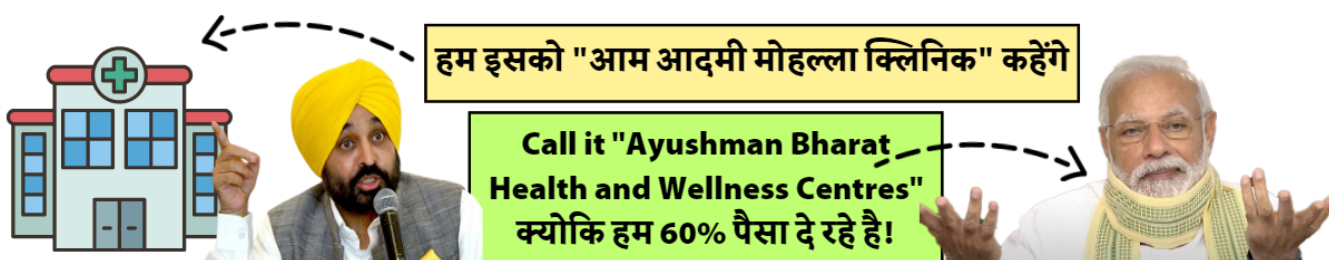
News Source: Indian Express and sikkim.ch



Renaming of Central Government Schemes- Ayushman Bharat clinic vs Aam Aadmi clinic

Types of Schemes:

Scheme	Central Sector Schemes	Centrally Sponsored Schemes	State Schemes
Funding	Union Govt	Both Union and State Govt; Ratio- 60:40, 90:10 etc.	State Govt
Implementation	Union Govt	State Govt	State Govt
Example	PM Mudra Yojana, Ujjwala Yojana, etc.	Swacch Bharat Abhiyaan, PM Krishi Sinchai Yojana, etc.	Eg- Jai Bangla Pension Scheme. etc.



Why in the news?

The Union Health Minister in Lok Sabha said that Centre would be forced to close down schemes if state governments continue to rename the schemes at will.

BIMARU States

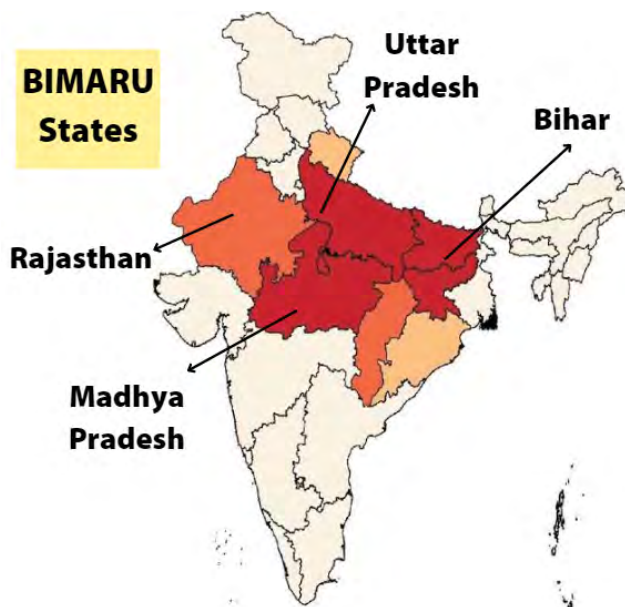
Why in the news?

Recently the term BIMARU came in news when the PM pointed it out in a rally.

More about the news:

- The Health and Wellness Centre scheme was launched under the Ayushman Bharat programme (a **centrally sponsored scheme**), running on 60: 40 contribution.
- The Punjab government has reportedly renamed the scheme as Aam Aadmi Clinics instead of Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (ABHWCs).
- Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Kerala are also not compliant with standard designs as per MoU between the centre and states.

News Source: Indian Express





Key Points:

- 'BIMARU' acronym has been used to refer to Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- It includes today's Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand.
- These states have lagged in terms of economic growth, healthcare and education.
- The term was coined by Ashish Bose, a demographer.

Source: Indian Express

State Anthem of Maharashtra

Why in the News?

- Recently the Maharashtra state cabinet declared 'Jai Jai Maharashtra Maza' will be the state's official song from 19th February 2023.

Key point:

Composer	• Raja Bade
Music	• Srinivas Khale
Time Played	• After the National Anthem at all official buildings and schools

Indian States and state songs:

- Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Odisha, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, and Uttarakhand, have their official state song.
- Assam was the very first state to announce a state song before independence and after independence, Andhra Pradesh was the very first state to announce its state song.

Some Facts about National Anthem

- **1911:** The 'Jana Gana Mana' was written by Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore.
- The song's original composition was in Bengali with many Sanskrit words in it.
- First sung in 1911 during the annual conference of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta.
- Rabindranath Tagore first translated 'Jana Gana Mana' into English in 1919 in Madanapalle, Andhra Pradesh.
- **January 24, 1950:** the song was embraced in its Hindi version by the Constituent Assembly of India and officially declared as the 'National Anthem of India'.
- The official version of the National Anthem should take 52 seconds by law.
- An abbreviated version of the first and last lines (which takes around 20 seconds) is also performed occasionally.

Source: The Indian Express

Elections

Voter-tracking MoUs by ECI

Election commission

pvt employees

1. प्राइवेट कंपनी का कर्मचारी भी वोट देने जा सके इसलिए कानून में उसे छुट्टी दी जाती है.
2. लेकिन फिर भी अगर वह वोट देने नहीं किया तो, उसका नाम कम्पनी के नोटिस बोर्ड पे डालो.
3. ताकि वह शर्मिंदा/जलील हुआ महसूस करें और दूसरी बार वोट देने जाएं

- वोट देना **income tax** भरने जैसी **compulsory/ अनिवार्य चीज नहीं है.**
- आप इस तरह मेरी **privacy/निजता का हनन नहीं कर सकते.**



Why in the news?

Election Commission of India (ECI) has announced that it will not replicate its initiative in the Gujarat elections (December 2022) to track electoral participation of the workforce, in the polls in north-eastern states in February.

What was the initiative in Gujarat?

- The ECI issued a directive to all government departments, PSUs, and all corporate entities with more than 500 workers.
- It asked to keep track of how many voters took leave on election day but didn't

actually vote.

- A nodal officer had to be appointed to ascertain leave availing but non-voting employees.
- A special voter awareness drive would be organised for “such non-voting members”.

What is the criticism of such a move?

- It was seen as a surveillance drive in the name of voter awareness.
- Some political outfits termed it as a “coercive step towards compulsory voting”.

About Compulsory voting:

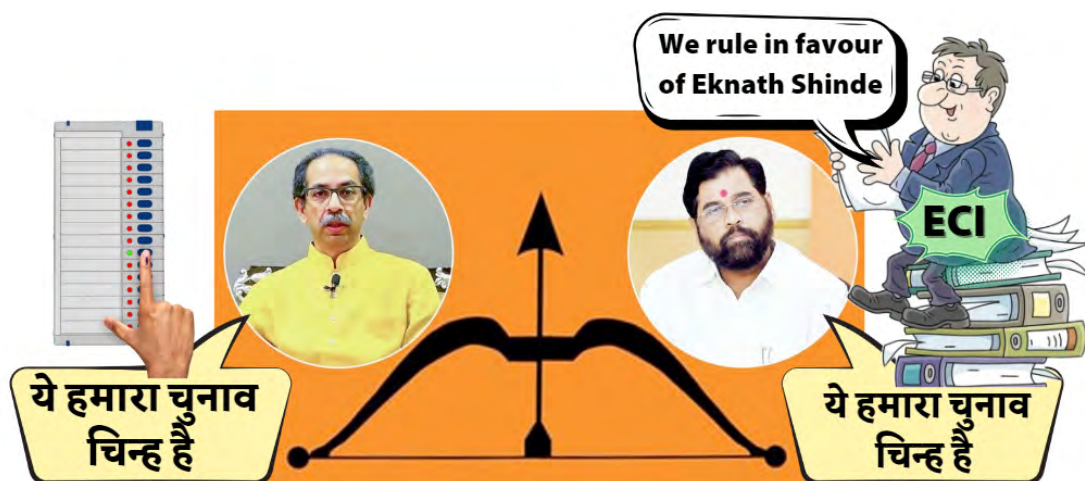
Status in India	• People have the legal right to vote, but voting is not mandatory/ compulsory.
Global situation	• Only a handful of countries like Argentina, Belgium and Brazil have provisions for mandatory voting.
Opinion of ECI	• “Freedom of expression means not only providing voters the right to vote but also the right to not vote”.
Opinion of Law Commission(2015)	• The idea of compulsory voting is “expensive, illegitimate and difficult to implement” in India.

What is the ECI's stand?

- The ECI has said that this step was meant to address non-participation of urban voters.
- After protests in Gujarat, now such MoUs/ Agreements will not be signed with individual organisations.
- Instead of that, existing **Voter Awareness Forum** initiative (launched in 2019) will be used to spread awareness in organisations.

News source: Indian Express

Symbol of Political Party- Shivsena ruling by ECI





Why in the news?

The Election Commission (EC) of India allotted the name 'Shiv Sena' and the party's bow and arrow symbol to the group led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

How are party symbols allotted?

- The EC is empowered by **Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968** to recognise political parties and allot symbols.
- The Election Commission registers political parties and recognizes them as national /

state parties or registered-unrecognised parties based on Poll performance.

- National party and state party is allotted a symbol exclusively reserved for their use throughout the country and the states respectively.

What did EC say?

- Uddhav Thackeray faction had referred to their party constitution to claim the symbol and name.
- The Election Commission said that the party constitution was "undemocratic".

News Source: TH

Judiciary

HC Additional Judge- controversy against appointment

Appointment of Additional Judge

PIL walla

ये महिला ने कुछ विवादास्पद राजनैतिक बयान दिया है, इसको जज मत बनाओ।

किसी उम्मीदवार को सिर्फ व्यक्तिगत राजनीतिक दृष्टिकोण के आधार पर रीजेक्ट नहीं कर सकते।

SC

Why in the news?

There was a petition in the SC against the appointment of an advocate as an Additional Judge of the Madras High Court, citing the political background of the advocate.

Permanent Judges	Additional Judges	Ad-hoc Judges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are permanent appointments in respective high courts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are appointed for any temporary increase in the business of a High Court or high pendency of work. • The Collegium may also later recommend making him/her a permanent judge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are retired judges, chosen on the basis of their expertise in a particular field of dispute. • Article 224A of the constitution provides for this. • The Chief Justice of a High Court, with the previous consent of the President, requests any retired judge of the same/different High Court to sit and act as a judge.

Appointment of Additional Judges:

Article **224** of the Indian Constitution provides for this.



Appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the President of India on the recommendation of the SC Collegium.
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed tenure, for a period not exceeding two years. • The said judge must be under 62 years of age, which is also the age limit for regular judges of the High Court.
Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as a permanent judge of High Courts in India.

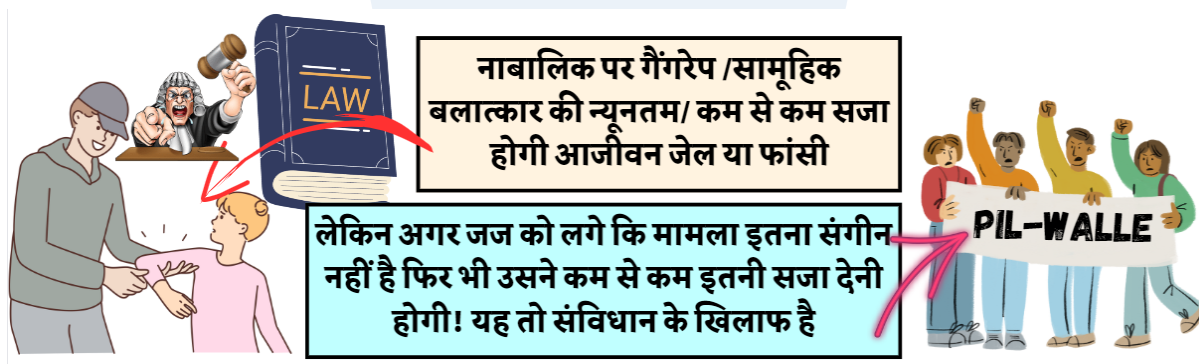
Supreme Court's observations on the petition:

- The Collegium takes the opinion of the candidate judge before an appointment.
- Consultee judges are Supreme Court judges who are originally from the same state High Court.
- The personal political view of a candidate is not a ground for not recommending him or her.

Mandatory Minimum Sentencing

Mandatory minimum sentencing:

- It refers to a sentence/punishment which must be imposed without leaving any discretion to the court.
- It means that the amount of punishment that cannot be reduced below the fixed period.
- This concept is primarily derived from the Canadian and American legal systems.



Why in the news?

The Supreme Court has decided to examine the constitutional validity of **Section 376 DB** of the Indian Penal Code, which prescribes a 'minimum mandatory sentence' of life imprisonment or death.

Mandatory minimum sentencing in India:

- Applicable for certain offences which are considered to be more serious than others.
- Minimum punishment **must be given, irrespective** of any unique circumstances of the offender/offence.
- Examples:
 - **Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act:** Minimum 3-5 years jail for sexual assault against children (Section 8).
 - **Section 376 DB (IPC) :** Imprisonment for rest of their life or a death sentence, for gang rape of a minor under 12 years.



Arguments for this practice:	Arguments against it:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It limits the scope for judicial discretion and arbitrariness. • It serves as a deterrent against crime. • Increased consistency and predictability in sentencing are possible. • Reduction in costs associated with lengthy legal proceedings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It leads to overcrowding of prisons. • It is unfair as not all cases are similar and can have unintended consequences. • Statistics show that no significant increase in convictions is seen despite an increase in reported cases. • Inflexibility: Mandatory minimum sentences limit the judge’s ability to reduce a sentence based on the circumstances or background of the offender.




News source: Indian Express

AI-Powered Surveillance System

Why in news?

Tihar jail is installing artificial intelligence (AI)-powered CCTV cameras to monitor inmates and fight crime.

High-tech overhaul

-  20 AI-powered cameras with built-in facial recognition to be installed
- Control room in each ward with a calling facility
-  Staffers will also be provided with walkie-talkies to communicate with each other
- Optical fibre network to do away with manual billing in canteens
-  A biometric system will also be put in place to help manage records




Image Source: The Hindu

More about the news:

- AI-powered CCTV cameras will help detect movements in “dark spots”.
- ‘Dark spots’, according to jail officials are areas where most incidents of assaults and fights take place, or where prisoners go to access mobile signals and store contraband drugs/weapons.
- The overcrowding of prisons has made monitoring inmates difficult.

Working of AI Camera:

- AI CCTV cameras observe repetitive hand movements, example-movement of assaulting a person, or action that show a phone call, and automatically trigger alerts to the officers.

- The cameras will also capture instances of inmates leaving the designated perimeter.

News Source: The Hindu

Governance

DGP appointment controversy in Nagaland

Why in the news?

There is some controversy with appointment of DGP of Nagaland.

The process of appointing Director General of Police(DGP):

- It is done on the basis of the Supreme Court judgement on police reforms in Prakash Singh vs Union of India (2006).
- UPSC has also made guidelines based on this judgement.
- Steps involved:
 1. The DGP is selected by the State Government from three persons recommended by UPSC.
 2. UPSC recommends these names from the list of eligible officers sent by the State.
 3. **Eligibility criteria:** At least 30 years of service, officers' track record, performance appraisal, and vigilance clearance.
 4. This list should be given to UPSC six months before the incumbent DGP retires.
 5. **Empanelment Committee:** Headed by the UPSC chairman, and has the union home secretary, state chief secretary, state DGP, and the chief of a central police organization.

News source: Indian Express

Aarogya Setu Data Deleted



Why in the News?

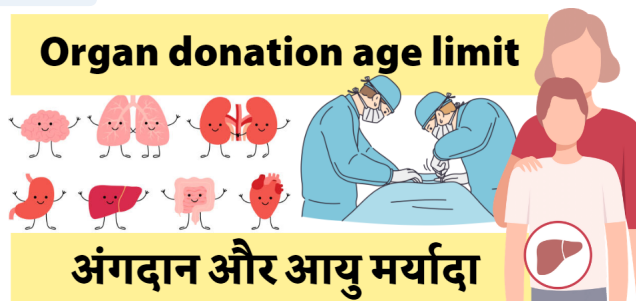
In a recent declaration from the Government, it said that the contact tracing feature of the app has been discontinued and data is deleted.

More about news:

- Aarogya Setu app uses smartphones' GPS and Bluetooth functions to detect the infection.
- It was launched in the year April 2020 during the first wave of COVID.
- It aids in detecting whether or not the person was in close touch with another affected person.
- Concerns: privacy breach and data theft

Source: Business Today

Organ Donor Age limit reforms



Why in news?

The Union Health Ministry has issued new guidelines that will allow the elderly (above 65) to register on waiting lists.

Before	After
People over 65 age could not receive an organ from dead donor.	Age Limit Removed.



More about the news:

- **NOTTO (National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation):** The nodal agency for issuing guidelines for organ and tissue transplant registration in India, headquartered in Delhi.
- India conducts the third-highest number of transplants in the world.
- To increase access to organ transplants,

the Health Ministry has also done away with the domicile requirement and fee for registration.

- **2022:** In India, organs from deceased donors accounted for 17.8% of all transplants.
- Government is working on “**One Nation One Policy**” for organ donation.

News Source: Indian Express

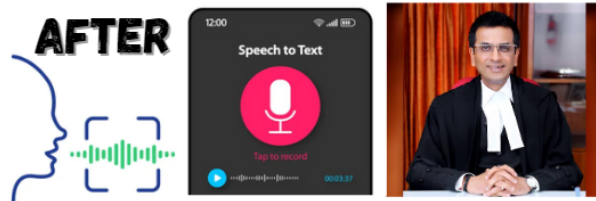
Supreme Court AI-Aided Transcript

BEFORE



अदालती सुनवाई को हाथ से type करने में काफ़ी समय लगता था।

AFTER



AI Aided Transcripts द्वारा अदालत की सुनवाई की लिखित-फ़ाइल उसी दिन बन जाएगी

Why in the news?

The apex court created history by using artificial intelligence software to start live transcription of its hearings.

More about the development:

- The technology was used to translate court arguments into text during live proceedings of the constitution bench.
- It was developed by a Bangalore-based start-up named TERES.

Before	After
Stenographer used to write down proceedings, which took very long time to compile.	Using AI, text of the hearing is available by evening on the same day.

- It helped to release the which earlier used to take much longer.
- It can ensure accountability by ensuring accurate documentation of the statements.
- It will also keep a check on other practices prohibited for judges, like the use of sarcasm.

Steps taken to promote accountability in judiciary:

- **E-courts project:** It was launched under the **National e-Governance Plan** for the integration of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in Indian judicial functioning.
- **Budgetary allocation:** Allocation of Rs 7,000 crore in the 2023-24 budget for phase III of the eCourts Project to enhance judicial institutions and efficiency.

News source: Livemint



Media Regulation/ Social Media

Disclosing Journalists Sources



Why in news?

Delhi court ruled that there is no statutory exemption for journalists from disclosing their sources to investigating agencies.

Legal protection for journalistic sources in India:

- Journalists in their profession derive information from various people.

Note: However, in the absence of a specific law, it is often at the discretion of a court. Courts in “public interest” asked journalists to disclose their sources.

Position in other countries:

United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contempt of Courts Act protects journalists in certain situations. European Court of Human Rights: forcing a journalist to reveal his source violates his freedom of speech and expression.
United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different levels of protection in different states. The Supreme Court has held that journalists don't have a right of refusal to disclose sources in a federal grand jury proceeding.
Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freedom of the Press Act: protects the rights of journalists. A journalist who reveals his or her source without consent may be prosecuted on behalf of the source.

Way Forward:

- The **Law Commission of India (93rd Report in 1983)** recommended to recognize the privilege

- It is important to safeguard them to avoid harassment and intimidation.
- In India, there is no specific legislation that protects journalists from being asked to disclose their sources.
- Article 19 of the Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of speech and expression to all citizens.
- Investigative agencies can issue notices to anyone, including journalists, to provide information.
- Under the **Press Council of India (PCI) Act, of 1978**, the Press Council has the powers of a civil court to deal with complaints against a newspaper.
 - However, the act does not provide PCI the power to compel any newspaper, news agency, editor, or journalist to disclose the source of their news.

Recognition by the Supreme Court:

- 2019:** In the Rafale case, the SC overruled the Centre's objections to disclose sources.
- 2021:** In the Pegasus case, SC recognized the protection of sources as one of the fundamental conditions for the media to exercise its right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19.

on the part of a journalist to refuse to disclose the source of information obtained by him in confidence.

- It suggested to amend the Indian Evidence Act for this, and reiterated this in its 185th report.

Media Censorship Provisions in India: Ban on BBC Documentary and 200+ Apps, Websites



Why in the news?

The government invoked certain emergency provisions from the IT Act and IT Rules 2021:

1. To ban a documentary by the BBC (British Broadcasting Channel). The documentary is based on the Godhra riots and allegedly portrays the Prime Minister in a poor light.
2. To ban 200 apps involved in online betting and lending activities. These apps had alleged links to China and provided unauthorised loan services.

Various legal provisions used for censorship in India:

<p>Information Technology Act, 2000 and Rules</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 67A: regulate material that is “grossly offensive or has menacing character”. Eg.- blocked pornography sites or religious-hatred content. • Section 69A: for online content detrimental to public interest, national security, or public order. • 2020: Chinese mobile apps banned under this provision. • 2023: Misleading betting and lending apps blocked by Meity; BBC documentary banned. • Rule 16(3) under IT Rules 2021 deals with ‘Blocking of information in case of emergency’. • BBC Documentary has been banned under this provision. • Section 87: allows making rules for intermediaries to monitor and take down content.
<p>Indian Telegraph Act, 1885</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 5: for action against those who publish or transmit messages that are “obscene, defamatory, or menacing in nature”. • In 2019, government used these provision for objectionable content related to CAA 2019, and blocked about 200 websites.



Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 144 allows government to prohibit certain content risking the security of the state. • It was used to restrain the screening of banned BBC documentary in Delhi University.
Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994; Cinematograph Act, 1952	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Information And Broadcasting issues directions to cable operators to stop transmission of any content violating the rules. • Can also suspend or revoke the licence of any channel violating the rules. • Looks into cases under Indecent Representation of Women Act, 1986.

Criticism of these laws:

- **Too broad and vague:** making it open to interpretation. Eg- terms like ‘grossly offensive’, ‘menacing character’ have no clear definition.
- Stifling **freedom of speech** and expression: particularly in political matters.
- **Targeted use:** against media persons, journalists, opposition leaders, etc.
- **Overly restrictive:** It enables more control rather than regulation of social media, as per Internet freedom foundation.

MCQs and Probable Mains Questions

1. With reference to the Indian judiciary, consider the following statements: (2021)

1. Any retired judge of the Supreme Court of India can be called back to sit and act as a Supreme Court judge by the Chief Justice of India with the prior permission of the President of India.
2. A High Court in India has the power to review its own judgement as the Supreme Court does.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

2. With reference to the Powers, Privileges, and Immunities of the Parliament and

its members, consider the following statements?

1. Article 105 of the Constitution deals with the powers and privileges of the Houses of Parliament and their members and committees.
2. A member of Parliament cannot be proceeded against in any court in respect of anything said by him in Parliament or any committee thereof.

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

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

3. With reference to the post of Deputy Speaker, which of the following statements is incorrect?

- (a) It is mandatory to have a Deputy Speaker under the Constitution.
- (b) Deputy Speaker has the same powers as the Speaker when presiding over a sitting of the House.
- (c) The Constitution lays down a specific time frame for the election of Deputy Speaker of the House.
- (d) Once elected, the Deputy Speaker usually continues in office for the entire duration of the House.

4. Consider the following statements:

1. The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006, says that child marriages are illegal and void.



2. Jaya Jaitly Committee submitted a report stating that the marriageable age for women should be increased from 18 to 21 years of age.

Which of the above statements are incorrect?

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

5. Consider the following statements:

1. In the election for Lok Sabha or State Assembly, the winning candidate must get at least 50 percent of the votes polled, to be declared elected.
2. According to the provisions laid down in the Constitution of India, in Lok Sabha, the Speaker's post goes to the majority party and the Deputy Speaker's to the Opposition.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

6. In the context of Child Marriage, which was in news recently, consider the following statements:

1. Men who marry girls below the age of 14 can be arrested under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.
2. As per Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, child marriage is illegal but not void.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 or 2

7. Which of the following is not correct about the appointment of State Police Chiefs (Director General of Police)?

- (a) Appointments of DGPs are on the basis of the Supreme Court judgement on police reforms in Prakash Singh vs Union of India.
- (b) The consent of an officer is required for his/her posting as DGPs.
- (c) Centre has the power to not relieve an officer for posting as DGP in the state.
- (d) States are supposed to draw up and send to the UPSC a list of eligible officers under certain conditions.

Questions:

1. "India ails from the problem of overcrowding of prisons and lack of surveillance." In the light of the statement discuss how technology can help bring out prison reforms in India?
2. What are constitutional provisions regarding the National Commission for ST? How has NCST ensured protection of Tribal Rights in modern times?
3. What do you mean by a "National Party"? What role does the Election Commission play in recognition and dispute settlement among political parties in India?
4. "Protection of journalists' sources is important for free and fair media." Critically analyse.
5. What are the provisions for appointment of Judges of High Courts? Discuss reforms needed in judicial appointments for speedy justice delivery.

1. (C)

2. (C)

3. (C)

4. (A)

5. (D)

6. (C)

7. (B)

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March 17	Krishna Mohan (retd. IAS)	Open session on 'Qualities you must have to become an IAS officer'

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*Source: The Indian Edtech Story, Q1 2022 Round-Up by Markelytics.

ECONOMY IN NEWS: 2023 - FEBRUARY

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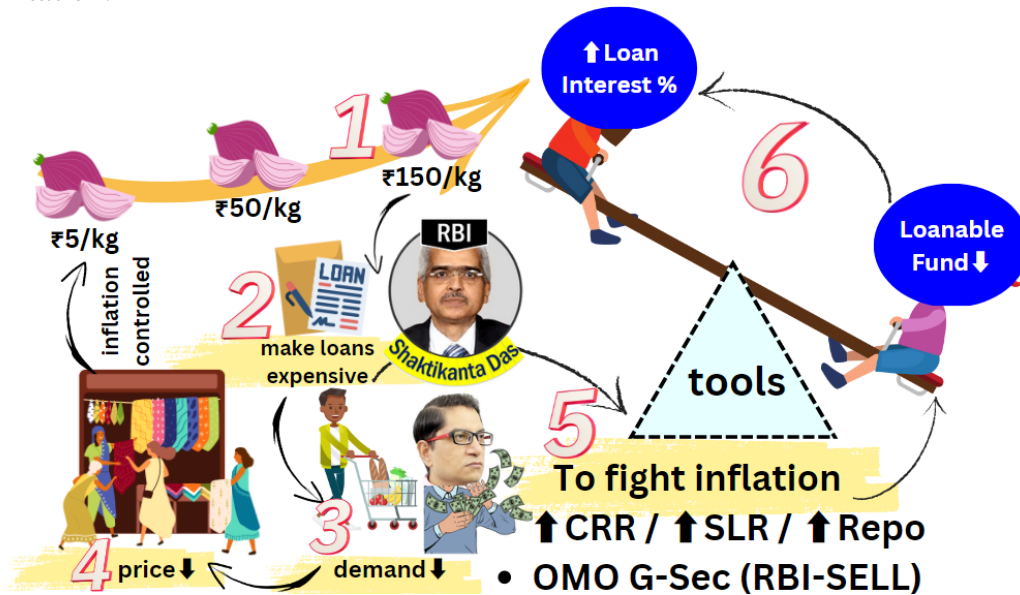


Money, Banking, Finance

RBI Monetary Policy Review (2023-Feb)

Why in the news?

