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The New Learning Mantra

A still life composition of historical artifacts. In the foreground, a brown leather flask with a metal cap stands on the left. A rolled-up scroll in a worn leather case lies horizontally in the middle ground. Below the scroll, a map with a grid and various markings is spread out. Scattered on the map are several metal items: a chain, a ring, and a key. The background is a textured, brown surface with faint, dark patterns. The text 'HISTORY-ARTS AND CULTURE' is overlaid in the center in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

HISTORY- ARTS AND CULTURE



**ENCROACHMENTS AROUND CENTRALLY
PROTECTED MONUMENTS, SITES**

SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARDS

NATRAJ SCULPTURE

UNESCO'S TENTATIVE LIST

PARAKRAM DIWAS 2023

**PADMA AWARDS 2023 WINNERS LIST
ANNOUNCED**

ETIKOPPAKA TOY CRAFT

SUNDARBANS TEMPLE

CHARAIDEO MAIDAMS FROM ASSAM



ENCROACHMENTS AROUND CENTRALLY PROTECTED MONUMENTS, SITES

CONTEXT: A total of 356 protected heritage monument structures are intruded into, across the country

BACKGROUND: India has a total of 3,695 Centrally Protected Monuments or Sites in the country, under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). The monuments are regularly inspected by the ASI officials to assess their present condition. The ASI regulates construction around the protected monuments through the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment) Act, 2010.

SIGNIFICANCE: The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958 is one of the landmark laws for the preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and

remains of national importance which are over 100 years old.

-The AMASR Act of 1958 was revised in 2010 to reinforce its criminal sanctions and stop widespread encroachments and unauthorised development close to monuments.

-It provided for the establishment of a Regulated area, 200 metres beyond the Prohibited area, where any construction requires approval from a newly established National Monuments Authority, and a Prohibited area, 100 metres around every National Monument, where no construction, public or private, is permitted.

SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARDS

CONTEXT: Sahitya Akademi Awards was announced in 23 languages included seven books of poetry, six of novel, two of short stories, three dramas, two literary criticism and one each of autobiographical essays, collection of articles and literary history

SIGNIFICANCE: Sahitya Akademi Award, also known as Sanity Akademi Main Award, is conferred on 24 writers in 24 languages annually for the most outstanding books of literary merit published in any of the major Indian languages recognised by the Akademi.

-Each Award carries a plaque, shawl, citation and a Cheque for Rs. One Lakh [1,00,000].

-Sahitya Akademi Award was first presented in 1955 and has been presented uninterrupted in all the languages recognized by Sahitya Akademi at a given time. Sahitya Akademi Award is the most prestigious literary award in India.

-For each language the ground list is prepared by two experts.-Then the concerned language advisory board members forward their own lists based on the ground list provided by the experts.

-The same is sent to the Preliminary Panel comprising 10 scholars in that language.

-The recommendations of the Preliminary Panel are placed before a 3-member jury and the jury selects one from those recommendations.

-So far 1239 books have been awarded Sahitya Akademi Award in all the 24 languages.

NATRAJ SCULPTURE

CONTEXT: The Idol Wing CID (IWCID) of the Tamil Nadu police on Thursday successfully stopped the scheduled auctioning of a bronze idol of Nataraja by France. The rare variety bronze idol was suspected to have been stolen from Kayathar in Thoothukudi district half a century ago.

SIGNIFICANCE: -The well-known dancing figure of Shiva as Nataraja was evolved and fully developed during the Chola Period and since then many variations of this complex bronze image have been modelled.

-Shiva is associated with the end of the cosmic world with which this dancing position is associated.

-In the Chola period bronze sculpture he has been shown balancing himself on his right leg and suppressing the apasmara, the demon of ignorance or forgetfulness, with the foot of the same leg.

-At the same time he raises his left leg in bhujangatrasita stance, which represents tirobhava,

that is kicking away the veil of maya or illusion from the devotee's mind.

-His four arms are outstretched and the main right hand is posed in abhaya hasta or the gesture suggesting.

-The upper right holds the damaru his favourite musical instrument to keep on the beat tala.

-The upper left hand carries a flame while the main left hand is held in dola hasta and connects with the abhaya hasta of the right hand.

-His hair locks fly on both the sides touching the circular jwala mala or the garland of flames which surrounds the entire dancing figuration.

UNESCO'S TENTATIVE LIST

CONTEXT: Vadnagar town, Modhera Sun Temple, Unakoti sculptures added to UNESCO's tentative list of World Heritage Sites India now has 52 sites on UNESCO's tentative list, an inventory of properties which each state party intends to consider for nomination

SIGNIFICANCE: Sun Temple, Modhera and its adjoining monuments

-The outstanding Sun Temple at Modhera is located on the left bank of the river Pushpavati, a tributary of river Rupan in Becharaji Taluka of Mehsana District of Gujarat.

- It is an exemplary model of Maru-gurjara architecture style of the 11th century of western India under the patronage of the Solanki dynasty. The age of the temple may be inferred from its style belonging to the reign of Bhimadeva I (1022-1063 CE)



-Amongst hundreds of small and large temples of Gujarat, temples built by the Solankis are more prominent than other dynasties. They built Saiva, Vaisnava, Saura, Sakta, Jaina temples, monasteries and also excavated large reservoirs. The important examples of architecture of the Solanki dynasty include Rani ki Vav, Sahastralinga reservoir at Patan, Rudramahalaya at Sidhpur etc.

-In India, Sun worship has a millennia old history.

-Many temples were constructed dedicated to Sun God.

-Along with the 8th century CE Martand Sun Temple in Kashmir and the 13th century CE Sun temple at Konark, this temple forms invaluable link in the history of diffusion of the practice of Surya worship in India, which originates in Kashmir during the 8th Century CE finally reaches towards the eastern and western ends.

-However, the Sun temple at Modhera is different from the one in Kashmir and the other important such temple at Konark near the seashore of Bay of Bengal in terms of their architectural features, materials and site plans.

-Architecturally, Sun temple at Konark represents the culmination of Kalinga style of architecture.

-Martand temple is based on Kashmiri architecture with a blend of Gupta and Gandhara architecture and used stone.

-On the other hand, the temple at Modhera is based on Maru-gurjara style of architecture and used mainly sandstone as the building material.

-Further, only this temple out of these three has a kunda of extraordinary aesthetic and artistic creativity, in front of it.

Rock-cut Sculptures and Reliefs of the Unakoti

-The site of Unakoti is located in the northeastern part of Tripura, about 8 km from Kailasahar and 185 km from the State capital Agartala.

-The vertical surface of the Unakoti hills was used by the ancient people to carve various mythological scenes such as the different iconographic forms of Siva, Ganesha, Uma-Maheshwara, etc.

-Unakoti is famous for its colossal rock cut panels depicting Hindu deities.

-Unakoti provides evidence of ancient Saiva worship in Tripura from 8th-9th centuries CE.

-The most central and conspicuous figure at the site is known as Unkotiswara Kala Bhairav.

-The place was ruled by the Manikya Kings and many temples for Hindu deities were built in this region.

-The Manikya rulers were the followers of Hinduism who built their temples in a new form of architecture with char chala roof (4-sided hut like roofs) with a stupa superstructure or stupa shirsha.

Vadnagar – A multi-layered Historic town, Gujarat

-Vadnagar is a town and municipality under Mehsana district of North Gujarat region of Gujarat state.

-As an historical city it was known by various names such as Vridhanagar, Anandapur, Anartapur and Nagar.

-Vadnagar town is a multi-layered and multi-cultural mercantile settlement with its history stretching back to nearly 8th Century BCE.

-The town is a rich tapestry of a dense urban fabric that has organically evolved over centuries.

-The oldest temple, Ambaji Mata Temple dates back to 10th-11th Century CE, while other important Hindu and Jain temples within the town are from 17th Century onwards.

-The current residential layer of the town is late Gaekwad period (late 18th Century CE).

-Some of the old havelis and houses in the town belong to mid-19th to early 20th Century CE.

-Vadnagar was strategically situated at the crossroads of two major ancient trade routes – one which led from central India to Sindh and to further northwest, and the other from the port towns on the Gujarat coast to Rajasthan and north India.

-The Roman connection of the site is proven by the find of an imitation intaglio in clay depicting a woman with flower in the hand, a coin mould of Greco-Indian king Apollodotus II (80-65 BC) and a sealing with impression of a Roman coin belonging to Valentinian-I (364-367 CE).

-Careful analysis and study of non-indigenous pottery such as torpedo jars and Glazed ware establish the site's contacts with Sasanid region and West Asia.

PARAKRAM DIWAS 2023

CONTEXT: Parakram Diwas is celebrated on January 23 in order to mark the birth anniversary of freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose, who is fondly known as 'Netaji'.

SIGNIFICANCE

-He sat in the most prestigious competitive examination of I.C.S. in England and came out with flying colours.

-However, love for his country made him resign this prestigious and comfortable job on 22 April 1921

-In 1921, he met Gandhi after reaching India and participated in the non-cooperation movement. In the meantime he came in contact with C.R. Das and became his disciple.

-He took over the editorship of a news daily 'Forward' started by C.R. Das's Swaraj Party

-He was arrested for his political activities in 1924.

-In 1930 he was elected Mayor of Calcutta, the same year

he was elected President of A.I.T.U.C.

-In the thirties, he was closely associated with left politics in Congress along with Jawaharlal Nehru, Congress Socialists, Communists and M.N. Roy.

-Because of the endeavour of the left group the Congress passed very far-reaching radical resolutions in Karachi in 1931, which decked the main Congress aim as socialisation of means of production besides guaranteeing fundamental rights.

-Subhash won the Congress presidential election at Haripura with the backing of leftists in 1938.

-Next year at Tripuri he again won the presidential election against Gandhi's candidate Pattabhi Sitarammayya.



-However his differences with Gandhi became every wide and ultimately he left the Congress.

-He founded a new party 'The Forward Bloc'.

-In 1939, the world war broke out. Subhash felt that the adversaries Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Japan of the main enemy of India, i.e. British imperialism, be utilized to the maximum advantage possible.

the maximum advantage possible.

-He reached Japan and from there to Burma and organised the Indian National Army (INA) to fight the British and to liberate India with the help of Japan.

-He gave famous slogans 'Jai Hind' and 'Dilli Chalo'.

-He died in a plane crash before realising his dreams.

PADMA AWARDS 2023 WINNERS LIST ANNOUNCED

CONTEXT: For the year 2023, the President has approved conferment of 106 Padma Awards including 3 duo cases (in a duo case, the Award is counted as one) as per list below. The list comprises 6 Padma Vibhushan, 9 Padma Bhushan and 91 Padma Shri Awards. 19 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 2 persons from the category of Foreigners/ NRI/PIO/OCI and 7 Posthumous awardees.

SIGNIFICANCE: Padma Awards - one of the highest civilian Awards of the country, are conferred in three categories, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.

-The Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc.

-Padma Vibhushan' is awarded for exceptional and

distinguished service; 'Padma Bhushan' for distinguished service of high order and 'Padma Shri' for distinguished service in any field.

-The awards are announced on the occasion of Republic Day every year.

-These Awards are conferred by the President of India at ceremonial functions which are held at Rashtrapati Bhawan usually around March/ April every year

THE BEGINNING OF INDIA'S CULTURAL RENAISSANCE

CONTEXT: The month-long Kashi Tamil Sangamam, which showcased Tamil culture, heralded a new era where ancient Indian traditions intermingle with one another and are revitalised with the help of modern practices so that they contribute to cultural and economic growth.

BACKGROUND: Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Kashi Tamil Sangamam in Varanasi on Saturday, highlighting the bond between Kashi and Tamil Nadu, both being ancient centres of culture and civilisation. He expressed hope in this event acting as a catalyst to generate the feeling of 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' (One India, Best India).

SIGNIFICANCE: -Kashi, one of the oldest living cities of the

world, and Tamil Nadu, where people proudly speak the world's oldest language, are towering pillars of ancient Indian civilization. Both have rich, old traditions of arts, music, craftsmanship, philosophy, spirituality and literature.

-The event saw people from all walks of life from Tamil Nadu visiting Kashi. They experienced the city's traditions and its iconic landmarks such as the Kashi Vishwanath temple, they approached the temple through the new corridor

PAIGAH TOMBS

CONTEXT: The United States government will extend financial support of \$250,000 towards the conservation and restoration of six of the Paigah tombs, built in the 18th and 19th centuries, located at Santoshnagar in Hyderabad. Aga Khan Trust for Culture will implement the project.

SIGNIFICANCE: -The Paigah tombs or Maqbara Shams al-Umara is a necropolis belonging to the nobility of the Paigah family who served the Nizam of Hyderabad in various capacities.

-The Paigahs were among the most influential and powerful families of Hyderabad in the 18th century.

-The tombs, comprising the resting place of several generations of Paigah nobles, are at least two centuries old and the complex of tombs, made of lime and mortar as well as marble, remains one of the major attractions

in Hyderabad for their architectural flamboyance and craftsmanship.

-The nobles of Paigah were believed to be wealthier than the average Maharajah of the country and they were the only ones to have the privilege of maintaining their court, palaces, as well as their private armies, which often numbered several thousand.

-Since the time of the second Nizam of Hyderabad, the Paigahs were given the responsibility to take care of the security and defence of the region.



ETIKOPPAKA TOY CRAFT

CONTEXT: The Union conferred Padma Shri to Mr. Raju in the art category as an honour to the Etikoppaka wooden toy craft.

SIGNIFICANCE: -Made in the Etikoppaka region of Andhra Pradesh, these toys are made with lacquer color and are traditionally known as Etikoppaka toys or Etikoppaka Bommalu. The village is very famous for its toys made of wood. The toys are also called as lacquer toys because of application of lacquer coating.

-The toys are made out of wood and are coloured with natural dyes derived from seeds, lacquer, bark, roots and leaves.

-The wood used to make the toys is soft in nature and the art of toy making is also known as

Turned wood Lacquer craft.

-While making the Etikoppaka toys, lac, a colourless resinous secretion of numerous insects, is used.

-The already prepared vegetable dyes are further mixed to the lac, during the process of oxidation.

-After this process, the end product obtained is rich and colored lacquer.

-The lac dye is used for decorating the Etikoppaka toys, which are exported all over the world.

SUNDARBANS TEMPLE

CONTEXT: The impact of climate change, especially the increase in air salinity, is gradually eroding the outer wall of Jatar Deul, an eleventh century structure, which is located at Raidighi in South 24 Parganas, only a few kilometres from the sea.

SIGNIFICANCE-Jatar Deul' a remarkably lofty tower standing near the estuary of the Moni river deep inside the sundarbans in the 24 Parganas of West Bengal.

-Some scholars thought it to be a victory tower of pratapaditya of Jessore while others have differently identified it as a Buddhist pagoda, a Hindu temple and even a shrine.

-A copper plate found near the temple in 1875 suggests that Raja Joychandra constructed the temple in 975 AD. The plate has long been missing, but its presence has been

confirmed by eminent Sundarban historian Kalidas Dutta.

-Absence of any other historical records on Joycahndra has still kept the historians in the dark.

-Jatar Deul doesn't follow the traditional Bengal style of Chala or Ratna, but follows the Oriya style of towering spire, 'Deul'.

-The temple is long abandoned but the locals believe that it once housed the deity of matted haired (Jatadhari) Shiva and hence the name "Jatar Deul.

CHARAIDEO MAIDAMS FROM ASSAM

CONTEXT: Assam's Charaideo Maidam gets nominated for UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Centre has decided to nominate this historic site for the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage Site. If selected, Assam will have three world heritage sites, the other two being Kaziranga National Park and Manas National Park.

SIGNIFICANCE-The maidams situated in Charaideo make the district an attractive tourist destination. Comparable to the pyramids of Egypt, the maidams are actually burial grounds of Ahom Kings and Queens.

-After the 18th century, the Ahom rulers adopted the Hindu method of cremation and began entombing the cremated bones and ashes in a Maidam at Charaideo.

bones and ashes in a Maidam at Charaideo.

-It enshrines the mortal remains of the members of the Ahom royalty, who used to be buried with their paraphernalia.

-They are substances of wonder seen-through the brilliant architecture and expertise of the artsmen and masons of Assam of the medieval era.



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GEOGRAPHY

An antique map of the world, likely a Mercator projection, showing continents, oceans, and a grid of latitude and longitude lines. The map is aged and has a yellowish-brown tone. The word 'GEOGRAPHY' is overlaid in large, bold, black letters across the center. The map includes labels for continents like 'AMERICA PRIMUM' and 'AMERICA SECVNDA', and oceans like 'MARE PACIFICVM' and 'MARE INDICVM'. There are also various smaller geographical features and names in Latin.



COLD WAVE

GLOBAL OVERTURNING CIRCULATION

**SLOW DOWN IN ROTATION OF
EARTH'S INNER CORE**

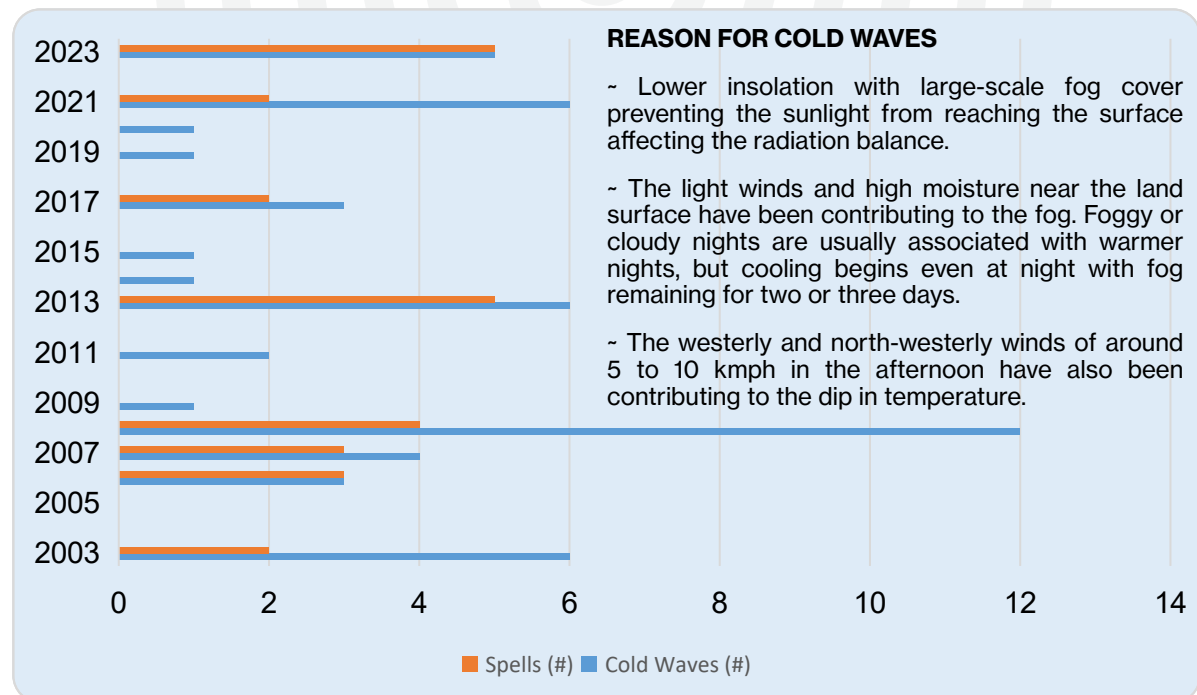
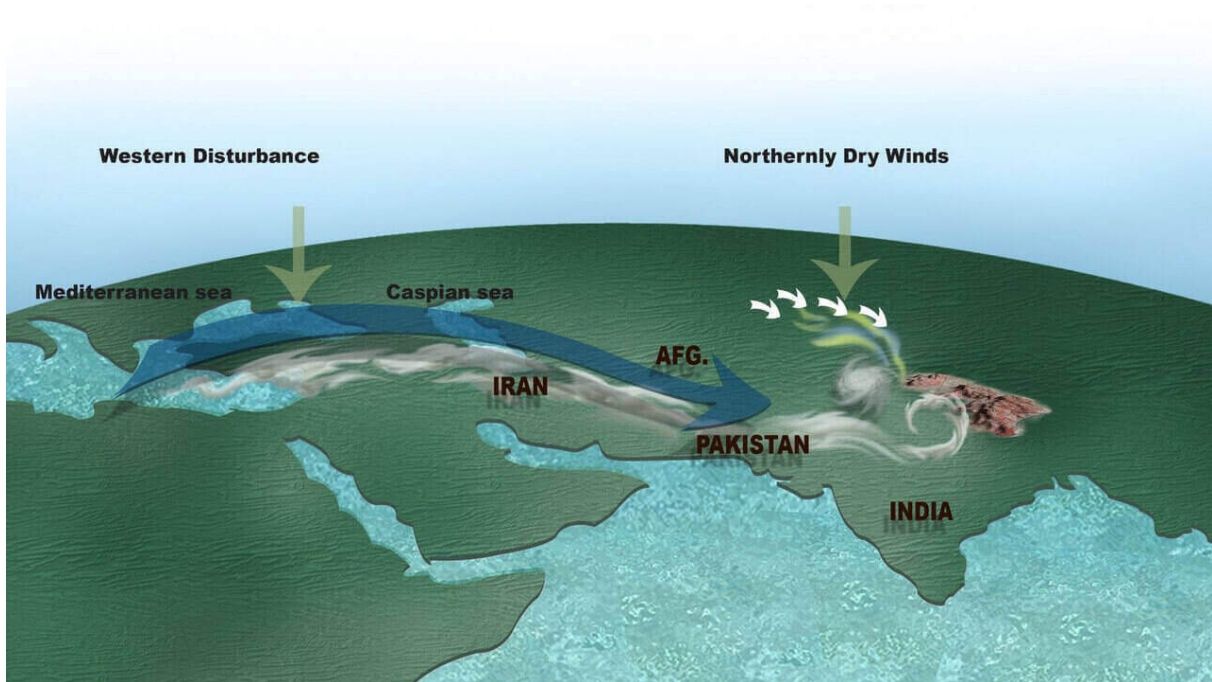
**HOW CLIMATE CHANGE FUELS
TROPICAL CYCLONES**

**NEW PLATEAU TYPE DISCOVERED IN
MAHARASHTRA**



COLD WAVE

CONTEXT: The Safdarjung weather station at Delhi recorded the lowest minimum temperature recorded on 1.90 C on January 8. A cold wave spell that has swept over Delhi and other parts of northwest India for five consecutive days have been currently reeling under a cold wave spell.



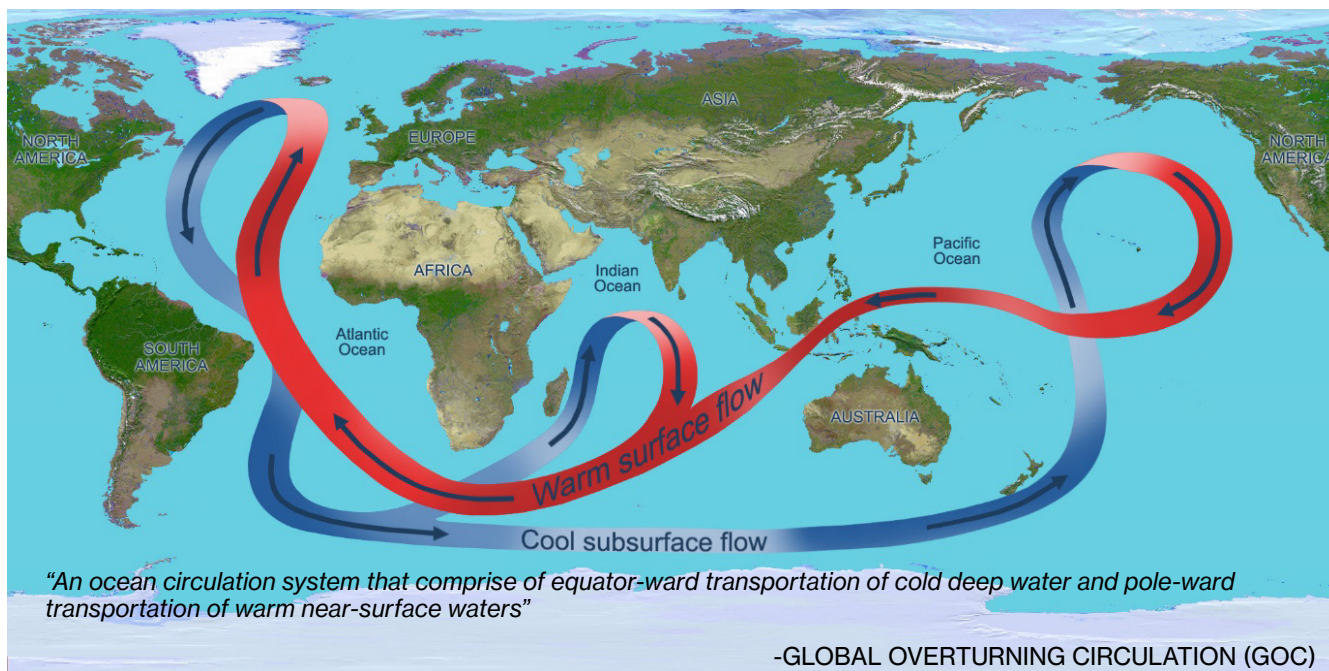
*Time will not pause or tarry on his way,
Today that seems so long, so strange, so bitter,
Will soon be forgotten yesterday.*

- SAROJINI NAIDU



GLOBAL OVERTURNING CIRCULATION

CONTEXT: Studies have cited the role of Global Overturning Circulation (GOC) in the distribution of ocean heat and atmospheric carbon dioxide levels.



UNDERSTANDING GOC: Global Overturning Circulation (GOC) carries warm surface waters from the tropics towards the Northern Hemisphere, where it cools and sinks. The cold water returns to the tropics and then to the South Atlantic as a bottom current. From there it is distributed to all ocean basins via the Antarctic circumpolar current. These Thermohaline circulations (THCs) distributing heat and nutrients throughout the world's ocean basins. The major units of the Global Overturning Circulation (GOC) are Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), Pacific Deep-water Overturning Circulation (PDOOC) and Southern Ocean Meridional Overturning Circulation (SMOC).

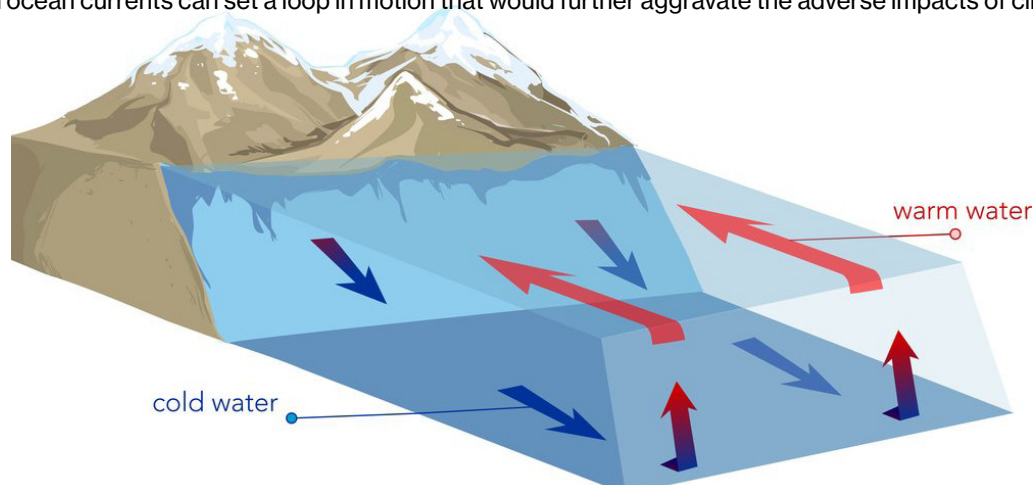
RECENT FINDINGS: Studies show tectonically driven changes in the ocean gateways such as the closure of the Central American Seaway (a body of water that once separated North America from South America), since the late Miocene period, had a dramatic impact on the GOC. AMOC has undergone exceptional weakening in the last 150 years compared to the previous 1500 years.

CONCLUSION: Ocean currents act as a global conveyor belt transporting heat from the surplus to deficit zones and play a dominant role in determining the climate of many of the Earth's regions. Such anthropogenic-induced anomalous behaviours in ocean currents can set a loop in motion that would further aggravate the adverse impacts of climate-change.

REASONS BEHIND WEAKENING: The global warming has been cited as the reason for weakening of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) in the last 100-200 years.

- **MELTING OF GLACIERS:** The efflux of fresh water in recent years with melting of Arctic ice shelves reduced the salinity and density of the water. The cold water is unable to sink as it used to weakening the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC).

- **WARMING OF THE INDIAN OCEAN:** The unusual warming of the Indian Ocean generates additional precipitation in the Indian Ocean, and relatively lesser precipitation in the Atlantic Ocean, leading to higher salinity in the waters of the tropical portion of the Atlantic. The saltier water in the Atlantic, as it comes north via Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), will get cold much quicker than usual and sink faster weakening the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC).





SLOW DOWN IN ROTATION OF EARTH'S INNER CORE

CONTEXT: Research suggested that Earth's inner core, a hot iron ball the size of Pluto, has stopped spinning faster than the planet's surface and might now be rotating slower than it.



UNDERSTANDING CORE ROTATION: Scientists used a database of earthquakes to understand the rotational behaviour of Earth's solid inner core over time. The inner core that sits suspended like a ball bearing in the molten-metal ocean of the outer core rotates slightly faster than the mantle and crust, a condition called "super rotation". Initial studies observed differential core rotation estimating that the inner core rotates up to one degree faster per year than the rest of the planet; others found an annual speedup of just tiny fractions of a degree. The rotation of the inner core might influence Earth's overall spin and contribute to fluctuations in the planet's magnetic field. It is estimated that the core expands by about a millimeter annually, as some of the molten iron in the outer core solidifies. The solidification also drives the circulation of the outer core, which, in turn, creates the planet's magnetic field. The rotation of the inner core could influence this solidification process in ways that are not yet fully understood, thus impacting the magnetic field.

STUDYING CORE ROTATION: Scientists studied core rotations using pairs of almost-identical earthquakes that originated at the same spots, separated only by time. The seismometers around the planet would record shock waves simultaneously from nearly identical quakes when they travel through the core and back out. If the core is spinning differently than the rest of the planet, identical earthquake waves that happen months or years apart will hit the core at slightly different spots and therefore bounce back with some subtle differences. The researchers compared quake waves going back to 1964 to track the changes in how the core might be moving over time.

DEBATE: Some studies [Vidale] hints that the core may alter its rotation every six years or so, while other studies [Guanning Pang and Keith Koper (2022)] others reported a single "lurch" in the early 2000s and little change since then. Lianxing Wen, a geodynamicist at Stony Brook University cites seismic waves travelling through the uneven and constantly changing core with a shifting topography might be responsible for the temporal changes of seismic waves that reflect off the inner core.



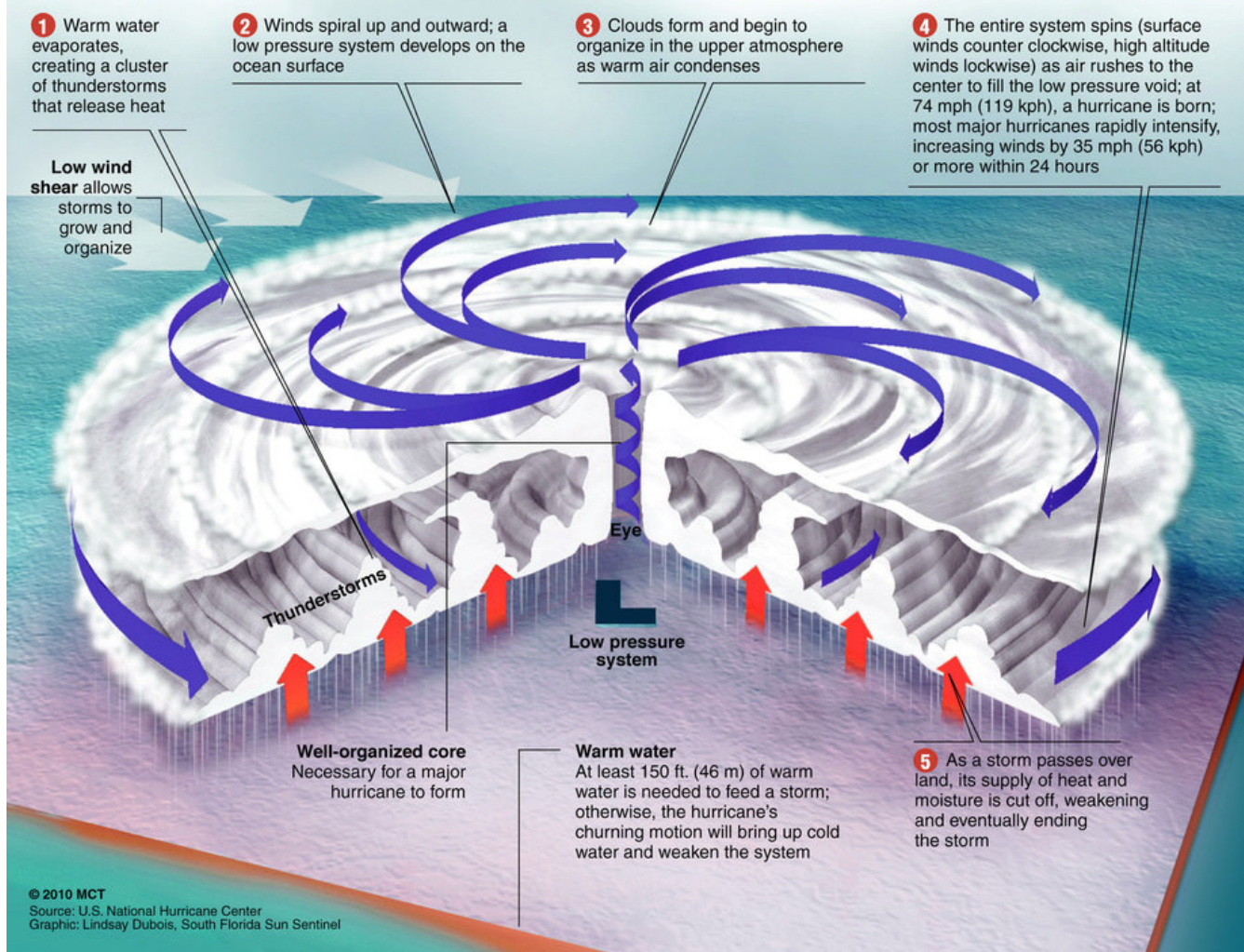
HOW CLIMATE CHANGE FUELS TROPICAL CYCLONES

CONTEXT: It is clear that climate change increases the upper limit on hurricane strength and rain rate and that it also raises the average sea level and therefore storm surge.

“Tropical Low-Pressure counter-clockwise and clockwise wind vortex system in northern and southern hemispheres respectively predominantly over warm equatorial ocean waters within 50 latitudes away from the equator during summers and nearly non-existent during winters in either hemisphere.”

-CYCLONES

Hurricanes act as massive release valves for warm, humid air. Deep water of at least 80 F (27 C) is needed to fuel the storms. If conditions are favorable, storms could rapidly intensify into major hurricanes.



FACTORS FAVOURABLE FOR TROPICAL CYCLOGENESIS

-PRE-EXISTENCE OF AN UNSTABLE WEATHER SYSTEM: Large-scale unstable weather system like Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) developed by a westerly moist air mass developed over warm equatorial Indian oceans around Seychelles guided by subtropical westerlies.

-HIGH HUMIDITY IN TROPICAL REGIONS: Warm Ocean water column at least 50 m deep with SSTs of at least 26.50 C with FAVOURABLE ADIABATIC LAPSE RATE.

-LOW WIND SHEARS: High wind shears disrupt development of a circulatory storm. **WEAK CORIOLIS FORCES:** Sufficient Coriolis force should be available to develop a frontogenesis, deflecting winds to blow towards the low-pressure centre. The Coriolis force is absent at Equator and increase progressively towards the poles.

-RAINFALL: The temperature of both the ocean and atmosphere are critical to hurricane development. Hurricanes are powered by the release of heat when water that evaporates from the ocean's surface condenses into the storm's rain. A warmer ocean produces more evaporation, which means more water is available to the atmosphere. A warmer atmosphere can hold more water, which allows more rain. More rain means more heat is released, and more heat released means stronger winds.

-STORM SURGE: The rise in water at a coast caused by a storm – is related to a number of factors including storm speed, storm size, wind direction and coastal sea bottom topography. Climate change could have at least two important influences.



NEW PLATEAU TYPE DISCOVERED IN MAHARASHTRA

CONTEXT: Scientists at the Agharkar Research Institute (ARI) in Pune have discovered a new low-altitude basalt plateau in the Western Ghats' Thane region.

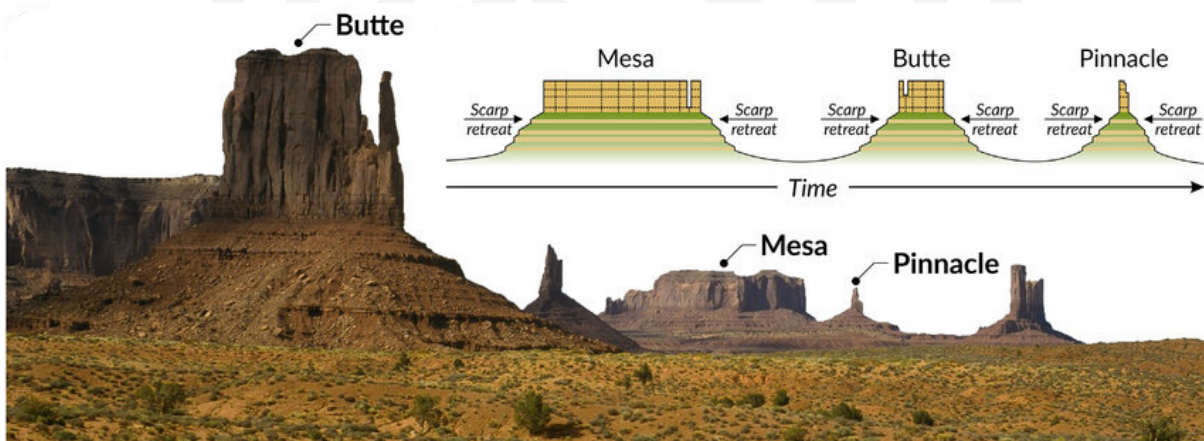
UNDERSTANDING PLATEAUS: Also called a high plain or a tableland, is an area of a highland consisting of flat terrain that is raised sharply above the surrounding area on at least one side. Plateaus are classified according to their surrounding environment.

WESTERN GHAT PLATEAU: The Western Ghats are one of the four global biodiversity hotspots in India were so far known to have three plateaus – High-Altitude Laterite Plateaus, Low-Altitude Laterite Plateaus and High-Altitude Basalt Plateaus. Geologists discovered a rare Low-Altitude Basalt Plateau housing 76 species of plants and shrubs from 24 different families was discovered in the Thane region in the Western Ghats.

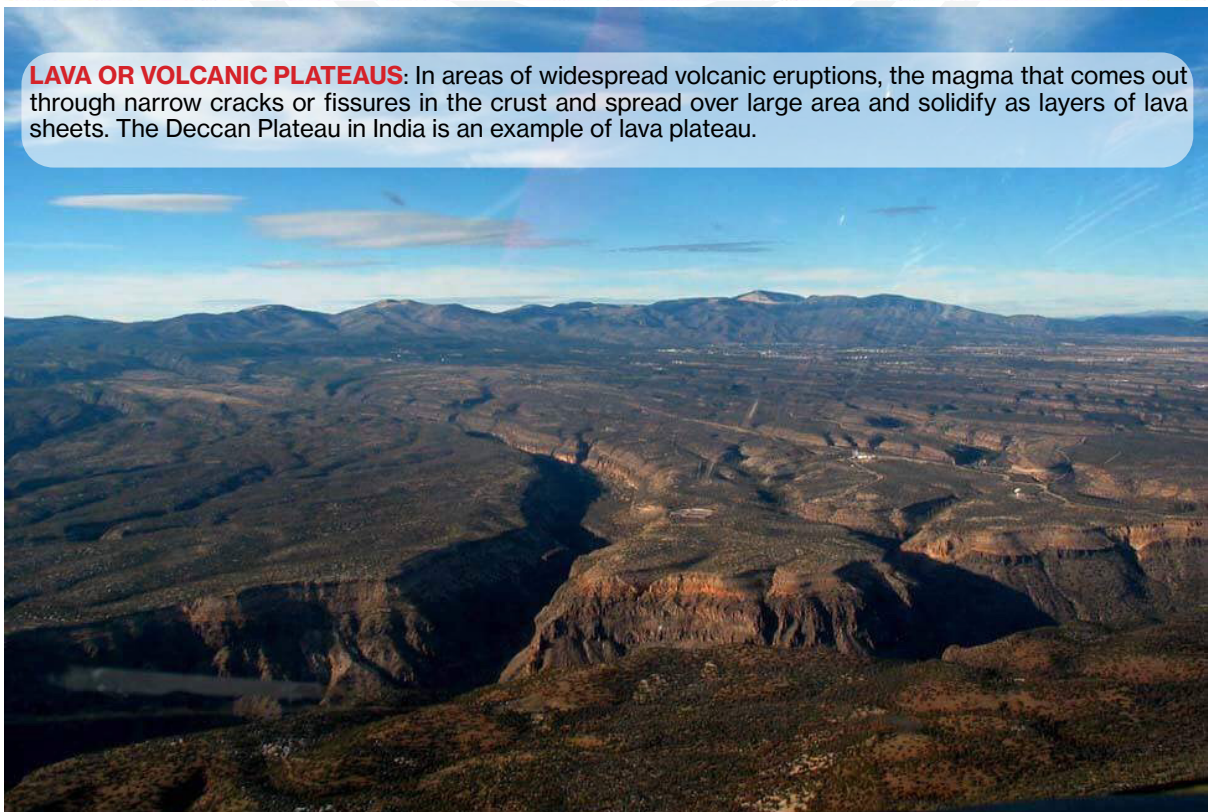
SIGNIFICANCE: Plateaus in Western Ghats are significant because of the predominance of endemic species. They are classified as a type of rock outcrop and provide a unique and challenging environment for species to adapt. These outcrops have seasonal water availability, limited soil, and nutrients, making them ideal laboratories to study the effects of climate change on species survival. It can help increase awareness of the conservation needs of rock outcrops and their immense biodiversity value in the global context. Besides, the discovery of a new plateau would provide more insights into the geomorphology of the formation of plateau.

CLASSIFICATION:

INTERMONTANE PLATEAUS: Extensive plateaus, formed by the erosional processes of glaciers on mountain ranges, often enclosed between the mountain ranges. The Tibetan Plateau between the Himalayas and Kuntun Mountains is an example for an Intermontane Plateau.



LAVA OR VOLCANIC PLATEAUS: In areas of widespread volcanic eruptions, the magma that comes out through narrow cracks or fissures in the crust and spread over large area and solidify as layers of lava sheets. The Deccan Plateau in India is an example of lava plateau.



PIEDMONT PLATEAUS: They are formed by tectonic plate movements which cause uplift, and are normally of a considerable size, and a fairly uniform altitude bordering mountains on one side and by a plain or a sea on the other side. The Piedmont



CONTINENTAL PLATEAUS: They are bordered on all sides by plains or oceans, forming away from the mountains. Example: Antarctic Plateau in East Antarctica.



POLITY AND GOVERNANCE





AGE OF CONSENT

NCPCR GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING MINORS

SECTION 6A OF THE CITIZENSHIP ACT, 1955

HIGH-POWERED COMMITTEE FOR LADAKH

BASIC STRUCTURE DOCTRINE

EAT RIGHT STATION

APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES

POLITICAL TUSSLE AT DELHI

CENTRE – STATE TENSIONS

POSTPONEMENT OF CENSUS EXERCISE

PRE-INSTALLATION OF GOOGLE APPS

**BROADCASTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND
NETWORK DEVELOPMENT (BIND) SCHEME**

PARAKH

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

**ETHYLENE GLYCOL (QUALITY CONTROL)
ORDER, 2022**

SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS DEMONETISATION

FOREST (CONSERVATION) RULES

REGULATING ONLINE GAMING IN INDIA

**PIL CHALLENGING COMMITTEES UNIFORM
CIVIL CODE**

**PILGRIMAGE REJUVENATION AND SPIRITUAL
HERITAGE AUGMENTATION DRIVE (PRASHAD)**

FINANCE COMMISSION



AGE OF CONSENT

CONTEXT: The SC agreed to examine whether girls as young as 15 years old can enter into marriage on the basis of custom or personal law although such marriages are illegal under statutory law.

BACKGROUND: The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) approached Supreme Court (SC) against the ruling of Punjab & Haryana State High Court (SHC) permitting a Habeas Corpus petition to allow an underage Muslim girl to marry a person of choice after reaching puberty.

ISSUE: In India, the legally recognised age of marriage is not uniform across communities with Personal laws governing marriage for communities. The Hindu Marriage Act, of 1955, Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872 and the Special Marriage Act, 1954 sets a minimum age of 18 for the bride and 21 for the groom for Hindus and Christians. For Muslims, the criterion set for age of consent is attaining puberty, assumed when the bride or groom turns 15.

COURT RULINGS: The Supreme Court of India (SC) in 'Shayara Bano v Union of India' (2017) ruled the practice of instant triple talaq as unconstitutional, despite the fact that it is permitted under Muslim law.

The Karnataka State High Court in 2013 ruled that no Indian citizen can claim immunity from the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 on the ground of his belonging to a particular religion.

LAWS PROHIBITING CHILD MARRIAGE

PROHIBITION OF CHILD MARRIAGE ACT, 2006: Legally prohibits any marriage below the prescribed age as illegal and prescribes punishment for forced child marriage.

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT, 2012: Does not recognise consent for sexual activity by minors.

PROHIBITION OF CHILD MARRIAGE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021: The Union Minister for Women and Child Development introduced an amendment to increase the age of marriage for women, and ensure uniformity in the marriage age limit across religions.

NCPCR GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING MINORS

CONTEXT: The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) drafted guidelines on the preliminary assessment of certain minors to be tried under law as adults in particular cases, including the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act.

BACKGROUND: All children under the age of 18 were deemed minors by the law. The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development introduced the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 in the Parliament to try children aged between 16 and 18 charged of heinous offences to be tried as adults. The Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) perform a preliminary assessment to determine whether to try such a child as an adult or a minor. Such children aged between 16 – 18 tried as an adult, may be sentenced to jail, with the exception of death or life imprisonment.

DRAFT GUIDELINES: The preliminary assessment determine four aspects:

- Physical capacity of the child
- Mental capacity
- Circumstances in which the offence was allegedly committed
- Ability to understand the consequences of the alleged offence

The NCPCR framed guidelines describing the key procedures to conduct the preliminary assessment for address any ambiguity. The guidelines suggest the child psychologist / psychiatrist to be given ample opportunity to interact with the child to build a rapport. The guidelines suggest the child psychologist / psychiatrist to be given ample opportunity to interact with the child to build a rapport.

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS

TYPE: Statutory body

STATUTE: Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005.

ESTABLISHED: 2007

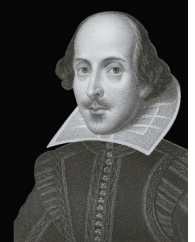
NODAL MINISTRY: Union Ministry of Women and Child Development.

MANDATE: Ensure that all Laws, Policies, Programmes, and Administrative Mechanisms align with the Child Rights perspective as enshrined in the Indian Constitution and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The assessment conducted within 3 months of the child being produced before the JJB must be given to the child and a legal aid counsel must be present during the assessment. The JJB determine whether to try such a child as an adult or a minor based on Social Investigation Report, statements of witnesses and interaction with parents, guardians, school staff, peer groups and neighbours.

"Be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and others have greatness thrust upon them."

- WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE





SECTION 6A OF THE CITIZENSHIP ACT, 1955

CONTEXT: A Constitution Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) will first take up for preliminary assessment Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955 for any “constitutional infirmity”.

BACKGROUND: Petitions were filed to challenge Section 6 A of the Citizenship Act, 1955 as “discriminatory” and violative of Article 6 of the Indian Constitution in granting citizenship to illegal immigrants. A savings clause, Section 6A was incorporated into the Citizenship Act, 1955 in pursuance of the ‘Assam Accord’ signed on August 15, 1985. The Centre, Government of Assam and All-Assam Students Union (AASU) signed a tri-partite agreement to identify and deport illegal immigrants, largely from neighbouring Bangladesh entered after March 25, 1971 from Assam.

SECTION 6A: Grant all the rights and obligations of Indian citizens to foreigners who had entered Assam before January 01, 1966, and been “ordinarily resident” in the State, while granting the same rights and obligations except voting rights for 10 years whom entered the State between January 1, 1966 and March 25, 1971.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF CITIZENS

Assam commenced the updating of National Register of Citizens (NRC), 1951 in 2013 to identify illegal foreigners living in Assam. The Centre has earlier finalised March 25, 1971 as cut-off date under the Assam Accord to identify illegal migrants in Assam. The draft NRC published by Assam Government excluded 40,07,707 individuals as illegal immigrants due to ‘some discrepancies’ in documents submitted for proving citizenship.

The Government of Assam plans to constitute 400 Foreigners’ Tribunals, quasi-judicial courts mandated to hear the appeal of those excluded from National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam to deal with cases people excluded from the NRC. Foreigners Tribunals are exclusively empowered to declare a person as a foreigner under the provisions of the Foreigner’s Act, 1946 and Foreigners Tribunal Order, 1964

HIGH-POWERED COMMITTEE FOR LADAKH

CONTEXT: The Union Government constituted a High-Powered Committee (HPC) for the Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh to study and recommend the suitability for granting the Sixth Schedule status for UT of Ladakh.

BACKGROUND: Civil society groups in Ladakh have been demanding the protection of land, resources and employment since revoking the special status of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370. It is estimated that more than 90 % of Ladakh’s population is tribal. The major Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Ladakh are Balti Beda, Bot, Brokpa, Changpa, Garra, Mon and Purigpa. The Ladakh region has several distinct cultural heritages by communities such as Drokpa, Balti and Changpa, among others, which need to be preserved and promoted. The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has recommended the inclusion of Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

MANDATE: The High-Powered Committee (HPC) will discuss measures to:

Protect the unique culture and language of Ladakh region taking into consideration its geographical location and strategic importance

Ensure the protection of land and employment for the A

Adopt strategies for inclusive development

Address issues related to the empowerment of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill District Councils of Leh and Kargil

GOVERNMENT’S STAND: The Union Government in not keen to give any special status to Ladakh. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) informed the Parliamentary Standing Committee on developmental activities undertaken as well as measures taken to ensure their overall socio-economic development. The Ladakh administration recently increased the reservation for the Scheduled Tribes in direct recruitment from 10 % to 45 % to significantly help the tribal population in their development.

SIXTH SCHEDULE: The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution contains special provisions for the administration of Tribal Areas present in the 4 north-eastern states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

SIXTH SCHEDULE: The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution contains special provisions for the administration of Tribal Areas present in the 4 north-eastern states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

Tribes with a distinctive culture, customs and civilization inhabit the Scheduled Tribal Areas in the 4 north-eastern states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

The Autonomous District and Regional Councils governs the Scheduled Tribal Areas in the 4 north-eastern states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

AUTONOMOUS DISTRICTS COUNCILS

Repeal or amend any particular Act of Parliament or the State Legislature, applicable to a Tribal Area.

Enjoys legislative powers over land, forests, canal water, shifting cultivation, village administration, property inheritance, marriage and divorce, social customs and so on with the assent of the Governor of the State.

Frame regulations with the assent of the Governor to control:

Business of money lending.

Trading by non-tribals.

Constitute Village Councils for trial of suits and cases between the tribes*.

Establish, construct or manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, ferries, fisheries, roads and so on in the district.

Assess and collect land revenue and to impose certain specified taxes.

* The State Governor prescribes jurisdiction of State High Courts over these suits and cases.



BASIC STRUCTURE DOCTRINE

CONTEXT: Vice President of India Jagdeep Dhankar criticised the Supreme Court for using the Basic Structure Doctrine to strike down constitutional amendments by Parliament. Earlier, VP Dhankar termed the striking down of the NJAC Act a “severe compromise” of parliamentary sovereignty and disregard of the “mandate of the people”.

BACKGROUND: After a reversal of key legislation including land reforms; nationalization of banks; abolition of the privy purse- the Parliament enacted a Constitution (Seventeenth Amendment) Act, 1964 empowering itself to amend any part of the Constitution. The Constitution (Seventeenth Amendment) Act, 1964 inserted certain State Acts in the Ninth Schedule to provide immunities from the scope of ‘judicial review’. Kesavananda Bharati (9 December 1940 – 6 September 2020), the Head Hindu monk of Edneer Mutt, a Hindu monastery in Kerala challenged a Kerala Land Reform Act, 1963. The Supreme Court examined the scope of powers of the Parliament to amend the Constitution and the legality of the land reforms.

‘BASIC STRUCTURE’ DOCTRINE

The Supreme Court laid the concept of “Basic Structure” Doctrine conceived in Sajjan Singh v. State of Rajasthan (1964)

The Supreme Court in Shankari Prasad Deo case that challenged the constitutional validity of Constitution (First Amendment) Act, 1951 upheld the powers of the Parliament to enact Constitutional Amendments abridging or annulling any of the Fundamental Rights. The SC excluded ‘constituent laws’ within the scope of term ‘law’ in Article 13 of the Indian Constitution.

The Supreme Court in Golak Nath vs. Union of India (1967) used the Doctrine of Prospective Overruling to restrict the powers of the Parliament to amend Constitution under Article 368 abridging or annulling any of the FR’s. The petitioners in the Golak Nath vs. Union of India (1967) challenged the constitutionality to include certain State Acts (Punjab Security and Land Tenure Act, 1964) in Ninth Schedule via Constitution (Seventeenth Amendment) Act, 1964. The Supreme Court noted the transcendental and immutable position of the Fundamental Rights in the Indian Constitution. The Parliament enacted the Constitution (Twenty Fourth Amendment (24th)) Act, 1971 to assert its sovereignty to amend the Constitution.

EAT RIGHT STATION

CONTEXT: The Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has awarded Varanasi Cantt. Railway Station with a 5-star ‘Eat Right Station’ certificate for providing high-quality, nutritious food to passengers.

BACKGROUND: The FSSAI embarked on a large-scale effort with a tagline ‘Sahi Bhojan. Behtar Jeevan’ adopting a judicious mix of regulatory, capacity building, collaborative and empowerment approaches to ensure safe, healthy and sustainable food for all Indians. Eat Right India adopts an integrative ‘whole of the government’ and a ‘whole of society’ approach bringing all stakeholders together on a common platform. Aligned to the National Health Policy 2017, it focus on preventive and promotive healthcare and flagship programmes like Ayushman Bharat, POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anemia Mukta Bharat and Swacch Bharat Mission.

EAT RIGHT STATION: The FSSAI awards ‘Eat Right Station’ certification to railway stations that set benchmarks in providing safe and wholesome food to passengers. The FSSAI accredit the stations on a scale of one to five based upon 240 parameters concerning food storage and hygiene. India has so far 34 ‘Eat Right’ certified stations, including Bhopal and Varanasi Cantt.

BASIC FEATURES

- Sovereignty
- Preamble Objectives
- Principle of power separation
- Independence of the judiciary
- Principle of free and fair elections
- Effective access to justice
- Principle of reasonableness
- Powers of the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court in the Kesavananda Bharati vs. State of Kerala (1973) upheld the validity of the Constitution (Twenty Fourth Amendment (24th)) Act, 1971 to amend the Constitution abridging or annulling any of the FR’s under Article 368 without altering the basic structure’ of the Constitution. A 13-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court evolved the doctrine in a landmark 7-6 verdict, where the ‘basic structure’ of the Constitution is inviolable, and could not be amended by Parliament. The Parliament enacted the Constitution (Forty second Amendment (42nd)) Act, 1976.

The Supreme Court in Minerva Mills case (1980) limited the powers of the Parliament to amend the Constitution abridging or annulling any of the FR’s under Article 368 without altering the basic structure’ of the Constitution.

BASIC STRUCTURE DOCTRINE

The Doctrine of Basic Structure is a form of judicial review used to test the legality of any legislation by the courts for any damage or destruction to the basic features of the Constitution. The test is applied to constitutional amendments to ensure the amendment does not dilute the fundamental features of the Constitution itself and is widely regarded as a check on majoritarian impulses of the Parliament since it places substantive limits on the power to amend the Constitution.

FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

TYPE: Autonomous statutory body

NODAL MINISTRY: Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, GoI

CONSTITUTING ACT: Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006

MANDATE: Protect and promote public health through the regulation and supervision of food safety.

OBJECTIVES:

- Lay down science-based standards for articles on food
- Regulate the manufacture, storage, distribution, import, and sale of food.
- Facilitate the safety of food



APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES

CONTEXT: The Union Minister for Law and Justice, Kiran Rijju has written to the Chief Justice of India (CJI) suggesting appointment of a Government nominee to the collegium making recommendations for the appointment of judges.

BACKGROUND: The Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) governed the Collegium appointing judges since its evolution through a series of Supreme Court (SC) rulings. The MoP was sought to be re-negotiated after the SC struck down the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act, 2015. The revised draft MoP included eligibility criteria, a new secretariat and a mechanism to deal with complaints against proposed candidates.

BONE OF CONTENTION: The SC and the Centre differ over the insertion of a clause 'national security' in the MoP guiding appointments. was a major point of contention. The SC in a 2017 judgement (a suo motu contempt proceeding against Justice C S Karnan, then a judge of the Calcutta HC) referred the need to revisit the process of selection and appointment of judges to the constitutional courts. The necessity to establish an effective legal regime to deal with situations where the conduct of a constitutional court judge necessitates remedial actions (other than impeachment). The SC has initiated a contempt case against the government for not adhering to the timelines set out in the MoP and court rulings. Government's stand: The MoP is under finalisation by the Government in consultation with the SC Collegium. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law and Justice voiced concern, given that the MoP had been pending for more than seven years.

EVOLUTION OF COLLEGIUM: The collegium system for the appointment of judges evolved through a series of judgements.

FIRST JUDGES CASE (S.P. Gupta vs. Union of India (1982)): The petitioners challenged the unconstitutional prerogative of CJI to initiate proceedings for appointment of SC and SHC judges and transfer of SHC judges. The SC Constitutional Bench allowed the President of India to appoint SC judges after due "consultations", interpreted as exchange of views, rather than concurrence with the CJI. The SC ruled State Governor and Chief Justice of the SHC(s), besides CJI as eligible constitutional functionaries to initiate the proceedings for appointments and transfer of SHC Judges under Article 217. The Constitutional Bench allowed the President to appoint judges to State High Courts and transfer judges of the State High Court with or without concurrence of all, any or none of the above constitutional functionaries after initiation of proceedings, interpreting term 'consultations' implying exchange of views only and not concurrence.

SECOND JUDGES CASE (SCoRA* vs. Union of India (1993)): The SC over-ruled its judgement of the S.P. Gupta vs. Union of India (1982) and devised a procedure, "Collegium" comprising of CJI and 2 other senior-most colleagues to recommend appointment of judges to the Supreme Court. The Council of Ministers enjoys suspensory veto only in the first instance over the recommendations of the Collegium, which can be overridden by the Collegium.

*Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association

THREE JUDGES CASE: The SC on a reference, also known as the "Three Judges Case" made by the President under Article 143 of the Constitution upheld the verdict of Second Judges Case.

The Supreme formally constituted a Collegium comprising of the CJI and 4 other judges of the SC to appoint judges to the Supreme Court. The Collegium should include the Chief Justice of SHCs for the appointment of the judges to the respective State High Court.