Repo has been increased to **6.50% from 6.25%** by the RBI in its bi-monthly monetary policy review, to combat inflation.



About the monetary policy review:

- RBI is required to keep inflation controlled within 2-6% CPI (All India).
- To combat inflation, repo increased from 6.25% to 6.50%.
- This decision is taken by the Monetary **Policy Committee**, a 12-member body set up in 2016 under **RBI Act, 1934**.

For more details, refer to Mrunal's free lecture series Win23: <https://unacademy.com/class/win23-economy-pill1ab-rbi-monetary-policydigital-payment/T53HOK3S>

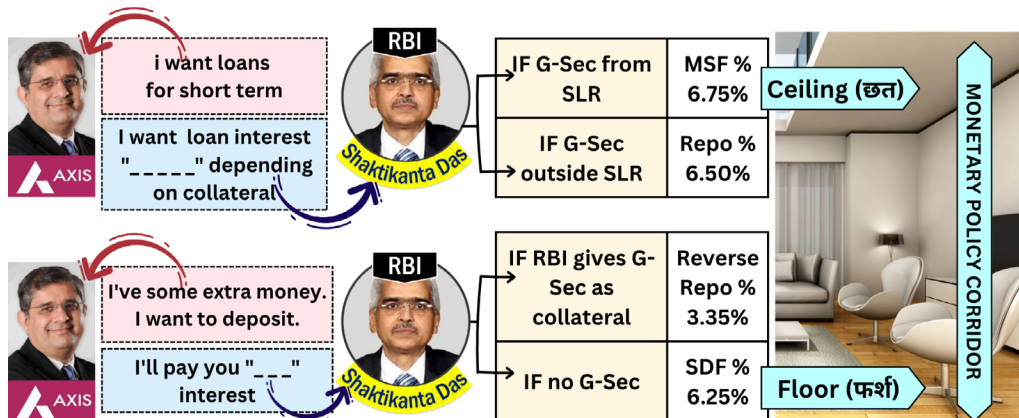


Chart credit: Mrunal.org

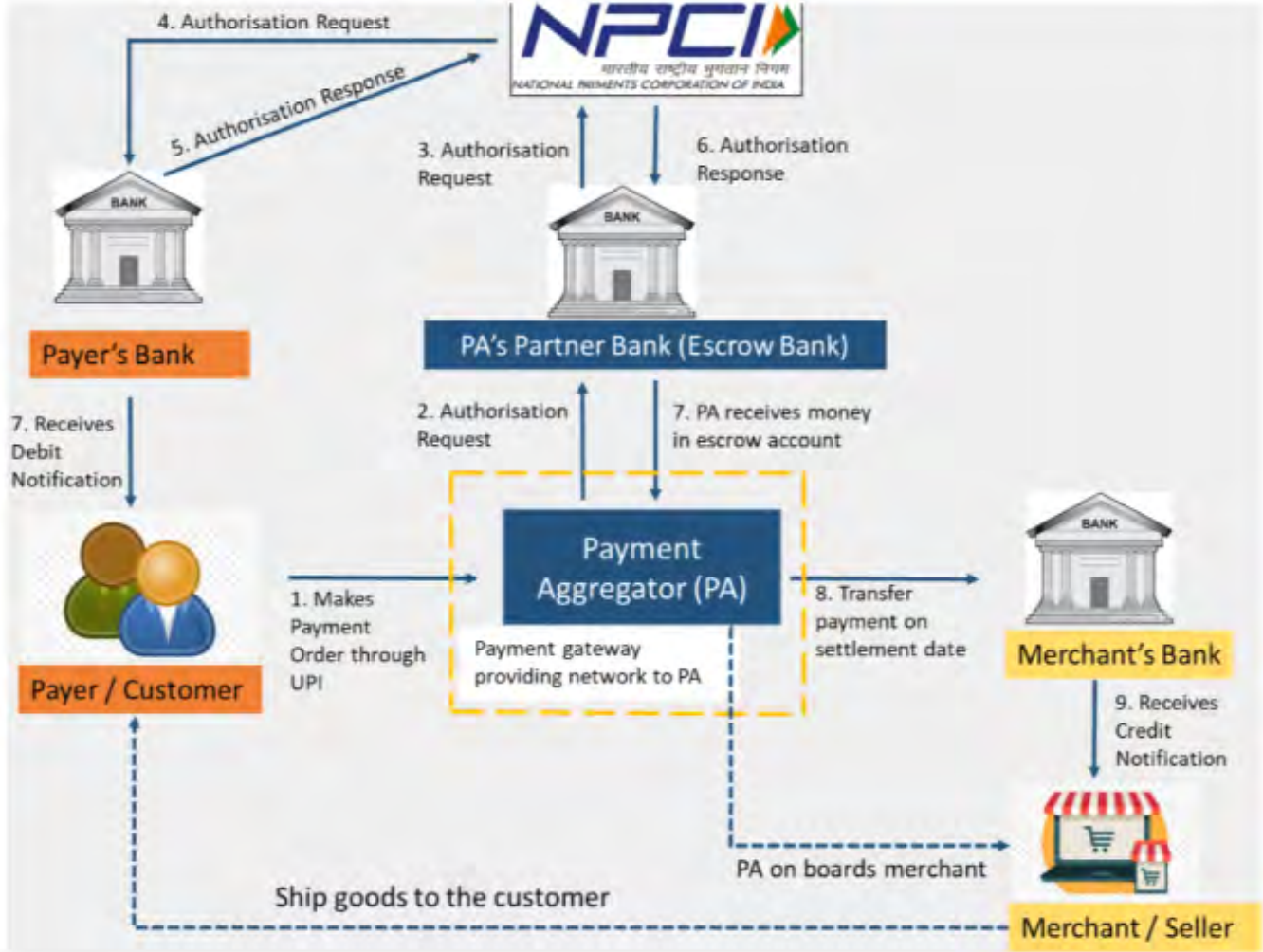
News Source: Indian Express



License to new Online Payment Aggregators

Why in news?

- The Reserve Bank of India allowed 32 entities, including Alphabet Inc.'s Google Pay, Amazon.com Inc.'s Amazon Pay, Reliance Payment Solutions Ltd., etc., to act as online payment aggregators.
- Approval has been given under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 (PSS Act).



What are Online Payment Aggregators?

- A payment aggregator (also known as a merchant aggregator) is a third-party service provider that allows merchants/businesses to accept payment from customers by integrating it into their websites or apps.
- It bridges the gap between merchants and acquirers (Customers).
- They can accept payments after getting a licence from the RBI.

News Source: Indian Express

QR Code-Based Coin Vending Machine (QCVM)





Why in the news?

The Reserve Bank of India has announced a pilot project on QR code-based coin vending machines.

Before	After
Insert paper note to get coin.	Scan QR code → transfer money from bank account via UPI → Get coins from machine.

News Source: Indian Express

T +1 Settlement Cycle

1st Jan: lets trade 100 infosys shares @Rs.1400 each. then within 1 working day

Buyer must transfer money to seller

Seller must deliver shares to buyer

foreign investors: this is difficult due to Timezone difference.

T+1 SETTLEMENT

Why in the news?

India will become the second country after China to implement the **one-day cycle (T +1 Settlement Cycle)**.

What is T+1 Settlement?

- The T+1 settlement cycle means that trade-related settlements must be done within a day, or 24 hours, of the completion of a transaction.
 - Eg: If a customer bought shares on Wednesday, they would be credited to the customer's demat account on Thursday.

Benefits of T+1?

- It will bring operational efficiency, faster fund remittances, share delivery, and ease for stock market participants.
- According to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), it reduces and frees up capital required for collateral.

Concerns Regarding T+1 Settlement:

- Foreign investors are concerned about operational issues like **time zone differences, information flow processes, and foreign exchange problems.**

UPI goes Global - ties with Singapore's PayNow





Why in news?

India started its **first cross-border real-time payments systems connectivity** with the linkage of **India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Singapore's PayNow** for money transfers from both sides of the country.

More about news:

- The idea of the linkage was first conceived in 2018.
- It would enable residents of both countries

to the faster and more cost-efficient transfer of cross-border remittances.

- People in both the countries will be able to send money real-time via QR-code based or simply by entering mobile numbers linked to the bank account.
- **Reserve Bank of India Remittance Survey, 2021:** Remittances from Singapore stood at 5.7 percent of total remittances to India.

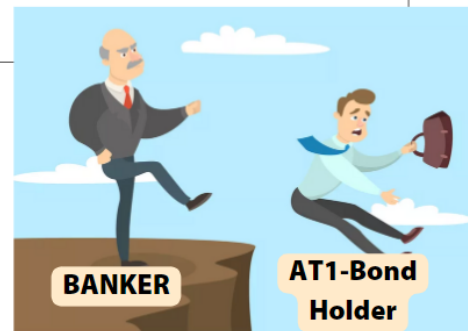
News Source: IE

AT1 Bonds of Yes Bank: write-off controversy

Debt Instrument	Principal returned	Interest Returned
Normal Bonds	✓	✓
AT1 Bond: when Bank running normally	◆ No*	✓ (for infinite years)
AT1 Bond: when Bank suffers a SCAM/crisis	◆ No*	◆ No*

जब बैंक में कांड होता है तो नुकसान की भरपाई के लिए AT1 Bond Holder पैसों का इस्तेमाल होता है और उसके बॉन्ड की देयता को खत्म कर दिया जाता है

✓ RBI PERMITS ✓ BASEL-III PERMITS



What is a Write Off?

A write-off is a decision by a company or government to accept that they will not be able to recover a debt or an amount of money that has been spent on something and can be removed from the account book.

Why in news?

The Bombay High Court quashed the write-off of Additional Tier-1 (AT1) bonds worth Rs 8,400 crore issued by Yes Bank Ltd.

Chart credit Mrunal.org

What triggered the write-off?

- RBI had put restrictions on Yes Bank in 2020.
- The RBI allowed a write-off of Rs 8,400 crore on AT1 bonds issued by Yes Bank after it was rescued by the State Bank of India.

News Source: Indian Express



G20 tourists can use UPI at Indian airports

Why in the News?

- In a recent circular RBI allowed inbound travellers from G-20 group countries and NRIs to access UPI for their merchant payment at select airports.



Chart Credit: Mrunal.org

Key Points:

Before	After
Indians with UPI apps can use and pay using the app.	Visitors from G20 countries with NRE/NRO accounts can avail UPI payment using UPI apps.

- The PPIs (Prepaid Payment Instruments) can be issued in the form of wallets linked to UPI, like Google Pay and PhonePe — and can be used for merchant payments (P2M) only.
- The RBI has granted access to Unified Payment Interface (UPI) payments to all G-20 travellers including non-resident Indians.

Source: The Indian Express

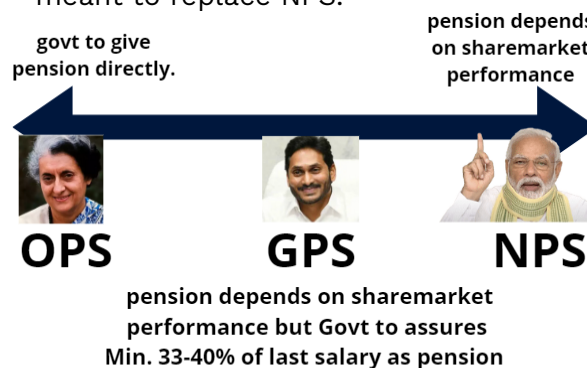
Andhra Pradesh's Guaranteed Pension Scheme (GPS)

Why in the News?

The hybrid scheme called the **“Guaranteed Pension Scheme”** was recently announced by the Andhra Pradesh Government.

About the Scheme:

- The new Pension system is being called a ‘Contributory Pension Scheme’ and it is meant to replace NPS.



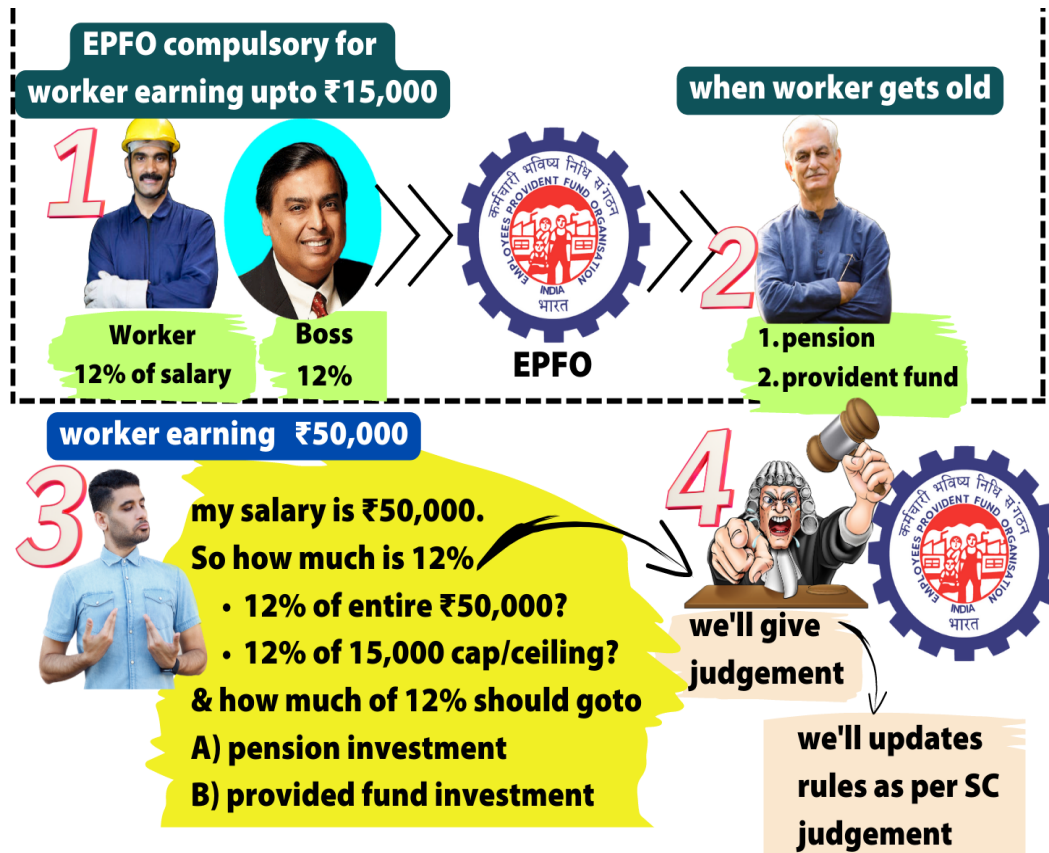
Employee Contribution	Andhra Govt. Contribution	Pension
10%	10%	33%
14%	14%	40%

Opposition to the Scheme:

- Employees of the state opposed this scheme and demanded a **similar 50% guaranteed** pension recommended by the **Thakkar Committee** during the previous **TDP government**.

Source: Business Standard

Higher Pension in EPFO



Why in news?

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has issued guidelines to allow some members to opt for a higher pension under the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS).

Old Guidelines	New Guidelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both employees and employers contribution of 12% of the employee's basic salary, dearness allowance, and retaining allowance. The Government of India contributes 1.16% to an employee's pension. The EPS provides employees with a pension after the age of 58, if they have rendered at least 10 years of service and retired at age 58. If a member leaves employment between ages 50 and 57, they can avail early (reduced) pension. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EPFO has allowed for the option of a higher contribution by: Employees whose Basic/DA was up to Rs15,000 a month or who had been a member of EPS as on September 1, 2014. those who did not exercise the joint option (by employer and employee) while being members of Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS 95).

News Source: IE



Govt Budgeting, Taxation and GST

GST Appellate Tribunal

About the GST Council:

- Constitutional body set up under **Article 279A** of the Constitution.
- It is a joint forum of the Union and State governments.
- **Members:** Union Finance Minister (Chairperson), Union Minister of State for Finance, State ministers of taxation or finance as nominated by States.
- It makes recommendations to the Union and the states on important issues related to GST.
- It also decides on various rate slabs of GST.

Why in the news?

Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council approved a long-pending proposal for an appellate tribunal for the GST. It is likely to be included in the Finance Bill 2023.

What is the GST Appellate Tribunal?

- A quasi-judicial body proposed to be established to resolve GST-related disputes.
- It will function as an independent body to hear appeals.
- It will have a national bench and various regional benches.
- It will help to reduce the burden on the judiciary.

- The jurisdiction extends to all cases where an appeal has been filed against an order of lower authority under the GST laws.

Power and jurisdiction of GST Appellate Tribunal:

- It is **first common forum of dispute resolution** between Centre and States related to GST.
- It is the forum of second appeal in GST laws. For example, for any dissatisfactory order passed by the First Appellate Authorities, an application for revision of the same can be raised to the National Appellate Tribunal.
- The Tribunal has the power to hear and resolve disputes related to the assessment of taxes, determination of liability, imposition of penalties, and other matters related to the implementation and interpretation of the GST laws.
- Its order **can be challenged in the High Court** and later in the Supreme Court.

Issues with the present litigation mechanism:

- **Compliance issues:** The new GST regime since 2017 is continuously evolving and facing issues.
- **Complex adjudication hierarchy:** The number of disputes has been rising and burdening appellate authorities and courts.
- **Time-consuming process:** It has led to challenges in ease of doing business.

News Source: The Hindu

Delay in GST compensation because States not submitting documents to Union

हमें GST का मुआवजा दो

आप पहले Accountant General's हिसाब किताब का certificate लायें।

NO!

Why in news?

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman pointed out that GST dues were delayed for some states due to the non-availability of the Accountant General's authentication certificate.



More about news:

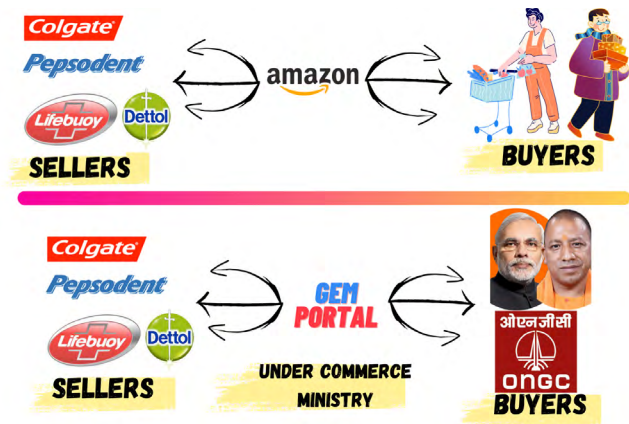
- Kerala has not sent even a single AG certification since 2017-18, leading to the delay in GST compensation.

News Source: Indian Express

Government e-Marketplace (GeM) PORTAL transaction to reach Rs 2 LCr

About GeM Portal:

It is a single-window public procurement portal for the government, its departments, agencies, and PSUs to procure goods and services.



Launched in	2016
Nodal Ministry	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Key features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completely cashless, paperless, and system-driven e-marketplace. • Includes tools for e-bidding and reverse e-auction. • Integration with PFMS (Public Financial Management System) and State Bank Multi Option System (SBMOPS).
Rising usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 66,000 government buyer organizations, and 60 lakh sellers are present on this portal. • It has become the third-largest such platform in the world after South Korea's KONEPS and Singapore's GeBIZ.

Why in the news?

The government's procurement of goods and services through the GeM portal is expected to reach Rs 2 lakh crore during this fiscal year (2022-23).

Benefits of this portal and Way forward:

- Higher transparency and reduced corruption. Reduced time for procurement.
- Savings for the government through efficient procurement.
- Utilising the huge potential in states and public sector undertakings to increase the buying from the platform.

News source: Financial Express

Balance of Payments and International Trade

(TATA) Air India 470 planes order

Why in the news?

Air India, which is now privately owned by Tata Sons, announced major purchase deals with manufacturers Airbus and Boeing.

LARGEST DEAL

70 wide-body, ultra long-range aircraft included in deals

■ These carry 300-410 passengers in three-class configurations

■ From India, these aircraft can fly non-stop to the US

470 new aircraft for Air India: 250 from Airbus, 220 Boeing

EXPLAINED

E **400** are narrow-body, which usually carry 140-170 passengers

■ These can be operated in India, countries close by

Image source: Indian Express



Significance of the order:

- This is the **largest order** placed by an airline at a time anywhere in the world and will make India the third-largest player in the aviation sector.
- **Modernise Air India's fleet** and expand India's aviation network.
- **Generate new jobs** and promotion of India's **'Make in India-Make for the World'** vision.
- **Promote Soft power** for India, as Presidents of USA and France and UK Prime Minister have lauded this deal, that will improve their local economies.

Steps taken to promote civil aviation in India:

- National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) 2016.
- UDAN ('Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik') Scheme -Regional air connectivity and affordability.
- NABH Nirman (Nextgen airports for Bharat)- for Airport development.
- DigiYatra- facial recognition technology for smoother travel.
- National Monetization Pipeline - for asset monetization of Airports.

News source: Indian Express

Sectors of the Economy, GDP, Inflation

ICAR's new wheat variety

Why in the news?

The Indian Council of Agriculture Institute developed a new variety of wheat called HD-3385.



More about the variety:

- This new variety will cope with the challenges of changing weather patterns and heat waves.
- **Benefit of this variety:**

BEFORE	AFTER
Wheat is grown in Rabi season: planted in month of October, and harvested in April. Sometimes rising heat from February and March adversely impacts wheat harvest.	This new variety is can be sowed early and thus harvested before March, escaping the adverse heat.

MIIRA (Millet International Initiative for Research and Awareness)

What are millets?

- A group of small-seeded grasses that are a staple food, mainly in Africa and Asia.
- Highly nutritious, having low glycemic index (GI)- ideal for various dietary and health problems.
- **Examples:** sorghum (**jowar**), pearl millet (**bajra**), finger millet (**ragi**), foxtail millet (**kangni**), little millet (**kutki**), kodo millet, etc.
- **Climatic conditions:** require **very less water**, mainly grown in rainfed areas with moderate temperature and **adequate sunlight**.
- They are also called "Shree Anna" in budget.

Why in the news?

In light of its G20 Presidency and the International Year of Millets, India is planning the launch of

a global initiative called “MIIRA” or the **Millet International Initiative for Research and Awareness**.

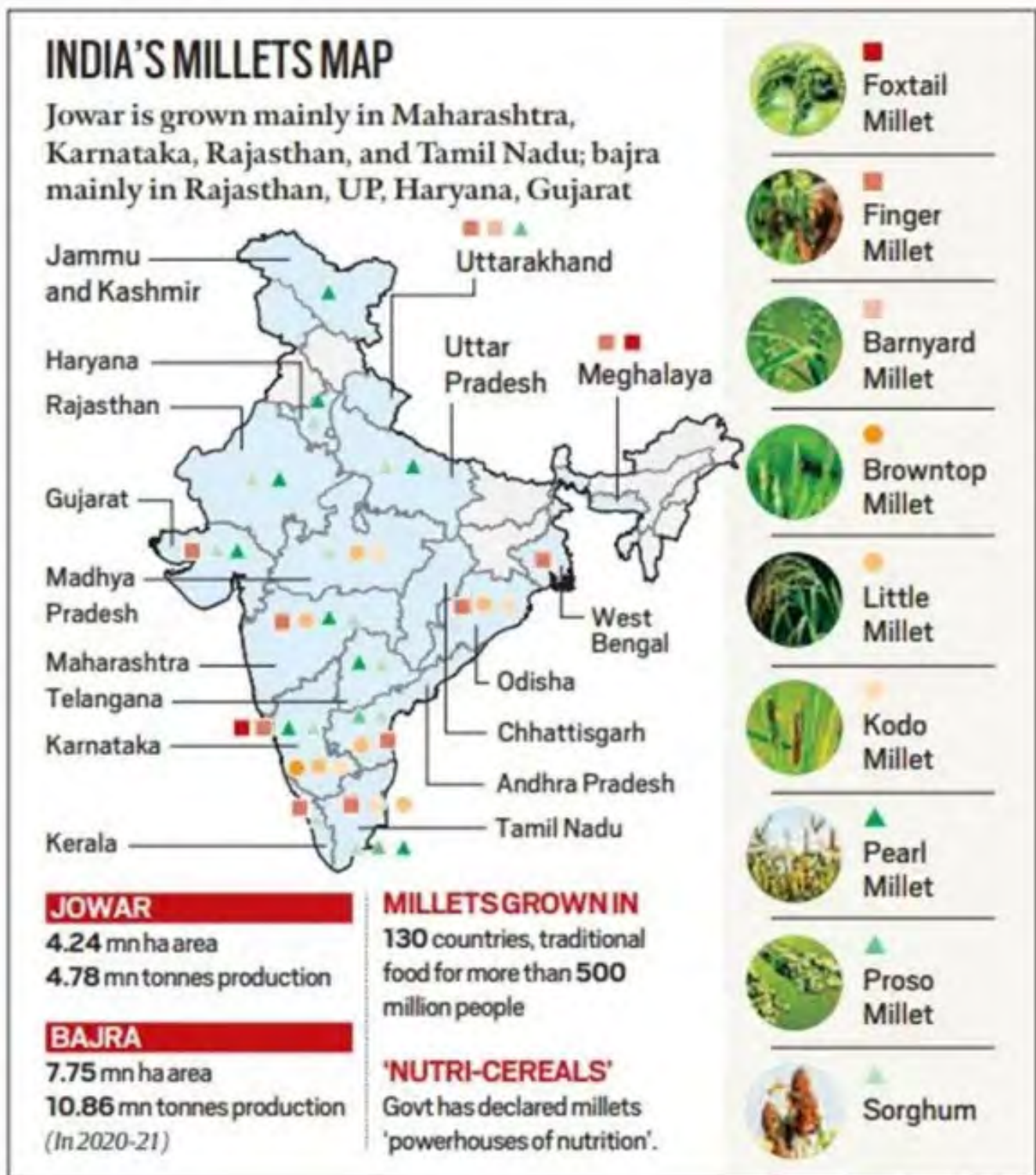


Image Source: Indian Express

More about the initiative:

- Aimed at coordinating millet research programs at the international level.
- Aligned with the plan to make India a global hub for millet.
- It will connect millet research organisations globally and support research on millet.
- MIIRA secretariat will be in Delhi and budgetary contribution is expected from G20 countries.



Millets: an approach for sustainable agriculture and healthy world

Food Security	Nutritional Security	Safety from diseases	Economic security
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable for combating hunger in a changing climate. • Resistant to climatic stress, pests and diseases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich in micronutrients like calcium, iron, zinc, iodine etc. • Rich in bioactive compounds • Better amino acid profile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gluten free: a substitute for wheat in celiac diseases • Low GI: good for diabetic persons • Combat cardiovascular diseases, anaemia, lack of calcium, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate resilient crop • Sustainable income source for farmers • Low investment needed • Value addition can lead to economic gains

Steps taken to promote millets in India:

- Indian Institute of Millet Research, Hyderabad is being supported as a Centre of Excellence.
- Government declares a Minimum Support Price (MSP) for jowar, bajra, and ragi, to promote their cultivation.
- Agriculture ministry declared millets as 'Nutri Cereals' for their "high nutritive value".

News Source: Indian Express

Infrastructure and Energy

Lithium deposits in J&K



Why in the News?

Lithium deposit Inferred in J&K.

Lithium

- Lithium is a non-ferrous metal and element of group 1 in the periodic table and it is a part alkali metal.
- It constitutes about 0.002 % of the earth's crust.

More about News:

- The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has "inferred" lithium resources of 5.9 million tonnes in Salal-Haimana area of Reasi District of Jammu and Kashmir.
- It is a part of "Reasi Sersandu-Kherikot-Rahotkot-Darabi" mineral block.
- The "inferred" mineral resources are estimated only with a low level of confidence and also of lower reliability.
- Hybrid electric vehicles use lithium-ion batteries.

Source: The Economic Times

Vibrant Villages Programme for Infra Development at Northern border

Why in the news?

The Cabinet has approved the "Vibrant Villages Programme" (VVP) for the financial years 2022-23 to 2025-26 under the Ministry of Home Affairs.



Details of the scheme:

Objective	All-round development of villages of blocks along the northern border.
Coverage	Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh.
Nature of Scheme	Centrally Sponsored Scheme
Other details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funds for the development of essential infrastructure. • Vibrant Village Action Plans will be created by the district administration. • Ensuring 100 % utilisation and coverage under existing central and state schemes. • Concept of “One Village-One product” to be promoted.

Importance of the scheme:

- **Border Security:** Improve surveillance and preparedness along the border with China.
- **Checking Out-migration:** To stop people from leaving due to poor connectivity, lack of development, and challenging living conditions.
- **Public Participation:** develop sustainable agricultural, dairy, and fishery cooperatives in each village.
- **Economic growth:** Develop small enterprises, trade, and other necessities.
- **Encourage Tourism:** It will help in making the places self-reliant and prosperous.

News Source: PIB

Jal Jeevan Mission

About Jal Jeevan mission:

	Jal Jeevan mission(rural)	Jal Jeevan mission(Urban)
Nodal Ministry	Ministry of Jal Shakti	Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
Mission launched	2019	2021
Goal	Providing Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) to every rural household by 2024 (Har Ghar Nal Se Jal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide universal water supply coverage to all urban households in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal-6, • Rejuvenate urban water bodies • Create a circular economy of water
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90:10 for Himalayan and North-Eastern States, • 50:50 for other states, and • 100% for Union Territories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central funding: • Union Territories: 100% • North Eastern and Hill States: 90% • Cities will less than 1 lakh population: 50% • Cities with 1 lakh to 10 lakh population: 33% • Cities with million plus population: 25%



Why in the news?

The mission achieved a milestone of providing tap-water connections to **11 crore** rural households.

Present status:

- **100% coverage in States-** Goa, Telangana, Gujarat, and Haryana and 3 Union Territories of Puducherry, Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- **Aspirational districts:** Out of 112 Aspirational districts, 8 districts have provided 100% (Dec 2022)
- **Quality Monitoring and Surveillance:** Total of 2,074 water testing laboratories promoted in the country, under this mission.

Budget 2023-24 Summary

Pillar 1: Money, Banking, Finance & Insurance

National Financial Information Registry

- To be set up as a central repository of financial and ancillary information, to ensure efficient flow of credit, financial inclusion, and financial stability.
- It will be designed in consultation with the RBI.

Capacity Building in Securities Market

- SEBI will be empowered to:
 - Make norms for better education in the National Institute of Securities Markets.
 - recognize the award of degrees, diplomas and certificates.
- This will help to build the capacity of functionaries and professionals.

National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM) is a public trust established by SEBI in 2006.

It has **six schools of excellence** located at Patalganga, Maharashtra.

Central Data Processing Centre

- It will be set up for faster response to companies from the government.

- It will enable centralised handling of various forms filed with field offices under the Companies Act.

Reclaiming of shares and dividends

- Government intends to make it easy for investors to reclaim unpaid shares and dividends from the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority.

Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority

The Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority is entrusted with the responsibility of administration of the Investor Education Protection Fund (IEPF), making refunds of shares, unclaimed dividends, matured deposits/debentures etc. to investors and to promote awareness among investors.

Established on 7th September, 2016 under the provisions of section 125 of the Companies Act, 2013 and comes under the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)**.

- An integrated IT portal will be set up for this.

Mahila Samman Bachat Patra

- A one-time new small savings scheme, Mahila Samman Savings Certificate, will be open for a two-year window up to March 2025.
- It will allow deposits upto INR 2 lakh in the name of women or girls for a tenure of 2 years at a fixed interest rate of 7.5% with partial withdrawal option.

Benefits for Senior Citizens

- Maximum deposit limit for the Senior Citizen Savings Scheme has been raised.

Financial Inclusion

- Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) membership has more than doubled to 27 Crore.
- 7,400 crore digital payments worth INR 126 lakh crore through UPI took place in 2022.

New vs Old Income Tax Slab

NEW TAX REGIME (REVISED*)		NEW TAX REGIME (PREVIOUS)		OLD TAX REGIME	
INCOME	TAX RATE (%)	INCOME	TAX RATE (%)	INCOME	TAX RATE (%)
0-3 Lakh	NIL	0-2.5 Lakh	NIL	0-2.5 Lakh	NIL
3-6 Lakh	5%	2.5-5 Lakh	5%	2.5-5 Lakh	5%
6-9 Lakh	10%	5-7.5 Lakh	10%	5-10 Lakh	20%
9-12 Lakh	15%	7.5-10 Lakh	15%	Above 10 Lakh	30%
12-15 Lakh	20%	10-12.5 Lakh	20%		
Above 15 Lakh	30%	12.5-15 Lakh	25%		
		Above 15 Lakh	30%		

*Effective from 1st Apr 2023

Image Source: The Economic Times

Highlights:

- New Tax Regime will become the default option now, but taxpayers will also have the option to choose the Old Regime.
- The old Regime has some exemptions on insurance premium, mutual funds and other such investments, which are not there in the New Regime.
- The rebate limit has been increased to ₹ 7 lakh in the New tax regime. Those with income up to ₹ 7 lakh do not need to pay any income tax.

Changes in GST regime

- Minimum threshold of tax amount for launching prosecution under GST raised from one crore to two crore rupees.
- Above does not apply to the offence of issuance of invoices without supply of goods or services or both.
- **Decriminalising certain offences** as recommended by the GST Council:
 - Obstruction or preventing any officer in discharge of his duties.

- Deliberate tempering of material evidence.
- Failure to supply the information.

Fifty-year interest free loan to States

- The provision will continue for one more year.
- The entire loan to states has to be spent on capital expenditure within 2023-24.
- Most of this will be at the discretion of states.
- Parts of the outlay will also be linked to following purposes:
 - Scrapping old government vehicles,
 - Urban planning reforms and actions,
 - Financing reforms in urban local bodies to make them creditworthy for municipal bonds,
 - Housing for police personnel above or as part of police stations,
 - Constructing Unity Malls,
 - Children and adolescents' libraries and digital infrastructure,
 - State share of capital expenditure of central schemes.

State Support Mission(SSM) of NITI Aayog

- It will be continued for three years for collective efforts towards national priorities.
- Under this, NITI Aayog helps state governments to set up similar bodies, by replacing their planning boards to ensure faster and more inclusive growth.

Result-Based Financing

- Financing of select schemes will be changed, on a pilot basis, from 'input-based' to 'result-based'.
- It will help address issues of inefficiencies in spreading while making more effective use of resources.

Pillar 3: Balance of Payment & International Trade

Unity Mall

- States will be encouraged to set up a Unity Mall in their state capital or most prominent tourism centre or the financial capital.
- It will promote and sell their own **ODOPs (one district, one product)**, GI products and other handicraft products, and provide space for such **products of all other States**.

Lab Grown Diamonds (LGD)

- India is a global leader in cutting and polishing natural diamonds, contributing about three-fourths of the global turnover.
- Deposits of natural diamonds are decreasing and therefore, the industry is moving towards Lab Grown Diamonds (LGDs).

- **LGDs** are environment-friendly alternatives to natural diamonds.
- They have the same optical and chemical properties as natural diamonds.
- **Manufacturing** is done through two processes-
- Both these methods begin with a seed - that is a slice of another diamond.
- **High Pressure, High Temperature (HPHT) method** - the seed along with pure graphite is exposed to HPHT, and forms diamond.

- **Chemical Vapour Deposition (CVD) method** - seed is kept in sealed chamber with carbon-rich gas. On heating, the gas sticks on seed and makes diamond bigger.

- Budget encourages indigenous production of LGD seeds and machines to reduce import dependency.
- A research and development grant will be provided to one of the IITs for five years.
- Budget proposes to reduce basic customs duty on seeds used in their manufacture.

GIFT IFSC (International Financial Services Centre)

- Delegating powers under the SEZ Act to IFSCA to avoid dual regulation.
- Setting up a single window IT system for registration and approval from IFSCA, SEZ authorities, GSTN, RBI, SEBI and IRDAI.
- Permitting acquisition financing by IFSC Banking Units of foreign banks.
- For countries looking for digital continuity solutions, India will facilitate setting up of their Data Embassies in GIFT IFSC.
 - **Data Embassy:** It is a set of servers that store one country's data and remain under that country's jurisdiction but located in another country, through diplomatic agreements.

Pillar 4: Sectors of Economy, GDP, Inflation

- Since 2014 The per capita income has more than doubled to Rs. 1.97 lakh pa.
- The Indian economy has increased in size from being 10th to 5th largest in the world.

Agriculture

- **PM-PRANAM (PM Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment and Amelioration of Mother Earth):**
 - Launched to incentivize States and Union Territories to promote alternative fertilisers and balanced use of chemical fertilisers.
- **Bhartiya Prakritik Kheti Bio-Input Resource Centres :**



- It will facilitate 1 crore farmers to adopt natural farming.
- 10,000 Bio-Input Resource Centres will be set-up.
- Creating a national-level distributed micro-fertilizer and pesticide manufacturing network.
- Agriculture Accelerator Fund for young entrepreneurs in rural areas.
- **Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Program** to boost availability of disease-free, quality planting material for high value horticultural crops like kiwi, avocado etc.
- **Shree Anna:**
 - Millets such as jowar, ragi, bajra, kuttu, ramdana, kangni, kutki, kodo, cheena, and sama.
 - India a global hub for 'Shree Anna' with R&D from the Indian Institute of Millet Research, Hyderabad.
- Agriculture credit target will be increased to ` 20 lakh crore with focus on animal husbandry, dairy and fisheries.

Ease of Doing Business and MSME

- **Mission Karmayogi:**
 - Centre, States and Union Territories are implementing capacity-building plans for civil servants.
 - Integrated online training platform, iGOT Karmayogi, to provide continuous learning opportunities for lakhs of government employees.
 - Upgradation of their skills and facilitating a people-centric approach.
- More than 39,000 compliances have been reduced and more than 3,400 legal provisions have been decriminalised.
- **Centres of Excellence for Artificial Intelligence:**
 - Three centres will be set-up in top educational institutions
 - It will provide solutions in the areas of agriculture, health, and sustainable cities.
- **Simplification of Know Your Customer (KYC) process :**
 - The process will be simplified by adopting a 'risk-based' instead of 'one size fits all' approach.
- **E-Courts :**
 - Phase-3 of the outlay E-Courts project will be of Rs:7,000 crore.
- **Unified Filing Process:**
 - For obviating the need for separate submission of same information to different government agencies, a system of 'Unified Filing Process' will be set-up.
 - It will be shared on a common portal with other agencies as per filer's choice.
- **Vivad se Vishwas I – Relief for MSMEs:**
 - In cases of failure by MSMEs to execute contracts during the Covid period, 95 per cent of the forfeited amount relating to bid or performance security will be returned to them by government and government undertakings.
 - This will provide relief to MSMEs.
- **Vivad se Vishwas II – Settling Contractual Disputes:**
 - To settle contractual disputes of government and government undertakings, wherein arbitral award is under challenge in a court.
 - It is a voluntary settlement scheme with standardised terms.
- **One stop solution for identity and address updating :**
 - A one stop solution for reconciliation and updating of identity and address of individuals maintained by various government agencies.
 - Using DigiLocker service and Aadhaar as foundational identity.
- **Common Business Identifier :**
 - For the business establishments required to have a Permanent Account Number (PAN), the PAN will be used as the common identifier for all digital systems of specified government agencies.
 - It will bring ease of doing business.
 - It will be facilitated through a legal mandate.
- **Credit Guarantee for MSMEs :**
 - From 1st April 2023 through infusion of

- 9,000 crore in the corpus.
- This will enable additional collateral-free guaranteed credit of 2 lakh crore.
- Further, the cost of the credit will be reduced by about 1 percent.

Pilar 5: Infrastructure

Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism:

- Establishment of **Infrastructure Finance Secretariat**:
 - Assist all stakeholders for more private investment in infrastructure, including railways, roads, urban infrastructure and power.
- **Transport**:
 - One hundred critical transport infrastructure projects, for last and first mile connectivity of coal, steel, fertiliser, and food grains sectors have been identified.
 - Taken up on priority with investment of 75,000 crore, including 15,000 crore from private sources.
 - Fifty additional airports, heliports, water aerodromes for improving regional air connectivity.
- **Tourism**:
 - **'Dekho Apna Desh' initiative**: Launched as an appeal by the Prime Minister to the middle class to prefer domestic tourism over international tourism.
 - Theme-based tourist circuits, the **'Swadesh Darshan Scheme'** was also launched.
 - Vibrant Villages Programme, tourism infrastructure and amenities will also be facilitated in border villages.
 - **Bharat Shared Repository of Inscriptions (Bharat SHRI)** : It will be set up in a digital epigraphy museum, with digitization of one lakh ancient inscriptions in the first stage.

Urban development:

- **Making Cities ready for Municipal Bonds**:
 - Through property tax governance reforms and ring-fencing user charges on urban infrastructure.

- Cities will be incentivized to improve their creditworthiness for municipal bonds.

- **Urban Infrastructure Development Fund :**

- Like the RIDF, an Urban Infrastructure Development Fund (UIDF) will be established through use of priority sector lending shortfalls.
- It will be managed by the National Housing Bank.
- It will be used by public agencies to create urban infrastructure in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.

- **Urban Sanitation :**

- 100 percent mechanical desludging of septic tanks and sewers to transition from manhole to machine-hole mode.

- **Fintech Services :**

- Developing and increasing our digital public infrastructure including Aadhaar, PM Jan Dhan Yojana, Video KYC, India Stack and UPI.
- Scope of documents available in DigiLocker for individuals will be expanded.

- **Entity DigiLocker:**

- An Entity DigiLocker will be set up for use by MSMEs, large business and charitable trusts
- Storing and sharing documents online securely, whenever needed, with various authorities, regulators, banks and other business entities.

- **5G Services :**

- One hundred labs for developing applications using 5G services
- Applications such as smart classrooms, precision farming, intelligent transport systems, and health care applications.

Green Energy:

- **"LiFE" or Lifestyle for Environment:**

- It aims to spur a movement of environmentally conscious lifestyle.
- Helps to achieve net-zero carbon emission by 2070 to usher in green industrial and economic transition.

- Battery Energy Storage Systems with



capacity of 4,000 MWH will be supported through viability Gap Funding.

- Green Credit Programme will be notified under the Environment (Protection) Act.
- **GOBARdhan scheme :**
 - It aims to create 500 new 'waste to wealth' plants under GOBARdhan (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan) scheme.
 - Promotes circular economy by including 200 compressed biogas (CBG) plants.
 - A 5 per cent CBG mandate will be introduced for all organisations marketing natural and biogas.

Pillar 6 : Human Resource Development

Healthcare and wellness:

- **Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission:**
 - A Mission to eliminate Sickle Cell Anaemia by 2047 will be launched.
 - It will entail awareness creation, and universal screening of 7 crore people in the age group of 0-40 years in affected tribal areas.
- One hundred and fifty-seven new nursing colleges.
- **Medical Research:** Facilities in ICMR Labs will be made available for research by public and private medical college faculty and private sector R&D teams.
- **Dedicated multidisciplinary courses for medical devices** will be supported in existing institutions to ensure availability of skilled manpower for futuristic medical technologies, high-end manufacturing and research.

Education:

- **National Digital Library for children and adolescents:**
 - set-up for facilitating availability of quality books across geographies, languages, genres and levels, and device agnostic accessibility.
 - States will be encouraged to set up physical libraries for them at panchayat and ward levels and provide infrastructure

- **Eklavya Model Residential Schools:**

- recruit 38,800 teachers and support staff for the 740 Eklavya Model Residential Schools
- Aimed to serve 3.5 lakh tribal students.

Skill Development:

- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0:**

- Skill up for youth within the next three years.
- On-job training, industry partnership, and alignment of courses.
- new age courses for Industry 4.0 like coding, AI, robotics, mechatronics, IOT, 3D printing, drones, and soft skills.
- To skill youth for international opportunities, 30 Skill India International Centres will be set up across different States.

- **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme :**

- Stipend support to 47 lakh youth in three years.
- Done through Direct Benefit Transfer in youth accounts.

- **PM Vishwakarma KAushal Samman (PM VIKAS):**

- Focus on traditional artisans and craftspeople.
- This will greatly benefit the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, women and people belonging to the weaker sections.

- For poor persons who are in prisons and unable to afford the penalty or the bail amount, required financial support will be provided.

Environment and Inclusion:

- **MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes)**

- It will be taken up for mangrove plantation along the coastline and on salt pan lands through convergence between MGNREGS, CAMPA Fund and other sources.

- **Amrit Dharohar:**

Ramsar Sites increased to 75 in our country.



What are Ramsar Sites?

A Ramsar site is a wetland of international importance recognised under the Ramsar Convention, an intergovernmental treaty established by UNESCO in 1971, and named after the city of Ramsar in Iran.

There are about 2400 Ramsar Sites in the world.

- The government will promote their unique conservation through the Amrit Dharohar Scheme.
- It will be implemented over the next three years to encourage optimal use of wetlands, and enhance biodiversity, carbon stock, eco-tourism opportunities and income generation for local communities.
- **Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission:**
 - To improve socio-economic conditions of the particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs), Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission will be launched.
 - PVTGs include Jarawas, Onges, Sentinelese of Andaman Islands; Dongria-Khond and Juangs in Odisha, etc.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG)

Some tribal groups have some specific features such as **dependency on hunting, gathering for food, having pre-agriculture level of technology, zero or negative growth of population and extremely low level of literacy**. These groups are called Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

A total of **75 PVTGs** out of 705 Scheduled Tribes, spread over 17 states and one Union Territory (UT), in the country (2011 census).

It will provide for basic facilities such as safe housing, clean drinking water and sanitation, improved access to education, health and nutrition, road and telecom connectivity, and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Economic Survey Summary

CHAPTER 1: State of the Economy 2022-23

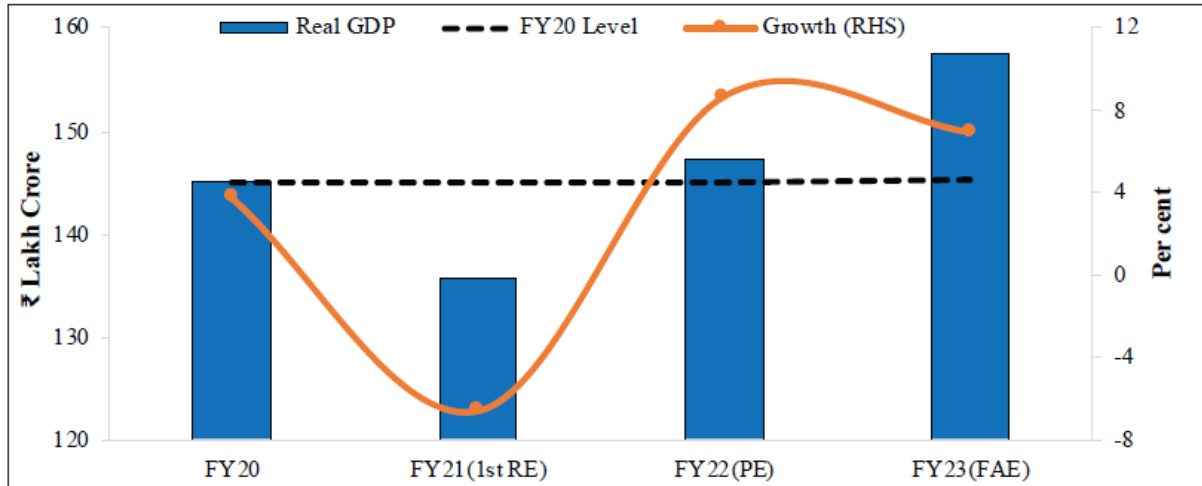
Three shocks to global economy since 2020:

- Covid-19 Pandemic
- Russia-Ukraine War
- Synchronised Policy Rate hikes by Developed Countries

Performance of India in this time:

- By March 2023, the nominal GDP of India will be around US\$ 3.5 trillion. India became the fifth-largest economy measured in current dollars.
- India's exports surged in FY22, and the momentum lasted until the first half of FY23.
- Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) shows that the urban unemployment rate is at a four-year low.
- Agencies worldwide continue to project India as the fastest-growing major economy at 6.5-7.0 % in FY23.

Figure I.9: Economic growth remains resilient



Source: NSO, MoSPI

Note: AE stands for Advanced Estimates, PE stands for Provisional Estimates, RE stands for Revised Estimates

CHAPTER 2: India's Medium-Term Growth Outlook

It discusses product and capital market reforms undertaken in 1991 due to earlier macroeconomic imbalances, and the impact of these reforms.

Reforms for New India-Sabka Saath Sabka Vikaas

The pillars are:

1. Creating Public Goods

- Includes road connectivity (Bharatmala), port infrastructure (Sagarmala), electrification, railways upgradation, and operationalising new airports/ air routes (UDAN).
- ₹111 lakh crore National Infrastructure Pipeline and National Monetization Pipeline.
- Public digital infrastructure based on the pillars of JAM Trinity
- Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) and Account Aggregator framework
- Portals like JanSamarth, eShram, PM GatiShakti.

2. Trust-Based Governance

- Simplifying regulation through the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code

(IBC) and Real Estate(Regulation and Development) Act (RERA).

- Decriminalisation of minor economic offences under the Companies Act of 2013.

3. Promoting the private sector

- Privatisation of Air India, and various schemes under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan, like PLI Scheme.
- Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) has benefited 1.14 crore MSMEs.

4. Enhancing productivity in agriculture

- Agriculture sector grew at an average annual growth rate of 4.6% during the last six years.
- Reforms include Soil Health Cards, the Micro irrigation Fund, promotion of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) extension Platform, the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) and Cluster Development Programme (CDP).

Growth Magnets in this Decade (2023-2030)

The following advantages will act as growth magnets in the medium term for India:

- Digitalisation reforms:** efficiency gains, greater formalisation, higher financial inclusion

- **Improvements in banking sector:** Better-capitalised banks, credit ratings.
- **Favourable geopolitical situation:** diversification of global supply chains and moving out of China.

of 1.7% of GDP (FY09 to FY20) to 2.5% of GDP in FY22.

- **Total liabilities of the Union Government** moderated from 59.2% of GDP in FY21 to 56.7% in FY22.