PROCEDURES FOR APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES

A Collegium headed by the Chief Justice of India recommends the name to the Union Law Ministry to initiate proceedings to appoint judges to the Supreme Court and State High Courts.

The Union Law Ministry either accepts the recommendation or exercise "suspensive veto" returning the recommendation back to the Collegium for the reconsideration. The Union Law Ministry is obliged to accept the recommendations upon returning the recommendations with or without considering the pleas of the Union Law Ministry.

The President either approves the names or returns the names for reconsideration of the Supreme Court. The President is obliged to accept the recommendations upon returning the recommendations with or without considering the pleas of the President. The President enjoys suspensory veto only at the first instance. He is bound to act upon the advice of the Collegium.

ELIGIBILITY FOR APPOINTMENT OF SUPREME COURT JUDGE

An Indian citizen holding office of the Judge of the State High Court (or High Courts in succession) for a period of 5 years.

An Indian citizen who served as an Advocate of a State High Court (or High Courts in succession) for a period of 10 years.

Distinguished "jurist" in the opinion of the President of India.

ELIGIBILITY FOR APPOINTMENT OF STATE HIGH COURT JUDGE

An Indian citizen holding office of the Judge, not subordinate to a District Court (or District Courts in succession) for a period of 10 years.

An Indian citizen who served as an Advocate of a State High Court (or High Courts in succession) for a period of 10 years.

Make no provision for appointment of a distinguished jurist in the opinion of the President of India as a judge of a State High Court.

* The Chief Justice of India consults with his 4 senior-most colleagues and make recommendations to the President for appointment of judges in the Supreme Court.

** The Chief Justice of India consults with his 3 senior-most colleagues and Chief Justice of the concerned State High Court make recommendations to the President for appointment of judges in the State High Courts.



POLITICAL TUSSLE AT DELHI

CONTEXT: *The Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court is hearing the dispute between the Centre and the Delhi Government over matters pertaining to control over the transfers and the overall functioning of administrative services in the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi.*

BACKGROUND: The Union Government constituted S Balakrishnan Committee in 1987 to study and recommend the demand of Delhi for statehood. The Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1991 conferred Special Status designating Delhi as National Capital Territory of Delhi and provided Legislative Assembly - Article 239 AA and Council of Ministers - Article 239 AB.

ISSUE: The President of India appoints the Lieutenant Governor of the NCT of Delhi as an administrator on the advice of Union Council of Ministers and the Chief Minister for the NCT of Delhi. The Lt. Governor exercises the legislative powers regarding all subjects included in the State List, except public order, Police and land Concurrent List on the aid and advice of Council of Ministers of NCT, Delhi. The President shall give binding directions regarding any conflict of opinion between the Lt. Governor and the Council of Ministers of the NCT Delhi under Clause 4 of the Article 239AA. The LG is competent to take action on the matter pending with the President of India to meet an emergency situation.

TIMELINE OF THE DISPUTE

2017: The Lieutenant Governor (LG) is not bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers in every matter for administration purposes of the NCT. The Supreme Court on an appeal referred the matter to decide the interpretation of Article 239 AA of the Constitution.

2018: A five-judge Constitution Bench laid down broad parameters for the governance of Delhi.

The Legislative Assembly of NCT Delhi is competent to enact laws on all subjects in the State and Concurrent Lists, except public order, police, and land, as per Article 239AA(3)(a).

The Government of NCT Delhi (GNCTD) enjoys executive powers over all matters coextensive with the legislative powers of Delhi Legislative Assembly.

The Lieutenant Governor (L-G) is bound by the aid and advice of GNCTD as per Article 239AA (4).

The LG may only in exceptional cases refer a matter over which he/she and the GNCTD have a “difference of opinion”, to the President, for a binding decision.

Both LG and CM are constitutional functionaries and must work harmoniously with mutual respect.

All decisions by Delhi’s Council of Ministers, who are elected representatives, must be communicated to the L-G but that does not mean his concurrence is required.

2019: The verdict was essentially delivered to decide the contentious issues based on the law settled by the five-judge Constitution Bench in 2018.

A two-judge Bench settled several issues relating to the powers of the LG, however, on the issue of control over services, the two judges ruled differently. In the case of a split verdict, the case is heard afresh by a larger Bench assigned by the CJI. The SC’s 3-judge Bench and the Centre’s argument to refer it to a larger Bench: The Centre argued that because Delhi is the national capital and the “face of the nation,” it needed the authority to order transfers and postings of personnel there. The court agreed that the scope of the legislative and executive powers of the Centre and NCT of Delhi would need an authoritative pronouncement under Article 145(3) of the Constitution. Article 145(3): The minimum number of Judges who must sit to decide any case involving a substantial question of law concerning the interpretation of the Constitution shall be five.

The court noted that the primary contention is related to the interpretation of Article 239 AA(3)(a) of the Constitution, which deals with special provisions for the NCT of Delhi. Hence a three-judge Bench had referred this case (last year) to a larger Bench on the Centre’s plea for “further examination”.

CENTRE – STATE TENSIONS

CONTEXT: *The strained relations between the Centre and non-BJP ruled States reached a new low with dispute between the Tamil Nadu Governor and the Tamil Nadu State Government.*

BACKGROUND: Non-BJP ruled States have been alleging discriminatory treatment with delayed payments of GST compensations, lower food grain allocations under PDS and fund allocation for Centrally Sponsored Schemes. The allegations of misuse of Central investigative agencies, especially Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for political vendetta led to the withdrawal of ‘General Consent’ provided to CBI by non-BJP ruled States. The State Governors of non-BJP ruled States have been reserving bills duly passed by the State Legislature for the President or inordinately delaying the assent for Bills.

PRESENT ISSUE: R N Ravi, TN Governor omitted certain paragraphs from the text prepared by the State Government while delivering his customary Governor’s address to the House.

TN Chief Minister (CM) moved a motion to take on record only the transcript distributed to legislators, prompting the State Governor to walk out of the House.

GOVERNOR’S ADDRESS

SPECIAL ADDRESS BY THE GOVERNOR (ARTICLE 176): The State Governor shall address the Legislative Assembly or both Houses (in the case of a State having a Legislative Council), assembled together at the commencement of the first session after each election (Assembly Election) to the Legislative Assembly and commencement of the first session of each year.



POSTPONEMENT OF CENSUS EXERCISE

CONTEXT: The Centre has further postponed the census exercise, originally scheduled to take place in 2021 to 2023-24.

BACKGROUND

States provide information on changes in the number of notified districts, villages, towns and other administrative units such as tehsils, talukas and police stations to the Registrar General of India (RGI) before every Census.

The Registrar General of India (RGI) freezes the administrative boundaries so that census tasks can begin. The Registrar General of India (RGI) extended the deadline for freezing administrative boundaries to December 31, 2022.

CENSUS

DEFINITION: Collecting, compiling, analysing and disseminating demographic, economic and social data pertaining, at a specific time, of all persons in a country or a well-defined part of a country.

POPULATION CENSUS: Union List (Schedule VII # 69)

STATUTE: Census Act, 1948

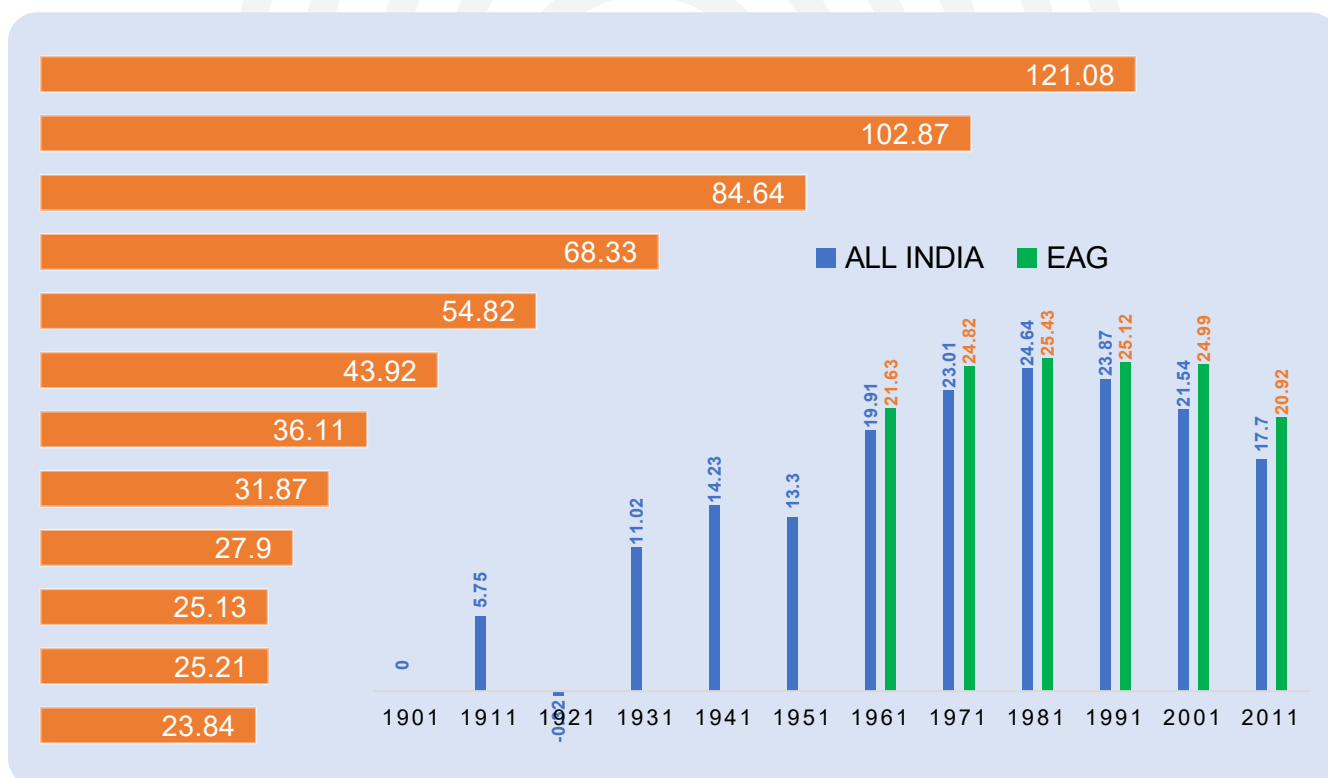
TIMELINE:

- 1872: First Non-synchronous Census*
- 1881: First Synchronous Census**
- 1951 -: Commencement of the Decennial Census***

* First Non-synchronous Census was held in India during the reign of Governor-General Lord Mayo.

** First Synchronous Census was taken under British rule by C. Plowden (Census Commissioner of India).

*** Decennial Census is conducted by the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs.



SIGNIFICANCE OF CENSUS

SOURCE OF INFORMATION: The Indian Census is the largest single source of a variety of statistical information on different characteristics of the people of India. Researchers and Demographers use census data to analyse growth and trends of population and make projections.

GOOD GOVERNANCE: The data collected through the census is used for administration, planning and policy making as well as management and evaluation of various programmes by the Government.

DEMARICATION: Census data is also used for demarcation of constituencies and allocation of representation to Parliament, State legislative assemblies and the local bodies.

BETTER ACCESS FOR BUSINESSES: The census data is also important for business houses and industries for strengthening and planning their business for penetration into areas, which had hitherto remained, uncovered.

GIVING GRANTS: Finance Commission provides grants to the states on the basis of population figures available from the Census data.



PRE-INSTALLATION OF GOOGLE APPS

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court of India refused to stay the order passed by the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) directing Google to deposit 10% of a penalty of 1,337 Crore imposed by the Competition Commission of India.

BACKGROUND: Earlier, The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has dismissed allegations of predatory pricing against e-commerce platform Shopee. Shopee, a Singaporean multinational technology company focuses mainly on e-commerce sells various products at extremely low prices with the intention to eliminate competition from small retailers. The CCI dismissed allegations of predatory pricing against e-commerce platform Shopee citing that the Shopee did not hold significant market power as it is a relatively new entrant in a market with well-established players.

ISSUE: Google mandated the pre-installation of Google mobile services - Search, YouTube, Maps, etc. abusing its dominant position in the Android ecosystem. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) ruled Google can neither force equipment manufacturers to pre-install Google apps nor restrict consumers uninstalling its pre-installed apps.

GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS

SPECIAL ADDRESS BY THE GOVERNOR (ARTICLE 176): The State Governor shall address the Legislative Assembly or both Houses (in the case of a State having a Legislative Council), assembled together at the commencement of the first session after each election (Assembly Election) to the Legislative Assembly and commencement of the first session of each year.

CONCLUSIONS:

COMPETITION COMMISSION OF INDIA

TYPE: Statutory Commission

STATUTE: Competition Act, 2002

FOUNDED: March 2009

MANDATE: Prohibit anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominant position by enterprises and regulates combinations (acquisition, acquiring of control and M&A), causing or likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India.

STRUCTURE: The Commission comprises a Chairperson and not less than 2 and not more than 6 other members appointed by the Central Government.

FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION

- Make the markets work for the benefit and welfare of consumers.
- Ensure fair and healthy competition in economic activities in the country for faster and inclusive growth and development of the economy.
- Implement competition policies with an aim to effectuate the most efficient utilization of economic resources.
- Develop and nurture effective relations and interactions with sectoral regulators to ensure smooth alignment of sectoral regulatory laws in tandem with competition law.
- Effectively carry out competition advocacy and spread the information on benefits of competition among all stakeholders to establish and nurture competition culture in Indian economy.

BROADCASTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND NETWORK DEVELOPMENT (BIND) SCHEME

CONTEXT: The Cabinet approved 2593 Cr. for Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development (BIND) Scheme, a Central Sector Scheme to modernize the public broadcaster Prasar Bharati.

OBJECTIVES

- To widen Prasar Bharati's reach, including in the LWE (Left Wing Extremism), border and strategic areas and provide high-quality content to the viewers.
- To increase the coverage of AIR FM in the country to 66 % by geographical area and 80 % by population (currently 59 % and 68 % respectively)
- Free distribution of over 8 lakhs DD Free Dish STBs (Set Top Box) to people living in remote, tribal, LWE and border areas.

BENEFITS

- Development of high-quality content for both domestic and international audience

PRASAR BHARATI

Prasar Bharati, as the public broadcaster of the country, is the most important vehicle of information, education, entertainment and engagement for the people, especially in the remote areas of the country through Doordarshan (DD) and All India Radio (AIR).

- Availability of diverse content by upgrading capacity of DTH platforms to accommodate more channels
- Purchase of OB vans and digital upgradation of DD and AIR studios make them HD ready

PARAKH

CONTEXT: The National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) has notified India's first national assessment regulator, PARAKH.

PARAKH: PARAKH has been launched as part of the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 that envisaged a standard-setting body:

- Advise school boards regarding new assessment patterns and the latest research, and promote collaborations between them
- Facilitate students for self-assessment of learning outcomes
- Remove disparities in the score of students enrolled with different boards



SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court transferred all petitions to itself pending in various State High Courts seeking legal recognition of same-sex marriage under the Special Marriage Act (SMA) 1954 and making the law gender-neutral for an authoritative ruling.

BACKGROUND: The Supreme Court in Navtej Singh Johar & Ors. v. Union of India decriminalised homosexuality reading down section 377 of the IPC. Currently, batches of petitions arguing non-recognition of same-sex marriage as discriminatory and impacting the dignity and self-fulfilment of LGBTQ+ couples are pending before the State High Courts of Delhi, Kerala and Gujarat. These petitions also challenge the mandatory requirement to issue public notice and objection to marriage contemplated under the SMA and the Foreign Marriage Act, exposing same-sex couples to the risks of ostracism, persecution and violence.

SPECIAL MARRIAGE ACT, 1954: Provides for civil marriage (or “registered marriage”) for the people of India and all Indian nationals in foreign countries, irrespective of the religion or faith followed by either party.

Marriages solemnised under the Act are not governed by personal laws.

ISSUES FACED BY SAME-SEX COUPLES:

NOT ELIGIBLE for Government pensions and benefits of same-sex partner.

CANNOT CLAIM Leave Travel Allowance for same-sex partner.

DO NOT enjoy Right to Property or inheritance of same-sex partner.

NOT ELIGIBLE for joint adoption

NO PROVISION to seek maintenance (alimony) by economically weaker partner in a same-sex marriage

DO NOT ENJOY the Right to take emergency medical decisions at the behest of the same sex partner.

STATUS OF SAME-SEX COUPLES

United States of America: The US Supreme Court recognised gay marriage, as limiting marriage solely to heterosexual couples violative of the Constitution (Fourteenth 14th) Amendment Act guaranteeing equal protection under the law. The US Supreme Court verdict led to a nationwide legalisation of same-sex marriage.

Australia: The Parliament of Australia passed a law recognising the same-sex-marriage.

Ireland: A referendum was held to adopt the formal recognition of LGBTQ marriages.

South Africa: The Supreme Court ruled the ‘Heterosexual-Only Marriage’ policy to be violative of the equal rights enshrined in the constitution becoming the first African country to legalise same-sex marriages in 2006.

Taiwan: Taiwan became the first Asian country to recognise same-sex marriage.

Argentina: Argentina became the first Latin American country to allow same-sex marriages nationwide.

Canada: In Canada, same-sex couples have enjoyed the legal benefits of marriage since 1999. In 2005, the Canadian Parliament passed nationwide legislation to legalise the same-sex marriage.

ETHYLENE GLYCOL (QUALITY CONTROL) ORDER, 2022

CONTEXT: The Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers issued a gazette notification titled Ethylene Glycol (Quality Control) Order, 2022

BACKGROUND: Recently, Uzbekistan alleged consumption of cough syrup Dok 1 Max, manufactured by Marion Biotech, an Indian drug-maker responsible for the death of 18 child deaths in Samarkand. In October, 2022 Gambia reported the death of 66 children after consuming cough syrups made by Indian manufacturer.

ISSUE: The syrup is manufactured containing ethylene glycol. Glycerine, a key ingredient in cough syrup replaced with cheaper industrial solvents Di-Ethylene glycol (DEG) or Ethylene Glycol (EG) consumed in high dose makes the cough syrup toxic. Ethylene glycol is a useful industrial compound found in many consumer products as antifreeze, hydraulic brake fluids, stamp pad inks, ballpoint pens, solvents, paints, plastics,

films, and cosmetics. The toxicity of Ethylene Glycol, a pharmaceutical vehicle mainly results from the accumulation of its toxic metabolites. Ethylene glycol is a Central Nervous System (CNS) depressant that produces acute effects similar to those of ethanol.

ETHYLENE GLYCOL (QUALITY CONTROL) ORDER, 2022

ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY: Entrusted the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) as responsible for certifying and enforcing authority in respect of specific goods or articles.

PENALTIES: Any person who contravenes the provisions of this Order shall be punishable under the provisions of the said Act.

Talk to yourself once in a day, otherwise you may miss meeting an intelligent person in this world

- SWAMI VIVEKANANDA





SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS DEMONETISATION

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court of India upheld the decision of the Centre to demonetise currency notes of denominations of 500 and 1,000 by a 4:1 majority.

BACKGROUND: On November 8, 2016, PM Modi announced demonetisation of currency notes of denominations of 500 and 1,000 with immediate effect. The Centre has cited curbing of fake currency notes, discouraging cash transactions and choking terrorist financing as stated objectives of the demonetisation. The Centre also announced the introduction of new notes of 2,000 and 500 for public circulation.

CONTENTION: A group of petitions, as many as 58 were filed before the Supreme Court of India citing deviations from procedures provided under Section 26(2) of RBI Act, 1934. The Central Government may, by notification in the Gazette of India, declare that any series of bank notes of any denomination shall cease to be legal tender on the recommendation of the [RBI] Central Board under Section 26(2) of RBI Act, 1934.

ARGUMENTS PRESENTED IN THE SUPREME COURT:

PETITIONERS: The petitioners argue that any recommendation to demonetise should have originated from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as per Section 26(2) of the RBI Act, 1934. The petitioners argued that the RBI made a recommendation to demonetise in 2016 following an advice by the Centre. Earlier, the Centre had demonetised currency in 1946 and 1978, by way of a law made by Parliament.

CENTRE: Section 26(2) of the RBI Act, 1934 does not deal with the process of initiation. The Centre started consultations with the RBI in Feb 2016, but kept confidential. During the two previous demonetisation in 1946 and 1978, the Centre enacted a law after RBI not agreeing to the request of the Centre. The quorum as determined by RBI General Regulations, 1949, was met for the Central Board meeting.

CONCLUSION: The Constitution of India was rightful in restricting the scrutiny with regard to demonetisation to procedures laid out in the relevant statutes despite the increase in digitization, cash with the public is at a record high of over 30 lakh Cr. six years since demonetisation (over 71% higher than the level for November 2016). The Judicial Review under a procedure established by law prescribed in the Constitution of India limits the Supreme Court to conduct only a 'single test', scrutinising only constitutional scope of powers exercised and procedures followed by the legislature and the executive, refraining itself from scrutinising effectiveness of such legal statutes and executive actions to meet the objectives of natural justice and reasonability.

FOREST (CONSERVATION) RULES

CONTEXT: The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) shared concerns over the Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2022 framed by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).

BACKGROUND: The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) notified the Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2022, which seeks to replace the Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2003.

ISSUE: The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) had raised concerns about the provisions in the Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2022 that proposes to waive the consent clause for the diversion of forest land for other purposes. The Centre contend that the rules were framed under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and dismissed the apprehensions of National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) of rules as a violation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006, as not legally admissible.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

FOREST (CONSERVATION) ACT, 1980: The Centre has the authority to deny requests for the felling of forests for any "non-forestry" purpose or to grant them with legally binding conditions to regulate deforestation. The clearance process includes obtaining permission from local forest rights holders as well as wildlife authorities.

FOREST CONSERVATION RULES, 2003: There are two stages of approval - 'in-principle' and 'final', prescribed for any application by any entity to use the forest land. The District Collector shall complete the process of recognition and vesting of forest rights in accordance with the provisions of the FRA with the consent of each Gram Sabha.

FOREST RIGHTS ACT (FRA), 2006*: The Forest Right Act, 2006 recognise the rights of forest-dwelling tribal

communities' and other traditional forest dwellers' over forest resources on which these communities rely for a variety of needs. The Forest Right Act, 2006 empowers the Gram Sabha and rights holders with the responsibility of biodiversity conservation and protection, by preventing any destructive practices affecting these resources.

* The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006

FOREST (CONSERVATION) RULES, 2022: The Central Government can give its final approval and thereafter leave it to the state government to pass an order for de-reservation or diversion or assignment. It is then left to the state government now to make sure that the claims of forest dwellers are settled. However, the collector is not required to obtain the consent of Gram Sabhas before the In-principle approval.

REGULATING ONLINE GAMING IN INDIA

CONTEXT: The Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) released draft amendments to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, in relation to online gaming.

BACKGROUND: The broad categories of online gaming includes e-Sports, Fantasy sports and Online casual games.

- **E-SPORTS**, short for electronic sports, is a form of competition often taking the form of organized, multiplayer video game competitions, particularly between professional players, individually or as teams using video games.

- **FANTASY GAMES** are virtual games of cricket, football, tennis etc. where the participants create virtual teams with the help of virtual currencies. They are categorised as skill-based games, where participants require analytical skills to improve the chance of winning.

- **ONLINE CASUAL GAMES** includes a game of chance, which may be considered as gambling with players betting money or anything of monetary value.

The online gaming industry in India recorded a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 38 % between 2017-2022. It is estimated to be a US \$ 5 billion industry by 2025 from the current value of US \$ 1 billion. The number of player increased from 8 Cr. In 2020 to 9.5 Cr. In 2021.

ISSUES: The cases of suicides from online-related games have been increasing recently. Besides, the World Health Organisation (WHO) added “gaming” under the section that deals with ‘Disorders due to addictive behaviours’ (category 06) which also deals with alcohol, drugs, gambling. At present, there is no uniformity in regulatory oversight as ‘betting and gambling’ is a state subject. The Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) constituted an Inter-Ministerial Task Force to propose the broad guidelines for a draft bill to regulate online gaming.

DRAFT OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS:

DEFINES ‘ONLINE GAMES’: Defines online games as a “game offered on the internet and accessible to a user through a computer resource with participant making a deposit with the expectation of earning winnings”. Companies offering such online games shall be treated at parity with social media companies in terms of regulatory compliances and obligations.

SELF-REGULATION: Proposed for a self-regulatory regime where online game developers would be required to register with a self-regulatory body permitted to function lawfully in India. The Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) can recognise and derecognise all self-regulated bodies.

MANDATORY KYC NORMS: Require Online gaming companies to follow the same rules as entities regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

BANNING BETS ON THE OUTCOME: Prohibit online gaming companies to accept bets on game outcomes.

CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER: Online gaming platforms need to appoint a senior employee - Chief Compliance Officer (CCO), who would coordinate with law enforcement agencies to ensure compliance with their orders.

CHIEF NODAL OFFICER: Online gaming platforms need to appoint Chief Nodal Officer as a nodal contact person to facilitate the necessary coordination at any point of the day.

CHIEF GRIEVANCE OFFICER: Online gaming platforms need to appoint Chief Grievance Officer for the receipt and resolution of grievances.

A SUCCESSFUL CAREER GROWS ON A
STRONG FOUNDATION



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PIL CHALLENGING COMMITTEES UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court refused to entertain a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) challenging the decisions of the Uttarakhand and Gujarat to constitute committees for implementing Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in their respective states.

BACKGROUND: At present, Personal laws made after careful consideration of customs and religious texts apply to a specific group of people based on their religion, caste, faith, belief over civil matters - divorce, adoption, inheritance, guardianship, succession etc. The UCC seeks to introduce uniformity in such matters for all Indian citizens regardless of their religion, gender and sexual orientation. Article 44 in the Part IV (Directive Principles of State Policy) of the Indian Constitution lays down that the state shall endeavour to secure a UCC for the citizens throughout the territory of India. Both Uttarakhand and Gujarat governments constituted committees to implementation of UCC.

The Centre has maintained the issue of UCC falls within the domain of legislature.

SC OBSERVATIONS: The executive power of a State extends to the matters on which the Legislature of the State has power to make laws under Article 162 of the Indian Constitution. The Entry 5 in the Concurrent List of the 7th schedule of the Constitution deals with marriage and divorce; infants and minors; adoption; etc. The States are well within their constitutional scope to constitute such committees. Hence, such Committees constituted by the states cannot be challenged for being ultra vires to the Constitution of India.

UNIFORM CIVIL CODE IN GOA

The Parliamentary Panel cited provisions of Uniform Civil Code of Goa, related to matrimony and division of property, outdated and not based on the principle of equality. Goa is the only state with Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in India. The Goa Civil Code doesn't recognise bigamy or polygamy, including for Muslims but grants an exception to a Hindu male to marry again in event of wife not conceiving a child by the age of 21 or a male child by the age of 30.

CONCLUSION: India's uniqueness is its unity in diversity, "Sarva Dharm Sadbhav". Secularism is in the DNA of India. UCC propose a generic set of laws for all citizens with regards to on issues like marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption and maintenance etc. without discrimination on religious grounds. The Uniform Civil Code will simplify complex laws, address discrimination against vulnerable groups (such as women), harmonise diverse cultural groups across the country and foster nationalistic fervour through unity. The UCC is inherently anti-minority and anti-tribal, promote communalisation of politics and a road block to the plurality in already codified civil and criminal laws

PILGRIMAGE REJUVENATION AND SPIRITUAL HERITAGE AUGMENTATION DRIVE (PRASHAD)

CONTEXT: The Chamundi Hills Citizens' Committee resolved to seek permission from the heritage committee to undertake developmental works under the PRASHAD Scheme.

PRASHAD SITES
 Amritsar
 Mathura
 Varanasi
 Gaya
 Puri
 Warangal
 Amaravati
 Velankanni
 Kanchipuram
 Badami
 Dwarka
 Ajmer
 Kedarnath
 Kamakhya
 Patna

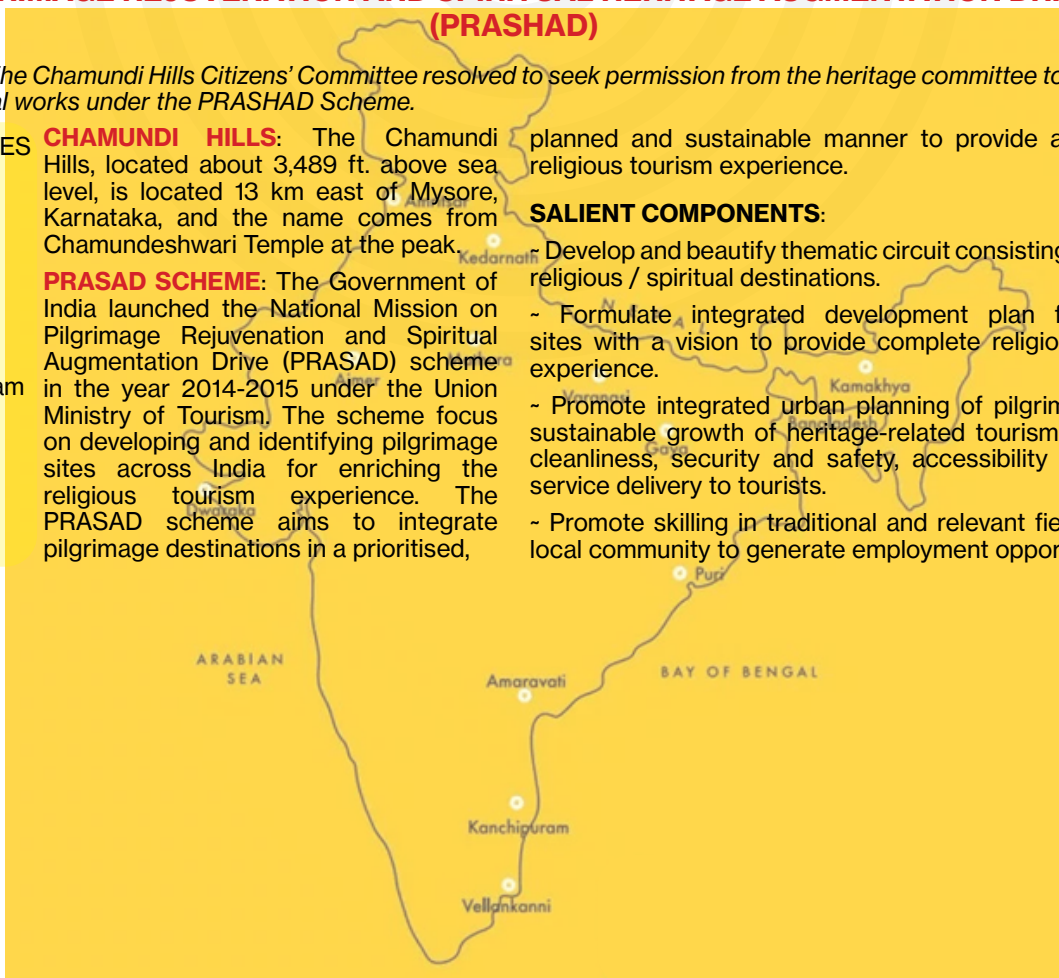
CHAMUNDI HILLS: The Chamundi Hills, located about 3,489 ft. above sea level, is located 13 km east of Mysore, Karnataka, and the name comes from Chamundeshwari Temple at the peak.

PRASHAD SCHEME: The Government of India launched the National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) scheme in the year 2014-2015 under the Union Ministry of Tourism. The scheme focus on developing and identifying pilgrimage sites across India for enriching the religious tourism experience. The PRASHAD scheme aims to integrate pilgrimage destinations in a prioritised,

planned and sustainable manner to provide a complete religious tourism experience.

SALIENT COMPONENTS:

- Develop and beautify thematic circuit consisting of various religious / spiritual destinations.
- Formulate integrated development plan for pilgrim sites with a vision to provide complete religious tourism experience.
- Promote integrated urban planning of pilgrim cities for sustainable growth of heritage-related tourism. Focus on cleanliness, security and safety, accessibility and faster service delivery to tourists.
- Promote skilling in traditional and relevant fields among local community to generate employment opportunities.





FINANCE COMMISSION

CONTEXT: The Centre will soon kick off the process to set up the 16th Finance Commission, with the Finance Ministry likely to notify the terms of reference (ToR) of the constitutional body.

BACKGROUND: Despite the Constitution's mandate to establish an FC every five years, breaking the trend, the 15th FC's term was extended by a year, ending in 2025–2026. In late 2019, the Commission was asked to give a standalone report for 2020-21 and another report for an extended five-year period till 2025-26. Since the FFC report covered six years (instead of five), the next FC must be selected this year. The last time an FC was granted a six-year time frame was for the 9th FC, formed in June 1987. The 10th FC was still constituted in June 1992 within the five-year deadline specified by Article 280 of the Constitution, which has not been the case this time. The 15th Finance Commission chaired by NK Singh was set up in November 2017 with a mandate to make recommendations for the five-year period from 2020-21.

The Commission is usually granted about two years to deliberate on its terms of reference, consult States and frame its recommendations.

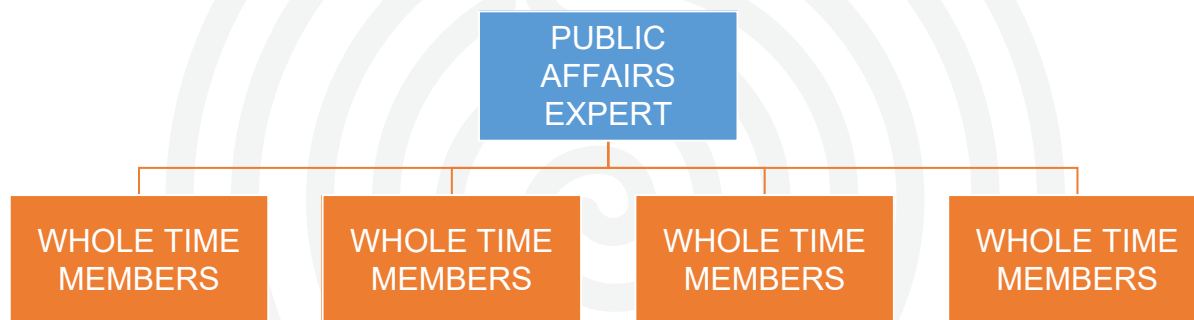
FINANCE COMMISSION

The President of India appoints the Finance Commission every fifth year or at such earlier time as he considers necessary.

Article 280 (2) empowers the Parliament to make laws that lay down procedures and qualifications for appointment as members to the Finance Commission. The Parliament enacted the Finance Commission (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1951.

The FC make non-binding recommendations to the Government of India.

COMPOSITION



*Judges of the High Court of India
Specialised knowledge in finance, economics or practical experience in financial matters
Practical experience in public administration*

CONSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONS AND MANDATE

- Formulate principles governing vertical devolution of net proceeds from divisible pool of taxes between the Union and the States and horizontal distribution among States respectively.
- Recommend principles governing transfer of Grants-in-aid to the States from the Consolidated Fund of India.
- Recommends measures needed to augment Consolidated Fund of States, including supplementing resources of Panchayats and Municipalities.
- Recommends any other matter referred to the Commission by the President in the interests of sound finance of the State Treasury.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIFTEENTH FINANCE COMMISSION

- Suitability of vertical devolution from net proceeds from divisible pool of taxes after committed expenditures of the Centre. A residual approach of distributing sharable pool of taxes after the committed expenditures of the Centre would pauperize the States.
- Suitability of utilising Census 2011 instead of the 1971 Census for population data to determine the devolution of sharable pool of taxes. If the previous finance commission had used 2011 population figures entirely instead of as a subcomponent southern states would have received about 20,000 Cr less over the 5-year period from 2015-2020.
- Suitability of providing revenue deficit grants. Revenue deficits are offshoots of the path of development followed by States and cannot be brought down in the short term. Discontinuing post-tax devolution of revenue deficit grants would go against the principle of cooperative federalism.
- Suitability of proposing performance-based incentives beyond those relating to fiscal responsibility, population and devolution to local bodies.
- Impact of the GST, including payment of compensation for possible loss of revenues for 5 years, and abolition of a number of cesses, earmarking thereof for compensation and other structural reforms programme, on the finances of Centre and States.
- Suitability of curtailing borrowing by States from the present 3 % of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) to 1.7 %.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS





GENERALISED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES

**COMPREHENSIVE MIGRATION AND
MOBILITY**

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (MMPA)

**THIRTEENTH AMENDMENT TO SRI
LANKA'S CONSTITUTION**

ASIAN PACIFIC POSTAL UNION (APPU)

GLOBAL RISK REPORT 2023

INDIA-MALDIVES RELATIONS

WASSENAAR ARRANGEMENT

INDUS WATER TREATY

**SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR
REGIONAL CO-OPERATION**

AGREEMENT ON FISHERIES SUBSIDIES

UN SECURITY COUNCIL REFORMS

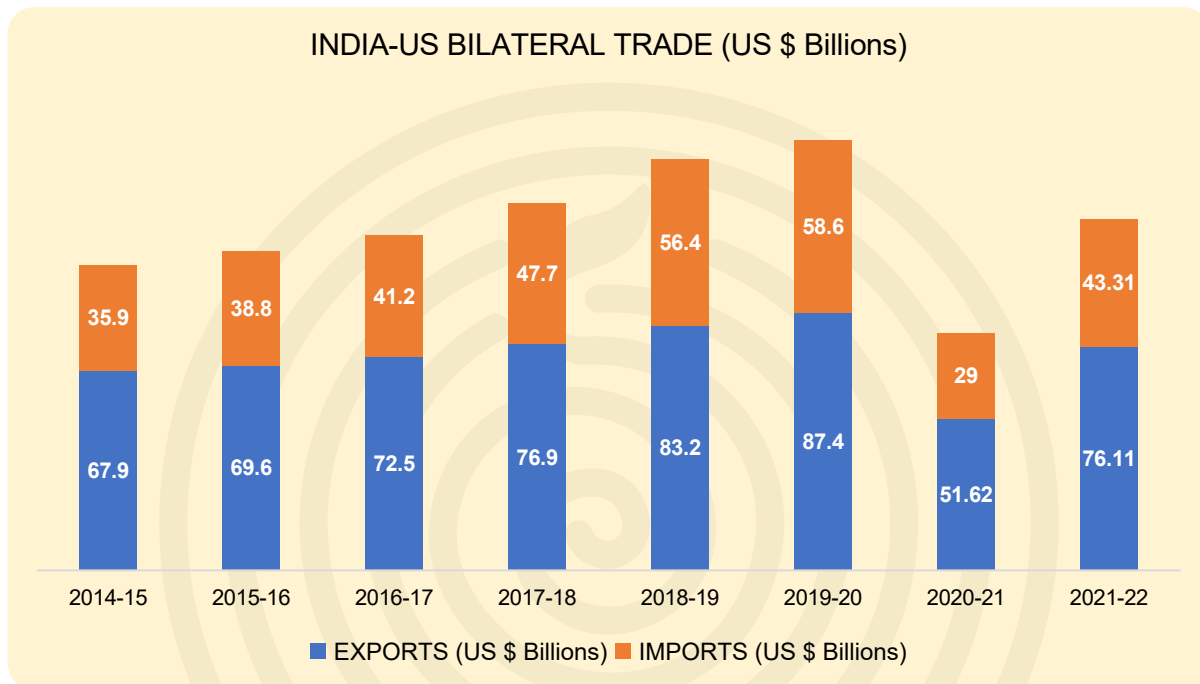


GENERALISED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES

CONTEXT: India sought restoration of the preferential access to the US market under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) programme was revoked by United States in 2019.

BACKGROUND: The Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) programme was first instituted at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) conference in 1971. Established by the Trade Act of 1974, the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) is the largest and oldest U.S. trade preference program.

The GSP is designed to promote economic development by allowing duty-free entry for thousands of products from designated beneficiary countries both developing and developed countries. Under it, a wide range of industrial and agricultural products originating from certain developing countries are given preferential access to US markets.



INDIA AND GSP: The GSP enables duty-free entry of 3,500 product lines in US markets, which benefits exporters of textiles, engineering, gems and jewellery and chemical products. About 2,000 products including auto parts and textile materials were allowed to enter the US duty-free. India was the largest beneficiary of the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) status in 2017, with duty-free status extended to US \$ 5.7 billion worth of exports from India. The total US imports under GSP in 2017 was US \$ 21.2 billion, of which India was biggest beneficiary with US \$5.6 billion, followed by Thailand (US \$4.2 billion) and Brazil (US \$2.5 billion). The US Congress in March 2018 voted to renew Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) through 2020.

The US Congress in March 2018 voted to renew Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) through 2020.

PRESENT STATUS: US President Donald Trump cancelled the GSP beneficiary status designated to India in 2019. The United States cancelled the designation as a beneficiary developing nation under the key GSP trade programme due to India's failure to provide the United States with assurances to provide equitable and reasonable access to its markets in numerous sectors. India has emerged as a significant trading partner of India with the present India US bilateral trade reaching US \$119.5 billion in 2021-22 from US \$ 80.5 billion in 2020-21.

COMPREHENSIVE MIGRATION AND MOBILITY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (MMPA)

CONTEXT: India and Austria concluded a Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA) during the visit of Indian External Affairs Minister, the first trip to Austria by an Indian Foreign Minister in 27 years to Vienna.

BACKGROUND: Austria faced a sharp increase in illegal migration last year, including over 15,000 illegal migrants from India. Indians, primarily students of the erstwhile Soviet States illegally immigrate to Austria and other relatively prosperous European nations. Such illegal immigrants have little or no chance of asylum. The Indian illegal immigrants in Austria have strained the relations between India and Austria.

MIGRATION AND MOBILITY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Regulate illegal migration, as it enables the swift return of illegal migrants

Regulate multiple entry visas for professionals and student exchange programmes, which will be reviewed regularly by a Joint Working Group (JWG).

THIRTEENTH AMENDMENT TO SRI LANKA'S CONSTITUTION

CONTEXT: India has reiterated that full implementation of thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution as "critical" for achieving reconciliation with the minority Tamil community.

Article 33 (2) (c) states "in addition to the powers, duties and functions expressly conferred or imposed on, or assigned to the President by the Constitution or other written law, the President shall have the power to summon, prorogue and dissolve Parliament."

BACKGROUND: The society of Sri Lanka was ethnically fractured among 2 major ethnic groups, Tamils occupying Northern provinces and Sinhalese occupying the southern provinces. The ethnic conflict between Tamils and Sinhalese for power had been gathering strength since before independence. The Tamil-dominated Northern Province enjoyed comparatively better facilities in terms of education and employment. The educated Tamils secured better employment in the colonial era much to the resentment of Sinhalese. The surge of Sinhalese nationalism in the post-independence period witnessed a slew of controversial and partisan legislations and executive actions to institutionally curb the Tamil presence in education and civil administration. The disenfranchisement of Indian Tamil plantation workers in 1949, the Sinhalese Only Bill, 1956 and Constitutional (Amendment) Act, 1972 to favour the Sinhalese language and Buddhist religion, along with their educational policies convinced many Tamils that they had been perceived as a marginal community. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) formed to fight for Tamil rights in 1976 launched a Civil War in 1983.

INDIA'S ROLE: The domestic politics often forced the Centre to sympathise with cause of LTTE, but not the means of struggle in international forums. The bilateral relations between India and Sri Lanka deteriorated in 1980's with ascendancy of the Tamil militant separatism in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka accused India of supporting LTTE with logistics, training and arms and ammunitions to fight against LTTE. The Indo-Sri Lankan Accord, 1987 between India and Sri Lanka proposed a political solution to the Sri Lanka's conflict by establishing a Provincial Councils and

meaningful devolution of power for 9 provinces in Sri Lanka. The Thirteenth Amendment (13A) to the Constitution of Sri Lanka, originally certified on November 14, 1987, states that Tamil will be one of Sri Lanka's official languages and that provincial councils, with substantial authority, will be established throughout the country. India also deployed Indian Peace Keeping Force under 'Operation Pawan' in Sri Lanka. **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS:** The Parliament of Sri Lanka passed the Constitution (Nineteenth) Amendment Act, 2015 inserting Article 33 (2) (c) to the Sri Lankan Constitution

Strengthen the independence and impartiality of key institutions of the state, such as the judiciary, the public service, and the police, by removing the President's powers to appoint or remove key officials in these institutions.

Limited the President's term in office to two consecutive terms.

Limited the power of the President to dissolve the Parliament during the first four and a half years of its five-year term, unless Parliament itself requests dissolution by a resolution passed by a two-thirds majority.

CONCLUSION: India and Sri Lanka are close on economic terms with India being the island's largest trading partner and an agreement to establish a proto single market also under discussion at an advanced stage. Besides, both share deep racial and cultural links. In recent years, Sri Lanka has moved closer to China, especially in terms of naval agreements. India has tried to exert influence over Sri Lanka via grants and expanding the scope of India-Sri Lanka bilateral cooperation from energy to tourism.

ASIAN PACIFIC POSTAL UNION (APPU)

CONTEXT: India will assume the charge of Secretary General of Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU) for a term of 4 years.

ASIAN PACIFIC POSTAL UNION (APPU) is an intergovernmental organization of 32 member countries of the Asia-Pacific region. Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU) is the only restricted union of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in the region, which is a specialized agency of the United Nations. It aims to extend, facilitate and improve postal relations between member countries. The Headquarters of the Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU) is located at Bangkok, Thailand.

WHY PEOPLE CHOOSE US FOR IAS COACHING.?

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GLOBAL RISK REPORT 2023

CONTEXT: The World Economic Forum (WEF) released Global Risk Report 2023.

MAJOR GLOBAL RISKS

“the possibility that something bad may happen which will affect all countries”

-GLOBAL RISK

- Cost of living crisis
- Natural disasters and extreme weather events
- Geo-economic confrontation
- Failure to mitigate climate change
- Erosion of social cohesion and societal polarization
- Large scale environmental damage incidents
- Failure to climate change adaption
- Widespread cybercrime and cyber insecurity
- Natural resources crisis
- Large scale involuntary migration

- Failure to mitigate climate change
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- Widespread cyber-crime and cyber insecurity
- Goeconomic confrontation
- Large scale environmental damage incidents

GLOBAL RISK REPORT: The Global Risks Report is an annual study published by the World Economic Forum ahead of the Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland. Based on the work of the Global Risk Network, the report describes changes occurring in the global risks landscape from year to year. The World Economic Forum (WEF) was established in 1971 as a not-for-profit foundation with its headquarters at Geneva, Switzerland. The World Economic Forum brings together decision-makers from across society to work on projects and initiatives that make a real difference.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Strengthening global risk preparedness and cooperation
- Risk identification and foresight of coming risks and ways to solve it
- Investment in risk preparedness

INDIA-MALDIVES RELATIONS

CONTEXT:The External Affairs Minister (EAM) of India visited Maldives when the presidential election in Maldives is around the corner.

BACKGROUND: India and Maldives share ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religions and commercial relations. India was among the first to recognise Maldives after its independence in 1965, later establishing its Mission at Male in 1972. Maldives, a group of 1200 coral islands is strategically located in the Indian Ocean next to key shipping lanes which ensure uninterrupted energy supplies to countries like China, Japan and India. Maldives, a member of South Asian Association of Regional Countries (SAARC) is important partner for India to maintain leadership in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Maldives significance has grown multiple folds, since China started expanding its naval footprint to Indian Ocean under the pre-text of anti-piracy operations right upto Gulf of Aden. China's massive economic presence in Maldives is a major concern for India. Maldives owes 70 % of its external aid to China. The China has built Male-Hulumale-Hulhule bridge and the Hulumale airport.

SIGNIFICANCE: There are around 25,000 Indians living in Maldives, the second largest expatriate community. Indian tourists also account for close to 6 % of tourists Maldives receives every year. With archipelago accounting for one of the highest numbers of foreign fighters in Syria in terms of per capita. India can ill afford a neighbour who fails to check Islamic radicalisation. In the past five years, Maldives occupied significantly in the Delhi's Neighbourhood First Policy, SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) policies, besides being a part of the India-driven Colombo Security Conclave.

DOMESTIC MALDIVIAN POLITICS: The decision of Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, the current President of Maldives to seek a second term is being opposed within his party by Mohamed Nasheed, former President and leader of the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP). Solih's foreign policy rooted in "India First" is also careful about not alienating China. The former President, Yameen with a pro-China tilt ran 'India Out' campaign.

INDIAN INITIATIVES IN MALDIVES

- Hanimadhoo International Airport**, Haa Dhaalu atoll (US \$ 136.6 million).
- Greater Male Connectivity Project** Connect the Maldives capital to three neighbouring highlands (US \$ 500 million)
- Foakaidhoo Community Centre** nearby Shaviyani atoll.
- Sea ambulances (2)
- Cochin University - Maldives National University collaboration
- US \$ 100 million Grant for "**High Impact Community Development**" projects.

CONCLUSION:

Maldives is an important player of India's Indian Ocean diplomacy. India should use its goodwill to persuade both citizens and leaders of Maldives of the importance of India in Maldives' development.

WASSENAAR ARRANGEMENT

CONTEXT: India assumed the chairmanship of the plenary of the Wassenaar Arrangement for a year on January 1, 2023, just five years after joining the 42-member voluntary export control regime that monitors transfers of conventional weapons and dual-use goods.

WASSENAAR ARRANGEMENT

(Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies)

TYPE: Inter-Governmental Organisation

FOUNDED: 1987

SPONSORING AGENCY: Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

MEMBERSHIP: 41 participating States including many former COMECON (Warsaw Pact) nations.

SECRETARIAT: Vienna

MANDATE: Exports control regime to promote transparent and accountable exports of conventional arms and Dual-Use goods and technologies among European and American continental nations.

BASIC LIST

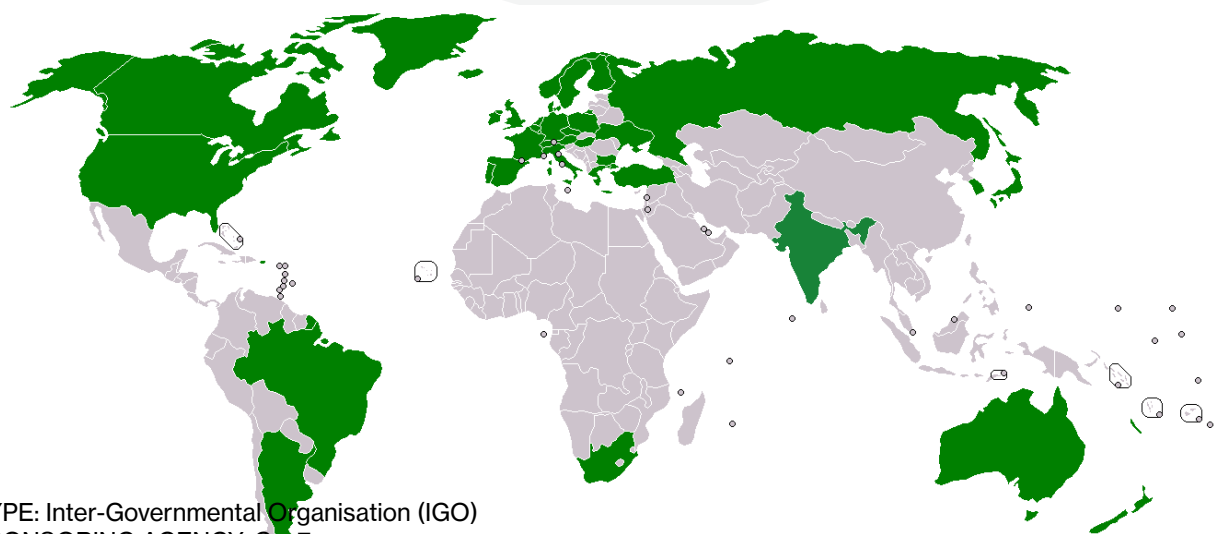
- Category 1 - Special materials
 - Category 2 - Materials processing
 - Category 3 - Electronics
 - Category 4 - Computers
 - Category 5 - Telecommunications. Part I
 - Category 5 - Information security. Part II
 - Category 6 - Sensors and Lasers
 - Category 7 - Navigation and avionics
 - Category 8 - Marine
 - Category 9 - Aerospace and propulsion
- List of Dual-Use Goods and Technologies and Munitions to impose export controls.



BENEFITS FOR INDIA

Provide access to high technology, which will help address the demands of Indian space and defence sectors. Facilitate high technology tie-ups with Indian industry and ease access to high-tech items for our defence and space programmes. Create grounds for realignment of India in export control policy framework of other Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) members, including eligibility for certain licensing exceptions.

MISSILE TECHNOLOGY CONTROL REGIME



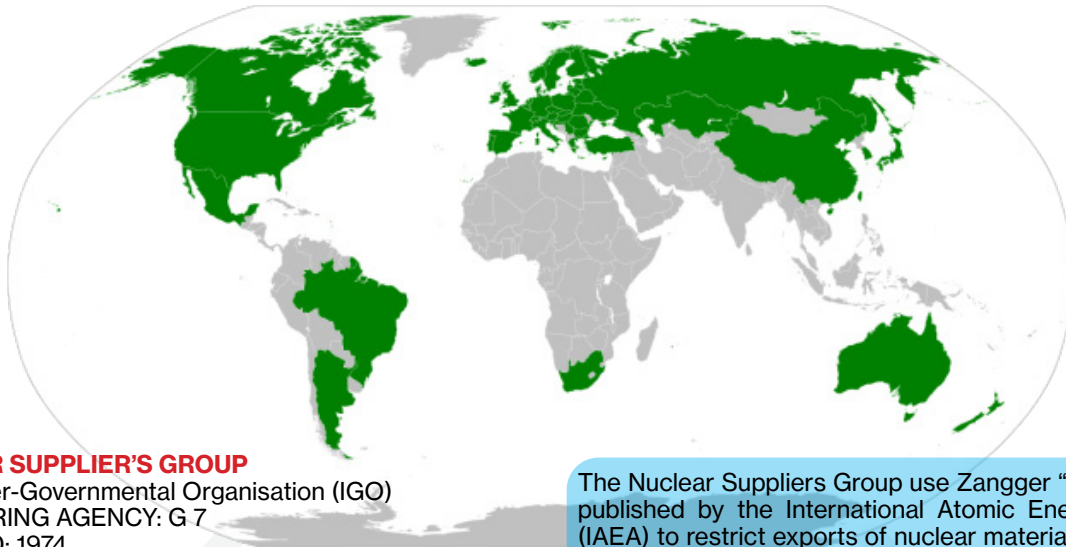
TYPE: Inter-Governmental Organisation (IGO)

SPONSORING AGENCY: G-7

FOUNDED: 1987

MEMBERSHIP: 35

MANDATE: Exports control regime to prevent proliferation of missile and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) technology.



NUCLEAR SUPPLIER'S GROUP

TYPE: Inter-Governmental Organisation (IGO)
SPONSORING AGENCY: G 7
FOUNDED: 1974
MEMBERSHIP: 48

MANDATE: Exports control regime to prevent proliferation of nuclear technology, equipment and materials that can be used to manufacture nuclear weapons.

The Nuclear Suppliers Group use Zangger “Trigger List” published by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to restrict exports of nuclear materials. The IAEA was constituted as multilateral scientific and technical co-operation forum to promote peaceful applications of nuclear energy, promoting safeguards against misusing nuclear technology and materials and safety standards in nuclear installations.

BENEFITS FOR INDIA

Recognise India's clean record track record in nuclear non-proliferation without being signatory of Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT);

Help India to access advanced technology in turn helping India to commercialize the production of nuclear power equipment which will in turn boost innovation and high tech manufacturing in India.

Make domestic nuclear industry companies comply with international norms and make it easier for them to trade in international market.

Help realise India's commitment to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and emission mitigation initiatives.

AUSTRALIA GROUP

TYPE: Inter-Governmental Organisation
SPONSORING AGENCY / ENTITY: EU & OECD
FOUNDED: 1985
MEMBERSHIP: 43.

MANDATE: Anti-proliferation arrangement to impose export restrictions on chemical and biological weapons.

The Australia Group maintains a uniform list of 54 compounds, including several that are not prohibited for export under the Chemical Weapons Convention, but can be used in the manufacture of chemical weapons.

The Australia Group operationalize their export controls through namely, “no-undercut” and “catch-all” provisions.

NO UNDER-CUT: Require mandatory consultations by any prospective exporter with any member State who has previously denied exports to the potential importer.

CATCH-ALL: Halting exports of all materials beyond the control list that could potentially be used for chemical or biological weapons programs.





INDUS WATER TREATY

CONTEXT: New Delhi issued a notice to Islamabad seeking modification of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).

ISSUE: The notice follows Pakistan's continued "intransigence" in implementing the treaty, by raising repeated objections to the construction of hydel projects on the Indian side. India is invoking Article XII (3) of the treaty to bring changes to the 1960 pact.

BACKGROUND: The World Bank (WB) brokered a water-distribution treaty, Indus Water Treat (IWT) between India and Pakistan to use the water available in the Indus River and its tributaries. The then-Indian PM Jawaharlal Nehru and then-Pakistani president Ayub Khan signed the Indus Water Treat (IWT) at Karachi in 1960.

RIGHTS ENJOYED BY INDIA

- ~ Custodianship with full rights over utilisation of eastern branch of the Indus river system, Sutlej, Beas and Ravi.
- ~ Utilisation rights over waters of western rivers (Chenab, Jhelum and Indus) only in non-consumptive manner for domestic purposes, including irrigation and hydropower production in a manner specified in the text of treaty.

RIGHTS ENJOYED BY PAKISTAN

- ~ Custodianship with full rights over utilisation of western

HISTORY OF THE DISPUTE OVER THE HYDEL PROJECTS

Pakistan has raised objections to 2 Hydroelectric Power Projects – Kishenganga HEP and Ratle HEP across river Chenab. Pakistan has invoked dispute resolution mechanisms under the Treaty multiple times. But a resolution has not been reached. In 2022, the WB announced to concurrently appoint a Neutral Expert and a Chair of the Court of Arbitration to resolve the dispute, which as per India poses practical and legal challenges. Pakistan had demanded the constitution of a Court of Arbitration, while India demanded a Neutral Expert to resolve the dispute.

branch of the Indus river system, Chenab, Jhelum and Indus.

DISPUTE REDRESSAL MECHANISM: The Indus Water Treaty set up Indus Commission, a permanent bilateral commission to maintain and exchange data, co-operates and solves disputes arising over water sharing between the two countries. The concerns have to be cleared at the levels of the Indus Commissioners Neutral Expert Court of Arbitration, in a graded manner.

SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL CO-OPERATION

A multi-lateral body founded in 1985 at Dhaka as a geo-political cum economic grouping with its Secretariat at Kathmandu. SAARC seeks to accelerate socio-cultural development in the region to promote welfare economics and collective self-reliance among the region.

MEMBERS: Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives and India.

OBSERVERS: Myanmar, China, Iran, Australia, Japan, South Korea, Mauritius, the United States of America and European Union.

FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION:

ECONOMIC COOPERATION: Realise a South Asian Economic Union (SAEU) and later a Common Monetary Union in a phased and planned manner through Free Trade Area, a Customs Union and Common Market.

Disaster management: South Asian Annual Disaster Management Exercise (SAADMEx) aims at augmenting current levels of individual and joint preparedness of member countries in the rescue, relief and response operations during disaster situations.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION: India acceded to the Statute of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN), a regional wildlife law enforcement framework launched in Paro, Bhutan in 2011 to combat wildlife crime and illegal trade in SAARC region based on principles for mutual benefit. The Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation of Nepal in association with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Global Tiger Forum (GTF), and National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) and South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) jointly hosted an anti-poaching symposium 'Towards Zero Poaching in Asia' in Kathmandu, Nepal.