CHAPTER 3: Fiscal Developments: Revenue Relish

- **Fiscal deficit** has moderated to 6.7 per cent of GDP in FY22 and is further budgeted to reach 6.4 per cent of GDP in FY23.
- Average monthly gross **GST collection** has increased from ₹0.90 lakh crore in FY18 to ₹1.49 lakh crore in FY23.
- Number of **GST taxpayers** increased from nearly 70 lakh in 2017 to more than 1.4 crore in 2022.
- Centre's **Capital Expenditure (Capex)** has steadily increased from a long-term average

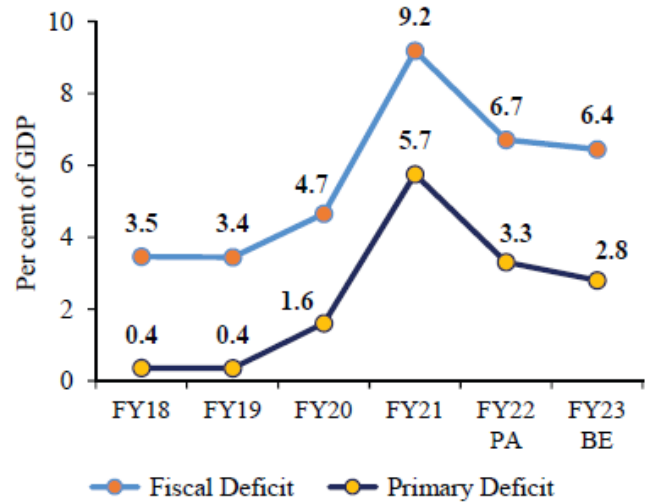
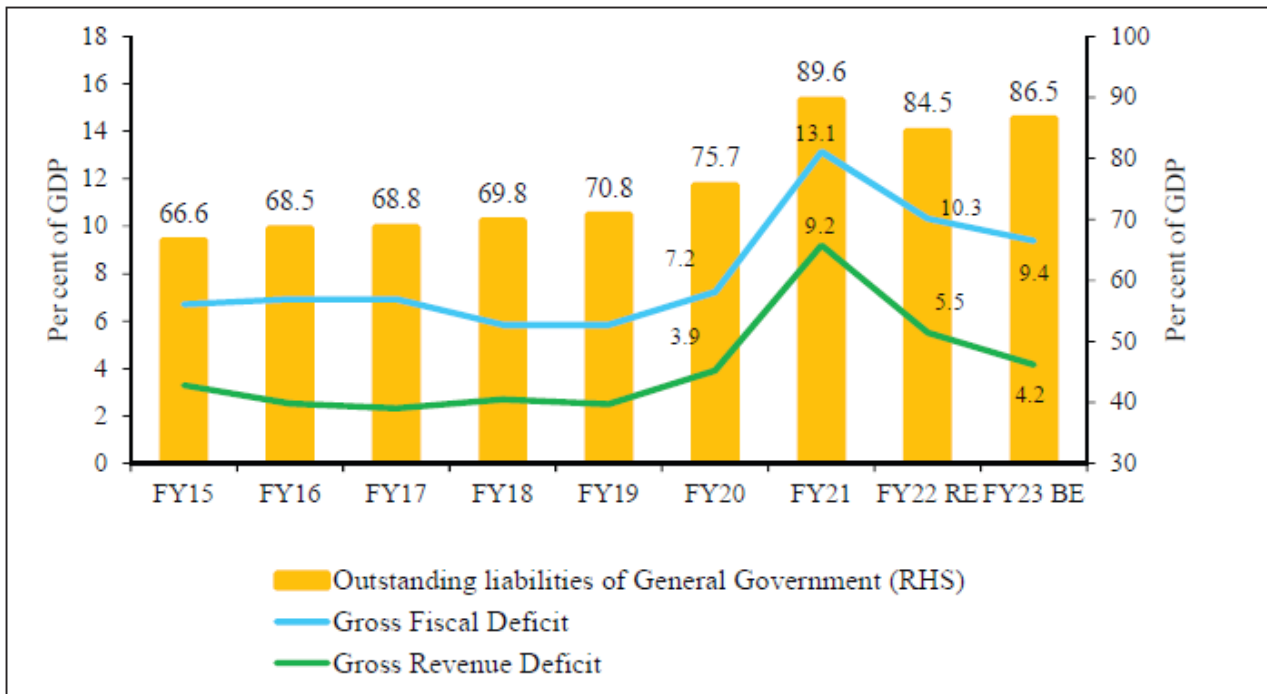


Figure III.17: General Government liabilities to GDP ratio come off their peak attained in FY21



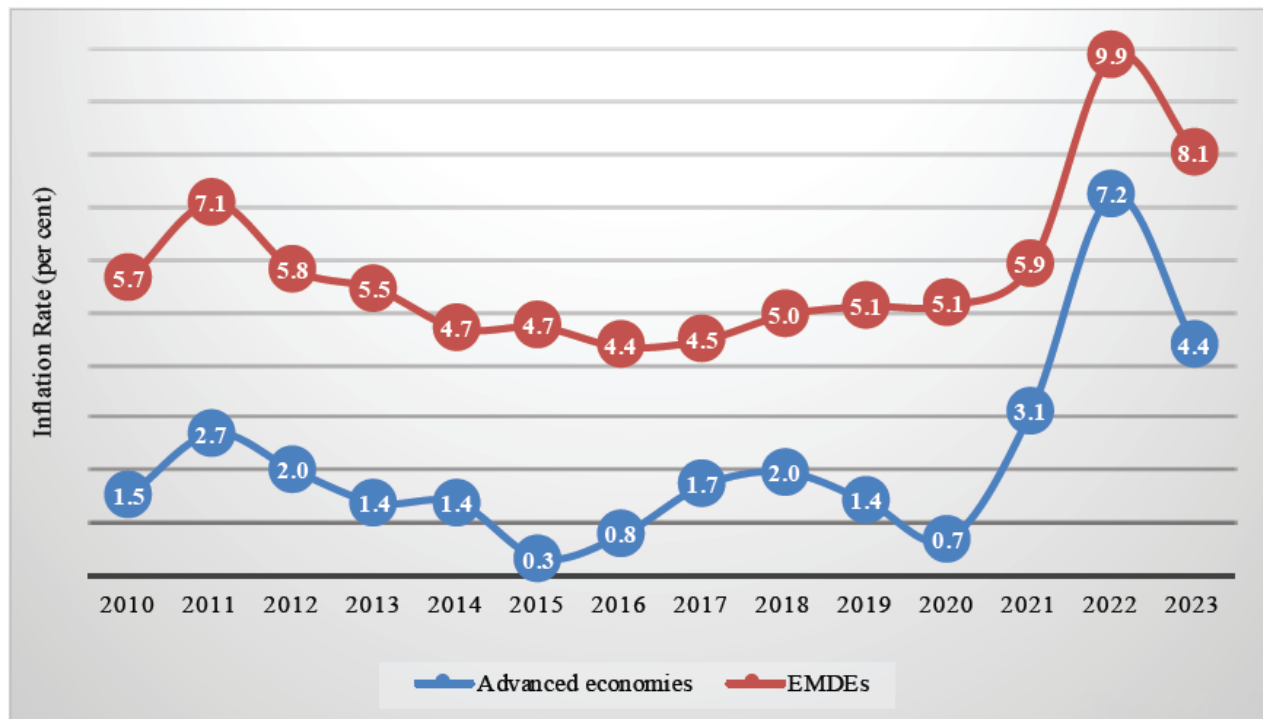
Source: RBI

CHAPTER 4: Monetary Management and financial intermediation

- Monetary Policy Committee indicated a change in stance from **'Accommodative'** to 'Accommodative and focused on the withdrawal of accommodation while supporting growth' signalling the start of the monetary tightening cycle.
- **Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA)** ratio of SCBs has fallen to a seven-year low of 5.0.
- **Capital-to-Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR)** is at 16.0 (well above the regulatory requirement of 11.5).
- **Insurance penetration** in India increased steadily from 2.7% around the turn of the millennium to 4.2% in 2021.
- **Insurance density** in India has increased from US\$ 11.1 in 2001 to US\$ 91 in 2021.
- Expansion in **Pension** is led by **government measures** like integration of electronic Pension Payment Order (e-PPO) with DigiLocker, and relaxation in the timeline for submitting Digital Life Certificate.
- **GIFT IFSC** is Emerging as a Preferred Jurisdiction for International Financial Services.
 - Bilateral and multilateral MoUs are being signed.
 - FinTech bridge is being established with Singapore.
 - Cooperation agreement between India INX at IFSC and Luxembourg Stock Exchange.

CHAPTER 5: Prices and Inflation

Figure V.1: Record Consumer Price Inflation in 2022 Calendar Year



Source: World Economic Outlook, October 2022, IMF

RBI's Monetary Policy Committee increased the repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) by 225 basis points from 4.0 per cent to 6.25 per cent between May and December 2022.

Fiscal measures by the government:

- Reduction in import duties and cess on pulses and **rationalisation of tariffs.**



- Reduction in excise duty on petrol and diesel.
- Prohibition of the export of wheat products.
- Imposition of stock limits on edible oils and oilseeds, aimed at avoiding hoarding.
- Maintenance of buffer stock for onion and pulses.
- Rationalisation of import duties on raw materials used in the manufactured products, for example on naphtha and vinyl chloride used in the plastic industry.

Additional reading: **Box V.3:** How is the Current Inflation Different from the 1970s? (Page 138 of the Survey)

CHAPTER 6: Social Infrastructure and Employment

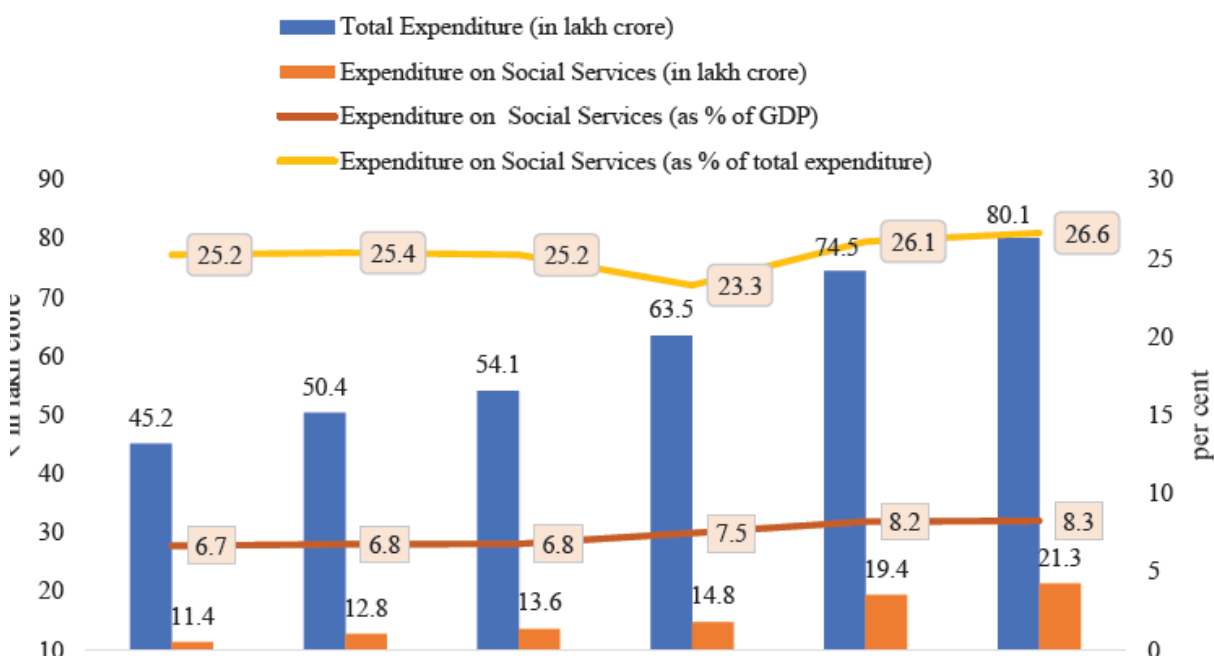
Focus on long-term goals of human development and “Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas” have assumed salience.

Poverty and Unemployment:

- More than 41 crore people exited poverty between 2005-06 and 2019-21 according to the UN Multi-dimensional Poverty Index.
- Rise in Rural Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) from 19.7% in 2018-19 to 27.7 % in 2020-21.

Health:

- Ayushman Bharat programme, with nearly 22 crore beneficiaries, is being further tech-enabled through digital health IDs ‘ABHA’ and telemedicine through e-Sanjeevani.



- Share of government health expenditure in total health expenditure has increased from 28.6% in FY14 to 40.6% in FY19.
- Decline in out-of-pocket expenditure as a percentage of total health expenditure from 64.2% in FY14 to 48.2% in FY19.

Major initiatives from 2014 to 2022 for better overall health

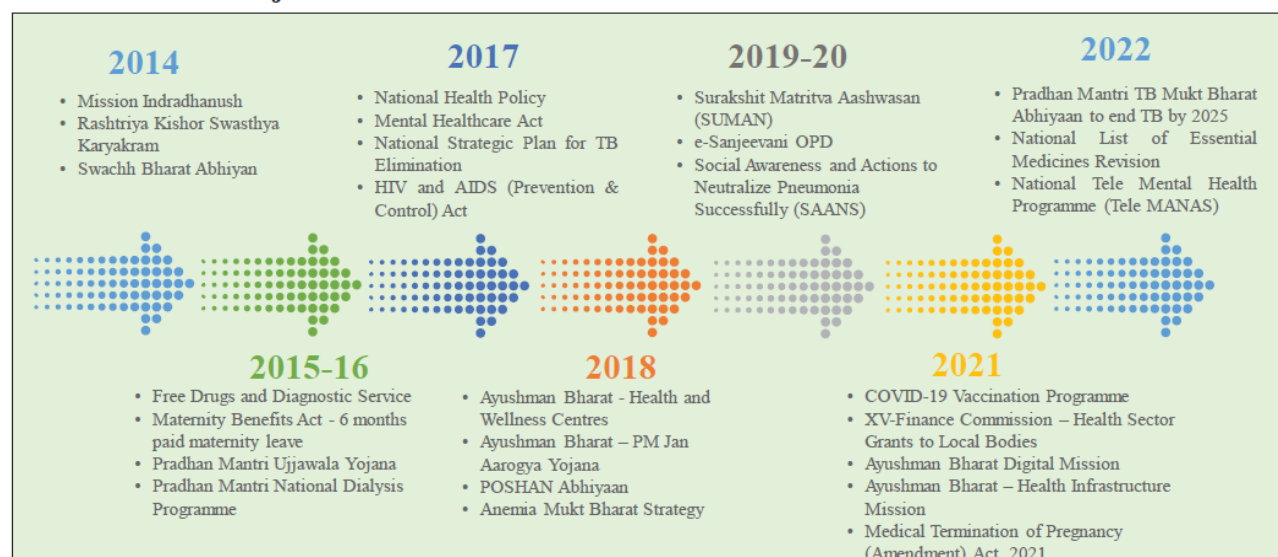


Table VI.17: Improvement in health-related Indicators

	NFHS-4 (2015-16)	NFHS-5 (2019-21)
Households with any usual member covered under a health insurance/ financing scheme (per cent)	28.7	▲ 41.0
Total fertility rate (children per woman)	2.2	▼ 2.0
Current Use of Family Planning Method- Any Method (per cent)	53.5	▲ 66.7
Mothers who had at least 4 antenatal care visits (per cent)	51.2	▲ 58.1
Institutional births (per cent)	78.9	▲ 88.6
Neonatal mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	29.5	▼ 24.9
Infant mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	40.7	▼ 35.2
Under-five mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	49.7	▼ 41.9
Children age 12-23 months fully vaccinated based on information from either vaccination card or mother's recall (per cent)	62.0	▲ 76.4
Children under age 6 months exclusively breastfed (per cent)	54.9	▲ 63.7
Children under 5 years who are stunted (height-for-age) (per cent)	38.4	▼ 35.5
Children under 5 years who are wasted (weight-for-height) (per cent)	21.0	▼ 19.3
Children under 5 years who are underweight (weight-for-age) (per cent)	35.8	▼ 32.1
Children under 5 years who are overweight (weight-for-height) (per cent)	2.1	▲ 3.4
Women who are overweight or obese (BMI \geq 25.0 kg/m ²) (per cent)	20.6	▲ 24.0
Men who are overweight or obese (BMI \geq 25.0 kg/m ²) (per cent)	18.9	▲ 22.9
Women age 15-24 years who use hygienic methods of protection during their menstrual period (per cent)	57.6	▲ 77.3



Growth of aspirational districts

- Two programmes have been conceptualised along the lines of ADP: ‘Mission Utkarsh’ and ‘Aspirational Blocks Programme’ (ABP).

Self-Help Groups:

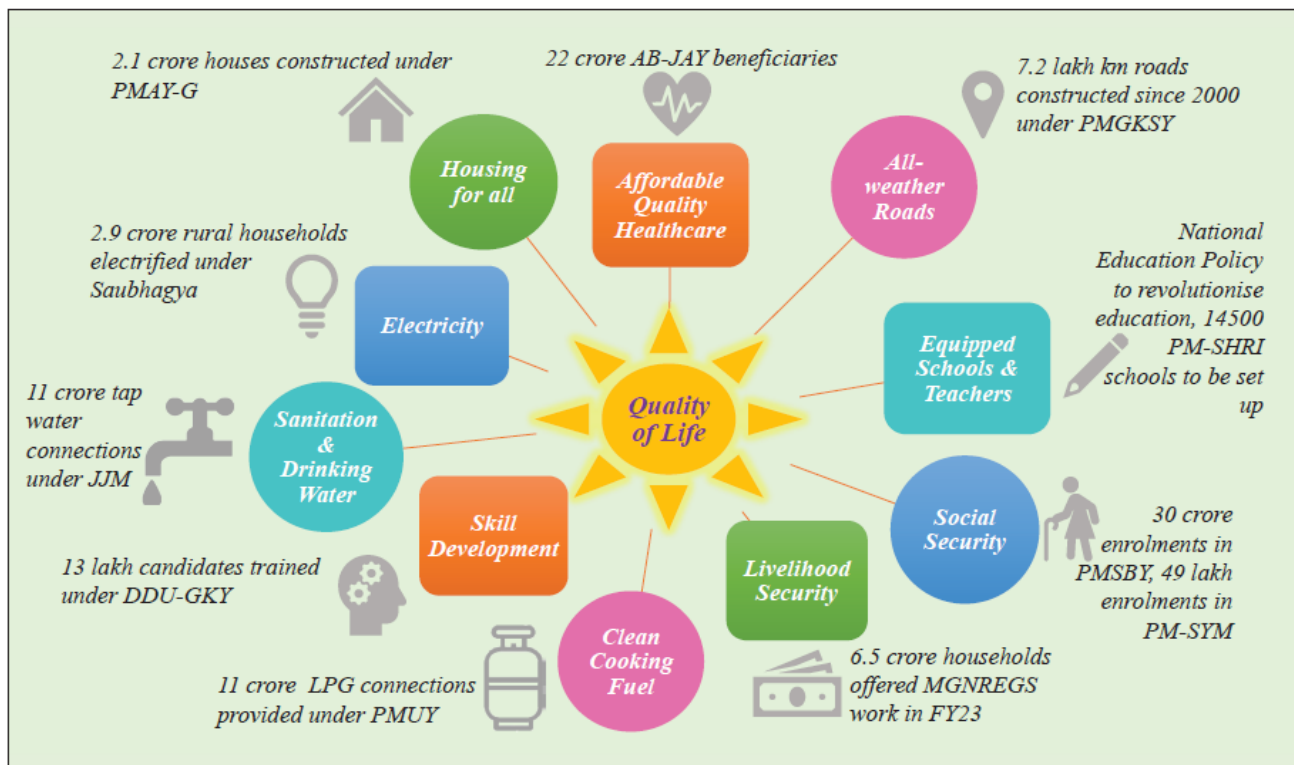
- India has around 1.2 crore SHGs, 88 per cent being all-women SHGs.
- Success stories include Kudumbashree in

Kerala, Jeevika in Bihar, Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahila Mandal in Maharashtra, and recently, Looms of Ladakh.

Additional reading:

- **Box VI.10:** Co-WIN: A successful digital story of vaccination to tell. (Page 198 of Survey)
- **Box VI.11:** Achievements under MGNREGA (page 205 of Survey)

Multifaceted initiatives to improve the ecosystem of quality of life



CHAPTER 7: Climate Change and Environment

- India is one of the most vulnerable regions despite having contributed only about 4 per cent in the cumulative global emissions (for the period 1850-2019).
- India now has **75 Ramsar sites** for wetlands.
- National Hydrogen Mission and Green Hydrogen Policy have been introduced.
- India’s **Long Term Low Emissions Development Strategy (LT-LEDS)** was announced at COP-27.
 - It seeks a practical implementation of India’s call for **“climate justice.”**
 - It is driven by the vision of Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE) launched by India.
- Critical Minerals are key to Green Transition.
 - These include Lithium, nickel, cobalt, manganese and graphite -crucial to battery performance.
 - A multi-dimensional mineral policy is suggested.
- Ministry of Mines has created **KABIL** - a Joint Venture Company to identify and acquire overseas mineral assets of critical and strategic nature.



Progress in India's Climate Action:

National Solar Mission	•Solar power capacity of 61.62 GW installed by October 2022
National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency	•PAT Cycle-VII notified in October 2021 for energy saving target of 6.63 Million Tonnes of Oil Equivalent (MTOE)
National Mission on Sustainable Habitat	•721 km of metro rail network made operational by August 2022. •62.79 lakh individual household toilets and 6.21 lakh community and public toilets constructed by April 2022
National Mission for a Green India	•₹ 626.96 crore for afforestation targets over an area of 2.1 lakh ha
National Water Mission	•Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch The Rain 2022
National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change	•Created and strengthened 12 Centres of Excellence for climate change (June 2021)
National Mission for Sustaining Himalayan Ecosystems	•Inter-University Consortium •8 Major R&D Programmes initiated
National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture	•Key targets for FY 2022-2023 covering 0.15 lakh ha under organic farming and 10 lakh ha under micro irrigation

International Initiatives:

- ISA (International Solar Alliance).
- CDRI (Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure).
- Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT) led by India and Sweden, supported by WEF.

Finance for Sustainable Development:

- India has scaled up efforts for greater mobilisation of **private capital** in climate finance.
- With growing focus on the environmental sustainability of projects, **green bonds** have become widely accepted.
- Union Budget 2022-23 announced the issue of **Sovereign Green Bonds**.

- A **Green Finance working committee** has also been set up.
- Regulatory Framework laid out by RBI and SEBI for Issuance of Green Debt Securities.
- SEBI requires **mandatory ESG-related disclosures** for the top 100 listed entities.

Domestic Initiatives:

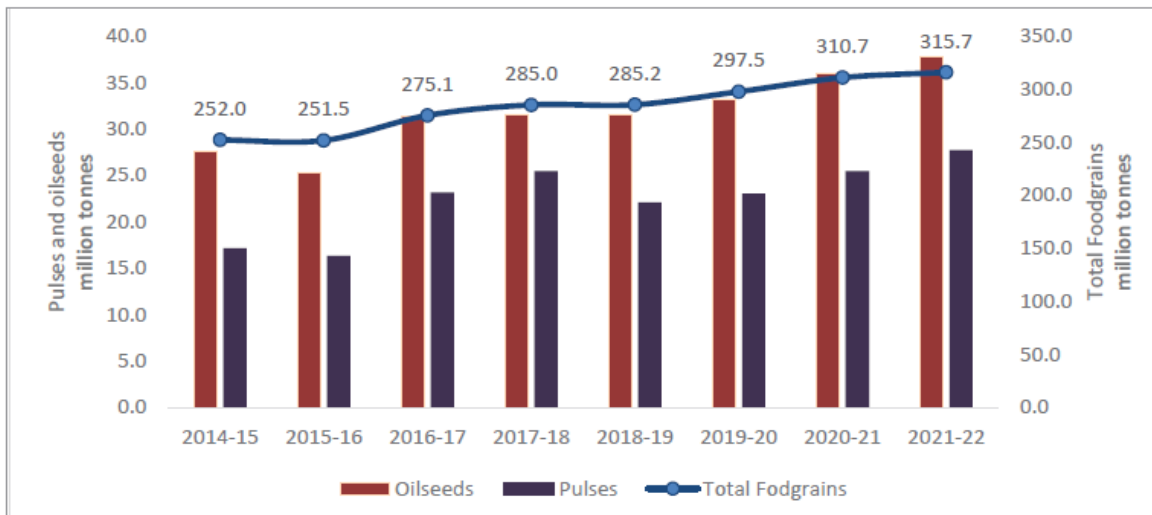
- Project Cheetah - an intercontinental large wild carnivore translocation project.
- 17 Tiger Reserves in the country have CAITS international accreditation, and two have received International Tx2 Award.
- Plastic Waste Management and Elimination of Identified Single-Use Plastics.
- Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022 and E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022 have been notified.



CHAPTER 8: Agriculture and Food Management

There has been an increasing trend in Year-on-Year (YoY) food grain production.

Figure VIII.4: Sustained increase in Foodgrains Production in India (Million Tonnes)



Source: 1st Advance Estimates (2022-23) of DA&FW released dated 21.09.2022.

The Government has been increasing the MSP for all 22 Kharif, Rabi and other commercial crops with a margin of at least 50% over the cost of production.

Improvement in Agricultural credit:

- Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) issued to 3.89 crore eligible farmers.
- Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS) and Prompt Repayment Incentive also given.

Promoting Organic and Natural Farming:

- **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)** and Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER) have been implemented.

- **Bhartiya Prakratik Krishi Paddhati (BPKP)**, a sub-scheme of PKVY, was launched to adopt traditional practices and promote ZBNF (Zero Budget Natural Farming).

Cooperative sector:

- Ministry of Cooperation was established in 2021 for greater focus on the cooperative sector.
- There are 8.5 lakh registered cooperatives in the country.
- 98% of villages are covered by Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACS).

CHAPTER 9: Industry

Industry contributes about **30% of the total gross value added** in the country.

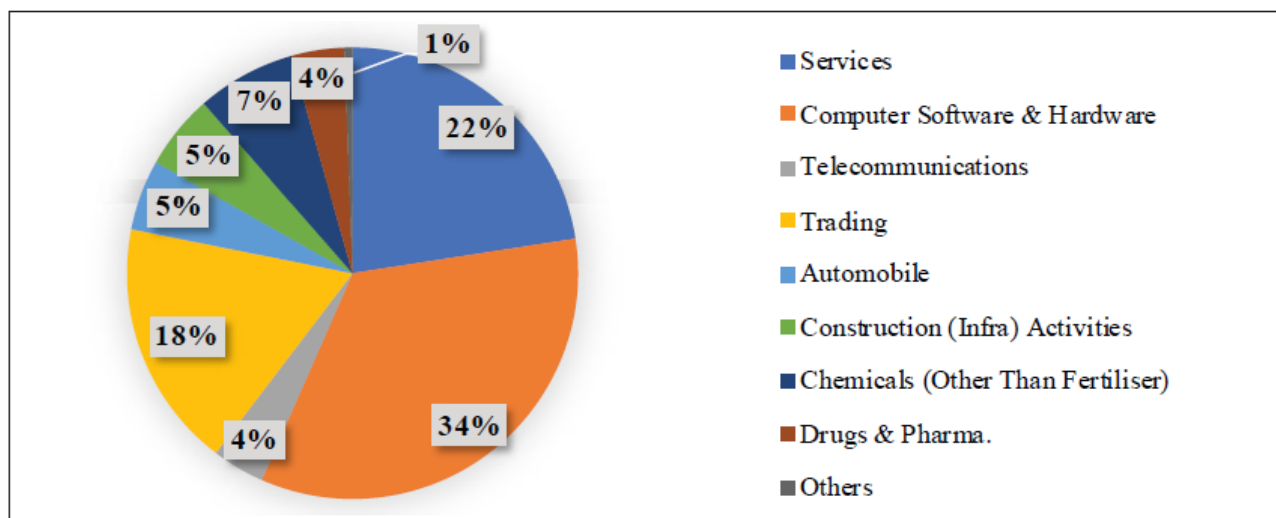
Table IX.1: Growth and Share of Industrial Components (in Per cent)

	Growth in Per cent		Real GVA growth in FY23 over FY22	Real GVA growth in FY23 over FY20	Share in total GVA FY23
	H1:FY23	H2:FY23 (Estimated)			
Industry	3.7	4.5	4.1	11.1	30.0
Mining & quarrying	2.2	2.6	2.4	4.4	2.3
Manufacturing	0.1	3.0	1.6	11.0	17.3
Electricity, gas, water supply & other utility services	10.0	7.9	9.0	13.0	2.3
Construction	11.5	7.3	9.1	12.8	8.1
Overall GVA	9.0	4.7	6.7	9.8	-

Eight core industries: coal, fertilisers, cement, steel, electricity, refinery products, crude oil, and natural gas are critical in meeting the demand for inputs across industries.

Annual FDI equity inflows in the manufacturing sector have been steadily increasing over the last few years.

Figure IX.8: Sector-wise FDI Equity Inflows in 2022-23 during April-September 2022



Source: DPIIT data

Contribution of the MSME sector to overall GVA rose from 29.3% in FY18 to 30.5% in FY20. It fell to 26.8% in FY21 due to the impact of pandemic.



MSME Performance

Figure IX.9a: MSME share in exports

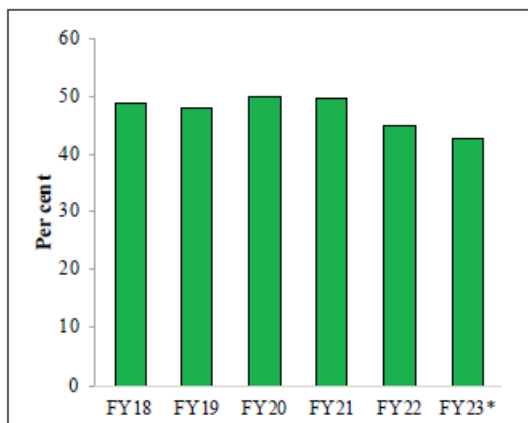
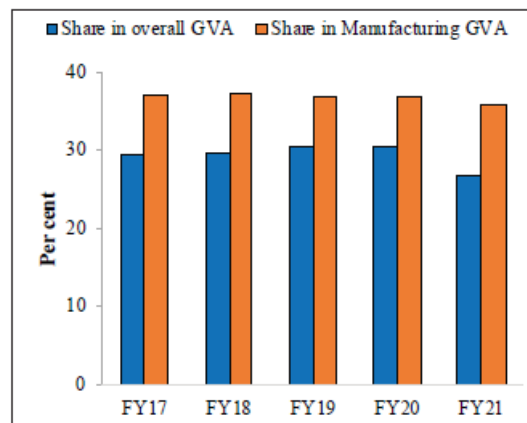


Figure IX.9b: MSME Share in overall GVA and Manufacturing GVA



Source: MoSPI, Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S)

Note: *Data for FY23 is until Aug 2022

Steps taken for MSMEs:

- Modification of the definition of MSMEs.
- Launching of a paperless, zero-cost Udyam registration portal.
- Samadhaan Portal, set up under the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act.
- CHAMPIONS, the single-window grievance redressal portal for MSMEs.
- 'Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance' scheme (RAMP) supported by World Bank.

Electronics industry:

- India aims to reach **US\$300 billion** worth of electronics manufacturing and **US\$ 120 billion in exports** by FY26.

Coal production:

- Expected to grow at 6-7% annually to reach a production level of **1 billion tonnes by FY26** and about 1.5 billion tonnes by 2030.

Steel:

- India is now a global force in steel production and the **2nd largest crude steel producer** in

the world.

- Iron and Steel exports are higher by 20% than pre-pandemic levels of FY20.

Textiles:

Setting up of seven **PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks** to develop integrated large-scale and modern industrial infrastructure facilities.

Pharma:

- India is ranked 3rd worldwide in the production of pharma products by volume and 14th by value.
- India is the largest provider of generic medicines globally, occupying a 20 per cent share in global supply by volume.

Automobiles:

- In December 2022, India became the 3rd largest automobile market, surpassing Japan and Germany in terms of sales.
- Domestic electric vehicles (EV) market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 49% between 2022 and 2030.

Additional Reading:

Box XI.5: 'Flipping and Reverse Flipping: the



recent developments in Start-ups' (Page 287 of Survey)

CHAPTER 10: Services

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Services:

- **World Investment Report 2022 (UNCTAD):** India is the **seventh largest** recipient of FDI in the top 20 host countries in 2021.
- Government has permitted 100% foreign participation in telecom, including all services and infrastructure providers, through the automatic route.
- The FDI ceiling in insurance companies was raised from **49% to 74%**, under automatic route.
- Government allowed 20% foreign investment in **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)** under the automatic route.

Recent initiatives to promote tourism:

- National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry (NIDHI).
- Ayush visa for medical treatment.
- Launch of the National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism & Responsible Traveller Campaign.
- Swadesh Darshan 2.0 scheme, and Heal in India initiative.
- Loan Guarantee Scheme for Covid Affected Tourism Service Sector (LGSCATSS).

E-commerce:

- Global Payments Report (Worldpay FIS): India's e-commerce market is projected to **grow at 18% annually** through 2025.
- Initiatives taken by the Government: Digital India program, Unified Payment Interface (UPI), GeM, etc.
- TRIFED has onboarded tribal artisans with their products for online sales,
- **ONDC** - Open Network for Digital Commerce is an initiative to democratize the e-commerce space.

Digital Financial Services

- A strong foundation provided by Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) trinity, UPI, and other regulatory frameworks.

- Introduction of **CBDC (Central Bank Digital Currency)** in both the Wholesale and Retail segments.
- **Neo-banking** segment has also risen consistently. They operate entirely online, with no physical presence apart from office space in the offline world.
- **Framework for Account Aggregators (AA)** (Non-Banking Financial Company engaged in the business of providing the service of retrieving or collecting financial information pertaining to the customer).

CHAPTER 11: External Sector

Merchandise Trade:

- Trade as a percentage of GDP for India was in the range of 12-15% in the 1980s; 16-25% in the 1990s and 25-50% in the 2000s.
- India achieved an **all-time high annual merchandise export of US\$ 422.0 billion** in FY22.
- USA remained the top export destination in April-November, 2022 followed by UAE and the Netherlands which occupied 3rd spot displacing China.
- Countries such as China, UAE, USA, Russia, and Saudi Arabia have a joint share of 40% of the total imports of India.

Services Trade:

- India's services exports rose by 23.5% whereas imports rose by 25.1% in FY22 over FY21.

Steps taken to promote trade:

- Interest Equalisation Scheme
- Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme
- Export Credit Guarantee by the Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC)
- Krishi Udan Scheme
- Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme
- One District One Product Initiative

Foreign Exchange:

- India's foreign exchange reserves stood at US\$ 532.7 billion as of end-September 2022.



- India's external debt as a ratio to GDP fell to 19.2% as of end-September 2022 from 20.3% a year ago.
- RBI issued a circular for International Trade Settlement in Indian Rupees.
- The framework can reduce the net demand for US dollars.

Other developments:

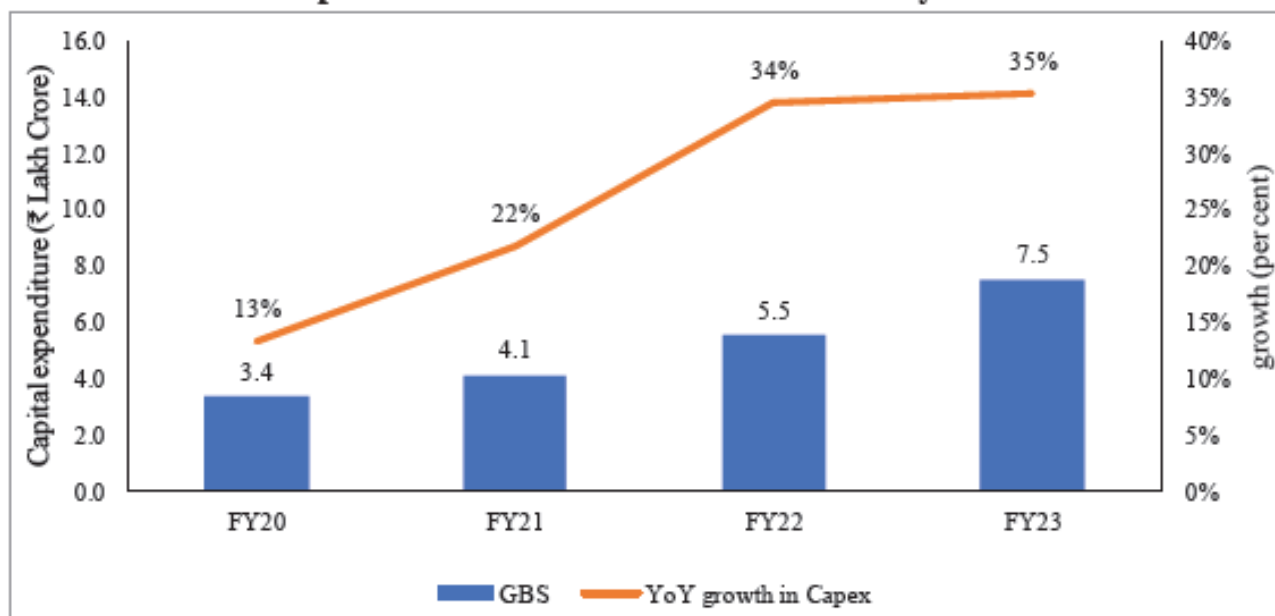
- Remittances are 2nd largest source of external financing after service export,
- India has the largest emigrant population and is the top remittance recipient country with remittances anticipated to reach a milestone of **US\$100 billion in 2022**, as per World Bank.

- India signed Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with UAE and with Australia.
- Computer Software and Hardware attracted the highest share of FDI equity inflow.

CHAPTER 12: Physical and Digital Infrastructure

- National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) and National Monetisation Pipeline, Gati Shakti and National Logistics Policy (NLP) have been announced to promote infrastructure growth.
- National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) set up as a development financial institution.

Figure XII.2: Central Government has sharply increased Capital Expenditure in the last two consecutive years*



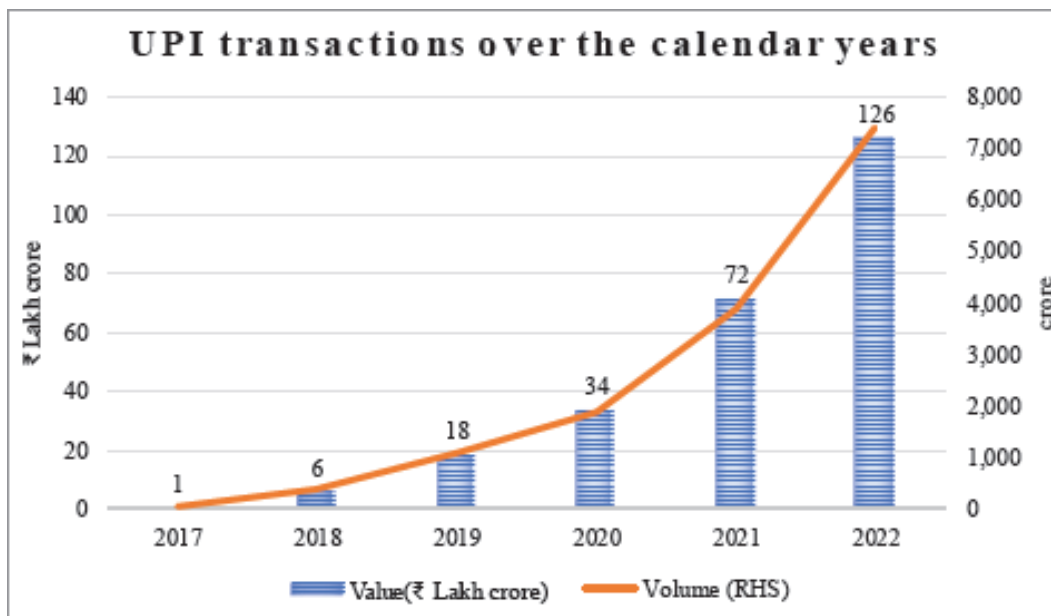
- 'India Infrastructure Project Development Fund Scheme' (IIPDF) - notified in November 2022.
 - It provides financial support for project development expenses of PPP Projects

Developments in Digital Infrastructure

- Total telephone subscriber base: 117 crore (November 2022).
- **Indian Telegraph Right of Way (Amendment) Rules, 2022:** facilitate faster and easier

deployment of telegraph infrastructure to enable speedy 5G rollout.

- **National Frequency Allocation Plan 2022 (NFAP):** for broad regulatory framework and identifying available frequency bands for various purposes.
- **National Language Translation Mission called Bhashini** launched in July 2022, aiming at nurturing Indian language technologies and solutions as a public good.



Source: NPCI

- Between FY19-22 **growth in UPI-based transactions** in value and volume terms have been 121% and 115%, respectively.

MCQs and Probable Mains Questions

1. With reference to the Economic Survey presented recently, consider the following statements:

1. It is prepared by the Department of Economics, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) under the guidance of the Chief Economic Adviser.
2. The first Economic Survey in India was presented in the year 1950-51.
3. The Economy is expected to grow between 6% to 6.8% in the coming financial year 2023-24.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

2. With reference to the 'Lab Grown Diamonds', consider the following statements?

1. Graphite is commonly used as the seeds used in its manufacture.
2. Due to not being environment friendly, its manufacture has been banned in some countries.
3. Chemical vapour deposition and high-pressure high-temperature lab-grown diamonds are the methods of manufacturing.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

3. With reference to glycaemic index, consider the following statements:

1. It is a rating system for foods containing protein.
2. Millets have a higher glycaemic index than rice or wheat.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2



4. In the context of the 'Coin Vending Machine' which is in news recently, consider the following?

1. India's think tank NITI Aayog has announced the launch of a QR code-based coin vending machine.
2. Its objective is to ease the availability of coins in the country.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

5. According to Union Budget 2023-24, consider the following statements:

1. India is a leader in cutting and polishing natural diamonds globally.
2. India is contributing about 75% of the global turnover by value of diamonds.
3. It is proposed to reduce customs duty on seeds used in the natural diamond manufacture.

Choose the correct option using the codes below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Questions:

1. Critically examine the performance of the Jal Jeevan Mission in providing access to adequate and safe drinking water.
2. The nutritional and food security benefits of millets provide ample reason to push for their higher adoption and overcome initial challenges. Discuss.
3. The recent increase in monthly GST revenues is a good sign, but it must be accompanied by faster dispute resolution and solving persistent issues. In this light, discuss steps taken by the government to streamline the GST regime.
4. Do you agree with the view that steady GDP growth and low inflation have left the Indian economy in good shape? Give reasons to support your answer. Also, briefly discuss the role of the Monetary Policy Committee in achieving the above targets.

1. (D)

2. (C)

3. (D)

4. (B)

5. (A)

IR IN NEWS: 2023 - FEBRUARY

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

INDIA AND WORLD

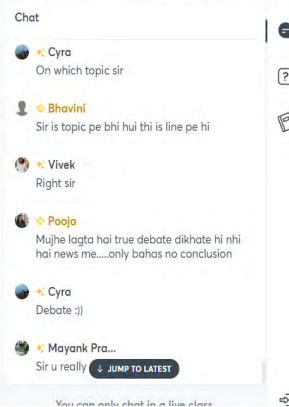
SECURITY ISSUES

DEFENCE

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, CONFERENCES, AGREEMENTS

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- But a unipolar order is likely to restrict the diplomatic elbow room available and thus the ability to avoid the costs associated with pursuing a particular policy.
- In effect, the practice of strategic autonomy is a function of the power capabilities possessed by a state and of the structure of the international system in a particular historical era.
- While strategic autonomy is the ideal that every state aspires to, most are unlikely to either possess the necessary power capabilities or enjoy a favourable international environment to practice it.
- If politics is the art of the possible, then political wisdom demands that the best not be made the enemy of the good.



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India and Neighbours

Indus Water Treaty

More about Indus Water Treaty:

- **1960:** Signed between India and Pakistan and brokered by the World Bank.

The treaty gave the waters of the

Western rivers	The Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab—to Pakistan
Eastern rivers	The Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej—to India.

- India can use certain parts of water from western rivers by means of runoff projects.
- The treaty also made provisions for the Permanent Indus Commission to communicate and resolve disputes.

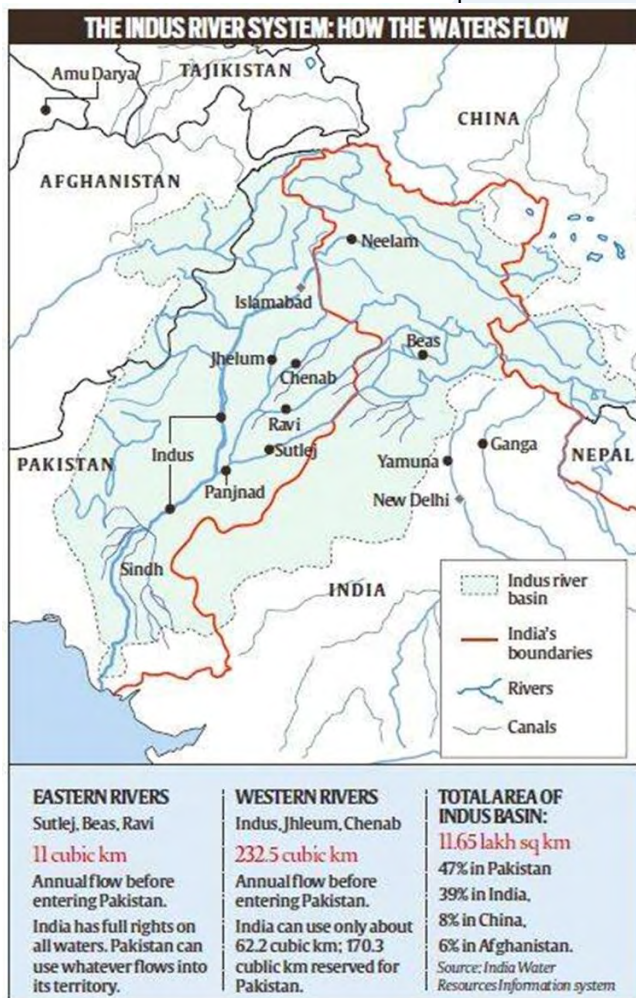


Image Source: Indian Express

Why in news?

India has issued a notice to Pakistan seeking modification of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).

More About Indus River System:

- The Indus River rises in the southwestern Tibet Autonomous Region of China and flows through the Kashmir region and then into Pakistan to drain into the Arabian Sea.
- It is joined by numerous tributaries, notably those of the eastern Punjab Plain—the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej rivers.
- The Indus River system has been used for irrigation since time immemorial.

Reasons for Disputes:

- India said that Pakistan's continued **"intransigence" (refusal to change one's views or to agree about something)** in implementing the treaty, has hampered the construction of hydel projects on the Indian side.
- In 2015 and 2016 unilaterally proposed that a Court of Arbitration should be set up for objections.

Developments on the Indian Side:

- **2016:** India established a high-level task force to exploit the full potential of the Indus Waters Treaty.
- Also working to start several big and small hydroelectric projects that had either been stalled or were in the planning stages.



Other Water Treatise in India:

India-Bangladesh Treaty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India-Bangladesh Agreement on Ganga 1977, 1996 • Teesta Draft Treaty • Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade
India-Nepal Treaty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kosi Treaty, 1975, 1966 • Mahakali Treaty, 1996 • Gandak Treaty, 1975, 1959
India-Bhutan Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Experts Team (JET) reviews the progress in the catchments of rivers Puthimari, Pagladiya, Sunkosh, Manas, Raidak, Torsa, Aie and Jaldhaka.
India-China Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indo China MOU on Brahmaputra, 2008. • Indo China MOU on Sutlej, 2013.

India and World

India - Egypt Relations

Why in news?

Egyptian President Abdel Fateh el-Sisi is the first Egyptian leader to be invited as the chief guest for the Republic Day Parade.

We elevated the **India-Egypt bilateral relationship to a “Strategic Partnership”**.



Image Source: Indian Express

More about news:

- A military contingent from Egypt participated in the parade on Republic Day.
- During the visit, both sides signed several MoUs on defense, trade, agriculture and renewable energy.

India Egypt through History:

Ancient Links

- India exported silk, medicines, incense sticks, pepper etc.
- Led to establishment of ancient Spice Route.

Medieval Links

- Regular diplomatic exchanges between India - Egypt.
- Common struggle against British.

After Independence (Start of Modern Links)

- Egypt became independent in 1922 and India in 1947 established diplomatic relations in 1947 itself.
- Bilateral visits continued and NAM became a common ground.
- This paved the way for current ties between Egypt and India



Various Fronts of Current Relationship:

- Egypt, the most populous country in West Asia, occupies a crucial geo-strategic location - 12% of global trade passes through the Suez Canal.
- It is a major market for India and can act as a gateway to both Europe and Africa.
- Friendly voice for India in West Asia (especially among Muslim nations) and Africa.

Concerns in relationship:

- China's bilateral trade with Egypt is currently

at \$15 billion, double that of India's \$7.26 billion in 2021-22.

- Egypt's attempt to woo Chinese investments.

Way Forward:

- India and Egypt were co-founders of the **Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) in 1961** along with Yugoslavia, Indonesia and Ghana.
- Countries have an opportunity to forge a new path ahead, for strategic and economic interests.
- Be the voice of the Global South.

Operation Dost: Turkey earthquake relief by India

Why in news?

India successfully completed aid work under "Operation Dost" in earthquake-hit region of Turkey and Syria.



INDIA'S OPERATION DOST: TO HELP SYRIA & TURKEY AFTER EARTHQUAKE (2023)

Other similar operations:

Operation Ganga	Bringing back Indian citizens from Ukraine (2021).
Operation Devi Shakti	Evacuation of Indians and foreign nationals from Afghanistan (2021).
Operation Vande Bharat	Bringing back Indian citizens from various countries during COVID lockdown (2020).
Operation Raahat	Evacuation of Indians from Yemen (2015).



Security Issues

Chinese High Altitude Balloon shot down by USA

About High Altitude Balloons:

- They are crewed or uncrewed balloons, usually filled with helium or hydrogen.
- Also called **Stratostats**, as they are released into the stratosphere.
- They can go **up to 40-50 km** from the ground.
- Baskets attached to them can carry instruments or human beings.
- They have the ability to carry a few thousand kilograms of payloads, for various purposes.
- Balloons fly much above **aeroplanes (around 10-12 km)** and far below the **nearest orbits (about 200 km)** where satellites are placed.
- **Karman Line**- imaginary boundary, commonly considered at **100 km** above the surface, roughly marking the end of Earth's atmosphere and the start of outer space.



Image source: World View

Why in the news?

China and the USA have accused each other of flying high-altitude balloons over their respective airspaces without permission.

Uses of these balloons:

Scientific research	E.g. wind speed and direction measurement, aerosol concentration, collection of images from near space.
Surveillance/ Espionage	They can hover over an area for a long time, without being detected.
Tourism	Longer flight experiences for just a fraction of the cost of rocket rides.
Telecommunication	Applications such as communications relays and space-based internet.

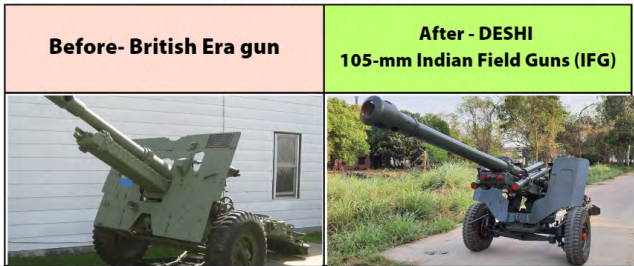
News Source: Indian Express



Defence

Indian Field Gun (IFG)

राष्ट्रपति को सलामी विदेशी नहीं
भारतीय तोपों से दी जाएगी



Why in the News?

- The DRDO's Armament Research and Development Establishment has designed and developed an indigenous gun system.
- It will help to make all equipment at Republic Day parade indigenous, breaking colonial-era legacy.

Source: The Indian Express

LCA Landing on Vikrant

Why in the News?

- Recently a naval variant of the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) undertook its maiden landing onboard the country's first Indigenous Aircraft carrier (IAC) INS Vikrant.



Key Points:

- It is an important part of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat, as India is designed, developed, and constructed IAC along with LCA.

Source: The Hindu

HAL's new helicopter unit

Why in the News?

- The PM has recently inaugurated a new helicopter building plant in Tumakuru Karnataka.



Key Points:

- It is a greenfield plant for helicopter manufacturing.
- It is India's largest helicopter manufacturing facility and will initially produce Light Utility Helicopters (LUHs).

Source: Business Standard



Sniffing Robot

Why in the news?

Researchers in Israel have developed a robot that can smell, opening up numerous possibilities in various fields.

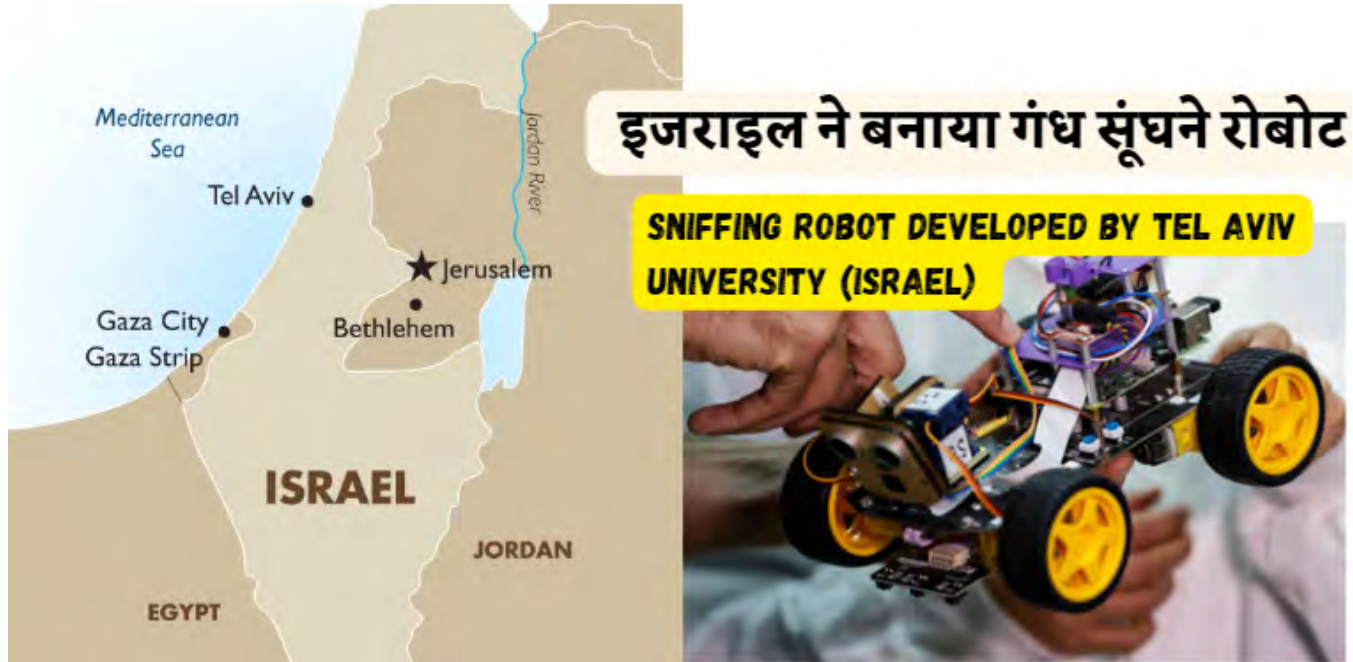


Image source: Reuters

Potential benefits of this robot:

- Advanced disease diagnosis.
- Improved security checks (more sensitive than existing electronic sniffers).
- Checking zoonotic diseases: by studying how some animals detect disease by smell.
- Various applications in the food safety industry, eg. checking adulteration.

News Source: The Hindu

India-US Exercise Tarkash

Exercise	Partner Countries	Objective
TARKASH	India, USA	Simulated response to Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) terror attacks.

Source: The Indian Express.

Aero India 2023 show at Bengaluru

Why in the news?

The five-day Aero India show began at the Air Force Station in Yelahanka, Bengaluru.

14TH AERO INDIA 2023 @YELAHANKA, BENGALURU.



About	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A biennial show (once in two years), to display India's growth in aerospace and defence capabilities.
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1996: First Aero India was held. • 2023: 14th Edition organized by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), on behalf of the Department of Defence Production.
2023 edition details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme: 'The runway to a billion opportunities' • Participation: 98 countries, Defence Ministers of 32 countries, Air Chiefs of 29 countries and 73 CEOs of global and Indian defence manufacturers. • SMEs and start-ups in the field are also invited.

News source: Indian Express

International Organizations, Conferences, Agreements

Raisina Dialogue 2023 for diplomacy

About Raisina Dialogue:

- An annual conference on geopolitical issues facing the global community.
- Organised by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF, a global think-tank) in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- **2016:** First Raisina dialogue held.
- **2023:** 8th edition. Theme: "Provocation, Uncertainty, Turbulence: Lighthouse In The Tempest?"
- Involves the participation of heads of state, ministers, journalists, academics and researchers. Thus it is also known as **Track1.5 Diplomacy** which means diplomacy involving both official (ambassadors, leaders etc) and non official (NGOs, businessmen, private organisations etc) channels.

Why in the news?