CRIME AND TERRORISM: SAIEVAC serve as an apex body of the SAARC nations created to bring governments of the region into active engagement for child protection against violence.

SPORTS: The South Asian Federation Games is a biennial multi-sport event held among the athletes from 8 South Asian (SAARC) countries inaugurated in 1984 and renamed as South Asian Games in 2004. The South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Cup is the biennial men's national football tournament in 1993 played among SAARC nations.



INDIA'S LARGEST ONLINE IAS COACHING ACADEMY



AGREEMENT ON FISHERIES SUBSIDIES

CONTEXT: Switzerland became the first WTO member to formally ratify the WTO's new Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies.

BACKGROUND: The World Trade Organization's Ministerial Conference XII approved a series of trade agreements including commitments on fish, a partial waiver of intellectual property (IP) rights for COVID-19 vaccines, and pledges on health and food security. The Agreement on Fisheries would prohibit subsidies provided for Illegal, Unreported & Unregulated fishing, fishing in high seas and overfished stocks.

SIGNIFICANCE: The Agreement adopted at Geneva WTO Conference, 2022 is the first WTO agreement for the environment and the second agreement reached at WTO since its inception. **INDIA'S POSITION:** India is the third-largest fish-producing country globally. India aims to achieve a target of producing 22 MMTPA of fish by 2024-25. India advocates to adhere by the principles of 'Common But Differentiated

Responsibilities' calling for Developed Countries to take more responsibilities.

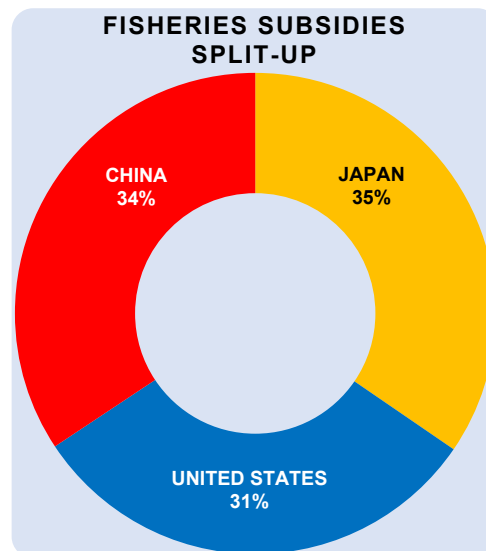
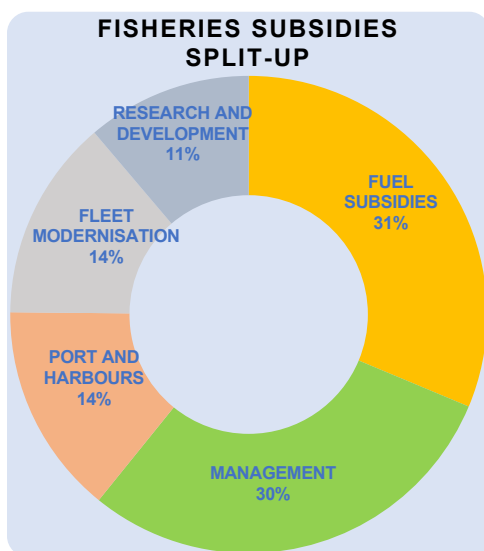
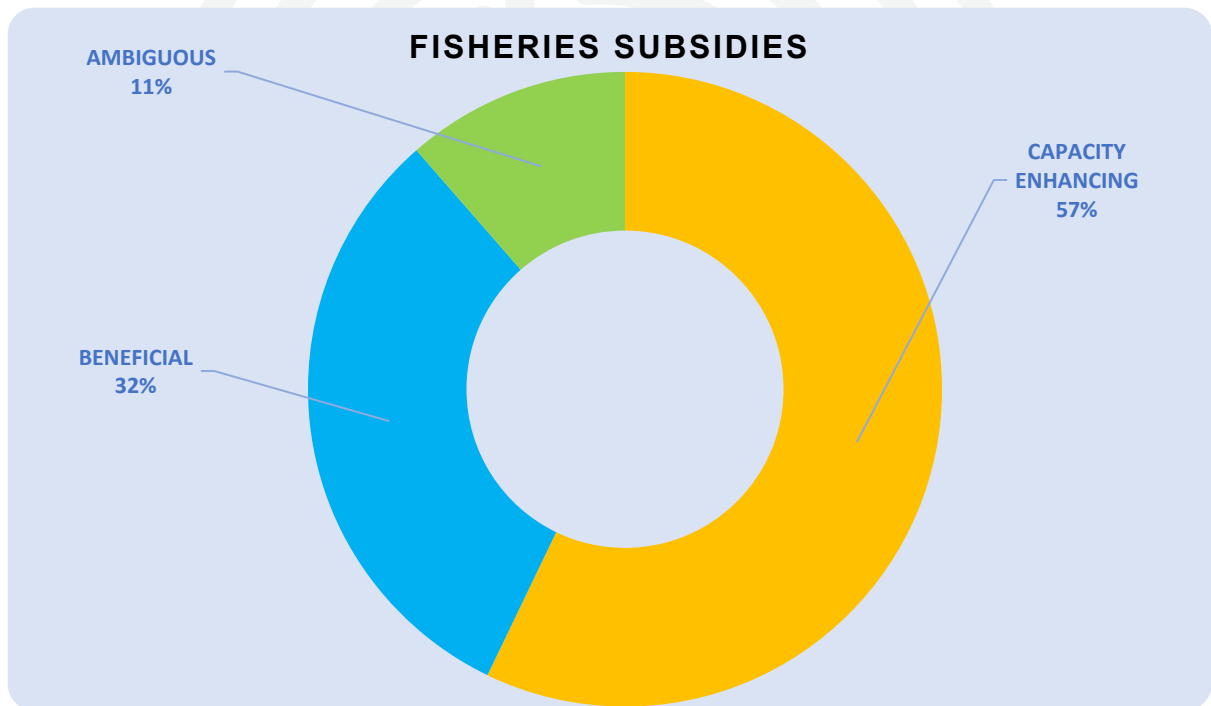
AGREEMENT ON FISHERIES

OBJECTIVE: Prohibit subsidies for Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and overfishing in areas outside of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

IMPLICATIONS: Hurt Indian fishermen with prohibitions of certain forms of fisheries subsidies, though India has secured certain relaxations for artisanal and traditional fishing.

SIGNIFICANCE: Recognised the need for appropriate and effective Special & Differential Treatment for developing country members and Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

CONCERN FOR INDIA: India's demand for curbing non-specific fuel subsidies for fisheries was not accepted.





UN SECURITY COUNCIL REFORMS

CONTEXT: The UN General Assembly (UNGA) President Csaba Korosi expressed concerns regarding the relevance of the UN Security Council in the present day.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL

TYPE: Principal organ of the UNO

CONSTITUTING STATUTE: Chapter V of the UN Charter.

MANDATE OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

Conduct peacekeeping operations in trouble prone areas

Peaceful settlement of disputes

- Investigate any potential dispute, or any situation leading to international frictions or violence.
- Recommend appropriate procedures or methods to normalise the situation endangering international peace and security in the opinion of the United Nations Security Council.

Action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression

- Impose and monitor sanctions on State parties, for acts of violations of adopted resolutions.
- Authorise military and non-military means to restore international peace and security.

SALIENT STRUCTURE

The 10 Non-permanent members of UNSC are elected by the United Nations General Assembly securing at least 2/3 of all votes cast for that seat for two-year terms starting, with five replaced each year.

VETO POWERS OF THE PERMANENT MEMBERS:

- ARTICLE 25: Empowers the UN Security Council to make binding resolutions / recommendations on its member States on all substantive matters through 9 affirmative votes without any veto votes.
- ARTICLE 27: Require the Security Council require the affirmative votes of 9 members without any vetoes to adoption of a proposal on all substantive matters. Abstention is not regarded as a veto despite the wording of the Charter.

NEED FOR REFORMS IN UNSC

ANACHRONISTIC BODY: There is an over-representation of European countries in P5-the United Kingdom and France, including Russia, while countries from regions like Latin America, the Caribbean Group, the Arab World, and Africa are underrepresented with no single permanent member. China is the sole representative of the global south region, whereas the global north has four nations to represent them at the UNSC. The composition of the UN Security Council is out of sync with present geopolitical realities, far removed from post-Cold War strategic influences.

VETO POWERS: All five permanent members of the UNSC enjoy veto powers. The inherent undemocratic veto powers have often been misused to put national interests ahead of

global interests. It has also been a main cause of inaction on war crimes and crimes against humanity, as it effectively prevents UN action against the permanent members and their allies. Such privileges have often led to a non-transparent and non-consultative manner of functioning.

EMERGENCE OF ALTERNATIVE PLATFORMS: The UNSC has lost its relevance due to its unrepresentative nature. India advocates for democratic reforms in multilateral fora, starting with the UN system, to better respond to the needs of its membership, especially developing countries. The implementation of the Council's decisions, and its very legitimacy, could be enhanced if the Council was reformed to be more representative, effective, efficient, accountable and transparent.





INTERNAL SECURITY



BLACKLISTING ABDUL REHMAN MAKKI

VERY SHORT-RANGE AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM

PAFF AND TRF DECLARED AS TERRORIST GROUPS

VILLAGE DEFENCE COMMITTEES (VDCs)

MILITARY EXERCISES

HYPERSONIC TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATOR VEHICLE

INS VAGIR

LEOPARD 2 TANK



BLACKLISTING ABDUL REHMAN MAKKI

CONTEXT: The UN Security Council (UNSC) 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee designated Abdul Rehman Makki Deputy chief of the terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba as a 'Global terrorist' after China withdrew its 'technical hold'.

BACKGROUND: During India's two-year (2021-22) tenure at the UNSC, five names were designated under the ISIL and Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee including Abdul Rehman Makki (LeT). These names faced a "technical hold" from China, while the other 14 members (permanent + non-permanent) of the UNSC supported the listing. India and the US have listed Makki as a terrorist under their respective national laws. Earlier, India was successful in designating Masood Azhar as a 'GLOBAL TERROIST' after Pulwama attacks. At present, China has put a technical hold on

Abdul Rauf Asghar and Shahid Mahmood to be designated as a 'GLOBAL TERROIST'. **UNSC COUNTER-TERRORISM COMMITTEE:** The External Affairs Minister at the Special Meeting of the Counter Terror Committee of the UN Security Council exhorted the international community should rise above political differences and defeat the challenge of terrorism.

PAKISTAN OUT OF FATF 'GREY LIST' ON TERROR FUNDING: Pakistan was removed off the 'Grey List' of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) after four years.

TIMELINE

FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE (FATF): The Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) founded Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF) as an IGO in 1989 on the initiative of the G7 to formulate policies to address conventional threats to protect integrity of the global financial system

TYPE: Inter-Governmental Organisation (IGO)

FOUNDED: 1989

SECRETARIAT: OECD Headquarters, Paris

COMPOSITION: 37 member jurisdictions and 2 regional organisations.

MANDATE: "Policy-making body" which works to generate the necessary political will to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in various areas regarding Money Laundering and terrorist financing.

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

Set global standards in anti-Money Laundering (ML) activities.

Combat terrorist financing, in addition to money laundering since October 2001.

Counter the financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction since April 2012

Examine and analyse trends and techniques to effectively respond to conventional, new and emerging threats.

Promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures to promote global financial integrity.

Assess and monitor compliance with the FATF standards.

BLACKLIST AND GREY LIST

BLACK LIST: Countries known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are put in the blacklist. These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities. The FATF revises the blacklist regularly, adding or deleting entries.

GREY LIST: Countries that are considered safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering are put in the FATF grey list. This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.

SANCTIONS UNDER GREY LIST

Economic sanctions from IMF, World Bank, ADB.

Problem in getting loans from IMF, World Bank, ADB and other countries.

Reduction in international trade.

International boycott.

PROCEDURE OF LISTING:

Any UN Member State can submit a proposal to list an individual, group, or entity as a GLOBAL TERRORIST.

The proposal must include acts or activities indicating the proposed individual/group/entity participation "in the financing, planning, facilitating, preparing, or

Perpetrating of acts or activities" linked to "ISIL, Al-Qaida or any cell, affiliate, splinter group or derivative".

All decisions on listing and delisting are adopted by consensus among Sanctions Committee.

Any member of the Sanctions Committee may also put a "technical hold" on the proposal and ask for more information from the proposing member state.

India moves an independent proposal against 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks master mind Masood Azhar to designate him as a GLOBAL TERROIST

CHINA BLOCKS PROPOSAL

India moves a joint proposal against Masood Azhar to designate him as a GLOBAL TERROIST with US, UK and France after Pathankot attacks

CHINA BLOCKS PROPOSAL

India moves a second joint proposal against Masood Azhar to designate him as a GLOBAL TERROIST with US, UK and France

CHINA BLOCKS PROPOSAL

India moves a joint proposal against Masood Azhar to designate him as a GLOBAL TERROIST with US, UK and France after Pulwama attacks

CHINA ACCEPTS THE PROPOSAL

JUNE 2022: India moves a joint proposal with US against Abdul Rahman Makki to designate him as a GLOBAL TERROIST

CHINA PUTS A 'TECHNICAL HOLD' ON THE PROPOSAL

AUGUST 2022: India moves a joint proposal with US against Abdul Rauf Asghar to designate him as a GLOBAL TERROIST

CHINA PUTS A 'TECHNICAL HOLD' ON THE PROPOSAL

OCTOBER 2022: India moves a joint proposal with US against Shahid Mahmood to designate him as a GLOBAL TERROIST

CHINA PUTS A 'TECHNICAL HOLD' ON THE PROPOSAL

The UNSC 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee designated Abdul Rehman Makki Deputy chief of the terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba as a 'Global terrorist'

CHINA PUTS A 'TECHNICAL HOLD' ON THE PROPOSAL

VERY SHORT-RANGE AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM

CONTEXT: The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) to procure the Very Short-Range Air Defence System or VSHORAD (Infrared Homing) missile system, designed and developed by the DRDO.



The Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) designed and developed indigenously Man portable Air Defence System (MANPAD) to ensure easy portability. A man portable and lightweight system can be deployed in the mountains close to the LAC at a short notice.



PAFF AND TRF DECLARED AS TERRORIST GROUPS

CONTEXT: The Union Ministry of Home Affairs declared the People's Anti-Fascist Front (PAFF) and The Resistance Front (TRF) were declared as a terrorist organisation under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), 1967.

“any act committed with intent to threaten or likely to threaten the unity, integrity, security, economic security, or sovereignty of India or with intent to strike terror or likely to strike terror in the people or any section of the people in India or in any foreign country.”

-SECTION 15, UAPA, 1967 (defining terrorist act)

PEOPLE ANTI-FASCIST FRONT (PAFF): People's Anti-Fascist Front (PAFF), a militant organisation currently active in the insurgency in Jammu & Kashmir emerged in 2019 as a proxy outfit of JeM, a proscribed terrorist organisation.

- 3 June 2021: Murder of BJP leader Rakesh Pandita.
- 11 August 2021: Rajouri attacks against Indian Armed forces killing 4 Indian soldiers.
- 11 October 2021: Poonch attack against Indian Armed forces killing 9 Indian soldiers.
- 3 October 2022: Murder of J&K Director General of Prisons Hemant Lohia.

THE RESISTANCE FRONT (TRF): The Resistance Front that began as an online entity in the aftermath of the

UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) ACT, 1967

ENACTMENT: 1967

OBJECTIVE: Effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India.

CRITICISM: Assigns absolute power to the Centre to assign an activity as unlawful via Official Gazette.

PUNISHMENT: Prescribe death penalty and life imprisonment.

abrogation of Article 370 and the revocation of special status to Jammu and Kashmir launched its on-ground activities together with other groups such as Tehreek-e-Millat Islamia and Ghaznavi Hind, apart from the Lashkar.

UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2019

-Empowers the Director General of National Investigation Agency (NIA) to grant approval of seizure or attachment of property when the case is investigated by the said agency. Earlier, an investigating officer needs to take prior permission of the Director General of Police of a State for conducting raids, and seizing properties that are suspected to be linked to terrorist activities. Central agencies such as the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) are required to obtain prior permission from the state government since law and order is a state subject under the Constitution.

-Empowers the officers of the NIA, of the rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases of terrorism. Earlier, only officers of the rank of Deputy Superintendent or Assistant Commissioner of Police of the NIA shall have the power to investigate offence under the UAPA law.

-Included the provision of designating an individual as a “terrorist” if they are found committing, preparing for, promoting, or involved in an act of terror.

-Empower individual designated as a “terrorist” with the “Right to seek a review” within one month of rejections of the application by the government. The Centre will set up the review committee consisting of a chairperson (a Retired / Sitting Judge of A High Court) and three other members to order the government to delete the name of the individual from the schedule that lists “terrorists”, if it considers the order to be flawed.

VILLAGE DEFENCE COMMITTEES (VDCS)

CONTEXT: The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is reviving Village Defence Committees disbanded in the early 2000s with heightened terror activity in Jammu.

ORIGIN OF THE VDCs: The Government armed ex-servicemen and abled-bodied youth in villages along the border to guard against the infiltration of Pakistani spies following the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars. The Village Defence Committees (VDCs) was constituted in same was used in the mid-1990s as a force multiplier against militant attacks with the escalation of violence in the valley. The VDCs have now been renamed Village Defence Guards (VDG). Each VDG will be provided with a gun and 100 rounds of ammunition. Persons leading the VDGs will be paid 4,500 per month by the government, while others will get 4,000 each.

CONTROVERSIES: The Village Defence Committees (VDCs) have faced allegations of human rights violations and other crimes, including murder, rape and extortion. The Supreme Court in the Salwa Judum case (2008) directed the State Government of Chhattisgarh to stop supporting and providing alms to Salwa Judum. The Centre has cited VDCs as institutions empowering its citizens and not absolving itself of responsibilities by arming civilians. The VDCs can instil confidence among the natives and citizens trained in using arms for self-protection could act as a deterrence in case of an attack.

MILITARY EXERCISES



The special forces of the Indian Army and the Egyptian Army held the first-ever joint exercise between the named “EXERCISE CYCLONE-1” at Jaisalmer in Rajasthan.



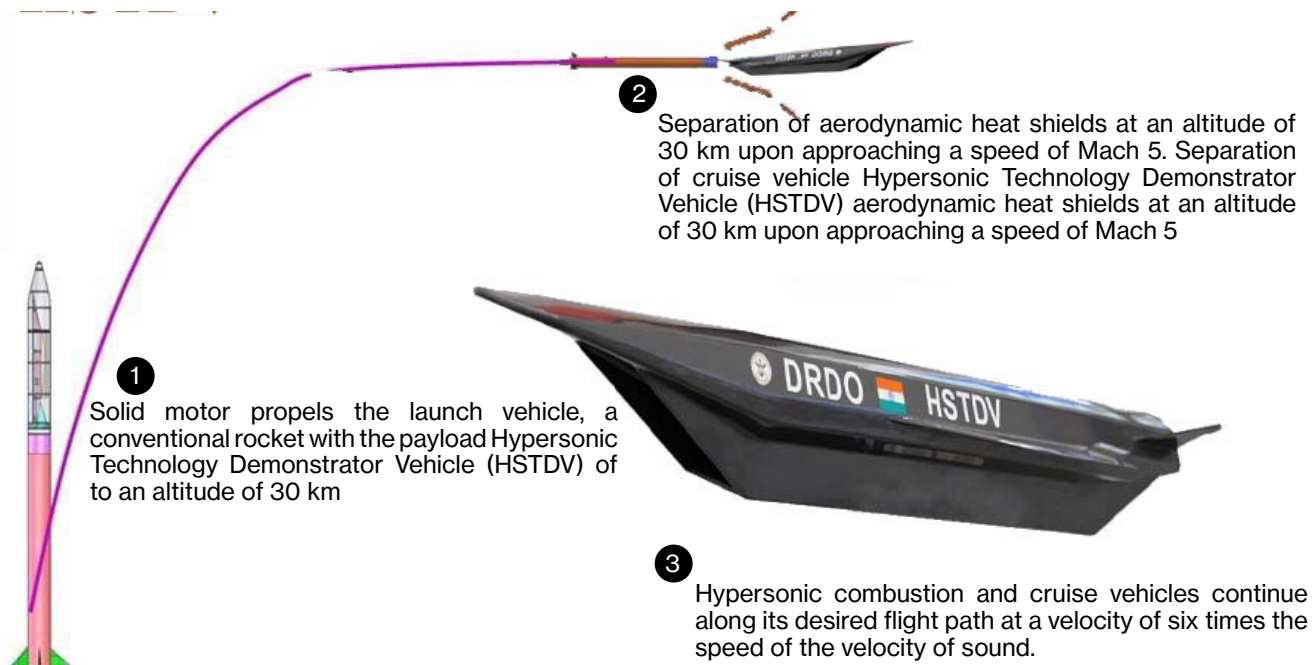
The Indian Air Force and the Japan Air Self-Defence Force held the inaugural edition of bilateral air exercise “VEER GUARDIAN 2023” in Japan.



The Indian Navy and the French Navy held the 21st Edition of the Bilateral Naval Exercise “VARUNA – 2023” on the Western Seaboard of India.

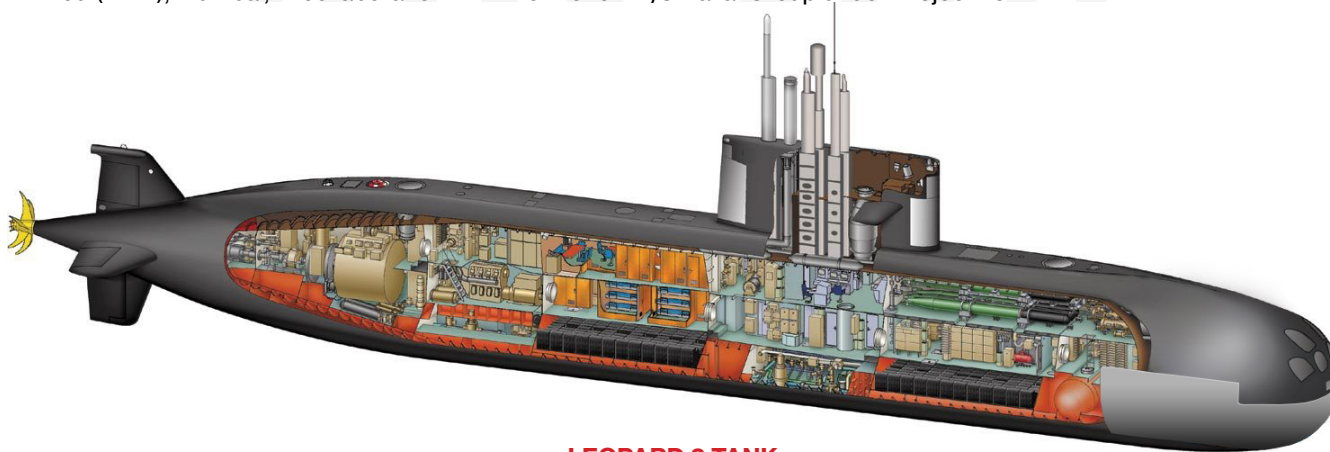
HYPERSONIC TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATOR VEHICLE

CONTEXT: Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the premier agency under the Department of Defence Research and Development in the Union Ministry of Defence tested its own Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV) powered by a scramjet engine.



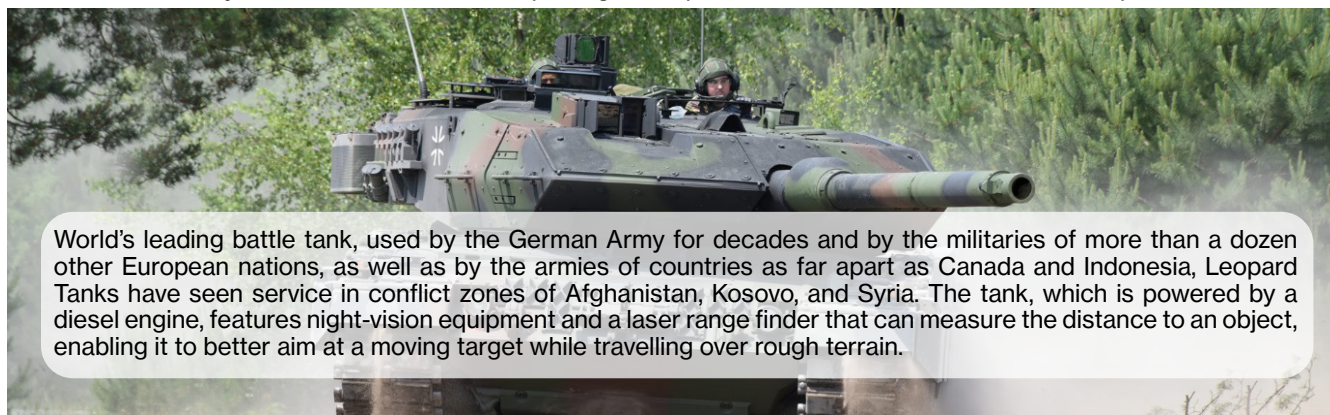
INS VAGIR

The Indian Navy commissioned the fifth diesel-electric Kalvari-class submarine Vagir at the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai, in collaboration with the French M/s Naval Group under Project 75.



LEOPARD 2 TANK

CONTEXT: Germany decided to authorize re-exporting of Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine from other European nations.



World's leading battle tank, used by the German Army for decades and by the militaries of more than a dozen other European nations, as well as by the armies of countries as far apart as Canada and Indonesia, Leopard Tanks have seen service in conflict zones of Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Syria. The tank, which is powered by a diesel engine, features night-vision equipment and a laser range finder that can measure the distance to an object, enabling it to better aim at a moving target while travelling over rough terrain.

ECONOMICS





DEPRECIATION OF INDIAN RUPEE (52-69)

ECONOMIC RECESSION

LOAN LOSS PROVISIONING NORMS BY BANKS

NATIONAL LEVEL MULTI-STATE COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

SOVEREIGN GREEN BONDS

SHORT SELLING

LOAN RECOVERY via LOK ADALAT

PRAJWALA CHALLENGE

RBI PUTS ON HOLD NUE LICENSING

BUREAU OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY (BEE)

NATIONAL COAL INDEX

NATIONAL GREEN HYDROGEN (GH₂) MISSION

PM-KISAN SAMMAN NIDHI SCHEME

NEW INDUSTRIAL POLICY DRAFT

INDIGENOUS LIVESTOCK BREEDS

ASSET RECONSTRUCTION

NEW T+1 SETTLEMENT CYCLE COMES INTO EFFECT

UTKARSH 2.0

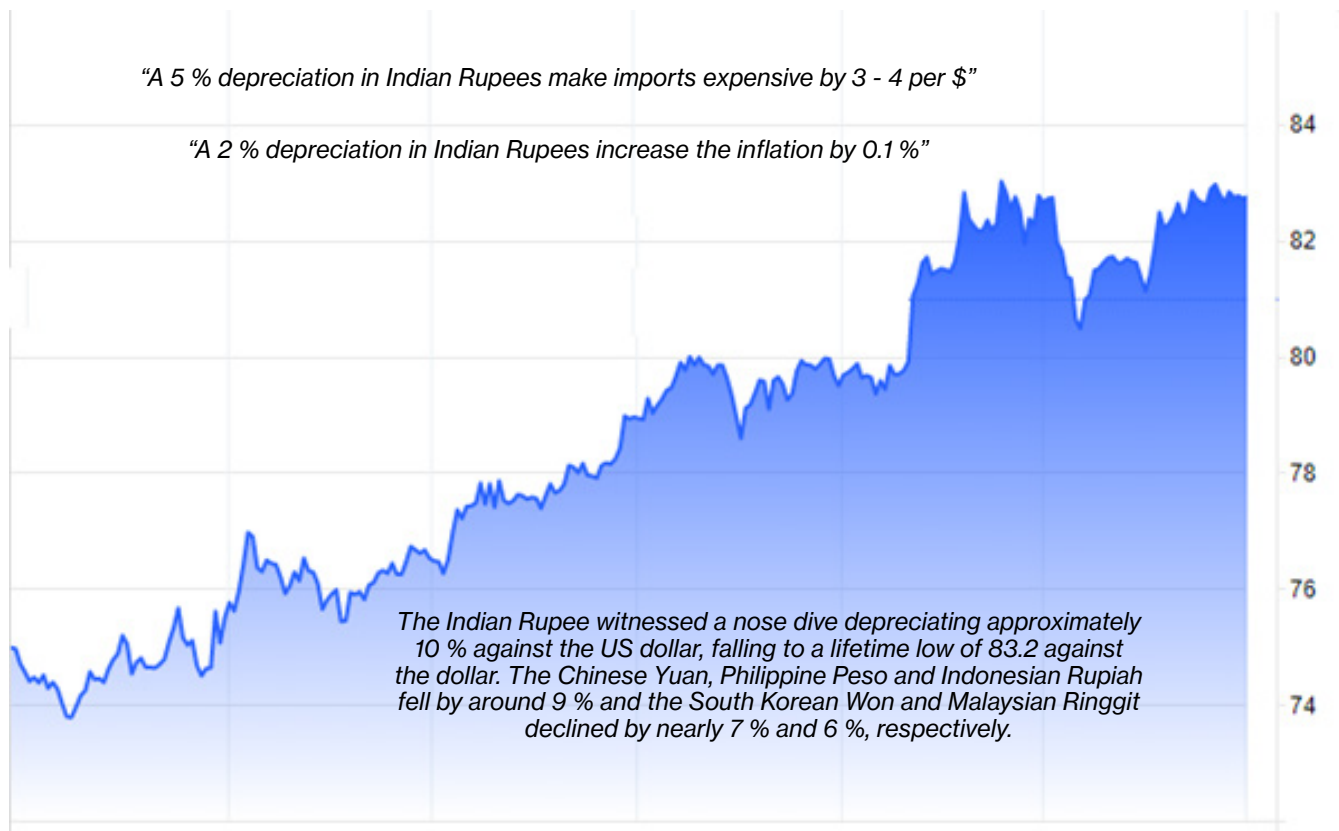
CREDIT DEFAULT SWAPS (CDS)

LOAN LOSS PROVISIONING NORMS BY BANKS



DEPRECIATION OF INDIAN RUPEE

CONTEXT: The Indian Rupee depreciated by around 10 % against the US Dollar (\$) in 2022.