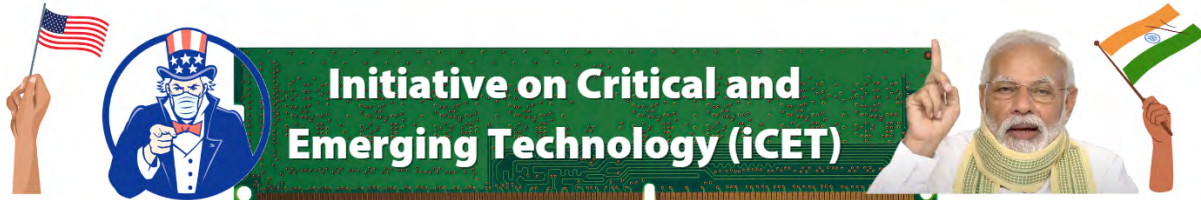
Iran's Foreign Minister cancelled his visit to the Raisina Dialogue in India, reportedly due to the mention of Iranian women protestors in a video clip posted by the organisers of the Raisina Dialogue.

About 'Raisina Hills'

- It is a slightly elevated territory in New Delhi housing India's most important government buildings, including the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

News source: Indian Express

Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)



Why in news?

India and the United States have launched the iCET initiative.

What is Critical Tech?

- It can be defined as essential technologies which help in the development and promote the long-term national security or economic prosperity of the country.
- The iCET involves a range of areas like **quantum computing, semiconductors, 5G and 6G wireless infrastructure, and civilian space projects etc.**

More about iCET initiative:

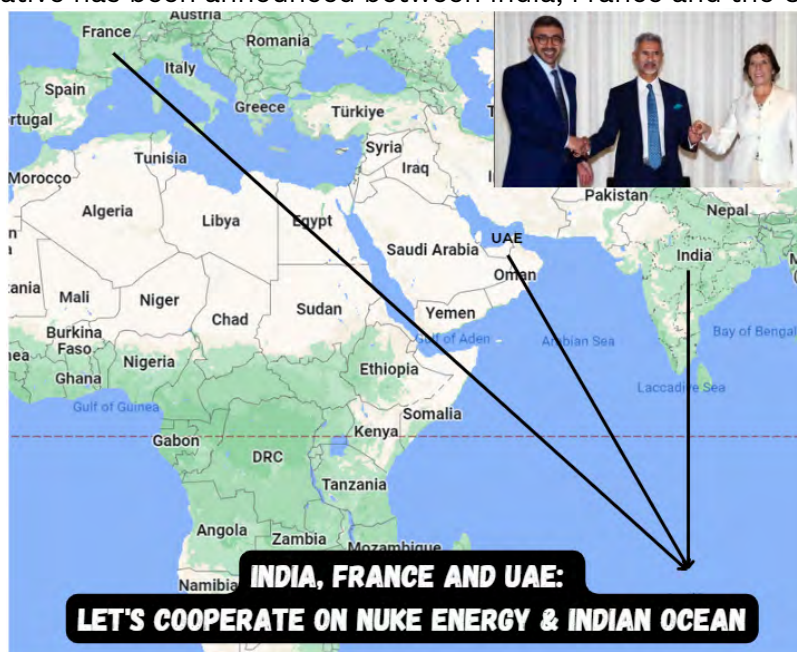
- Bilateral Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies could lend a new strategic depth to India-US engagement.
- India is also looking to reduce its over dependence on Russian weapons and military technology thus iCET can be a way forward.

News Source: ToI and IE

India-France-UAE Trilateral Collaboration

Why in news?

A new trilateral initiative has been announced between India, France and the United Arab Emirates.





More about news:

- The initiative will serve as a forum to design and execute cooperation projects.
- **Fields of interest:** solar and nuclear energy, climate change, protection of biodiversity, particularly in the Indian Ocean region, defense preparedness and countering infectious diseases.
- Further discussions will be held at G20 India and COP28 in UAE in 2023.
- Other such trilateral initiatives include:
 - JAI - Japan, America(USA) and India - for 'free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific'.
 - AUKUS- Australia, UK and USA for submarine technology.

News Source: The Hindu

MCQs and Probable Mains Questions

1. 'Operation Dost', which was recently in the news, is related to:

- An initiative by NITI Aayog to improve social relations.
- Mediation initiative between Israel and Palestine by the United Nations.
- Initiative by India to help Ukrainian refugees.
- Initiative by India to provide assistance to Turkey after earthquake.

2. TARKASH is a Joint War-Exercise organized between which two countries?

- India-US
- India-UK
- India-Russia
- India-France

3. With reference to Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology or iCET, consider the following statements:

- India and the United States have launched the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology or iCET.
- Critical Technology is defined as essential technology for the development and long-term national security or economic prosperity of the country.
- The iCET process, which will be monitored from the Meity in Delhi and the White House in Washington.

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

- 1 statement only
- 2 statements only
- All 3 statements
- None of these

1. (D)

2. (A)

3. (B)

Questions:

- How have India and Egypt relations diversified over time? Discuss the possibilities and challenges in India-Egypt relations in modern times.
- Rivers play an important role in Indian diplomacy and relations with neighbours. Discuss.
- What is Track 1.5 diplomacy? What is the role played by "Raisina Dialogue" in strengthening Indian image in global fora?
- What do you mean by "high altitude balloons"? Analyse the security threat posed by these balloons? Suggest some steps to tackle these threats.

GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT IN NEWS: 2023 - FEBRUARY

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Geography and Disasters

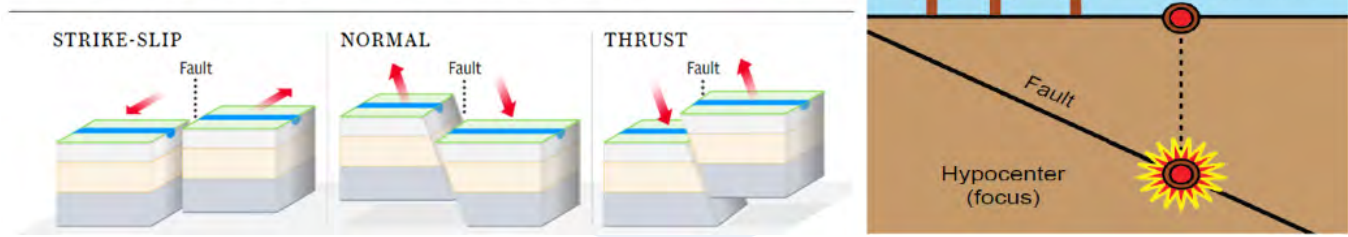
Earthquake in Turkey and Syria

- An earthquake simply implies the shaking of the earth.
- Earthquakes can be detected using tools called **seismographs** which record the movement of the ground during an earthquake.
- There are different scales used to measure earthquakes, such as the Richter scale or the Moment Magnitude scale.

Mechanism of the Earthquake:

1. Tectonic plates of the earth's crust continually collide, push and grate against each other.
2. The meeting points of these plates are made up of a series of 'faults.'
3. Along these faultlines, energy is often released when pressure imbalance causes rocks to re-adjust.
4. This energy travels as waves and causes the ground to shake.

THREE MAIN TYPES OF FAULTS CAUSING EARTHQUAKES



Why in the news?

Two large earthquakes of magnitudes 7.8 and 7.6 (Richter scale) hit south-eastern Turkey, claiming more than 30,000 lives in Turkey and Syria, and causing more than 200 aftershocks.



Image source: The Geological Society of London and BBC



Reasons for the vulnerability of Turkey:

- Turkey and Syria lie at the **confluence of three plates**: the Arabian Plate, the Anatolian Plate and the Eurasian Plate.
- The bulk of Turkey sits on the Anatolian Plate between **two major faults**: the North Anatolian Fault and the East Anatolian Fault, which had **built up stress** over centuries.
- **Lack of enforcement** of building codes in Turkey and the timing of the earthquake (early morning) made it more devastating.

Measurement of Earthquakes:

Richter Scale	Mercalli Scale
Developed by Charles Richter in 1935.	Developed by Giuseppe Mercalli in 1902.
Measures magnitude.	Measures intensity.
Strictly valid only for certain frequency and distance ranges.	Gives more accurate measure of destruction and actual impact.
It measures from a magnitude of 1 (smallest) to a magnitude of 10 (largest)	It has 12 levels that range from imperceptible shaking to catastrophic destruction.

- **Moment scale** is related to the total energy released in the earthquake, and is a more accurate measure at higher scales.
- Both Richter and Moment scales are logarithmic.
- Now a days, **Intensity scales**, like the **Modified Mercalli Scale** and the **Rossi-Forel scale**, provide better detail on amount of shaking at a particular location.

Damage caused by Earthquake:

- Damage caused by an earthquake depends on several **factors**:
 - magnitude of the earthquake
 - distance from the epicentre
 - depth of the earthquake
 - type of soil and geological conditions at the surface

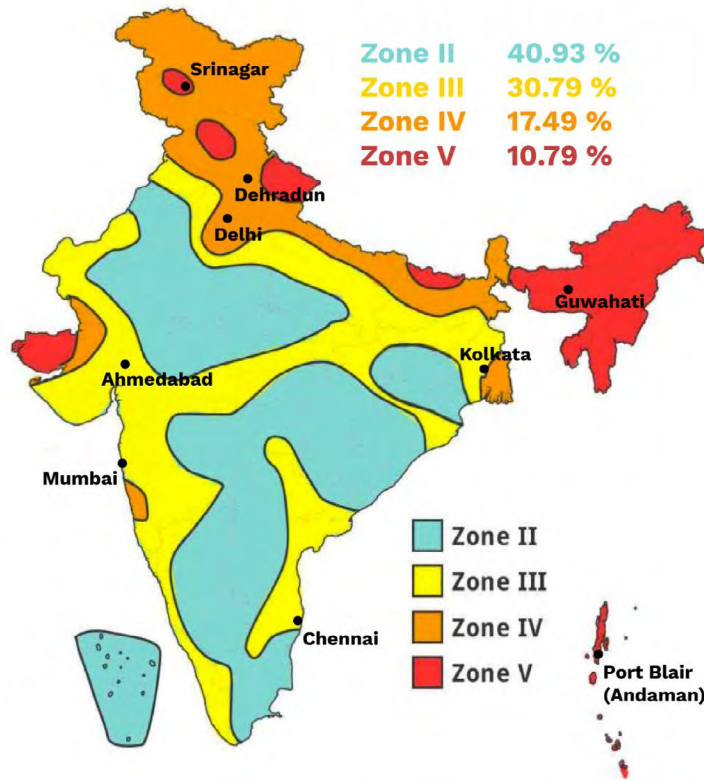
Impact of depth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shallow earthquakes (depth of less than about 70 km) are more devastating as they carry greater energy when they reach the surface. • Deep-focus earthquakes lose energy while travelling a greater distance, causing less damage.
Impact of magnitude and strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnitude is a measure of how big the waves are, while strength refers to the energy it carries. • Eg.: waves produced by a magnitude 6 earthquake have 10 times higher amplitude than a magnitude 5 earthquake. • The energy differential is even higher: 32 times high for every change of 1 in magnitude.



Seismic Zone Map of India:

About 59 Percent of the land area of India is liable to seismic hazard damage

Zone	Intensity
Zone V	Very High Risk Zone Area liable to shaking Intensity IX (and above)
Zone IV	High Risk Zone Intensity VIII
Zone III	Moderate Risk Zone Intensity VII
Zone II	Low Risk Zone VI (low lower)



Lessons from best practices:

- Chile, a country with a long history of devastating earthquakes, has minimized the damage by strictly enforcing building codes.
- Japan is also known for its experience in earthquake-proofing structures.
 - The **2011 earthquake in Fukushima** caused a radiation leak but didn't damage the stability of the structure.

News Source: The Hindu

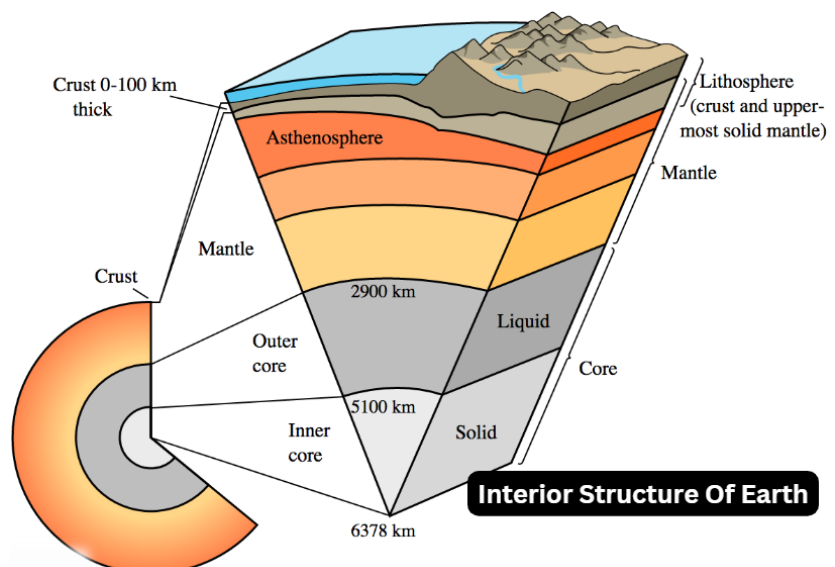
Earth's inner core rotating slower: study

Why in news?

Recently research suggested Earth's inner core has stopped spinning faster than the planet's surface.

About Earth's Layer:

- **Crust:**
 - The crust is the outer layer where we live. The thickness is around 0-60 km. It's a solid rock layer divided into two types: Continental crust and, Oceanic crust.



Source: USGS



- **Mantle:**
 - Mantle is the widest section of the Earth. Its thickness is approximately 2,900 km.
 - It is mainly made up of semi-molten rock known as magma.
- **Outer Core:**
 - Earth's core is the very hot, very dense centre of our planet..
 - Outer core is very hot, between 4,500° and 5,500° Celsius.
 - It is composed of metals such as iron and nickel.
 - Earth's magnetic field is created in the swirling outer core. Magnetism in the outer core is about 50 times stronger than it is on the surface.
- **Inner Core:**
 - It is the centre and the hottest layer of the Earth composed mostly of Iron.
 - Temperature in the inner core is about 5,200° Celsius.

More about news:

- Rotation of inner core rotates is a matter of debate and is not yet settled.
- Scientists believe that the inner core rotates, relative to the Earth's surface, back and forth, like a swing and one cycle is about seven decades.
- The inner core started rotating slightly faster than the rest of the planet in the early 1970s but it had been slowing down before and syncing with Earth's rotation around 2009.

Polar Vortex

What is Polar Vortex?

- It is a mass of cold, low-pressure air that consistently hovers over the Arctic region.
- It is denoted by the word "vortex" because it spins counter-clockwise, just like a hurricane does.

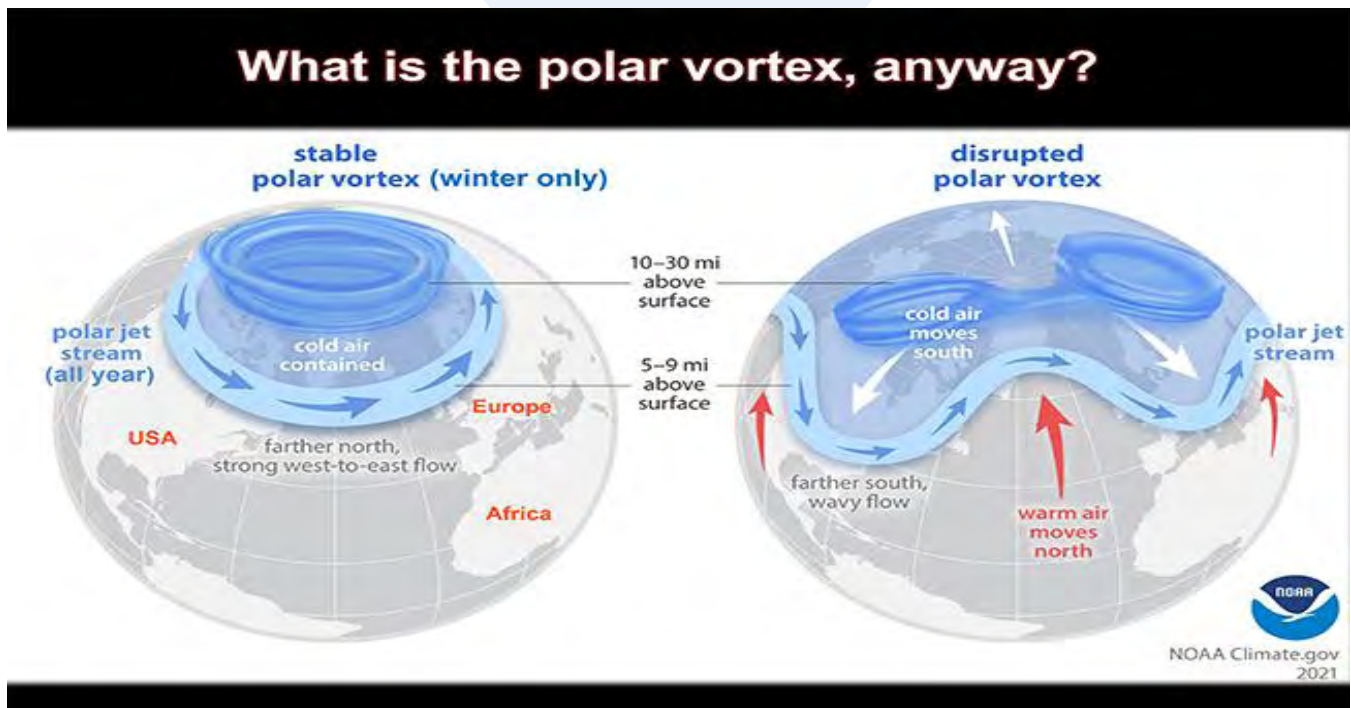


Image Source: www.noaa.gov

Why in news?

Recently, the arctic region has been rapidly warming. This has been linked to extreme cold weather in the US. These are a result of the expansion of the Polar Vortex.



Reasons for expansion of Polar Vortex:

- Usually, the polar vortex remains strong and compact like the mass of frigid air that stays at the North Pole.
- But sometimes it weakens and expands to influence the jet stream.
- Once the jet stream is impacted, the cold polar air finds its way toward the mid-latitude regions.
- Researchers found that the expansion of the polar vortex has been occurring more frequently due to the rapidly warming Arctic.

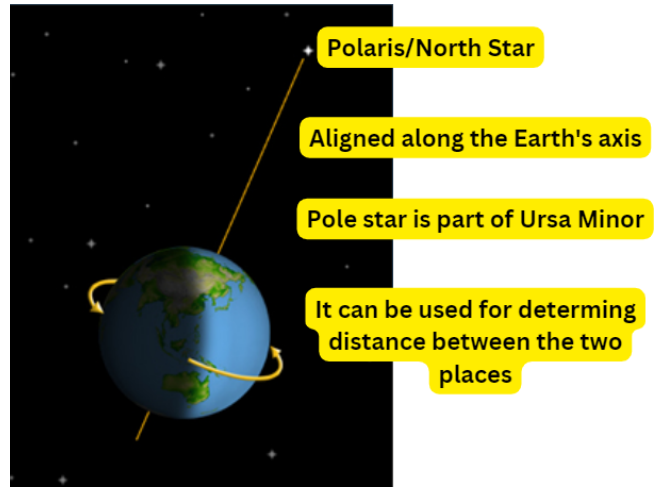


Image Source: Indian Express

North Star

Why in news?

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar said **Parliament is the “North Star” of democracy**, while Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud had described the **basic structure of the Constitution, as the “North Star”** because North Star appears to be stationary in the sky.

About North Star/Polaris/Pole Star:

- Since Polaris is almost in direct line with the Earth’s rotational axis, it appears to sit motionless in the northern sky, with all the other stars appearing to rotate around it.
- Its position and brightness have allowed humans to use it for navigation.

News Source: Indian Express

Unusual February Heat

गर्मी की लहर में Heat Wave in February गर्मियों में सामान्य

तापमान



तापमान



Why in news?

Temperatures in some parts of the country are touching 40 degrees Celsius in February, raising concerns about a very hot summer and extended heat waves this year.

More about news:

Between 1981-2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average maximum temperature is about 28 degrees C while average minimum temperature is about 15 degrees C which is taken as “normal”.
February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum temperatures have been 5-11 degrees C higher than normal in most parts of northern and western India.



What is a heatwave?

If temperatures in the plains exceed 40 degrees Celsius, these areas are said to be experiencing a heatwave.

For the mountains, this is 30 degrees C, and for the coastal areas, 37 degrees C.

Reasons for the Temp Rise in February:

- Hot weather is due to a combination of factors like the absence of western disturbance activity in February.
- A weaker sea breeze along the Konkan coast has also aggravated the temperature.

Global Scenario: It is a hotter season because of the expected end of the strongest-ever La Niña event.

La Niña: cooler than normal surface waters in the equatorial Pacific Ocean, which influences global weather.

News Source: IE

Flora and Fauna

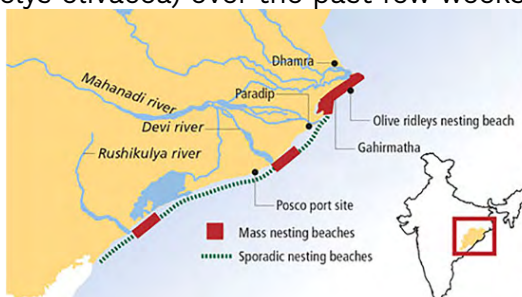
Mass mortality of Olive Ridley

About Olive Ridley:

IUCN	Vulnerable
Wildlife Protection Act, 1972	Schedule 1
CITES	Appendix 1
Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans. • The Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary, Odisha is the world's largest nesting ground. • Rushikulya river mouth is another mass nesting site in Odisha's Ganjam district.
Breeding Season	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third week of February to the first week of March . • Arribada (nesting) is a unique phenomenon where the Olive Ridley turtles try to increase the chances of survival of their offspring.

Why in news?

- The breeding grounds **Sakhinetipalli, Malikipuram, Mamidikuduru and Allavaram (Godavari Region Andhra Pradesh)** have been witnessing the mass mortality of the Olive Ridley Turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) over the past few weeks.





Reasons for mass mortality:

- Wastewater being discharged through pipelines by the ONGC facilities.

Red Sanders

About Red Sanders:

Scientific Name	Pterocarpus santalinus
Common Name	Red sanders, red saunders, Red Sandalwood, Rakta Chandana, etc.
IUCN Status	Endangered
Regions Found	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern Ghats especially state of Andhra Pradesh. • Usually grow in rocky, degraded and fallow lands with Red soil and hot and dry climate.
Other facts and uses	<p>It is a very slow-growing tree species that attains maturity in natural forests after 25-40 years.</p> <p>Uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is used to make furniture and handicrafts. • The red dye obtained from the wood is used as a colouring agent in textiles. • It also has medicinal properties and is valued in many international markets.



Why in news?

According to **CITES** databases, there is a heavy underreporting of **Red Sanders smuggling** in India.

Steps taken in India to protect Red Sanders:

- Andhra Pradesh Forest Act was amended in 2016 to give special protection to Red Sanders.
- Enforcement agencies such as the **Forest Departments, Customs, Railways, Police, DRI (Directorate of Revenue Intelligence), and Coast Guards** are coordinating efforts to curb trafficking.



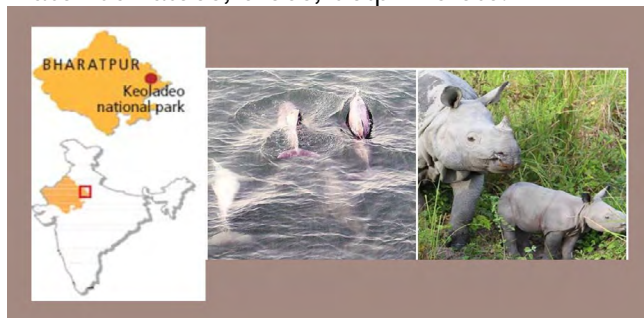
Red Sanders	Sandalwood
Highly valued in China, Japan and middle east countries for traditional medicine.	It is mostly renowned for its aromatic and cosmetic value.
Costs between Rs. 1500-2000 per Kg.	Second costliest wood after African Blackwood. Costs about Rs.10,000 per kg.
Illegal to possess and sell it.	Individuals can grow, but it is illegal to cut, harvest and sell in the open market.

News source: The Hindu

Zoo inside Bharatpur Sanctuary

Why in news?

The Rajasthan state Forest Department has proposed to construct a zoo inside Keoladeo National Park to display species like rhinos, water buffaloes, crocs, dolphins etc.



More about news:

- Zoo will be called **Wetland ex-situ Conservation Establishment (WESCE)**.
- Several facilities are planned inside Keoladeo national park which include
 - a breeding and reintroduction centre for locally extinct species, such as otters, fishing cats, blackbucks, hog deer, etc

About Keoladeo National Park:

- It is an important UNESCO World Heritage Site and is famous for migratory birds.

About Pangolins:

Species found	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globally 8 species, four each in Africa and Asia. • India has two of them- Indian and Chinese Pangolin.
Poached for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat, which is a delicacy and also has medicinal property. • Scales, made of keratin, which have medicinal value.

- Recognised in 1981 It is one of the first Ramsar sites, along with Chilika Lake.
- Important rivers: Gambhir and Banganga.

Concerns Raised:

- Questions have been raised about the zoo coming up in a globally significant habitat for migratory birds.

News Source: Indian Express

Poaching of Pangolins

Why in the news?

A report released jointly by WWF India and TRAFFIC revealed that over 1,200 pangolins were trafficked and poached in India between 2018-22.



Image credit: Indian Express



Importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are called ‘ecosystem engineers’. • By building burrows, improve soil aeration, circulation of organic matter and affect plant community succession.
IUCN Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian Pangolin - Endangered • Chinese Pangolin - Critically Endangered
Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972. • Listed in Appendix I of CITES - prohibiting commercial trade.

News source: Indian Express

Schemes and Initiatives

Green India Mission

National Action Plan on Climate Change(NAPCC) and its eight missions:

- The NAPCC was announced in **2008**.
- It was designed to address climate change in India and initiated by the **Ministry of Environment and Forests**.
- It seeks to help India meet its commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the **Paris Agreement**.

About Green India Mission:

- National Mission for a Green India (GIM) is one of the eight missions under NAPCC.
- It aims at protecting, restoring, and enhancing India’s forest cover and responding to climate change.

National Mission	Targets and Goals
National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess India’s vulnerability to climate change and develop strategies for adaptation and mitigation • Implemented by the Department of Science and Technology
National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure food and nutritional security, increasing agricultural productivity, shift towards climate-resilient agriculture • It is led by Ministry of Agriculture
National Mission for a Green India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase forest cover from 21% to 33% of the geographical area of the country by 2020 • Improve the quality of forest cover and preserve biodiversity
National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect Himalayan ecosystem from anthropogenic pressures • Implemented by the Department of Science and Technology
National Water Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure year round availability of water for agriculture and drinking purposes and efficient use of water • Led by Ministry of Jal Shakti
National Mission on Sustainable Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage green buildings, promote sustainable and inclusive urbanisation • comes under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs



National Mission on Enhanced Energy Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce energy intensity of the Indian economy by 20-25% by 2020 Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) scheme is a component, and is led by Ministry of Power
National Solar Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate 20 GW of solar power by 2022. (later revised to 100GW) Reduce the cost of generation and establish India as a global leader Led by Ministry of New and Renewable Energy

Why in the news?

India is lagging behind in the targets to increase the number and quality of tree- and forest-cover under the Green India Mission, according to RTI data.

India State of Forest Report-2021 data:

- 17 States and Union Territories have more than 33% of their area under forest cover.
- Forest cover **area** by state: Madhya Pradesh>Arunachal Pradesh> Chhattisgarh> Odisha> Maharashtra.
- Forest cover **percentage** by state: Mizoram (84.53%)> Arunachal Pradesh (79.33%)> Meghalaya (76%)> Manipur (74.34%)> Nagaland (73.90%).

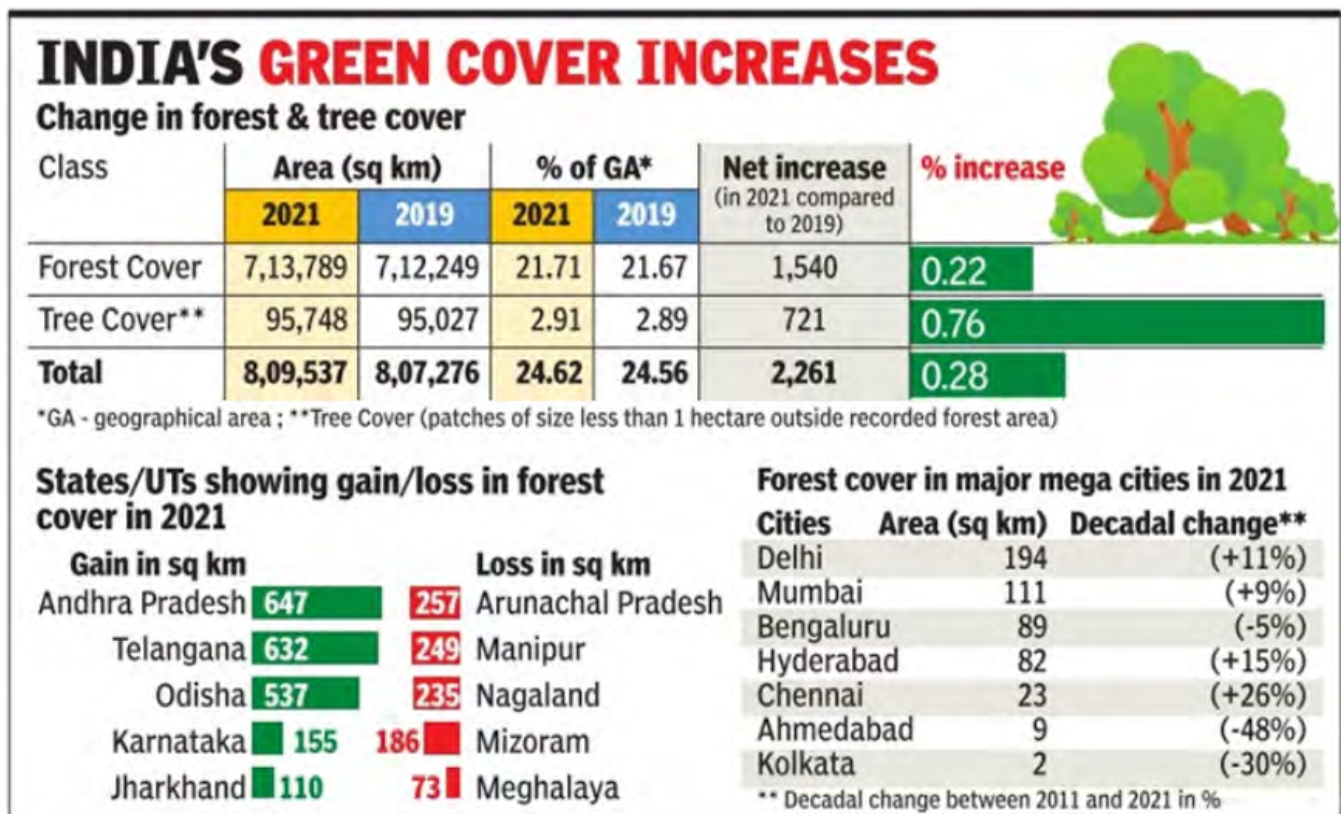


Image source: India times

Major challenges:

- Increase in green cover was almost entirely via commercial plantations and not natural forests.
- In an ecological sense, it doesn't compensate for natural forests and biodiversity.
- Monoculture plantation systems are more susceptible to pest attacks.



Environment new schemes- Amrit Dharohar, PM PRANAM, MISHTI

Why in the news?

The Finance Minister in Budget 2023-24 announced a “green push” with three new schemes focused on the environment and climate change.

About the three schemes:

MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim: To facilitate mangrove plantation along India’s coastline and on saltpan lands. • The programme will operate through convergence between MGNREGS, CAMPA Fund and other sources.
PM PRANAM (Prime Minister Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment and Amelioration of Mother Earth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim: to encourage states and UTs to reduce chemical fertilizer use by farmers. • Bhartiya Prakritik Kheti Bio-Input Resource Centres: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 10,000 such centres to be set up to reduce the use of chemical fertilisers. ○ It will create a national-level distributed micro-fertiliser and pesticide manufacturing network.
Amrit Dharohar Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim: wetlands conservation through enhanced biodiversity, carbon stock, eco-tourism opportunities and income generation for local communities • It is inclusive of local communities and recognizes them as caretakers of the ecosystem.

News Source: Indian Express

Global Climate Resilience Fund- by SEWA

Why in the News?

- Hillary Clinton and **Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA)** announced this Fund to fight the menace of climate change.
- Hillary Clinton is the former United States secretary of state.

SEWA to tackle Climate Changes



Key Points:

- SEWA was founded by Late Ela Bhatt and works in 18 states.
- This partnership is under the **‘Clinton Global Initiative’s (CGI)** commitment to providing critical support for climate resilience in the region.



- **The Clinton Global Initiative (CGI), Rockefeller Resilience Centre, Desai Foundation, the AI Gore Foundation, Council for Inclusive Capitalism, and the American India Foundation** will work with SEWA.

Source: The Indian Express

MCQs and Probable Mains Questions

1. With reference to Red Sanders, consider the following statements:

1. The IUCN status of this species is 'Endangered'.
2. It has been placed in Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

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

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) None of these

2. With reference to the Mangroves, consider the following statements:

1. Mangroves are salt-tolerant plant communities found in only subtropical intertidal regions.
2. They are located in the intermediate zone between the land and the sea and represent one of the best examples of ecotone.
3. West Bengal has the largest mangrove forest area in India.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

3. With what is the term 'Aftershocks' and 'Foreshocks' which were in the news recently?

- (a) El Nino and La Nina
- (b) Coral Bleaching
- (c) Seismic Activity
- (d) Solar Storm

4. With reference to Polar Vortex, consider the following statements:

1. It is a mass of cold, low-pressure air that consistently hovers over the Arctic region.
 2. They have no effect on the extreme cold weather experienced in The US recently.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1, nor 2

5. The plateau of Anatolia, which was in news recently, is situated between which two water bodies?

- (a) Black Sea and Azov Sea
- (b) Mediterranean Sea and Azov Sea
- (c) Black Sea and Caspian Sea
- (d) Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea

6. With reference to shallow earthquakes, consider the following statements:

1. It is an earthquake that originates far away from the surface.
2. They are often more deadly than deeper earthquakes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1, nor 2

7. With reference to "Skyglow", consider the following statements:

1. Skyglow is the light in the night sky which is a commonly noticed aspect of light pollution.
2. It is made of artificial lighting only.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1, nor 2



Questions:

1. Discuss the vulnerability of India to earthquake related hazards. Give examples including the salient features of major disasters caused by earthquakes in different parts of India during the last three decades. (UPSC 2021)
2. Discuss the major schemes introduced in budget 2023-24 for preservation of the environment.
3. What role is played by civil society and NGOs in fighting Climate change and upliftment of vulnerable societies from climate change?

1. (C)

2. (B)

3. (C)

4. (A)

5. (D)

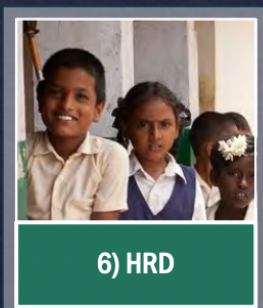
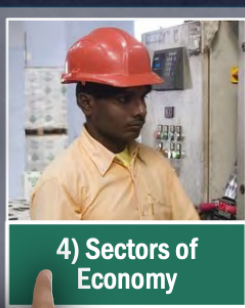
6. (B)

7. (A)

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SCIENCE AND TECH IN NEWS: 2023 - FEBRUARY

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HIMA BINDU

Nucleus
Nucleolus
Chromatin

Eukaryote

Nucleoid (folded chromosome)

Prokaryote

Chat

- Prateek ok mam
- Mona yess mam
- Alankrita Promise ko yaad karna
- Mushafir Jii
- saurav G
- VINAY yes mam

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Healthcare and Biotech

Norovirus

Why in the News?

Recently it was reported that 2 school children from Kerala got infected with Norovirus.

About the Norovirus:

- It is a disease affecting the gastrointestinal

system of humans.

- It is not a new virus but it has been circulating in humans for the last 50 years.
- It can be fatal, especially to those under 5 and above 65 years age.
- It is also referred to as '**winter vomiting disease**' as outbreaks tend to be common in winter or colder regions.

Spreading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through direct contact Through contaminated food/ water Through contaminated surfaces and putting those hands in the mouth.
Symptoms	Diarrhoea, Vomiting, Nausea, Stomach pain.
Treatment	There's no specific treatment for norovirus infection and recovery depends on person's immunity system.
Prevention	Washing hands and hygiene practices, homestay (isolation), keeping the body hydrating, consuming fruits, etc.

Source: The Indian Express

Immunity Imprinting

Why in the news?

Study shows that immune imprinting might be making bivalent booster doses less effective.

About Immune Imprinting:

- It is a tendency of the body to repeat it's immune response based on the first variant it encountered.
- It acts as a database for the human immune system.
- 1947:** It was first observed against flu.
- Earlier it was termed as 'original antigenic sin' but now it is commonly called imprinting.
- The body produces **memory B cells**, that produce the antibodies whenever the same strain of the virus infects again.
- Alien virus in body **activates**

Science in News

Immune Imprinting

- Immune imprinting is a tendency of the body to **repeat its immune response** based on the first variant it encountered.
- In 1947, it was first observed, when developed against **flu**.
- After 1st exposure to virus, body produces **memory B cells** that produce antibodies whenever the same strain of the virus infects again.
- Alien virus in body **activates memory B cells**, which produce antibodies that bind to both the old and new strains, known as "**cross-reactive antibodies**".



memory B cells, which produce antibodies that bind to both the old and new strains, known as **‘cross-reactive antibodies’**.

Source: The Indian Express

TAWS

Why in the News?

The leading national mental health institute NIMHANS developed a **stress measuring tool** called “Tool To Assess and Classify Work-Related Stress” (TAWS).

About the Tool:

- TAWS-16 helps to map mental health condition that could trigger chronic heart disease and diabetes.
- The employees get a color-coded score after assessment- green, yellow and red.

About NIMHANS:

- It is the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences, located in Bengaluru.
- It comes under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Source: The Indian Express

Information Technology

Bharat Operating System (OS)

Why in news?

IIT-Madras has developed a new operating system called BharOS, which is indigenous private mobile operating system. Some of the other important OS are Windows, macOS, Linux etc.

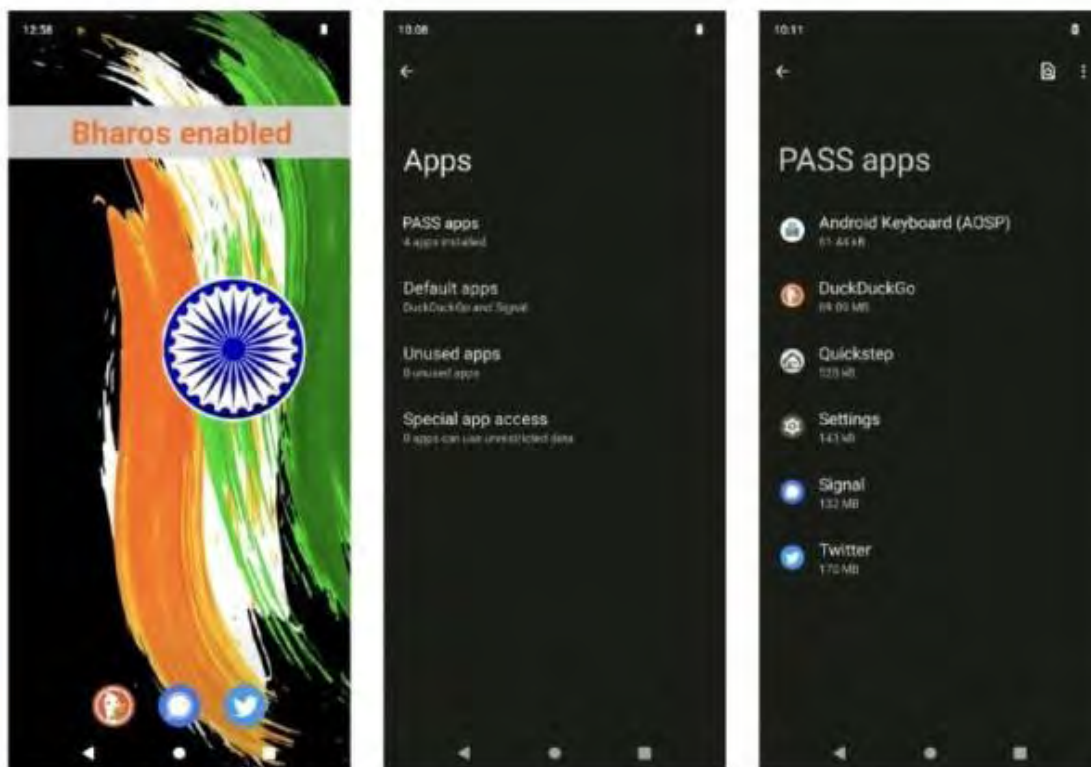


Image Source: IE



Google Bard vs Microsoft's ChatGPT

Why in news?

ChatGPT	Bard
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ChatGPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) is an AI-based processing model that is pre-trained on a large corpus of text developed by Microsoft-backed OpenAI.• It is designed to generate human-like text and can be used to respond to questions.• GPT is trained using unsupervised learning algorithms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is a natural language processing model developed by Google.• Bard is trained using supervised learning algorithms.• It is better suited for tasks such as machine translation and text summarization.

Concern with AI-based platforms:

- These can be extremely prone to inaccuracies.
- The ability to generate content such as hate speech and racial and gender biases and stereotyping, could lead to problems.
- There is also an issue of plagiarism, cheating, and threat to online safety with sophisticated AI chatbots.

News Source: Indian Express

MicroLED Display- Apply in-house Mfg

Why in the news?

Tech-giant Apple is currently developing its own microLED display technology and plans to implement the same in its future devices.

What is microLED display technology?

- MicroLEDs are self-illuminating diodes(semiconductors).
- These displays are based on sapphires, which are substances that can shine forever on their own.
- These microLEDs are gathered into modules, which are then assembled to make screens.
- MicroLED dimensions are less than 100µm (micrometres), much smaller than conventional LED.



Image Source: The Hindu



Benefits of microLED over OLED

microLED (micro Light emitting Diode)	OLED (Organic Light Emitting Diode)
It is made of inorganic compounds thus more stable and lighter.	Organic compounds make it more prone to decay.
No need for colour filters, thus it is thinner.	Need for additional layers makes it thicker.
microLED has brighter colour reproduction.	Less brighter colour reproduction.

Other benefits of this technology:

- It has unlimited scalability, as it is resolution-free, bezel-free and ratio-free.
- There is the possibility to resize the screen in any form for new devices.
- It does not need backlighting or colour filters and can produce red, blue, and green colours individually, thus, color reproduction is better.

News Source: The Hindu

BHASHINI AI for content translation for Farmers



Why in the News?

- The Ministry of Electronics and IT launched, BHASHINI, National Language Translation Mission.



Key Points:

- BHASHINI- BHASa-INterface for India.
- It provides easy access to digital services in Indian languages, voice-based access, and content in Indian languages.
- Bhasha Daan will generate databases for Indian languages, and AI models for developing products and services .
- WhatsApp to be used to facilitate search on key government schemes, powered by the ChatGPT.

Source: PIB

Space / Atomic Technology

Dark Sky Reserve

What is Dark Sky Reserve?

- A “dark-sky reserve” – an area whose skies were free of light pollution. The designation meant that the reserve had a responsibility to keep the skies dark, particularly for the astronomical observatories located in the area.
- Eg : In 2022, the district administration of Ladakh designated **six hamlets within the Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary** a “dark-sky reserve”.





Light Pollution and Situation globally:

- The night is actually becoming brighter in almost the rest of the world due to ‘skyglow’.

What is Skyglow?

- Skyglow is the light in the night sky, apart from light sources such as the Moon and visible individual stars. It is a commonly noticed aspect of light pollution.
- While usually it is artificial lighting, skyglow may also involve any scattered light seen at night, including natural ones like starlight, zodiacal light, and airglow.
- Non-natural light has increased the skyglow, by 9.2-10% every year between 2011 and 2022.

Consequences of Light Pollution:

- Sea turtles are unable to come ashore to nest.
- Skyglow keeps trees from sensing seasonal variations.
- Young burrow-nesting seabirds don’t take flight unless the nesting site becomes dark, hence its natural cycle is disturbed.
- Clownfish eggs don’t hatch when exposed to artificial light at night, killing the offspring.
- Artificial light at night can hamper the production of melatonin, an influential hormone in the human body with effects on sleep, moods and cognition.

Subatomic Particles for Studying Structures

Why in news?

Researchers are examining the fortress wall of Xi’an, an ancient city in China, by using “muons”.

What are Muons?

- Muons are subatomic particles which are created when the particles in Earth’s atmosphere collide with cosmic rays (i.e. clusters of high-energy particles) that move through space at the speed little less than that of light.
- These particles are similar to electrons with

negative charge but are 207 times heavier. Therefore, they are sometimes called “fat electrons”.

Why are “Muons” used?

- Muons are heavy so they can travel through hundreds of metres of rock or other matter and then get absorbed or decay into electrons and neutrinos.
- The drawback of this technique is that they are highly unstable and exist for just 2.2 microseconds.

How does muography work?

- Muography is conceptually similar to X-ray but is capable of scanning much larger and wider structures.
- The technique was first used in the late 1960s by Nobel Laureate physicist **Luis Alvarez**.

News Source: Indian Express

ISRO SSLV-D2 launch

Why in the News?

To exploit the international satellite launch market, ISRO launched the SSLV-D2 rocket.

Key points:

- It was the second launch of Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV-D2).
- It seeks to capture the commercial market for small and micro satellites, including on-demand launches.
- It will place following satellites:
- ISRO’s earth observation satellite EOS-07
- Janus-1 (US based Antaris and India’s XDLinks and Ananth Technologies)
- AzaadiSat2 (built by 750 girl students from across India)

Source: ISRO





MCQs and Probable Mains Questions

1. With reference to Muons, which was recently in news, consider the following statements:

1. These are subatomic particles raining down from space. They are created when these particles in the Earth's atmosphere collide with cosmic rays.
2. These cosmic rays are groups of high-energy particles that move through space at almost the speed of light.
3. These particles are similar to electrons but are 207 times more massive.

Which of the above statement are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

2. With reference to 'Small Satellite Launch Vehicle-D2', which was in news recently, consider the following statements?

1. It can place satellites up to 500 kg in low earth orbit on a 'launch-on-demand' basis.
2. ISRO has successfully sent three Indian satellites into space with this launch vehicle.

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

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

3. With reference to "North Star" consider the following statements:

1. It is also known as Pole Star.
2. It is part of the constellation Ursa Major.
3. North Star position and brightness have made humans to use it for navigation.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

4. With reference to 'Inferred Lithium Deposit in J&K', which was in news recently, consider the following statements?

1. Lithium is a type of ferrous metal widely used in battery making of hybrid electric Vehicles.
2. "Inferred" mineral sources are estimated with high level of confidence and reliability.
3. Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

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

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

5. With reference to Norovirus, consider the following statements:

1. It is thought to be one of the primary causes of gastroenteritis.
2. The virus is not capable of surviving low temperatures.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) Both 1 and 2
- (c) Neither 1 nor 2
- (d) 2 only

Questions:

1. What is Artificial Intelligence? How can AI help in doubling farmer's income?
2. What is a LED? Discuss the new advancements in the field of MicroLED.
3. What are subatomic particles? Discuss various uses of these subatomic particles.

1. (D)

2. (A)

3. (C)

4. (D)

5. (A)



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HISTORY IN NEWS: 2023 - FEBRUARY

MAJOR EVENTS

CULTURE

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

LEARN HISTORY FROM THE BEST EDUCATORS

The screenshot displays a Zoom meeting interface. The main content is a presentation slide titled "Sources of History" from unacademy. The slide features a hierarchical diagram of "Archaeological Sources" with the following categories and sub-points:

- Stone Tools
 - Artefacts
- Inscriptions
 - Prasasti
 - Nature? Eg. Religious
 - Didactic
 - Admin
 - Commerce
 - Eulogistic
 - Votive
 - Denotative
 - Literary
- Coins
 - Metal
 - Type
 - Punch-marked
 - Figure-Impressioned
- Monuments
 - Stupa
 - Pillars
 - Caves
 - Temples
 - Sculpture
 - Seals
- Pottery
 - Material
 - Colour
 - Paintings Etc.

Handwritten blue notes on the slide include "Bun" and "Bunish" near the Pottery section. The Zoom chat window on the right shows messages from participants: Saina (Yes), Ayush (joined), Sajad (Weapons?), Garima (yes sir), Ashish (fossils), Divya (JI SIR), Ankita (Yes sir), Satyajit (Ok kanishk), Ashish (yes sir), and Rishabh (Ji). A "JUMP TO LATEST" button is visible at the bottom of the chat. At the bottom of the screen, there is a QR code, the text "Scan QR Code", and a prominent red "JOIN NOW" button. The presenter's name "Ancient History- Pratik Nayak ©" is visible at the bottom of the slide.



Major Events

Aadi Mahotsav tribal handloom fair at Delhi



About Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation Limited (TRIFED):

Formed in	1987; under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 1984.
Nodal Ministry	Ministry of Tribal Affairs
Objective	Socio-economic development of tribal people in the country through the marketing development of tribal products.
Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) by Tribals. Coordinating Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana (PMVDY). Village and Digital Connect Initiative. Tech For Tribals Program. TRIFOOD Scheme for value addition to MFP.

News source: The Hindu

ICHR's Prakalp initiative for historical research



हम भारत के स्मारकों, शास्त्रों और मूर्तियों पर शोध करेंगे



Why in the News?

- The Government of India launched the PRAKALP project under ICHR to fill gaps in historical research.

Key points:

- This project aims to update and publish 12-13 volumes of history.
- **ICHR - The Indian Council of Historical Research** is a body under the Union Ministry of Education, and was established in 1972 for promoting scientific historical research.

Source: The Indian Express

Culture

Etikoppaka wooden toy craft

Why in The News?

- On the eve of Republic day, the Government of India honored Etikoppaka toy craft with India's 4th highest civilian award Padma Shri.



Key Points:

- Etikopakka is a village on the **banks of Varaha river in Vishakhapatnam**.
- Toys are **lacquer-colored** and created in the region and traditionally called Etikopakka Bommalu.
- Natural dyes derived from seeds, lacquer, bark, roots and leaves are used on these toys.
- Recently CV Raju, a craftsman of Etikopakka has been given **Padma Shri**.
- In 2017 It got the GI tag in the handicraft category.
- These toys depict rural life including women, bullocks, carts, wells, birds, etc.

Source: The Hindu

Kashmir's Pashmina Shawls

Why in the News?

A French artist Maximilien Pellet used the Pashmina shawl for making canvas for the contemporary art form in a Persian exhibition.



KASHMIR'S PASHMINA SHAWL



About the Pashina Shwal:

- The word Pashmina is taken from the Persian word Pashm, meaning waivable fibre precise wool.
- It originated in the Kashmir region of India and it has **got GI tag**.
- The wool for the shawl is obtained from the **Changthangi goat**, a local goat of Ladakh.

Source: The Hindu

Jatar Deul

Why in news?

Sea winds are eroding 11th-century terracotta temple in West Bengal's Sundarbans.



Jatar Deul Temple, West Bengal

More about Jatar Deul:

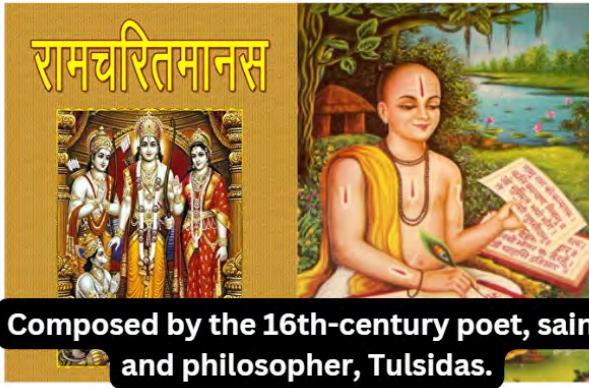
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located at Raidighi in South 24 Parganas, a few kilometres from the sea.
Ancient Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) states that Jatar Deul is traditionally connected to an inscription by Raja Jayantachandra issued in 975 AD.
Impact of climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early brick temples have been completely destroyed because of hostile climate. • Increase in air salinity, Amphan (the tropical cyclone), etc have gradually eroded the outer wall of Jatar Deul.

News Source: The Hindu

Ramcharitmanas by Tulsidas

Why in the news?

A political controversy arose in Bihar related to the interpretation of some verses from Ramcharitmanas.



Composed by the 16th-century poet, saint and philosopher, Tulsidas.

About Ramcharitmanas:

- It is a retelling of the events of the Ramayana, in the regional language of **Awadhi**.
- It is divided into seven chapters ('Kand') that tell the story of Lord Ram from birth to his becoming King of Ayodhya.
- It influenced many forms of Indian art, including music, theatre and dance forms like Bharatanatyam, Kathak, and Odissi.

About Tulsidas (Bhakti saint):

- Estimated to live between 1532-1623, and thus a **contemporary of Akbar**.
- He was a Brahmin whose original name was Ram Bola Dubey.
- He is said to have composed the Ramcharitmanas on the bank of the Ganga in Varanasi.

- **Other important works:** Vinaya Patrika, Kavitali, and Janaki Mangal.

Amrit Udyan

Why in The News?

In keeping with the theme of the Aazadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Union government has renamed the Mughal Garden as 'Amrit Udyan'.



About the Garden:

- **Location:** within the Rashtrapati Bhawan complex, New Delhi.
- It was designed by Edwin Lutyens and influenced by the Persian Charbagh style of architecture.

Source: The Indian Express

Pen Monument

Why in news ?

Tamil Nadu proposed to construct a 134-foot high 'Pen Monument' in the memory of former Chief Minister and DMK supremo M. Karunanidhi at the Bay of Bengal in Chennai.