BACKGROUND: Reasons of geopolitical and geo-economic nature have put additional pressure upon the Indian Rupee .

MONETARY POLICIES: The Indian markets that offer an interest rate of approximately 7 %, compared to ~ 2 % is attractive for foreign investors. Such capital inflows lead to appreciation of Indian Rupee. The US Federal Reserve's aggressively hiked interest rates by 425 basis points (bps) in 2022 to fight inflation. Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) pulled out 1.34 lakh Cr. from the Indian markets in 2022 and started investing in the US market to take advantage of higher interest rate differential between the US and India.

GEOPOLITICAL TUSSELE: Higher export volumes from India create a demand for Indian Rupee, leading to its appreciation. The elevated global commodity prices, driven by geo-political tensions in Middle East (Saudi-Houthi-Iran) and Central Asia. (Russia-Ukraine) increased the risk of a potential global economic slowdown choking investments from overseas and substantially raising the import bills.

STEPS TAKEN TO ARREST DECLINE:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) heavily intervened in the foreign exchange (forex) market to defend the Indian Rupee. The forex reserves of India have fallen by US \$ 70 billion (\$562.81 billion as of December 23, 2022) since the beginning of 2022. The central bank is now starting to again build up its reserves and that would act as a buffer in times of uncertainty.

CONCLUSION:

The RBI and the Government must work together to check the inflation rate in the margins set under the inflation targeting scheme. The RBI needs to shed its accommodative policy stance and raise policy rates to control inflation. However, the poor outlook for exports, primarily due to the global slowdown driven by the confluence of stubbornly high inflation, rising borrowing costs and geopolitical tensions create challenges for India.

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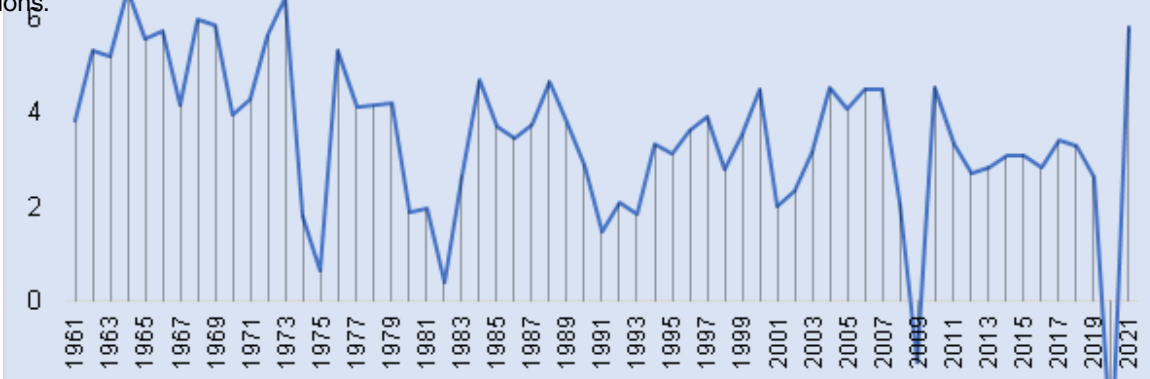
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ECONOMIC RECESSION

CONTEXT: According to the World Bank's annual report, the global economy will come "dangerously close" to a recession this year, owing to poorer growth in all of the world's top economies – the United States, Europe, and China.

GLOBAL GDP GROWTH RATES (%)

The World Bank has reduced its forecast for global growth this year by nearly half, to 1.7%, from 3% previously, the third-weakest yearly expansion in three decades, trailing only the massive recessions caused by the 2008 global financial crisis and the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. Over the years, inversion of the bond yield curve has become a strong predictor of recessions.



In the current instance, the US Federal Reserves has been raising short-term interest rates, which further bumps up the short-end of the yield curve while dampening economic activity. There is a fear that such a move may lead to the US going into recession and thus impacting India and the world. The recession fears have prevented further fall in crude oil prices from US \$120 for a barrel of crude three months ago to about US \$90 a barrel with fears of a looming economic recession.

LOAN LOSS PROVISIONING NORMS BY BANKS

CONTEXT: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released the Discussion Paper proposing a framework for the adoption of an expected loss-based approach for provisioning against loan loss by banks in India.

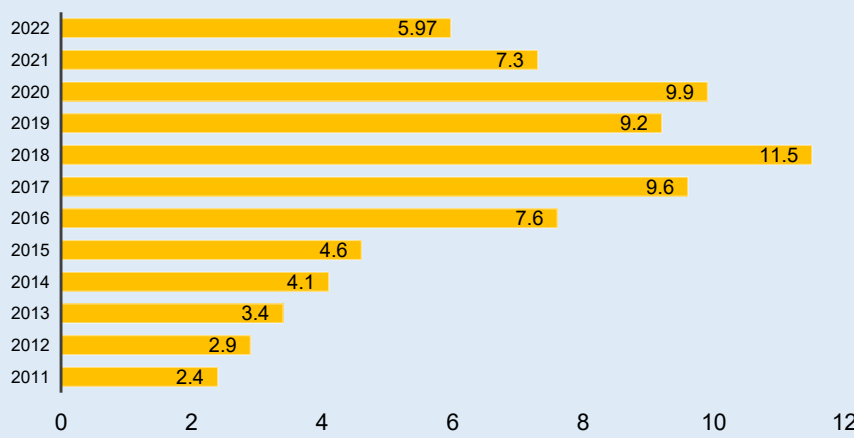
BACKGROUND: The Non-Performing Asset (NPA) has emerged as a major issue in the domestic banking sector. Decline in the Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) for SCBs sequentially from its peak 9 % in FY 2017-18 to 5.8 % March 2022, led by lower slippages as well as reduction in outstanding GNPA. As per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reports, Indian Banks have been able to recover only 13 % of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) in the last 5 years and over Rs 10 lakh crore was written off.

purpose of estimating loss provisions based on broader RBI guidelines in line with the proposed principles. Banks will be provided with an option to phase out the effect of increased provisions on Common Equity Tier I capital, over a maximum period of five years to enable a seamless transition, as permitted under the Basel guidelines. Regional Rural Banks and smaller Cooperative Banks (based on a threshold to be decided based on comments) are proposed to be kept out of the framework.

SIGNIFICANCE: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) proposes to use 'Expected Loss-Based approach' - provisioning against loan loss by banks in line with International Financial reporting standards guidelines. Banks would have the independence to design and implement their own models for measuring expected credit losses for the

PROVISIONING: Under provisioning, Banks have to set aside funds to a prescribed percentage of their bad assets. The percentage of bad asset that has to be 'provided for' is called the provisioning coverage ratio. It helps the bank balance the income and survive during bad times and is recorded in the income statement as a non-cash expense.

GROSS NPA AS A PER CENTAGE OF GDP





NATIONAL LEVEL MULTI-STATE COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

CONTEXT: The Union Cabinet approved the setting up of three new cooperative bodies - Multi-State Cooperative Export Society, Multi-State Cooperative Organic Society and Multi-State Cooperative Seed Society at national levels under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies (MSCS) Act, 2002. Primary to national level cooperatives societies including primary societies, district, state and national level federations and MSCS can become constituent members.

BACKGROUND: The Government of India have been promoting cooperative sector in farming and animal husbandry as part of its objective to double farmer's income. In India, there are about 8.50 lakh Cooperatives, which have around 29 Cr. members mainly from rural areas. The Government of India has launched the Central Sector Scheme for "Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)" in the year 2020 with a total budgetary outlay of 6865 Cr.

MULTI-STATE COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES ACT, 2002

OBJECTIVE: Govern more than 1,500 multi-State cooperative societies whose members and areas of operation are spread across more than one state.

NEED FOR AMENDMENT

- Strengthen governance, reform the electoral process, improve the monitoring mechanism, and ensure ease of doing business in multi-State cooperative societies.
- Improve the composition of boards and ensure financial discipline, besides enabling the raising of funds in the Multi-State Cooperative Societies.

MULTI-STATE COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2022

- Establishment of a Cooperative Election Authority for the conduct of free and fair elections to Multi-State Cooperative Societies. Appointment of a Cooperative Information Officer to disseminate information of public interest regarding the operations of the Multi-State Cooperative Societies.
- Appointment of Cooperative Ombudsmen with territorial jurisdiction to inquire into members' complaints.
- Establishment of the Cooperative Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Development Fund for the revival of sick Multi-State Cooperative Societies.
- Prescribed for a concurrent audit for such Multi-State Cooperative Societies with an annual turnover or deposit of more than the amount as determined by the Centre.
- Merger of any cooperative society into an existing Multi-State Cooperative Society. Any cooperative society may, by a resolution passed by majority of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting at a general meeting of such society, decide to merge into an existing multi-state co-operative society, provided such resolution is subject to provisions of the respective State Cooperative Societies Act for the time being in force, under which such cooperative society is registered.

MULTI-STATE COOPERATIVE EXPORT SOCIETY

MANDATE: Umbrella organisation to export surplus goods / services produced by various cooperative societies

SIGNIFICANCE: Increase exports of goods / services of cooperative societies promoting Make in India thus leading to Atmanirbhar Bharat

BENEFIT: Cooperative can get benefits of various export related schemes and policies of different ministries through "Whole of Government" approach

MULTI-STATE COOPERATIVE ORGANIC SOCIETY

MANDATE: Umbrella organisation to aggregate, procure, certify, test, brand and market organic products produced by cooperative societies

SIGNIFICANCE: Facilitate technical guidance and capacity building for organic producer and help develop and maintain dedicated market intelligence system for organic produce

BENEFIT: Manage various activities related to organic sector by providing certified and authentic organic products

MULTI-STATE COOPERATIVE SEED SOCIETY

MANDATE: Act as an apex organisation to produce, procure, process, brand, label, package, store, market and distribute quality seeds; conduct strategic research and development, and develop a system for preservation and promotion of indigenous natural seeds

SIGNIFICANCE: Reduce the yield gaps and enhance productivity promoting Seed Replacement Rate (SRR) and Varietal Replacement Rate (VRR).

BENEFIT: Create more employment in the agriculture and cooperative sector, reducing the dependence on imported seeds and provide boost to rural economy.

RECENT INITIATIVES:

The Union Ministry of Co-operation is planning to set up multi-purpose Primary Agricultural Credit Society (PACS) in Panchayats over the next 5 years in order to promote various cooperative activities at the grassroots level. The Dept. of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) Limited signed an MoU to promote Millets towards celebration of the International Year of Millets 2023.

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SOVEREIGN GREEN BONDS

CONTEXT: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently announced the inaugural issue of Sovereign Green Bonds (SGrBs) in the current financial year.

BACKGROUND: Green bonds are debt financial instruments that can be issued by countries, companies and multilateral organisations to only fund projects that have positive impacts on the climate and environment and provide investors with fixed income payments. The European Investment Bank issued Climate Awareness Bond, referred to as the first Green Bond in 2007. The World Bank issued Green Bonds worth US \$14.4 billion since its first issue in 2008 with funds used to support 111 projects around the world, largely in renewable energy and efficiency (33%), clean transportation (27%), and agriculture and land use (15%). The World Bank issued Green Bonds financed Rampur Hydropower Project, which aimed to provide low-carbon hydroelectric power to northern India's electricity grid.

GREEN BONDS - TIMELINE:

- 2007: The European Investment Bank issued Climate Awareness Bond to raise US \$ 807 mn.
- 2008: The World Bank became the first institution to issue Green Bonds.
- 2014: The UK based power technology company Halelectric issued the first certified Green Bond.
- 2015: Yes Bank issued India's first ever Green Infrastructure Bond worth US \$ 160 mn. to finance green infrastructure projects.

SOVERIEGN GREEN BONDS

TYPE: Debt financial instrument
ISSUE: Government of India (GoI)
TENURE: 5-year and 10 years
ELEIGIBLE PROJECTS: Financing projects having a positive environmental impact, such as ecosystem restoration or reducing pollution
TRADEABILITY: Eligible to be traded

*Wildlife Conservation Bond, also called **Rhino Bond** is a 5-year bond launched by World Bank with Global Environment Facility (GEF) to channelise private capital to protect and increase black rhino populations in protected areas in South Africa.*

- 2016: Axis Bank issued India's first ever internationally listed certified Green Bonds at London Stock Exchange
- 2016: Poland issues the first Sovereign Green Bond.
- 2017: Larsen & Toubro (L&T) issued SEBI-approved Green Bonds.
- 2022: The Union Budget 2022-23 announced the issue of SGrBs
- 2023: The Government of India announced the issue of Sovereign Gold Bonds worth US \$ 2 billion in January 2023.

SHORT SELLING

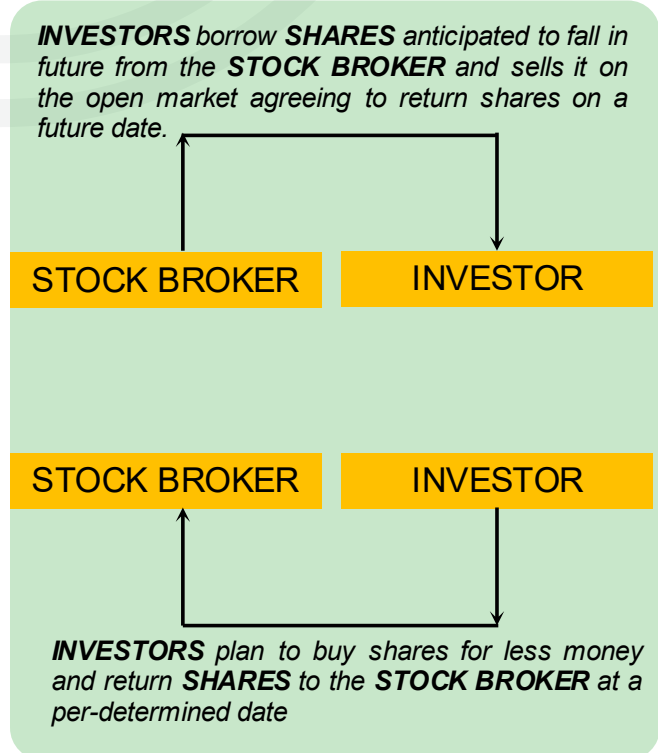
CONTEXT: Hindenburg Research, a short seller has released a report accused the Adani Group involving in fraudulent activities.

"a trading strategy 'buy low, sell high' approach based on the expectation that the price of the security will fall."

-SHORT SELLING, OR SHORTING

CASE STUDY: ADANI HINDENBURG FACEOFF

A trader believes that the stock price of Adani Enterprises Limited - currently trading at 3388.95 (January 25, 2023) will decline in the wake of an adverse report by Hindenburg Research, a short seller. Such a trader, who holds a pessimistic view of stock price of Adani Enterprises Limited would borrow 100 shares and sell them to another investor. The trader has now "short" 100 shares selling something that they did not own but had borrowed. The short sale was only made possible by borrowing the shares may not always be available if the stock is already heavily shorted by other traders. A week later, the stock price of the Adani Enterprises Limited falls to 1565.25 (February 02, 2023). The trader decides to close the short position and buys 100 shares for 1565.25 from the open market to replace the borrowed shares. The trader's profit on the short sale, excluding commissions and interest on the margin account from a single share, is 1823.7 (3388.95 - 1565.25). The total profit made by the trader on shorting the shares of Adani Enterprises Limited is 18237.





LOAN RECOVERY VIA LOK ADALAT

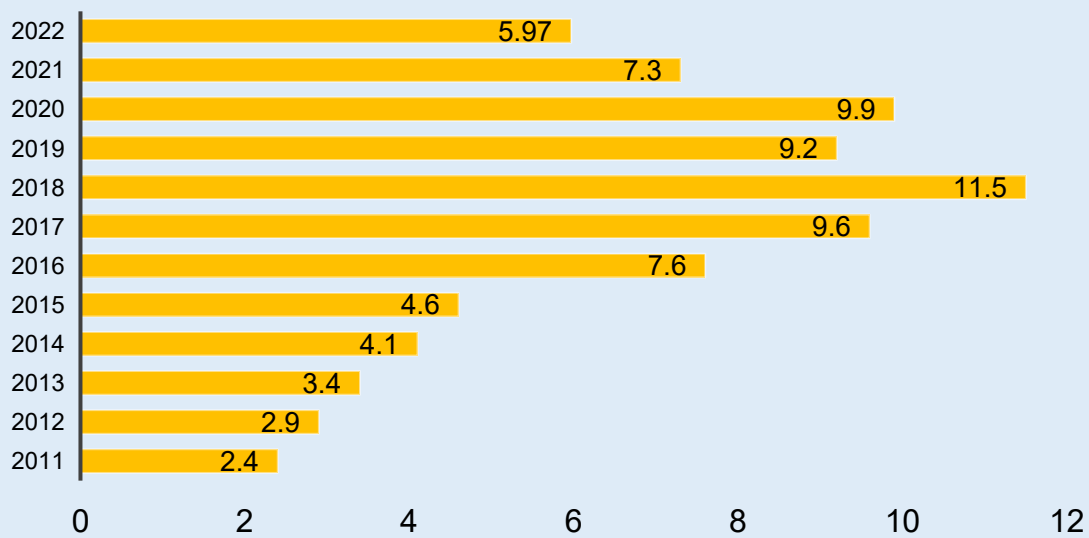
CONTEXT: The number of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) referred by banks to various recovery channels, including Lok Adalat and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) increased fourfold over 2020-21.

BACKGROUND: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) noted that the Indian Banks were able to recover only 13 % of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) in the last 5 years. The Union Finance Minister in a statement to the Parliament informed of written off bad loans worth 10, 09, 511 Cr. (10 trillion) from FY 2017-18 to FY 2021-22. The Reserve Bank of India published Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2021-22 – statutory compliance in accordance with the Banking Regulation Act 1949, and presents the performance of banking sectors, including cooperative banks and NBFCs noted the decline in the Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) for SCBs sequentially from its peak

9 % in FY 2017-18 to 5.8 % March 2022, led by lower slippages as well as reduction in outstanding GNPA.

REVIVAL OF INTEREST IN LOK ADALATS: Banks have approached Lok Adalats to resolve stressed accounts worth up to 20 lakh. Banks organise Lok Adalats in collaboration with the District Legal Service Authority. Lok Adalats are preferred since the cost of recovery through this route is lower than through DRTs or SARFAESI. The recovery rate through this route has been very low (2.3 % in 2021-22 and 4% in 2020-21), as it is very difficult to recover loans from defaulters in this sub 20 lakh loan segment.

GROSS NPA AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP

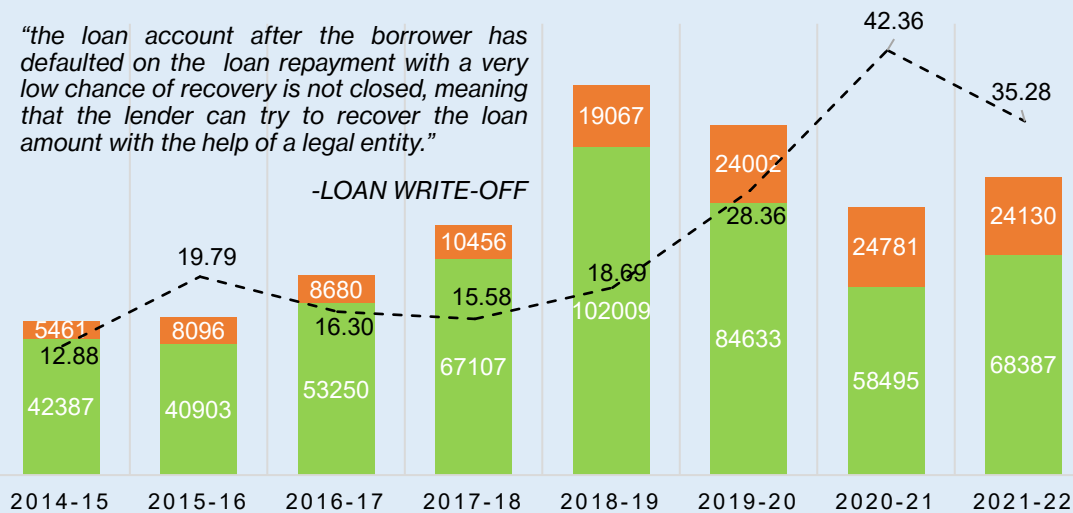


LOAN RECOVERY (₹ CR.)

■ NPA RECOVERY ■ WRITTEN OFF NPA RECOVERY

“the loan account after the borrower has defaulted on the loan repayment with a very low chance of recovery is not closed, meaning that the lender can try to recover the loan amount with the help of a legal entity.”

-LOAN WRITE-OFF





LOK ADALATS - SALIENT FEATURES

Non-adversarial litigation resolution system presided over by retired judges, social activists, or other members of the legal profession held by the Taluk Legal Services, District Court Legal Services Committee, High Court Legal Services and Supreme Court Legal Services Committee.

Decide the matter so referred on the basis of the compromise or settlement between the parties in an independent and impartial manner in their attempt to reach amicable settlement of their dispute.

LOK ADALAT JURISDICTION

Civil Cases

- matrimonial disputes
- land disputes
- partition / property disputes
- labour disputes

Compoundable criminal Cases

Award made by Lok Adalats is deemed to be a decree of a civil court and is final and binding on all parties and no appeal against such an award lies before any court of law.

LOAN RECOVERY MECHANISMS

Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of the Security Interest Act (SARFAESI Act, 2002): Banks can attach securities pledged against the loan and manage or sell them to recover dues without any court intervention. The Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs) constituted under Section 3 of the SARFAESI Act, 2002 are specialised agencies to resolve the issue of stressed assets in the Indian banking system. ARCs take over the business of the borrower, sell a part or whole of the business, reschedule payment of debts payable by the borrower, and enforce security interest in accordance with the provisions of this Act. Asset Reconstruction Companies are regulated by the Reserve Bank of India.

Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial institutions Act, 1993 (RDDBFI Act, 1993): The Debt Recovery Tribunals (DRTs) and the Debts Recovery Appellate Tribunals constituted under the RDDBFI Act, 1993 are constituted for expeditious adjudication and recovery of debts.

Scheme for Sustainable Structuring of Stressed Assets (S4A Scheme): The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) launched the S4A Scheme to restructure stressed assets in the corporate sector. The unsustainable debts of a corporate firm eligible for resolving stressed assets under the S4A Scheme shall not exceed 50 % of existing debts. The sustainable debts shall be serviced under original terms and conditions. The Joint Lender Forum would formulate a Comprehensive Resolution Plan under which the Financial Institutions would absorb unsustainable debts converted to Equity, Optionally Convertible Debentures or Redeemable Optionally Convertible Preference Share and offload them within 18 months to a prospective promoter. Hindustan Construction Company (HCC), a construction major became India's first firm to get debt recast under RBI's Sustainable Structuring of Stressed Assets (S4A).

Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code, 2016: The IBC, 2016 is a consolidated and amended laws relating to reorganisation as well as insolvency resolution of entities – Corporates, Individuals and Partnership firms in a time-bound manner. An Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India was constituted to regulate the Regulate functioning of Insolvency Professionals; Insolvency Professional Agencies and Information Utilities. Section 35AA of the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Act of 2017 empower the Reserve Bank to issue directions to any banking company or banking companies to initiate insolvency resolution process in respect of a default, under the provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.

PRAJWALA CHALLENGE

CONTEXT: The Union Ministry of Rural Development launches Prajwala Challenge inviting ideas, solutions and actions to transform the rural economy.

BACKGROUND: The Livelihood Mission has been a major pillar in the poverty alleviation strategy of post-independence India. The Livelihood Mission focus upon supporting projects for economic empowerment of socially and educationally backward communities (S&EBCs). The scheme focus upon providing credit-linked subsidies to facilitate Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to undertake remunerative employment opportunities in farm and non-farm enterprises in rural areas. The Mission so far has mobilised more than 87 million women into the Self Help Groups (SHGs) and their federations.

PRAJWALA CHALLENGE

Launched under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana, the office of the Principal Scientific Advisor, Dept. Science & Technology would host Manthan portal inviting ideas, solutions and actions to transform the rural economy. The Manthan platform promotes collaboration between industry and scientific research to help meet India's national targets and SDGs.

CASE STUDIES:

NATIONAL RURAL ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION PROJECT (NRETP): A sub-component under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAYNRLM) of the Union Ministry of Rural Development, the National Rural Economic Transformation Project supports finance project women owned and women-led farm and non-farm enterprises and also supports youth skills development, in coordination with the Deen Dayal Upadhaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana.

AJVIKA GRAMEEN EXPRESS YOJANA (AGEY): A sub-scheme under Deendayal Antyodya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), it provide credit linked subsidies to facilitate SHG members operate public transport services in backward rural areas. This will provide safe, affordable and community monitored rural transport services like e-rickshaws, 3 and 4 wheeler motorised transport vehicles to connect remote villages with key services and amenities including access to markets, education and health for the overall economic development of the area.



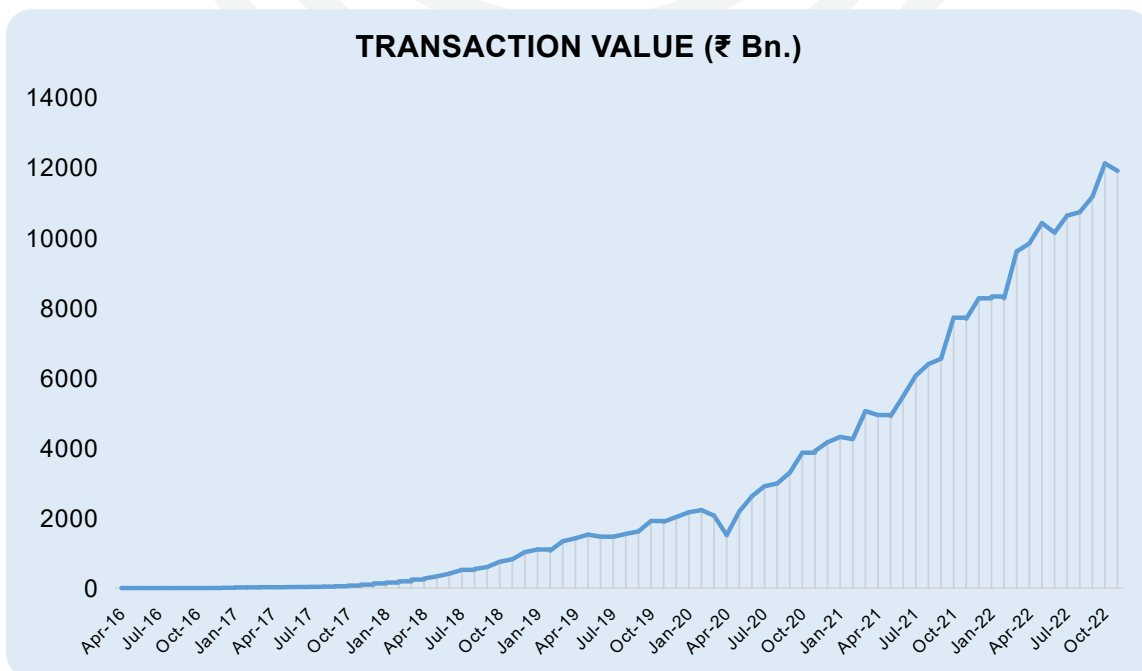
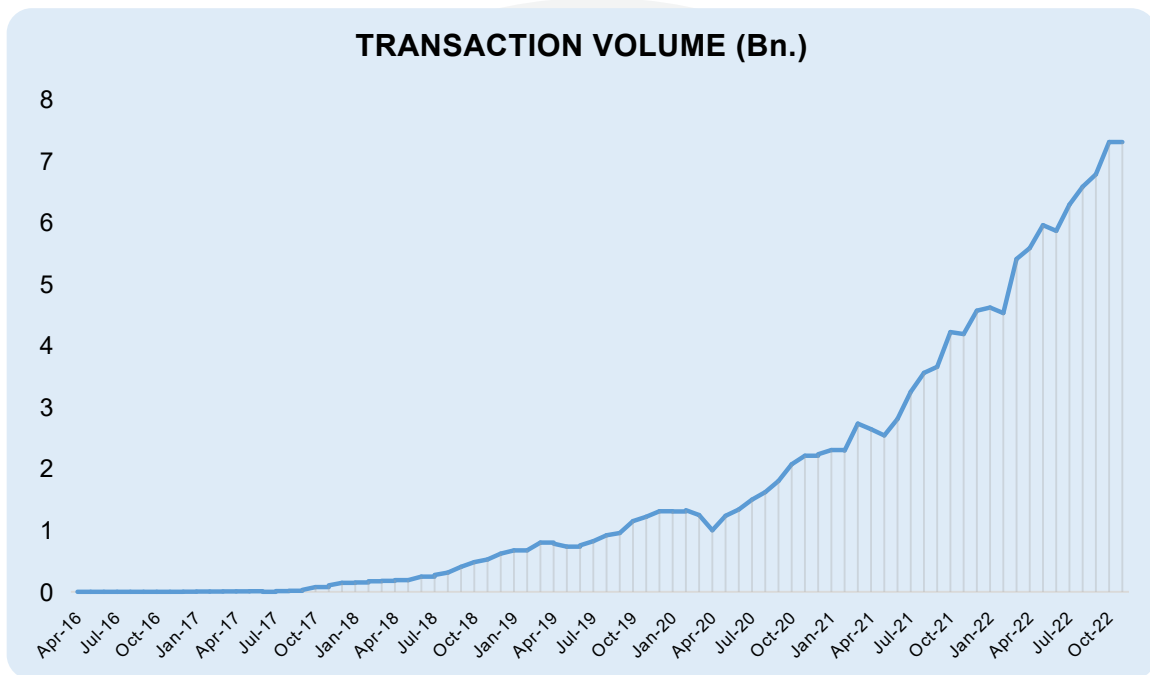
RBI PUTS ON HOLD NUE LICENSING

CONTEXT: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has put on hold to licensing of the New Umbrella Entity (NUE) network, a fintech institution planned as a rival to the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

BACKGROUND: The RBI issued guidelines in 2020 for corporates to create For-Profit New Umbrella Entities (NUEs) to manage clearing and settlement systems that could be an alternative to the bank-promoted NPCI. This is expected to promote competition and “de-risk” growing domestic digital payments ecosystem. The New Umbrella Entities (NUE) can be constituted as an entity under the

Companies Act, 2013 to manage and operate the new payment system in the retail sector such as Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), Point of Sale (PoS), Unified Payments Interface (UPI) etc. Six groupings, which included Facebook, Google, Amazon, Flipkart and others, had applied for NUE licences, but none of them could meet the RBI's expectations in bringing a technology breakthrough.

PERFORMANCE OF UPI



Source: UPI Product Statistics. NPCI

Data excludes the transactions having debit/credit to the same account for the month of August 2018 onwards.



BUREAU OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY (BEE)

CONTEXT: The revised Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) guidelines included ceiling fans under the ambit of mandatory star labelling from January 1, 2023.

BACKGROUND: The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) introduced Star rating under the Standards and Labelling Program in 2006. The Standards and Labelling Program comes under Energy Conservation Act, 2001. The star rating provides visual representation of efficiency of appliances. At present, star labelling is provided for refrigerators, LED lamps, air-conditioners, TV, TFL etc.

STAR-LABELLING: Star labelling refers to energy savings of a minimum of 30 % for ONE-star rated fans to over 50 % for FIVE-star rated fans. The manufacturers would have to display the star ratings on their fans. It is estimated that high energy-efficient five-star rated fans will require new imported motors and electronic components.

SIGNIFICANCE: The expanded scope of adoption of 'STAR RATINGS' by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) for electrical appliances is likely to save electricity. This is improvements would reduce the peak load on the grid benefitting the Transmission and Distribution (T&D) Companies and provide financial savings for the consumer. The mitigations in Green House Gases (GHGs) in a substantial manner would help India to achieve its voluntary goals committed under the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCC).

BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS

TYPE: Statutory Body

CONSTITUTING STATUE: Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016

FOUNDED: October 12, 2017.

MANDATE: National Standards Body of India

SUPERVISORY DEPARTMENT: Department of Consumer Affairs

NATIONAL COAL INDEX

CONTEXT: The Union Ministry of Coal revised Performance Bank Guarantee (PBG) based on the National Coal Index (NCI) for the month of April to launch the sixth-round commercial

"price index reflecting the change in the price level of coal in a particular month relative to the fixed Base Year (2017-18)"
-NATIONAL COAL INDEX (NCI)

coal mines' auction for 141 coal mines.

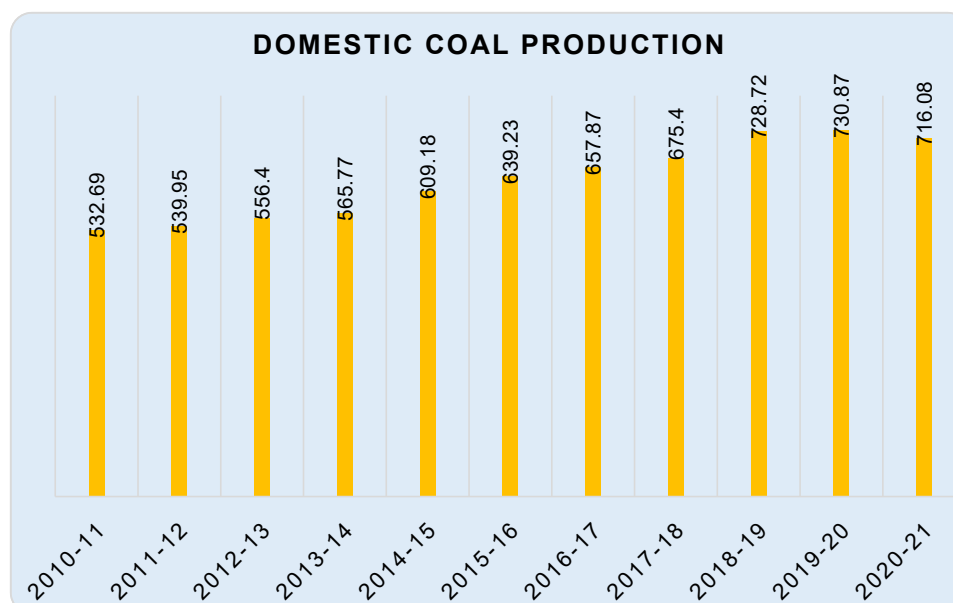
BACKGROUND: The Supreme Court of India cancelled the coal auctions held in 2014, which allowed private sector participation. However, it was limited to captive usage in its own end-use plants. The coal mining sector has recently been opened for commercial mining for the private sector.

basis using the National Coal Index. Performance Bank Guarantee (PBG) is a bank guarantee that needs to be submitted by the successful bidder to show that the entity has the capability to carry on the mining activity. The revision of PBG will ensure Ease of Doing Business for companies and allow more investors in the coal sector.

SIGNIFICANCE: The Union Ministry of Coal commenced the commercial auction of coal mines on a revenue-share

STATS AND FIGURES

India has the 4th largest coal reserves in the world, 2nd largest coal producer and 2nd largest coal consumer. The Union Ministry of Coal has set a target to produce 1.3 billion tonnes (BT) in FY 2025 and 1.5 BT by FY 2030 to replace imported coal with domestically mined coal.





NATIONAL GREEN HYDROGEN (GH₂) MISSION

CONTEXT: The Union Cabinet has approved the National Green Hydrogen Mission, aimed at making India the global hub for the production of Green Hydrogen (GH₂).

BACKGROUND: India has committed itself to reduce the Green House Gas (GHG) emissions intensity by a third by 2030, compared to 2005 levels at Paris Climate Change Agreement. The Centre constituted a committee led by Tarun Kapoor, former Petroleum secretary tasked with creating a thorough, step-by-step plan for fully switching from fossil fuels to clean energy. The Government launched Prime Minister National Action Plan on Climate Change (PM-NAPCC), an umbrella programme for realising a more environmentally sustainable development model. The Government launched National Solar Mission with a target of 20 GW by 2022, later increased to 100 GW to promote the share of solar energy in the domestic energy mixture. NITI Aayog published a report - "Harnessing Green Hydrogen – Opportunities for Deep Decarbonisation in India".

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Green Hydrogen can help India committed itself to reduce the Green House Gas (GHG) emissions intensity by a third by 2030, compared to 2005 levels at Paris Climate Change Agreement. The Centre constituted a committee led by Tarun Kapoor, former Petroleum secretary tasked with creating a thorough, step-by-step plan for fully switching from fossil fuels to clean energy. The Government launched Prime Minister National Action Plan on Climate Change (PM-NAPCC)

TIMELINE:

2003: The National Hydrogen Energy Board (NHEB) proposed the National Hydrogen Energy Road Map (NHERM).

2006: Approved National Hydrogen Energy Road Map (NHERM) to bridge the technological gaps in different areas of hydrogen energy, including its production, storage, transportation and delivery, applications, safety, codes and standards and capacity building for the period up to 2020.

2016: Constituted Dr. K. Kasturirangan Committee to prepare reports on hydrogen and fuel cells.

EXPECTED MISSION OUTCOMES 2030

- ~ 5 MMTPA of GH₂ production
- ~ 60 – 100 GW electrolyser capacity
- ~ 125 GW of GH₂ based RE production
- ~ 50 MMTPA of CO₂ emission mitigation
- ~ 6 lakh job opportunities
- ~ 8 trillion in investments
- ~ 1 trillion in fuel import savings

2021: Launched 'Mission Innovation', a global initiative to accelerate global clean energy innovation.

2021: Launched National Hydrogen Mission on August 15 to mitigate domestic GHG emissions and increase the share of renewable sources of energy in the domestic energy mixture.

2022: Formulated 'Green Hydrogen Policy (GHP)' that set a target of 5 Million Tonnes Per Annum (MTPA) of Green Hydrogen production by 2030, more than 80% of the current hydrogen demand in the country.

DOMESTIC MILESTONES:

GAIL has commenced India's maiden project of mixing hydrogen into the natural gas system to establish the techno-commercial feasibility of blending hydrogen in City Gas Distribution (CGD) network in line with National Hydrogen Mission.

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Larsen & Toubro (L&T), and ReNew Power (ReNew) have signed a binding term sheet to set up a Joint Venture (JV) company to develop the green hydrogen sector in India at an "industrial scale".

The Oil India Limited (OIL) commissioned the first pure Green Hydrogen Plant in India at Jorhat, Assam. The plant produces Green Hydrogen from the electricity generated by the existing 500kW Solar plant using a 100 kW Anion Exchange Membrane (AEM) Electrolyser array.

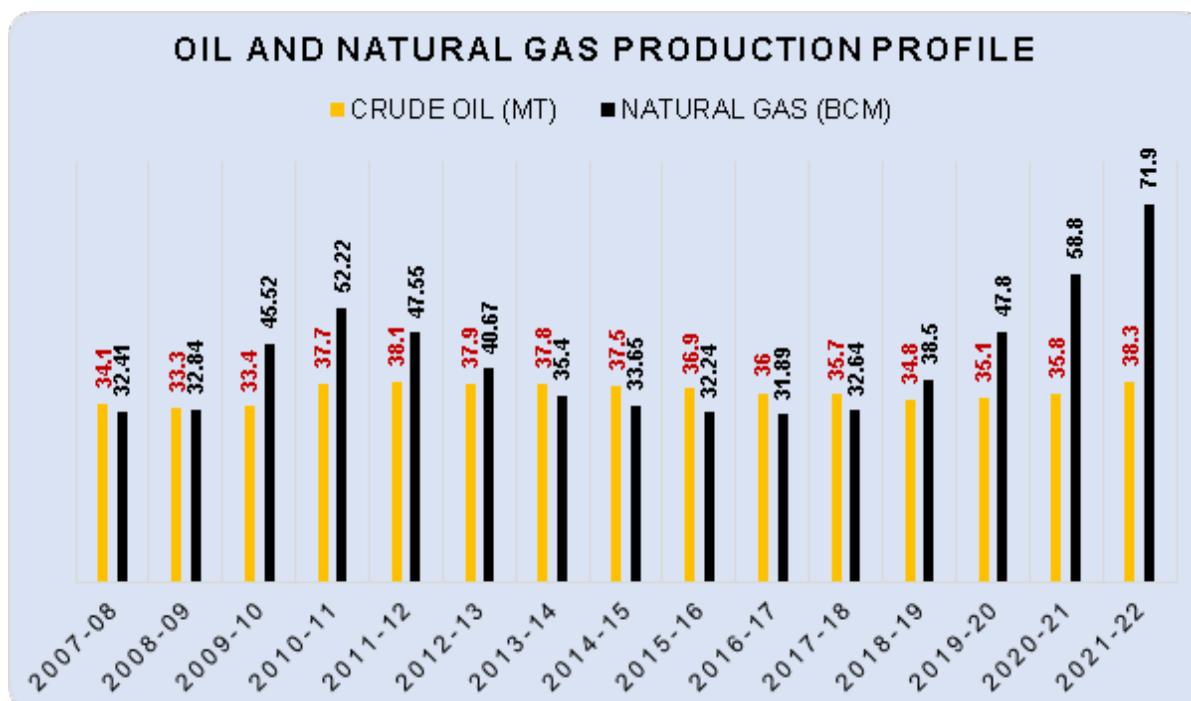
COMPONENTS OF THE GREEN HYDROGEN (GH₂) MISSION

STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS FOR GREEN HYDROGEN TRANSITION (SIGHT): Financial incentive mechanisms under the Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP) to mobilise finance and speed up green energy development to:

- Targeting domestic manufacturing of electrolysers via 15,000 Cr. Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for electrolysers.
- Production of Green Hydrogen (GH₂) focussing upon regions capable of supporting large scale production and/or utilization of Hydrogen identified and developed as Green Hydrogen Hubs

STRATEGIC HYDROGEN INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP (SHIP): A Public-private partnership framework for Research & Development facilitated:

- Developing an enabling policy framework to support the establishment of the green hydrogen ecosystem.
- Developing standards and regulations framework
- Undertaking a coordinated skill development programme
- Supporting pilot projects in emerging end-use sectors and production pathway



PM-KISAN SAMMAN NIDHI SCHEME

CONTEXT: A proposal is pending with the Union Finance Ministry to increase the income support provided to farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme from 6,000 to 8,000 per year.

BACKGROUND: The Centre launched the Central Sector Scheme – PM KISAN scheme in December 2018 to provide income support to farmers and their families. Over the past 3 years, the number of beneficiaries grew from 3.1 Cr. to reach 11 Cr. and cumulative transfers worth more than 2 trillion to bank accounts of farmers.

ANALYSIS: The income transfers can help farmers meet agricultural inputs, daily consumption, education, health and other incidental expenses. An annual expenditure of 75,000 Cr. (-US \$ 9.9 billion) can significantly effort to boost consumption and rural demand, would entail an annual additional cost of around 22,000 Cr. to the government.

PM-KISAN SAMMAN NIDHI SCHEME

TYPE: Central Sector Scheme

NODAL MINISTRY: Union Ministry for Agriculture & Farmer Welfare

LAUNCHED: December 2018.

MANDATE: Annual income support of 6,000 to farmers*.

ROLE OF THE STATES: Identification of scheme beneficiaries.

MODE OF TRANSFER: Direct Benefits Transfer (DBT)

EXCEPTIONS: Affluent farmers such as Income Tax payers in last assessment year, professionals like Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Chartered Accountants etc and pensioners drawing at least 10,000/- per month (excluding MTS/Class IV/Group D employees).

WHY PEOPLE CHOOSE US FOR IAS COACHING.?

More than 50% officers are qualified every year through Samkalp





NEW INDUSTRIAL POLICY DRAFT

CONTEXT: The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Union Ministry of Commerce & Industry is currently drafting a new industrial policy, the third industrial policy after 1956 and 1991.

BACKGROUND: India has already drafted Industrial Policy Resolution twice in 1956 and 1991. The Industrial Policy Resolution, 1956 was meant to secure the organisation of country along socialistic lines. The IPR, 1956 called for greater role of State in production and distribution related activities. The Industrial Policy Resolution, 1991, popularly called as the New Economic Policy was formulated to reorganise the domestic industrial eco-system to cater to a globalising world.

NEW INDUSTRIAL POLICY DRAFT

OBJECTIVES

Focus on competitiveness and capability of domestic industries
Deepen economic integration of domestic industries to facilitate moving up the global value chain
Promoting India as an attractive investment destination
Nurturing innovation and entrepreneurship
Achieving global scale and standards

PROPOSALS

Adopt One Nation-One Standard
Promote startups in every district
Create startup innovation zones at the level of urban local bodies
Formulation of a national capacity development program
Incentivise Indian speciality products by creating premium international brands
Increase financing sources
Promote the Made in India brand
Enhance local value addition
Promote credibility of India as a source of quality products

A SURVEY OF INDIA'S PAST INDUSTRIAL POLICY

INDUSTRIAL POLICY RESOLUTION, 1956

- Classification of the industries
- Schedule A (17) industries: Reserved exclusively for Central PSUs
- Schedule B (12) industries: Reserved exclusively for State Public Sector Enterprises or private sector participation with compulsory licensing
- Schedule C industries: All other sectors left out of the Schedule A & B were and left with the private sectors subject to licensing and regulation under the IDR Act
- Emphasis on Capital Goods industries and massive infrastructure projects
- Emphasis on 'labour intensive' cottage and small-scale industries
- Emphasis on industrialisation in the backward regions to spur balanced growth
- Emphasis on industrialisation in the backward regions to spur balanced growth
- Emphasis on 'Industrial Peace'

ACCESS TO INDUSTRIAL FINANCE- WAYS SUGGESTED

- Constituting Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) to provide finance at competitive rates*
- Industrial financing using forex reserves*
- Integrated investment promotion strategy involving district, state, national and international market synergies*
- Strengthening of the export finance systems for enhancing export competitiveness*
- Providing performance-based loans and incentives for innovation and green growth*
- Encouraging MSMEs to choose the corporate bond market*
- Accepting intellectual property rights as collaterals for loans*
- Enabling supply chain financing*
- Encouraging microfinance institutions to form cooperative groups and finance micro-enterprises at affordable rates*

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Creating a national digital grid*
- Developing a robust data protection regime*
- Setting up a technology fund*
- Creating a task force to continuously identify skill gaps*
- Rolling out social security schemes for women workers*
- Inclusion of labour-intensive industries under the production-linked incentive scheme.*

INDUSTRIAL POLICY RESOLUTION, 1991

- Liberalised industrial licensing and reservation regime
 Abolition of industrial licensing*: Abolished licenses to set up or substantially expand Schedule C and B* industrial units, except for strategic and hazardous industries. The licensed was further pruned in 1999 and reduced to 6 industries viz. drugs and pharmaceuticals, hazardous chemicals, explosives such as gun powder and detonating fuses, tobacco products, alcoholic drinks, and electronic, aerospace and defence equipment.

De-reservation of industries in public sector: De-reserved sectors earlier exclusively reserved for Central and State PSEs.

- Liberalised access to foreign capital and technology
- Relaxed sectorial FDI caps.
- Automatic permission for Foreign Technology Agreement.
- Revival of loss making Central and State PSEs
- Greater autonomy to Central and States PSEs
- Restructuring of asset stressed sick Public Sector Enterprises
- Disinvestment in selected Public Sector Enterprises
- Financial sector reforms

Legislation of Competition Act, 2002, repealing the Monopolistic Restrictive Trade Practices (Amendment) Act, 1969

Legislation of Foreign Exchange Management Act, 2002, repealing of Foreign Exchange Regulatory Act, 1973.

- Greater support to Small Scale Industries



INDIGENOUS LIVESTOCK BREEDS

CONTEXT: The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has registered 10 new breeds of livestock species, including cattle, buffalo, goat and pig taking the total number of indigenous breeds to 212.

The 10 new breeds included three new cattle breeds (Kathani, Sanchori, Masilum), one buffalo breed (Purnathadi), three goat breeds (Sojat, Karauli, Gujari) and three pig breeds (Banda, Manipuri Black, Wak Chambil)

ONGOLE CATTLE BREED

1. Also nicknamed as 'Nelore cattle', the cattle derive its name from the name of a place called 'Ongole', which occupies a small area between Gundlakamma and Musi rivers in Andhra Pradesh. The Ongole bull has great demand all over the world. In Brazil, population of Ongole off-breed is around several millions. The USA's famous 'Santa Gertrudis breed' also have Ongole blood. They are used in bull fights not only in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, but also in Mexico and some parts of East Africa. They are known for their toughness, high milk yield, rapid growth rate, tolerance to tropical heat and natural resistance to both foot and mouth disease (FMD) and mad cow disease.

DISTRIBUTION:

BUFFALO BREED

Purnathadi – Vidarbha, Maharashtra.

CATTLE BREED

Kathani – Vidarbha, Maharashtra

Masilum - Khasi & Jaintia, Meghalaya

Sanchori – Jalore, Rajasthan.

GOAT BREED

Sojat – Ajmer

Karauli – Rajasthan

Gujari – Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh

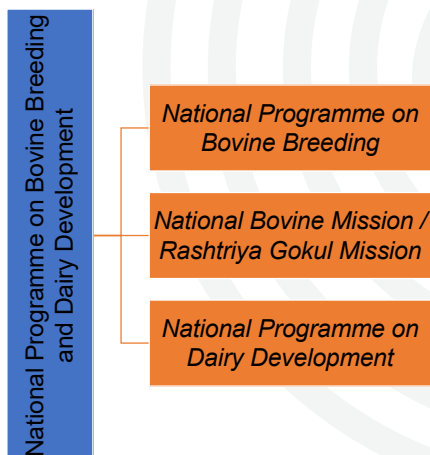
PIG BREED

Manipuri Black – Manipur

Banda - Jharkhand

Wak Chambil - Garo Hills, Meghalaya.

BACKGROUND: The Government of India (GoI) formulated National Action Plan on Dairy Development (NAPDD), 2017 to increase the milk production from 175 MTPA to 300 MTPA by 2023-24. India recorded an annual CAG rate of 5.53 % compared with the 2.09 % achieved globally in milk production.



PASHU SANJIVNI is a biometric identification of milch animals to issue Nakul Swasthya Patra recording their breed, its age and details of vaccination, among other details to all animals in milk and uploading data on INAPH data base.

E-PASHU HAAT PORTAL link farmers and breeders of indigenous breeds empowering farmers with information on location and agencies with high genetic merit indigenous disease free bovine germplasm in the form live animals, semen doses and embryos. Breeders / farmers can sell and purchase breeding stock, information on all forms of germoplasm including semen, embryos and live animals with all the agencies and stake holders in the country.

NATIONAL PROGRAMME ON BOVINE BREEDING: Undertake scientific organized breeding among selected indigenous bovine breeds, either via Artificial Insemination or natural method using high quality germoplasm;

Multi-Purpose AI Technicians in Rural India (MAITRIs)

National Bovine Genomic Centre for Indigenous Breed (NBGC-IB)

NATIONAL BOVINE MISSION / RASHTRIYA GOKUL MISSION: Undertake scientific organized breeding among nondescript cattle breeds using elite indigenous breeds like Gir, Sahiwal, Rathi, Deoni, Tharparkar, Red Sindhi;

Establishing Gokul Grams to distribute disease free high genetic merit bulls of indigenous breeds for natural services;

Central Cattle Breeding Farms (CCBFs);

Central Herd registration Scheme;

Central Frozen Semen Production & Training Institute;

NATIONAL PROGRAMME ON DAIRY DEVELOPMENT: Strengthen infrastructure for procurement, including cold chains; processing and marketing of milk and milk products;

Increase milk production with farm extension services;

Strengthening Dairy Cooperative Societies / Producers Companies at village levels and assistance in rehabilitation of potentially viable Milk Federations / Unions;

The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) manage Dairy Processing & Infrastructure Development Fund (DIDF) (2017-18 to 2028-29) to boost dairy sector.

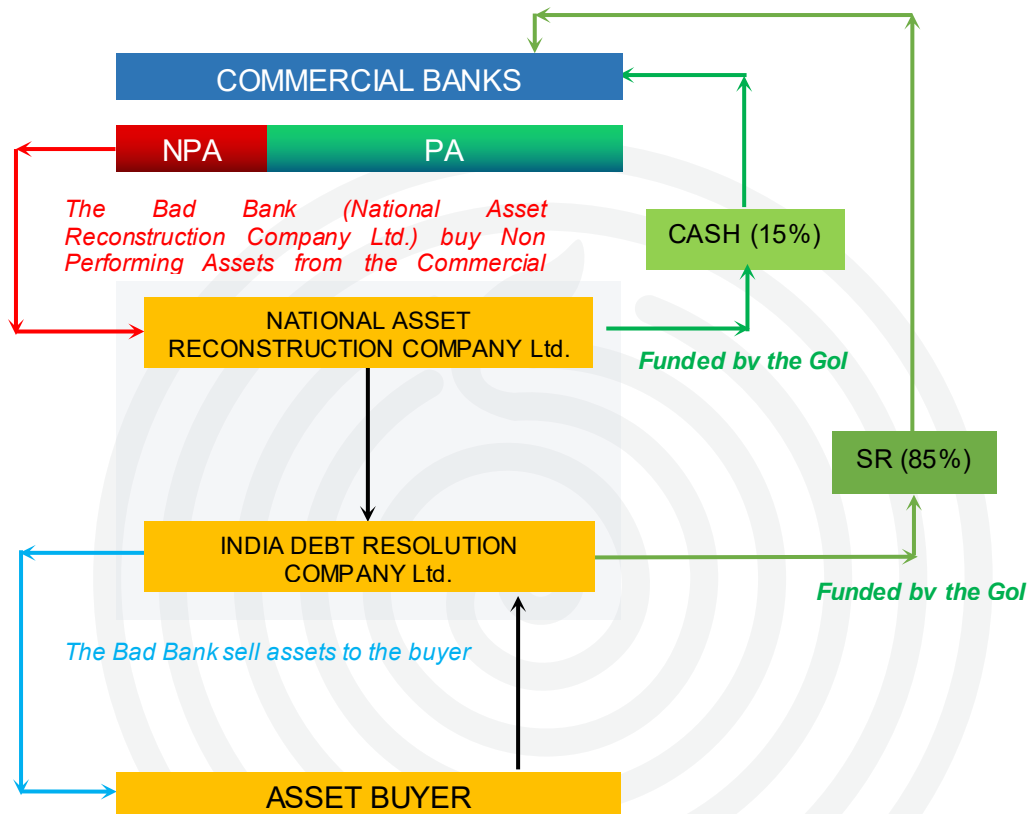
The NABARD manage Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) for financing infrastructure requirement of animal husbandry sector.



ASSET RECONSTRUCTION

CONTEXT: The National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd (NARCL) has acquired its first stressed asset — Jaypee Infratech — from lenders led by IDBI Bank. The NARCL will acquire assets on a 15:85 ratio of cash and security receipts (SRs). SRs, which are issued in favour of the transferring lenders, are secured by a government guarantee for their face value.

“Specialized financial institution that can clean up balance sheets of banks and financial institutions, buying the Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) and helps banks to concentrate on normal banking activities.”



NATIONAL ASSET RECONSTRUCTION COMPANY Ltd

TYPE: Specialized Financial Institution (FI) comprising of an Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC) and an Asset Management Company (AMC).

OBJECTIVE: Manage and recover Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) (bad loans) of 500 Cr. and above.

CATEGORY: Joint initiative of Public and Private sector banks, with majority-stake owned by State-owned banks.

SIGNIFICANCE: Purchase the Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) with proper valuation from banks and financial institutions clearing the balance sheets and helps banks to concentrate on normal banking activities.





NEW T+1 SETTLEMENT CYCLE COMES INTO EFFECT

CONTEXT: India will become the second country in the world after China to start the 'trade-plus-one' (T+1) settlement cycle in top-listed securities.

"Transactions of securities will be reflected in the Demat account after a day. An investor buying a stock on Monday would be shown in the Demat account on Tuesday."

T+1 SETTLEMENT CYCLE

BACKGROUND: Most international markets such as the US, Europe, and Japan are still under the 'T+2' settlement cycle. Since 2017, trade settlements in India used to take place on a 'T+2' basis, securities bought or sold by an investor will reflect in his/her Demat account after a period of 2 days.

SIGNIFICANCE: Migration to a T+1 settlement cycle reduce the number of days for settlement facilitating be more frequent circulation of money, leading to higher trading volumes and providing better liquidity to investors and thereby enhancing trade and participation.

CONCERNS:

INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES: A shift to shorter settlement cycle require upgradation of existing infrastructure of trading operations for brokers, and proper onboarding of Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs), trading from different countries in different time zones.

INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES: Higher volatility in capital markets could pose a contagion risk to the entire trading ecosystem.

TIMELINE

- 1976: T+5 settlement
- 1995: T+3 settlement
- 2017: T+2 settlement
- 2022: T+1 settlement

BENEFITS

- Better operational efficiency
- Faster fund remittances
- Share delivery
- Ease for stock market participants
- Frees up capital required to collateralise the risk
- Reduces the number of outstanding unsettled trades at any point in time

FOREIGN INVESTORS: The United States, United Kingdom and Eurozone markets are yet to move to the T+1 system. Foreign investors operate from different geographies leading to time zone differences, information flow processes, and foreign exchange problems. Foreign investors would find it difficult to hedge their net India exposure in dollar terms at the end of the day under the T+1 system.

UTKARSH 2.0

CONTEXT: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched Utkarsh 2.0, the second edition of RBI's Medium-Term Strategy Framework for strengthening regulatory and supervisory mechanisms.

BACKGROUND: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the central bank of India established under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 is responsible for regulating banks under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) under the RBI Act, 1934. The RBI is also the regulator of the digital payment system under the Payment and Settlement Act, 2007. The RBI launched an initiative Utkarsh to strengthening regulatory and supervisory mechanisms in the banking network.

UTKARSH: The RBI launched Utkarsh, a medium-term strategy in line with the global Central Banks' plan to strengthen the regulatory and supervisory mechanism. Utkarsh 2.0 builds upon the foundation laid by Utkarsh 2022, launched in July 2019 and covered the period from 2019 to 2022. Utkarsh 2.0 will guide the RBI over the period from 2023 to 2025 and includes six vision statements that are designed to improve the performance of the RBI's statutory and other functions, enhance its relevance and significance at the national and global levels, and improve its internal governance, infrastructure, and human resources.

SIX VISION STATEMENTS

EXCELLENCE IN PERFORMANCE OF STATUTORY AND OTHER FUNCTIONS: Improve the statutory and other functions of the RBI to better serve the needs of the Indians and the economy.

STRENGTHENED TRUST OF CITIZENS AND INSTITUTIONS IN THE RBI: Enhance the trust of RBI among citizens and institutions, effectively fulfilling its mandate.

ENHANCED RELEVANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE IN NATIONAL AND GLOBAL ROLES: Improve the relevance and significance of the RBI at the national and global levels, to better contribute to the stability and development of the Indian economy.

TRANSPARENT, ACCOUNTABLE, AND ETHICS-DRIVEN INTERNAL GOVERNANCE: Focus on improving the RBI's internal governance by making it more transparent, accountable, and guided by a strong ethical code.

BEST-IN-CLASS AND ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE: Improve the digital and physical infrastructure of RBI, making it the best-in-class and environmentally friendly.

INNOVATIVE, DYNAMIC, AND SKILLED HUMAN RESOURCES: Improve the quality and capabilities of human resources of RBI, making them more innovative, dynamic, and skilled.