More about Pen Monument:

- According to an official document shape of a pen represents Karunanidhi's many contributions to **Iyal (poetry and literature), Isai (music), and Naadagam (theatre)**, the three fundamental pillars of Thamizh, or Tamil.

Criticism And Concerns about the move:

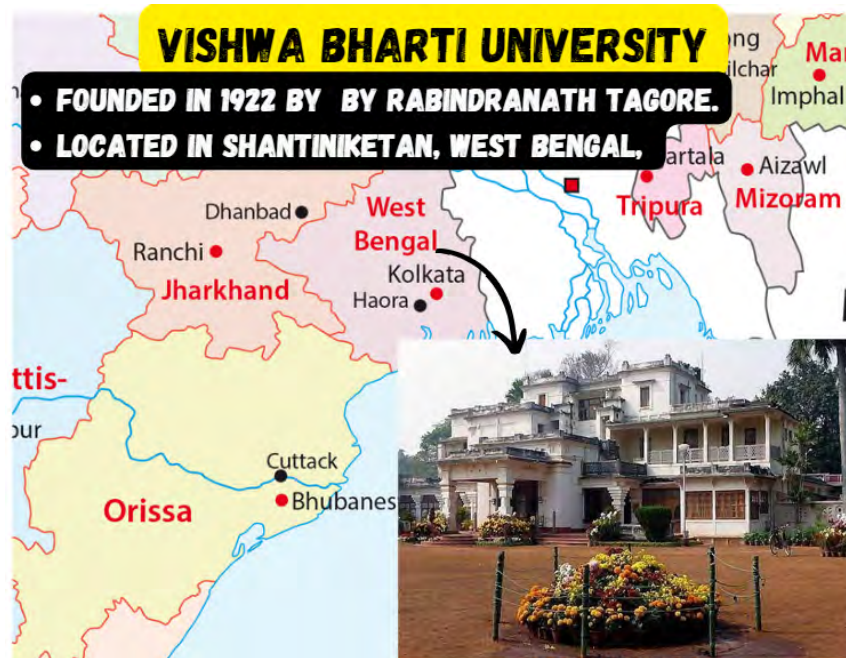
- Damages the ecosystem and marine life along the coast of Marina beach and would adversely impact the livelihood of fishermen.



Vishwa Bharti University

Why in the News?

- The Central University of India, Vishwa Bharti, is set to get world's first living heritage university tag by UNESCO.



What is a living heritage site?

- The existing practice of giving heritage site tags to dead or non-living sites but Vishwa Bharti is a functioning university so it will get a living heritage tag.

About Vishwa-Bharti:

- **1951:** This institution got a central university tag.
- It is based on an open-air education system that is still carried out and for excellence in cultural studies, including arts, language, humanities, fine arts, and music.

Major Initiatives of UNESCO (United Nations Scientific, Educational and Cultural Organization):

- World Heritage Programme.
- Network of Creative Cities.
- Man and Biosphere Programme.
- Global Geopark Network.

Source: The Indian Express



This day in history

Date	Significance	Description
26th Jan	Republic Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">This day commemorates and celebrates adoption of the Constitution of India.On this day in 1930 IN Lahore INC declared 'Poorna Swaraj' and hoisted the Triocolor.The Preamble to the Indian Constitution went into effect on this day.India became a Sovereign Democratic Republic on this day.
30th Jan	Martyr's Day or Shaheed Diwas is celebrated in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated by Nathuram Godse in the Birla House during his evening prayers on January 30, 1948.The International Day of Nonviolence is held on October 2nd, Mahatma Gandhi's birthday.Books written by him include: The Story of My Experiments with Truth (1927), Hind Swaraj (1909), India of my dreams (1947), Satyagraha in South Africa (1928).
31st Jan	On the orders of Queen Elizabeth I of Britain, the first East India Company was established in India.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The English East India Company was incorporated by royal charter on December 31, 1600.In 1651, the East India Company started its trading in Bengal after an agreement of returning an annual payment of 3,000 rupees instead of all duties.At Hooghly(1651), an East Indian company was started. In Kasimbazar, Patna and Rajmahal, the British started the factories.
2nd Feb	World Wetlands Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Adoption of the Convention on Wetlands was done on 2 February 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar"Revive and restore degraded wetlands" is the theme for 2023.India has a total of 75 Ramsar sites so far covering an area of 13,26,677 ha.
3rd Feb	Battle of Diu	<ul style="list-style-type: none">It was a naval battle fought on 3 February 1509 in the Arabian Sea, in the port of Diu, India.Fought between the Portuguese Empire and a joint fleet of the Sultan of Gujarat, the Mamlûk Burji Sultanate of Egypt, and the Zamorin of Calicut.The Portuguese victory was critical.It eased controlling the Indian Ocean to route trade down the Cape of Good Hope.The Portuguese did not take over Diu immediately.



4th Feb	Chauri Chaura Incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is situated in the Gorakhpur district of the United Province, (modern Uttar Pradesh).• A large group of protesters, participating in the Non-cooperation movement, clashed with police, who opened fire.• The incident led to the deaths of three civilians and 23 policemen.
6th Feb	Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan Birth Anniversary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He was also popularly known as Frontier Gandhi.• a die-hard opponent of the two-nation theory and the idea of Pakistan.• He enjoyed the same stature in the North West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) as Gandhi had in India.
9th Feb	Treaty of Alinagar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was signed between Robert Clive of the British East India Company and Mirza Muhammad Siraj Ud Daula, the Nawab of Bengal.• One of the reasons leading up to the famous Battle of Plassey.
10th Feb	Battle of Sobraon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• On February 10, 1846, Battle of Sobraon was fought.• fought between the British forces and the Sikh Khalsa army.• Sir Hugh Gough, the main Commander of the Bengali army, oversaw the British.• Sardar Tej Singh, Sardar Lal Singh, and Sardar Sham Singh Attariwala were the Sikh side's Commanders.• The Battle of Sobraon was the fourth battle of First Anglo-Sikh war after Battle of Ferozpur, Battle of Baddowal and Battle of Aliwal.
14th Feb	Coronation of Akbar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• On February 14, 1556, the Coronation ceremony of Akbar took place at Kalanaur, Punjab.• Akbar defeated Hemu in the second battle of Panipat and established control over Delhi.
18th Feb	Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Birth Anniversary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was born in Nabadwip on February 18, 1486.• He taught Vaishnavism in Bengal and Odisha.• Popularised the “Hare Rama, Hare Krishna” chant.



19th Feb	Gopal Krishna Gokhale Death Anniversary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He was born on 9th May 1866 in Ratnagiri district, in Maharashtra.• He died on 19th February 1915.• Was influenced by Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade,• He was often called the 'Protege Son' (Manas Putra) of Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade.• Gokhale was a moderate who was elected president of the INC in the Banaras session in 1905.
22ndFeb	Kasturba Gandhi Death Anniversary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kasturbai Gandhi was a political activist and was married to Mahatma Gandhi.• She educated women about hygiene, discipline, and health in Champaran, Bihar.• Kasturba was an active participant in the Borsad Satyagraha and the Bardoli Satyagraha.• In the year 2013, the Government declared April 11 as the National Safe Motherhood Day to be celebrated every year to mark the birth anniversary of Kasturba Gandhi.• She was arrested in 1942, along with Gandhiji and other freedom fighters, for taking part in the Quit India movement.

MCQs and Probable Mains Questions

1. In the context of Jatar Deul Temple, which was in news recently, consider the following?

1. This temple is situated on the banks of the Krishna river in Andhra Pradesh.
2. It is a famous Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

2. With reference to the Etikoppaka toy, consider the following statements:

1. This toy craft is mainly related to the state of Odisha.
2. Etikoppaka Toys was granted Geographical Indication in the year 2017.

Which of the above statement is/are **not** correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

3. Recently seen in news "Charaideo moidams – royal burial sites" are related to the state of:

- (a) Tripura
- (b) Mizoram
- (c) Assam
- (d) Arunachal Pradesh

4. With reference to Visva-Bharati University, which was recently in news, consider the following statements:

1. It will be the world's first living heritage university.
2. It is located in Shantiniketan of West Bengal.

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

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

1. (B)

2. (A)

3. (C)

4. (D)

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ETHICS AND ESSAY IN NEWS: 2023 - FEBRUARY

CONDUCT OF OFFICERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

CANCEL CULTURE- MODIFYING OLD LITERATURE TO FIT NEW SENSIBILITIES

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HIMA BINDU

Nucleus
Nucleolus
Chromatin

Eukaryote

Nucleoid (folded chromosome)

Prokaryote

Chat

- Prateek ok mam
- Mona yess mam
- Alankrita Promise ko yaad karna 🥰
- Mushafir Jii
- saurav G
- VINAY yes mam

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Conduct of Officers on Social Media



Why in the news?

There was a war of words on social media between an IAS and an IPS officer in Karnataka, resulting in them being transferred without a posting.

Social media use by civil servants:

Benefits	Concerns
Better accessibility and public outreach.	Self-promotion and the lure of glamour.
Feedback on government initiatives.	Counter to the principle of anonymity.
Emergency response, e.g., during COVID-19.	Blurs the line between personal and official views.
Improved public perception by showcasing works.	Partisan politics: civil servants are often drawn into politics on social media.
Increased transparency by regular information sharing.	Time management: It may hamper official duties.

Conduct Rules for Civil Servants:

- The Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964 lay down the norms for civil servants.
- Similar rules exist for officers of the All India Services and State Governments.
- The **Conduct Rules** include the following norms:
 - Maintaining integrity and absolute devotion to duty.
 - Not engaging in “behaviour inappropriate for a government employee.”
 - The code of conduct lists certain acts that are judged inappropriate for public officials. For example- taking dowry, speaking to the Press against the government, etc.

Other recent instances:

- An IAS Officer from UP was relieved by the ECI from Gujarat Election Duty for sharing pictures during official work.
- An IAS officer from Mumbai made controversial remarks related to Nathuram Godse and insulting Mahatma Gandhi.
- Public remarks by an officer from Madhya Pradesh put a bad light on the ongoing Swachh Bharat Mission.

2nd ARC Recommendations:

- **Apex level:** Having a clear statement of values and ethical standards for civil servants, including political impartiality and accountability.
 - Examples: commitment to uphold the Constitution, protect citizens’ rights, and promote the public good.
- **Second level:** Outlining broad principles that govern a civil servant’s behaviour, which constitute the Code of Ethics.
 - Examples: the importance of integrity, honesty, impartiality, confidentiality, and avoiding conflicts of interest.
- **Third level:** Creating a specific Code of Conduct that clearly states acceptable and



unacceptable behaviour and actions with specified consequences.

- Examples: prohibition of accepting gifts, nepotism, discrimination, or harassment.
- **Statutory backing:** Values and Code of Ethics should be given legal backing by including them in the proposed Civil Services Bill.

Cancel Culture- modifying old literature to fit new sensibilities

What is Cancel Culture?

It refers to criticising and boycotting public figures or celebrities who have done something that is considered offensive or controversial in today’s society, often leading to the withdrawal of public support.

Why in the news?

Recently, some changes have been made by Puffin Books to children’s books by British author Roald Dahl to make them more in line to modern sensibilities.

Roald Dahl’s books contains words like “enormously fat,” “enormous” for children which are used for body shaming.

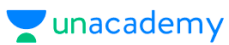
Major cases of cancel culture:

- **2021-The Cancellation of Dr. Seuss:** Several Dr. Seuss books were removed from circulation due to their offensive imagery and content.
- **Mark Twain:** critics argue that his works contain language that is racially insensitive, sexist, and offensive to African-American.

Effects of Cancel Culture:

Pros	Cons
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Useful tools for holding people accountable for their words, actions, and beliefs. 2. Used to bring awareness to issues that are often ignored or not talked about. 3. This can encourage people to think before they speak and act, which can lead to a more informed and tolerant society. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Often leads to mob mentality, where people rush to make judgments without considering all the facts or context. 2. Used to silence dissenting opinions and can lead to an environment of fear where people are afraid to speak up or express their opinions. 3. Cancel culture can lead to an environment where people are afraid to take risks or be creative for fear of being judged or cancelled. 4. White washing literature is not right way as people will not be able to know the state of mind and the state of the society.

News Source: IE



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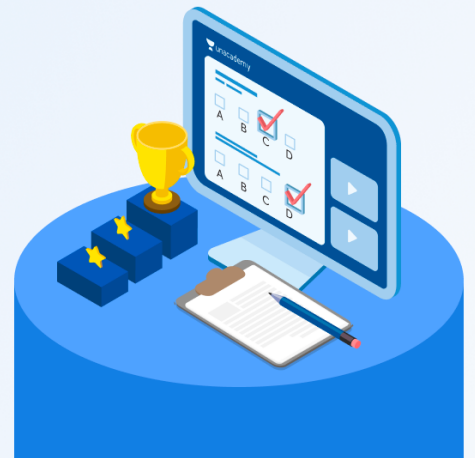
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CURRENT AFFAIRS IN NEWS: 2023 - FEBRUARY

PLACES / PEOPLE IN NEWS

AWARDS

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Net International Investment Position (NIIP)

The net claims of nonresidents on India increased by \$34.3 billion during the second quarter (Q2) of FY23 and stood at \$389.6 billion in September, according to data released by **Released Bank of India on India's International Investment Position (IIP)**.

- The **net international investment position** is the difference in the external financial assets and liabilities of a country. External debt of a country includes government debt and private debt.
- External assets publicly and privately held by a country's legal residents are also taken into account when calculating NIIP.

Vibrant Village Programme (VVP)

Union Home Minister asks border-guarding forces to strengthen **Vibrant Village Programme and ensure welfare programmes are implemented**

- It was announced in the 2022-23 budget with an aim to enhance infrastructure in border villages along **India's border with China**.
- This objective will be met by strengthening infrastructure across villages located near the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**.
- Activities include Housing, Tourism promotion, Road Infrastructure, Renewable Energy, livelihood generation etc.
- Community knowledge in the border management.

Yes sir

Chanchal
Yes

CH
Oh

Dr ram
Shakti birthday?

Amit
SHAKTI DOUBT BOX CHECK KR LUJIYE

Roshan
Yes

Amit
SHAKTI DOUBT BOX CHECK KR LUJIYE

Roshan
Yes

Kirti
OH AJ SUNDY H

Anuj
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Places / People in News

Solomon Islands

Why in the News?

- The US recently opened its embassy in the Solomon Islands to counter Chinese influence in the Pacific Ocean.

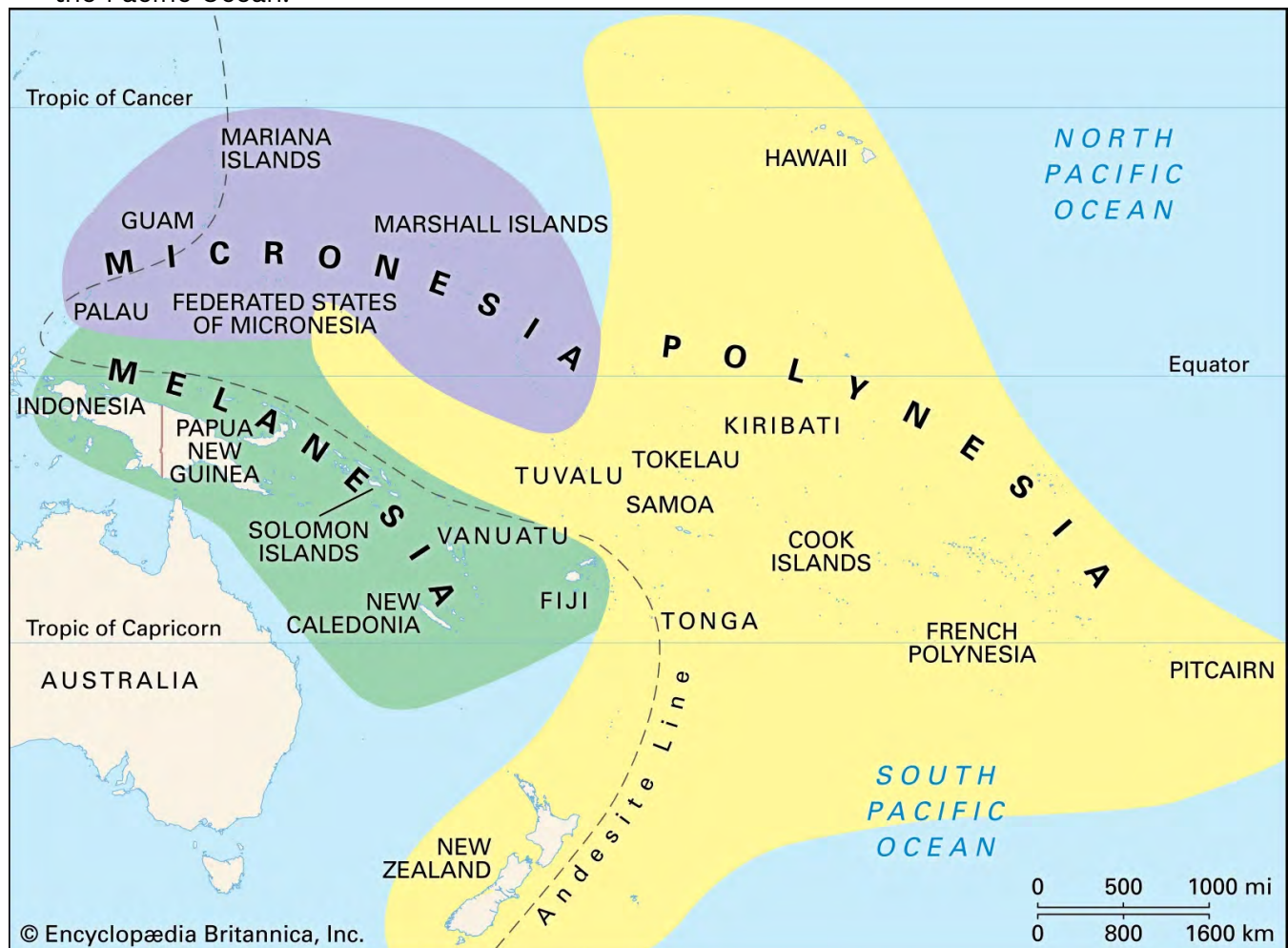


Image Source: Britannica

About Solomon Island:

- It is a Melanesia island country, with 900 plus islands and its capital is Honiara, which is located on the island of Guadalcanal.
 - Melanesia is a subregion of Oceania in the southwestern Pacific region.
- It is a member of the Commonwealth, as it was once a colony of the British government and it has a Constitutional monarchy government.

Source: The Guardian



UP Cow sanctuary

Why in the news?

- The first cow sanctuary of Uttar Pradesh is proposed in Chandan village of Purkaji block in Muzaffarnagar.

Significance:

- It will host more than 5000 stray cattle and will help in solving the issues of stray

cattle as well as related issues such as road accidents.

- It will have an electric crematorium that will solve the problem of disposal of dead cattle.
- Also, have a biogas plant inside the sanctuary that will run on cattle waste to generate important gas and organic manure.

Source: Hindustan Times

PIN/ GK	Description
<p>Neal Mohan</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is selected new CEO of Youtube and was born in Lucknow. • Other important Indian personalities: such as Sattya Nadela (CEO of Microsoft), Shantanu Narayen (CEO of Adobe), Sundar Pichai (CEO of Alphabet).
<p>Smriti Mandhana</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cricketer Smriti Mandhana won the highest amount at T20 WPL (Women's Premier League) auctions. • She was acquired by Royal Challengers Bangalore. • Earlier in 2022, she won the ICC women's cricketer of the year award.
<p>Nikkey Haley</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She was the former South Carolina Governor. • She declared her candidature for the 2024 US Presidential election nomination from the Republican party.
<p>International Mother Language Day</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1999: UNESCO declared 21st February as International Mother Language Day. • 2019: UNGA had declared it as International Year of Indigenous Languages. • Theme: this year's theme is 'Multilingual Education- A Necessity to Transform Education.'



New CEO of NITI Aayog



- Cabinet Committee on Appointments selected former Commerce Secretary B.V.R. Subrahmanyam as the new CEO of the NITI Aayog.
- The CEO has a fixed tenure of 2 years and the rank of Secretary.

Parvez Musharraf



- **Key Point:**
 - Recently Ex-Pakistani President and military ruler died in UAE.
 - He was the **President until 2008 and was part of the 1965 and 1971** wars between the 2 countries.
 - Musharraf was a leading strategist behind the Kargil Conflict (1999)
- **About Amyloid:**
 - Amyloid can start depositing on organs like **the heart, brain, kidney, spleen, and other parts of the body.**
 - A person may **have amyloidosis in one organ or several.**

Vani Jairam



- She was a veteran Indian singer who had songs in many Indian languages.
- Birth Place: Vellore (TN) in 1945.
- Awards: Padma Bhushan (2023)
- Famous For: Carnatic singer and Hindustani musician

Prabhakaran and LTTE



- V. Prabhakaran was the founder of the Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and is rumoured to be still alive.
- LTTE was a militant organisation that aimed to create a separate state from Sri Lanka's north and east parts.
- In 2009 Sri Lankan army declared that Prabhakaran was dead and the civil war came to an end.

Awards

Padma Awards 2023

Why in the News?

On 26th January 2023, the Government of India announced Padma Awardees.

History and Relevance:

- **1954:** The Government of India instituted two civilian awards—Bharat Ratna & Padma Vibhushan.
- The latter had three classes namely **Pahela Varg, Dusra Varg, and Tisra Varg**. These were subsequently renamed **Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri** through Presidential Notification issued on January 8, 1955.
 - **Padma Vibhushan:** Exceptional and distinguished service.
 - **Padma Bhushan:** Distinguished service of higher service.
 - **Padma Shri:** Distinguished service.

PADMA VIBHUSHAN IS THE SECOND-HIGHEST CIVILIAN AWARD GIVEN AFTER BHARAT RATNA.



Eligibility:

- Government servants including those working with PSUs, except doctors and scientists, are not eligible for these Awards.

Conditions:

- The total number of awards given in a year should not be more than 120.
- **Selection Process:** It is done by a committee constituted every year by the PM. It is **Headed** by the Cabinet Secretary.

Awardees of 2023:

Padma Vibhushan

Name	Field	State
Balkrishna Doshi (Posthumous)	Architecture	Gujarat
Zakir Hussain	Art	Maharashtra
S M Krishna	Public Affairs	Karnataka
Dilip Mahalanabis (Posthumous)	Medicine	West Bengal
Srinivas Varadhan	Science & Engineering	USA
Mulayam Singh Yadav (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Uttar Pradesh

Padma Bhushan

Name	Field	State
S L Bhyrappa	Literature & Education	Karnataka
Kumar Mangalam Birla	Trade & Industry	Maharashtra
Shri Deepak Dhar	Science & Engineering	Maharashtra
Vani Jairam	Art	Tamil Nadu
Swami Chinna Jeeyar	Others - Spiritualism	Telangana
Suman Kalyanpur	Art	Maharashtra
Kapil Kapoor	Literature & Education	Delhi
Sudha Murty	Social Work	Karnataka
Kamlesh D Patel	Others - Spiritualism	Telangana

Source: The Indian Express



Kirti Awards (Gallantry Awards)

Why in the News?

On the 74th Republic Day, the President of India awarded the Gallantry awards, given to defense personnel.

Peace Time Gallantry Awards	War Time Gallantry Awards
Ashok Chakra	Param Vir Chakra
Shaurya Chakra	Maha Vir Chakra
Kirti Chakra	Vir Chakra

2023 Recipient of Kirti Chakra:

- A total of 6 Kirti Chakra are awarded and 2 of them are awarded posthumously.
- Major Shubhang and Naik Jitendra Singh from the Army got the Kirti Chakra for their role in counter-terror operations in J&K.

Source: The Indian Express



Image: Kirti Chakra to Major Shubhang

Khelo India Winter Games

Why in news?

The first-ever Khelo India Winter Games were held at Leh in the Union Territory of Ladakh.



FIRST KHELO INDIA WINTER GAMES WERE HELD AT LEH

About:

- The event's objective is to promote Indian winter sports.
- The Open Ice Hockey Championship, Figure Skating, and Speed Skating are the three winter sports competitions taking place during the Ladakh phase of the Khelo India Winter Games.



Women U-19 T20 World Cup

Why in The News?

- The ICC's prestigious first-ever T20 women's world cup was concluded in South Africa.

India won First-Ever Women's U-19 T20 World Cup



- A total of 16 teams participated and India beat England in the finals.
- Indian team was led by Shefali Verma and Titas Sadhu of India became Player of the Match.
- The final match was played at Potchefstroom, South Africa.

Germany wins hockey WC in Bhubaneswar

Why in the News?

- The 15th edition of the FIH Hockey world cup concluded recently.

Germany wins Men's Hockey World Cup 2023



About the tournament:

- 'Olly', the Olive Ridley Turtle is the **goodwill ambassador** for the tournament.
- The final match was played at Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar, where Germany beat Belgium.
- India won the hockey world cup only once, in 1975.

Source: The Hindu

Grammy Awards

Why in the News?

- The prestigious 65th Grammy awards 2023 have been announced. They are given by the Recording Academy of the United States to recognize spectacular work in the music industry.
- American singer Beyonce got 9 nominations in various areas, the highest for an artist this year.

Category	Winners
Best Immersive Audio Album category	Rickey Kej (India) (Divine Tides' album)
Best Dance/Electronic Recording	Beyonce (Break My Soul)

Source: The Indian Express

Australian Open Grand Slam 2023

Novak Djokovic wins 2023 Australian Open





About the Tournament:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was started in 1905 on grass courts but later on, it has been played on hard courts.• It is one of the 4 grand slams held every year and the season's first grand slam of every year.
Winners in 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Novak Djokovic in the men's singles event.• Aryna Sabalenka won the women's singles event.
Indian Player:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sania Mirza announced her retirement after being the runner-up in the Australian Open 2023 in mixed doubles.

Source: The Indian Express

MCQs

1. With reference to Padma Awards, consider the following statements

1. Government servants including those working with PSUs, except doctors and scientists, are not eligible for these awards.
2. The first ever non-Indian Padma Vibhushan awardee was Jigme Dorji Wangchuk.
3. President of India can annul/cancel someone's Padma award in case of any egregious misconduct committed by the recipient.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 2 only
- (d) All of the above

2. With reference to Madanapalle of Andhra Pradesh, which one of the following statements is correct?

- (a) Pingali Venkayya designed the tricolour Indian National Flag here.
- (b) Pattabhi Sitaramaiah led the Quit India Movement of Andhra region from here.
- (c) Rabindranath Tagore translated the National Anthem from Bengali to English here.
- (d) Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott set up headquarters of Theosophical Society first here.

Q3. With reference to "Living Will" consider the following statements:

1. A Living Will is a document in which an individual discloses his/her health insurance schemes to the government for availing cheaper healthcare services.
2. An adult with a sound and healthy mind can make a living will.
3. A Living Will is a part of National Health Record which can be accessed by Indian hospitals.

Which of the statement given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

4. Arrange the following in the correct geographical order, North to South:

1. Solomon Islands
2. Hawaii Islands
3. New Zealand

Choose the correct option:

- (a) 3-1-2
- (b) 3-2-1
- (c) 2-1-3
- (d) 1-2-3

1. (D)

2. (C)

3. (B)

4. (C)