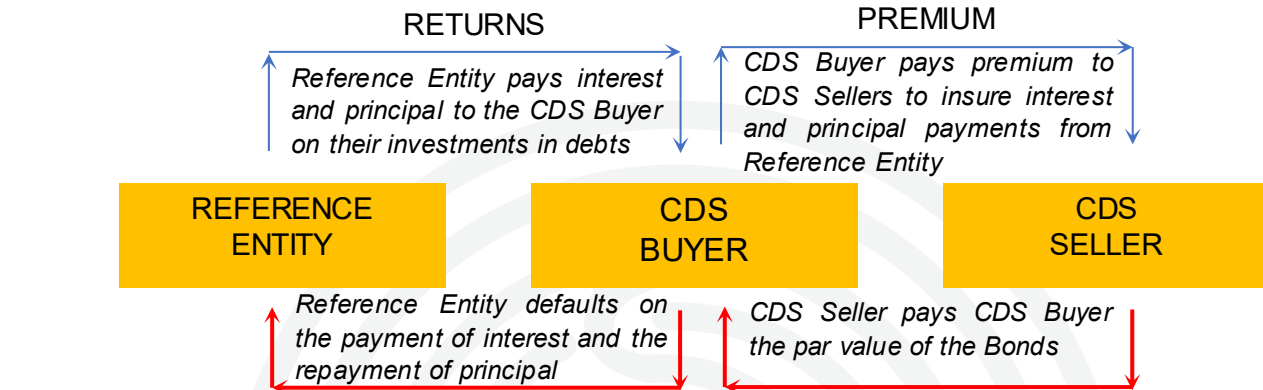
CREDIT DEFAULT SWAPS (CDS)

CONTEXT: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has allowed Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) to participate in Credit Default Swaps (CDS) as protection for both buyers and sellers.

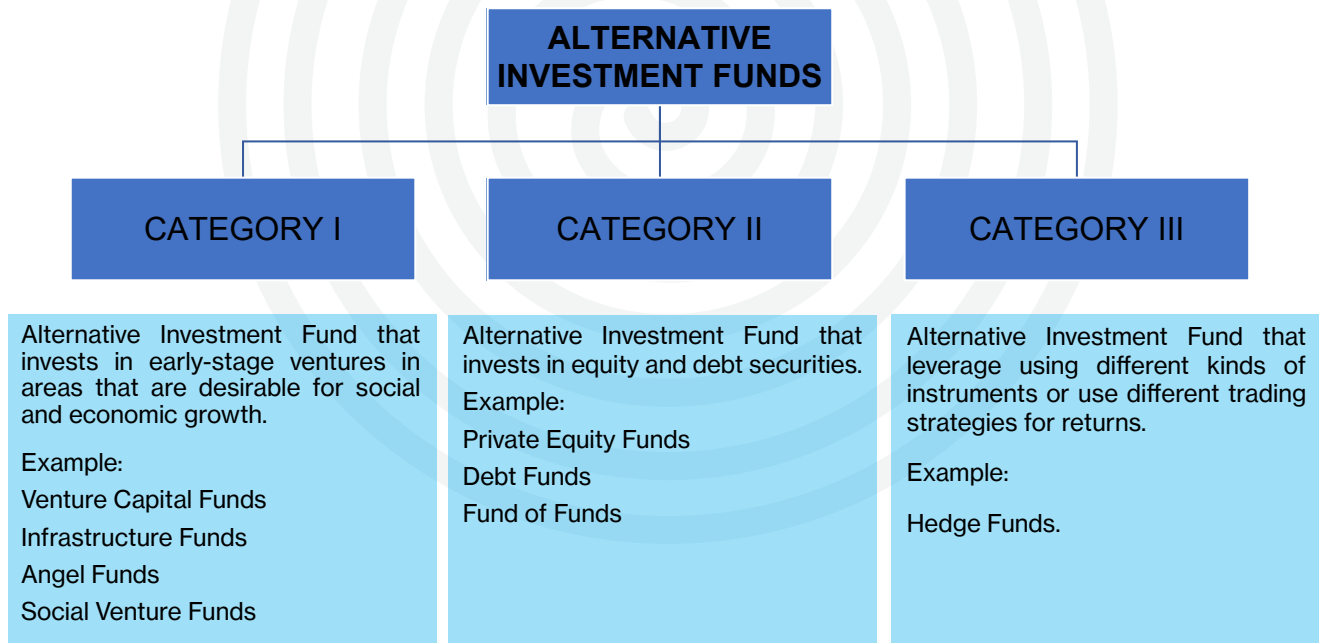
“Contract between two parties in which one party purchases protection from another party against losses from the default of a borrower for a defined period of time. In a CDS, one party sells risk and counter party buys that risk.”

-CREDIT DEFAULT SWAP

HOW CREDIT DEFAULT SWAP WORKS



ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENT FUNDS



PRIVATE EQUITY FIRM: Investment management company that provides financial backing and makes investments in the private equity of startup or operating companies through a variety of loosely affiliated investment strategies including leveraged buyout, venture capital, and growth capital to profit from growing the value of the business through a controlling stake.

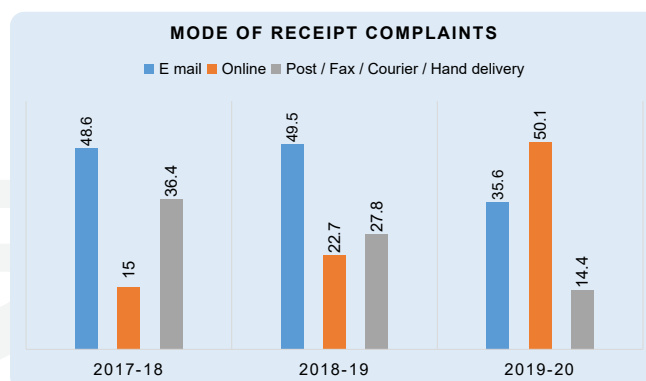
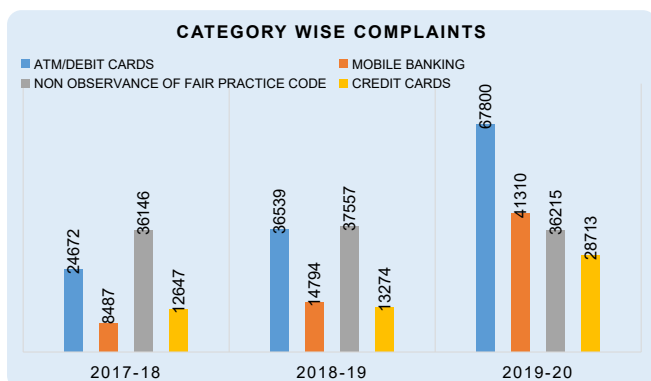
Venture capital is a form of private equity financing provided by Venture Capital Firms or funds to startups, early-stage, and emerging companies that have been deemed to have high growth potential or which have demonstrated high growth.

PRIVATE DEBT: Loans typically made by non-bank investors to companies to finance growth, expand their working capital, or fund real estate development. Institutional investors invest into various private debt instruments / loans to deliver superior risk-adjusted returns vs. savings bonds.

HEDGE FUNDS: A pooled investment fund that trades in relatively liquid assets and is able to make extensive use of more complex trading, portfolio-construction, and risk management techniques in an attempt to improve performance, such as short selling, leverage, and derivatives. Funds that invest money in anything that they believe will make profit – so they try to find profitably returns across all types of market conditions.

RBI INTEGRATED OMBUDSMAN SCHEME

CONTEXT: The complaints received under the Reserve Bank of India's ombudsman schemes and consumer education and protection cells showed an increase of 9.39 % compared to the previous year. Of the total complaints received in 2021-22, about 42 % were related to the digital modes of payment and transactions, according to the annual report of Ombudsman Schemes, 2021-22.



RBI INTEGRATED OMBUDSMAN SCHEME

Banking Ombudsman Scheme, 2006

Ombudsman Scheme for NBFCs, 2018

Ombudsman Scheme of Digital Transactions, 2019

TYPE: Unified Ombudsman Scheme

MANDATE: Provide redress of customer complaints involving deficiency in services rendered by RBI-regulated entities banks, NBFCs (Non-banking Financial Companies) and pre-paid instrument players upon non-resolution of grievances to the satisfaction of the customers or not replied within a period of 30 days by the regulated entity.

POWERS: The RBI Ombudsman have broad powers and act with powers of a Civil Court in the said matter.

Award Compensation

Search Premises

Examine Witness

Constitute Inspection Team

Establish Advisory Committee

CONCLUSION: The RBI Integrated Ombudsman Scheme is likely to serve as a One Stop solution providing comprehensive redressal related to banking transaction grievances. The overall redressal cost would decrease significantly providing affordable solutions to the consumer

ECOLOGY





BAR-HEADED GEESE (70-77)

NILGIRI TAHR CONSERVATION PROJECT

HEAT DOME

NATIONAL GREEN HYDROGEN MISSION

**SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT OF THE OZONE
LAYER DEPLETION: 2022**

NEELAKURINJI

NATIONAL CLEAN AIR PROGRAMME

GIVING TO AMPLIFY EARTH ACTION (GAEA)

OLIVE RIDLEY TURTLES

TAX-PAID GREEN BONDS

HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT



BAR-HEADED GEESE

CONTEXT: *One of world's highest flying birds spotted near Chennai*

ABOUT

They are considered as one of the world's highest flying birds.

This species has two brownish-black bars in the shape of a horseshoe on the rear of its white head and is grey and white overall.

The bill and legs are pink, orange, or yellow, and the body is generally grey.

Plants make up the majority of their diet, with the rare crab or invertebrate.

Location: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Thailand, and Vietnam are among locations where the Bar-Headed Goose can be found.

IUCN: Least concern

CITES: Not listed



NILGIRI TAHR CONSERVATION PROJECT

CONTEXT: *T.N. government sets up Nilgiri Tahr conservation project*

About

The Nilgiri tahr is to be protected through a scheme that is being hailed as the nation's first, according to the Tamil Nadu government.

The 5-year project, worth Rs 25.14 crore, would be carried out between 2022 and 2027.

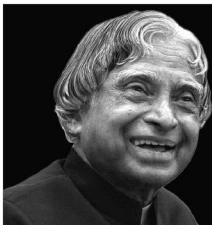
Important highlights of the project

The project would also include a significant portion for habitat restoration.

The restoration of the animal's primary habitat, the shola grasslands, will be prioritized.

The Nilgiri Tahr project aims to address immediate concerns, return Tahrs to their historic habitat, gain a better understanding of the Nilgiri Tahr population through surveys and radio telemetry research, and raise public awareness of the species. The funds for the project are to be provided by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board.

The project will be headed by a Project Director, who will be assisted by an Assistant Director.



You have to dream before your dreams can come true..

- A. P. J. ABDUL KALAM

NILGIRI TAHR

- Species is an endangered mountain ungulate that is only found in the southern Western Ghats.
- The Western Ghats, which are located in the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, contain the species along a 400 kilometre span.
- The animal's predilection for the habitat of grasslands with steep rocky cliff shelters is ascribed to the species' local distribution.
- The Nilgiri tahr can be found in the highest density and largest remaining population in the Eravikulam National Park.

STATUS OF PROTECTION

- Endemic species of the Western Ghats.
- IUCN Status: Endangered Species.
- Wildlife (Protection) Act of India, 1972: Schedule I
- Major Threats
 - Habitat loss and Fragmentation
 - Hydroelectric power projects
 - Competition with domestic livestock.
 - Monoculture plantations
 - Occasional hunting for its meat and skin



HEAT DOME

CONTEXT: Heat dome observed in several countries

About

- Defining in simple words: Consider a summertime water tank that is maintained on the roof. The water warms up as the heat rises, but the tank lid prevents moisture and steam from escaping.
- When the atmosphere seals in warm ocean air like a cap or lid, a heat dome is created.
- Summertime brings scorching weather, which can occasionally be dangerously hot.

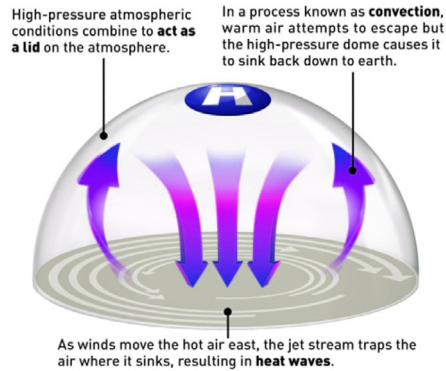
In recent years, extreme heat waves have become increasingly regular. Sometimes, what is known as a heat dome traps the sweltering heat.

- Once the heater is turned on, the pool's areas near the heating jets will warm up more quickly, resulting in a greater temperature there.
- Similar to this, the temperatures of the western Pacific Ocean have risen recently and are now comparatively higher than those of the eastern Pacific.

WE AIM TO INSPIRE



Heat Dome



WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEAT DOMES AND THE JET STREAM?

- The behaviour of the jet stream, a region of swiftly moving air located high in the atmosphere, has an impact on how the heat dome forms.
- The jet stream is thought to move continuously from north to south and then back north in a manner like a wave.
- These waves move slowly and can occasionally become stagnant as they become larger and longer.
- A heat dome develops when a high-pressure system becomes locked in this manner.
- Even though heat domes have probably always existed, researchers believe that climate change may be lengthening and intensifying them.
- They claim that as temperatures rise, it is anticipated that the jet stream would become more erratic and have more deviations, leading to an increase in the frequency of extreme heat events.

NATIONAL GREEN HYDROGEN MISSION

CONTEXT: Cabinet approves National Green Hydrogen Mission

ABOUT

- India wants to become a global hub for the production, use, and export of green hydrogen and its derivatives, according to the mission.
- Mission will aid in India's transition to energy independence and the decarbonisation of key economic sectors.
- Under the Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition Programme (SIGHT), two distinct financial incentive mechanisms – targeting domestic manufacturing of electrolyzers and production of Green Hydrogen – will be provided under the Mission.
- The Mission will also support pilot projects in emerging end-use sectors and production pathways. Regions capable of supporting large scale production and/or utilization of Hydrogen will be identified and developed as Green Hydrogen Hubs.

THE MISSION WILL RESULT IN THE FOLLOWING LIKELY OUTCOMES BY 2030:

- Development of green hydrogen production capacity of at least 5 MMT (Million Metric Ton) per annum with an associated

- renewable energy capacity addition of about 125 GW in the country
- Over Rs. Eight lakh crore in total investments
- Creation of over six lakh jobs
- Cumulative reduction in fossil fuel imports over Rs. One lakh crore
- Abatement of nearly 50 MMT of annual greenhouse gas emissions.

ADVANTAGES OF THE MISSION

- Creation of export opportunities for Green Hydrogen and its derivatives.
- Decarbonisation of industrial, mobility and energy sectors.
- Reduction in dependence on imported fossil fuels and feedstock
- Development of indigenous manufacturing capabilities
- Creation of employment opportunities
- Development of cutting-edge technologies.
- Facilitate demand creation, production, utilization and export of Green Hydrogen.

SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT OF THE OZONE LAYER DEPLETION: 2022

ABOUT

- The 2022 Assessment is the most recent in a line of assessments created under the auspices of the Montreal Protocol in collaboration with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme.
- It was created by the foremost experts in atmospheric sciences in the world (UN Environment).
- The Scientific Assessment Panel has produced a number of significant evaluations as direct input to the Montreal Protocol process, the tenth of which is the 2022 Assessment.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL

- The stratospheric ozone layer is continuing to recover as a result of the Montreal Protocol's actions, which also continues to reduce atmospheric abundances of regulated ODSs.
- Recent research confirm earlier assessments in that the Montreal Protocol's compliance prevents global warming by reducing ODS emissions.



-The Montreal Protocol's actions are still helping the ozone layer recover. The upper stratosphere's ozone recovery is advancing.

-It is predicted that adhering to the Montreal Protocol's 2016 Kigali Amendment, which calls for a phase-down of some hydrofluorocarbons (HFC) production and consumption, will prevent 0.3–0.5°C of warming by 2100.

NEELAKURINJI

CONTEXT: Centre puts Neelakurinji on the list of protected plants

ABOUT

-Ministry: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF)

-Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule III including it on the list of protected plants.

-Kurinji or Neelakurinji, also known by its scientific name *Strobilanthes Kunthiana*, is a flower that grows in the shola woodlands of South India's Western Ghats.

-The plant is so named because it may be found in vast numbers in the Kunthi River, which flows through the Silent Valley National Park in Kerala.

-Kurinji is a plant that was first identified in the 19th century and is a member of the *Strobilanthes* genus in the *Acanthaceae* family.



NATIONAL CLEAN AIR PROGRAMME

CONTEXT: Minimal improvement in air quality in cities under National Clean Air Programme

ABOUT

-Four years since the introduction of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) – India's first national policy on curbing air pollution – air quality has improved in only 49 out of 131 cities in FY 21-22, compared to the previous year, according to a report by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA).

NATIONAL CLEAN AIR PROGRAMME (NCAP)

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

-The program intends to cover in a comprehensive manner with targets to achieve 20% to 30% reduction in Particulate Matter concentrations by 2024 keeping 2017 as the base year for the comparison of concentration.

-Under NCAP, 122 non-attainment cities have been identified across the country based on the Air Quality data from 2014-2018.

-A list of Smart Cities under the Smart Cities Mission, which are non-attainment cities under National Clean Air Program (NCAP), is attached at Annexure-I.

-The city specific action plans have been prepared which, inter-alia, include measures for strengthening the monitoring network, reducing vehicular/industrial emissions, increasing public awareness etc.

-Implementation of the city specific action plans are regularly monitored by Committees at Central and State level namely Steering Committee, Monitoring Committee and Implementation Committee.

-Air quality of cities is monitored by State Pollution Control Boards which publishes their results from time to time.

-Some Smart Cities have established Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs) which are also connected to Air Quality Monitors (AQMs) for effective monitoring.

GIVING TO AMPLIFY EARTH ACTION (GAEA)

CONTEXT: World Economic Forum launches new initiative to tackle climate change

ABOUT

-Initiated by: World Economic Forum.

-Objective: unlock the \$3 trillion of financing needed each year to tackle climate change and nature loss.

-Supported by: more than 45 major philanthropic, public, and private sector partners.

Talk to yourself once in a day, otherwise you may miss meeting an intelligent person in this world

- SWAMI VIVEKANANDA





OLIVE RIDLEY TURTLES

CONTEXT: Mass mortality of Olive Ridley turtles in Godavari region of Andhra Pradesh raises concerns

BACKGROUND: During the ongoing yearly breeding season on the east coast, hundreds of endangered Olive Ridley Turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) have washed ashore along the shoreline between Kakinada and Antarvedi in the Godavari region. Turtles are dying in great numbers at their nesting grounds in Sakhinetipalli, Malikipuram, Mamidikuduru, and Allavaram. The mass extinction of turtles is also attributed to the effluents that are discharged from the aqua ponds along the coast and the discharges from the pipelines of the onshore oil exploration sites. As many as 70 Olive Ridley turtles that have been discovered dead in their nesting habitats between Kakinada and Antarvedi since early January have been seen on camera by a group of residents.

OLIVE RIDLEY TURTLE

- These species of sea turtle found in warm and tropical waters, primarily in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.
- They are known for their mass nesting, known as arribadas, where thousands of females come ashore at the same time to lay eggs.

Protection Status:

- Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Scheduled 1
- IUCN Red List: Vulnerable
- CITES: Appendix I

Significance of Olive Ridley turtle to ecosystem

- The Olive Ridley turtle contributes to the ecosystem's health by assisting in the preservation of the harmony in marine ecosystems.
- Their primary food sources are crabs, shrimp, and mollusks, which serves to regulate their number and keep the food web in balance. They assist in spreading the seeds of the plants they eat by acting as seed dispersers.
- By supplying food for numerous creatures including ghost crabs, lizards, and birds, their arribadas mass nesting behavior also contributes to the maintenance of the beach ecosystems. Predators including raccoons, skunks, and coatis also eat the eggs and hatchlings.
- Since olive ridley turtles are regarded as indicator species, their presence or absence might reveal information about the state of the environment. Therefore, preserving them contributes to maintaining the ecosystem's overall health.

TAX-PAID GREEN BONDS

CONTEXT: The federal power ministry of India has suggested enabling select power financing firms to issue tax-paid green bonds in order to raise less expensive capital for lending to green projects.

BACKGROUND: Power Finance Corp (PFC), REC Ltd, and Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) may be able to raise capital through tax-paid bonds, where the issuer pays the bond's principal and interest rather than the investor and often receives better returns. India wants to increase the number of investors in order to generate 500 gigawatts of non-fossil energy by 2030 and attain carbon neutrality by 2070. The Government of India (GoI) will benefit from the issuing of Sovereign Green Bonds by being able to attract the necessary funding from potential investors for use in public sector projects targeted at lowering the economy's carbon intensity.

According to the Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI), green debt securities are developed to finance projects that have favourable environmental and/or climate benefits, according to the written response. These bonds' earnings are designated for environmental projects.

Green debt securities are defined as debt securities issued for raising funds that are to be used for project(s) and/or asset(s) falling under any of the following categories, subject to the conditions as may be specified by the Board from time to time

Why green bonds are important to India?

-Climate change: India is one of the nation's most at risk from its impacts, which include a rise in the frequency and severity of natural disasters as well as the level of the oceans. Projects that reduce these consequences, such those involving renewable energy and sustainable water management, can be financed with the aid of green bonds.

according to the SEBI (Issue and Listing of Non-Convertible Securities) Regulations:

- Renewable and sustainable energy including wind, solar, bioenergy, other sources of energy which use clean technology,
- Clean transportation including mass/public transportation,
- Sustainable water management including clean and/or drinking water, water recycling,
- Climate change adaptation,
- Energy efficiency including efficient and green buildings,
- Sustainable waste management including recycling, waste to energy, efficient disposal of wastage,
- Sustainable land use including sustainable forestry and agriculture, afforestation
- Biodiversity conservation, or
- A category as may be specified by the Board, from time to time.
- Energy transition: In order to fulfil its commitment to the Paris Agreement, India is trying to increase the proportion of renewable energy in its power mix. These projects may be financed with the help of green bonds.
- Investments in green projects can help India experience sustained economic growth. It can contribute to job growth, better public health, and greater energy security.



-Financial inclusion: In India, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and microfinance institutions can both find capital from green bonds. Green bonds can fill in the gaps where regular financial sources are inaccessible to these groups.

-Align with government priorities: India has lofty goals for decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing the use of renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency.

By serving as a source of funding for initiatives that are in line with these goals, green bonds can aid in the achievement of these goals.

Overall, green bonds could be extremely important in India's transformation to a low-carbon, sustainable economy. They could also help India's green projects draw in foreign investment.

HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT

CONTEXT: Odisha comes up with comprehensive strategy to mitigate human-elephant conflict

BACKGROUND: To sustain a long-term viable population of 1700–1800 elephants in the State, the Odisha government has developed a “comprehensive action plan for conservation of elephants and mitigation of human–elephant conflict” using a zonation method.

Three elephant reserves make up the “Elephant Conservation Zone,” which is Zone I. The State Forest and Environment Department will provide rigorous protection, guarantee that there will be no change in the way the land is used, enhance the habitat's quality, and maintain the ideal number of elephants there throughout the year.

With the aim of increasing habitat quality and viability, decreasing conflict, discouraging destructive land use, promoting scientific eco-restoration of degraded forests, and encouraging wildlife-friendly land use, Zone II will be treated as a coexistence zone. This will encourage elephants to stay in these areas for an entire year.

Zone III will be a Conflict Mitigation Zone where actions will be done to minimise human and elephant mortality, reduce conflict through short-term methods, and maintain

a minimum viable number of elephants in accordance with social carrying capacity. Elephants won't be allowed in Zone IV. The stray jumbos in this area must be apprehended and immediately relocated to designated areas.

HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT IN INDIA

Every year, 100 humans (in some years it may be 300 people) and 40-50 elephants are killed during crop raiding in India. (Credit: WWF)

Elephant habitat is being lost and fragmented, which pushes them to interact with human settlements in search of food and water, which leads to the conflict. Elephants may therefore harm crops, property, and occasionally even injure or kill people.

Conflict between humans and elephants is a complicated issue that calls for a multidisciplinary approach as well as active participation from the government, local people, NGOs, and conservation groups. Reducing the incidence and severity of HEC in India requires addressing habitat loss and enhancing the accessibility of food and water supplies for elephants in their natural habitats.



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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY





**NEW TECH FILTER MICRO PLASTICS
WITH MINIMAL ENERGY**

INDIAN SCIENCE CONGRESS (ISC)

DRAFT RULES FOR ONLINE GAMING

**INDIA'S FIRST GREEN HYDROGEN
BLENDING OPERATION IN PNG
NETWORK**

**NEW ELECTROLYTE FOR BETTER
AMMONIA SYNTHESIS**

VIROVORE

**INDIAN TELEGRAPH
(INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY) RULES
2022**

AAMANTRAN PORTAL

**INDIA'S FIRST 5G-ENABLED DRONE,
SKYHAWK**



NEW TECH FILTER MICRO PLASTICS WITH MINIMAL ENERGY

CONTEXT: South Korean researchers have created a novel water filtration device that can swiftly and effectively remove micro plastics.

BACKGROUND: South Korean scientists have created a new water filtration device that can swiftly and effectively remove micro plastics. In one trial, in just 10 seconds, more than 99.9% of the pollutants were removed from the water. In one trial, more than 99.9% of the pollutants were eliminated from the water in under ten seconds. The Korean team's innovative water purifying technology uses less energy, making it suitable for use with solar power. For agricultural countries with erratic power supplies, this is very helpful.

ABOUT MICRO PLASTICS: Micro plastics are tiny plastic particles measuring less than 5mm in length. They are found in a variety of products including cosmetics, toothpaste, and clothing, and can also be a result of larger plastic items breaking down into smaller pieces. Micro plastics are a significant environmental concern as they can be ingested by marine life, potentially causing harm to their health, and can also end up in our food supply. They are also hard to filter out of water using traditional methods. Therefore, the development of a new water purification system that can efficiently remove micro plastics would be a significant advancement in addressing this issue.

Significance of the Current Technology:

-Ecological impact: A variety of creatures, such as fish, birds, and turtles, can become ill or even die after ingesting micro plastics. They can also take up hazardous contaminants, which can affect larger animals and even people if they are transmitted up the food chain.

-Micro plastic contamination of water sources can make them unfit for irrigation and drinking.

-Micro plastics in the soil can have a detrimental effect on plant growth and biodiversity.

-Aesthetics: Micro plastic pollution can be ugly and have a detrimental effect on local tourism and recreational activities.

-Impact on local economies: Micro plastics can harm the fishing and tourism sectors, which can have a considerable negative effect on the local economy.

COMMON USAGE OF MICRO PLASTICS:

-They serve as exfoliates in toothpaste and other cosmetic and personal care products.

-They are utilized as abrasive additives in washing machines to boost cleaning power in the textile industry.

-Packaging: To protect food and other products, micro plastics are utilized as a packaging material.

-Micro plastics are utilized in agriculture as a fertilizer and soil conditioner.

-Medical: Drugs and vaccinations are transported using micro plastics.

-Industrial: In a variety of industrial applications, micro plastics serve as lubricants, insulators, and coolants.

INDIAN SCIENCE CONGRESS (ISC)

CONTEXT: The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed the 108th Indian Science Congress (ISC) via video conferencing.

BACKGROUND: "Science and Technology for Sustainable Development with Women Empowerment" is the main theme of this year's ISC. Discussions about women's empowerment, sustainable development, and the role of science and technology in attaining these goals will take place. The attendees will debate and discuss ways to give women equitable access to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education, research possibilities, and economic engagement, as well as measures to boost the number of women in higher echelons of teaching, research, and industry. There will also be a unique programme to highlight the contributions of women in science and technology, which will feature lectures from well-known female scientists.

INDIAN SCIENCE CONGRESS ASSOCIATION (ISCA)

-Two British chemists, Professors J. L. Simonsen and P. S. MacMahon, had the foresight and initiative that led to the creation of the Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA).

-They had the idea that if a yearly gathering of researchers could be organised, like to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, it might encourage scientific research in India.

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*Time will not pause or tarry on his way,
Today that seems so long, so strange, so bitter,
Will soon be forgotten yesterday.*

- SAROJINI NAIDU





DRAFT RULES FOR ONLINE GAMING

CONTEXT: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology released draft amendments to the IT intermediary rules 2021, pertaining to Online Gaming for public consultations.

HIGHLIGHTS: The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Guidelines, 2021, have been amended to include the proposed rules, which aim to protect users from any potential harm from skill-based games. The goal is to regulate online gambling platforms as middlemen and subject them to strict due diligence standards.

Among the most important recommendations in the draught regulations for online gambling are the creation of a self-regulatory body, required know-your-customer criteria for verification, and a grievance redressal mechanism. Only games approved by the agency will be able to legally function in India, and online games would need to register with a self-regulatory authority. According to the proposed regulations, online gaming Organisations will not be permitted to place bets on the results of games.

Five directors from a variety of professions, including online gaming, public policy, IT, psychology, and medicine will make up the board of the self-regulatory agency. It must make sure that the registered games don't contain anything that is detrimental to India's sovereignty and integrity, defence, security, friendly relations with other countries, or public order, or that encourages the commission of any crimes related to the aforementioned.

Online gambling companies will be obliged to carry out additional due diligence, similar to an intermediary, such as user KYC, transparent money withdrawal and refund, and a fair distribution of wins. They must adhere to the KYC guidelines established for firms under Reserve Bank of India regulation (RBI).

Online gaming industry in India: Online gambling generated \$1.2 billion in revenue in 2021, a 28% increase, and \$1.9 billion is predicted by 2024. The gaming sector is on the verge of experiencing exponential growth, and it is projected to expand by 20–30% by FY23 and reach INR 380 billion by 2026.

With 130 million users, India has the largest fantasy sports market. At 40% in 2020 and reaching 50% in 2021, India has experienced the world's highest growth in the percentage of new paying users (NPU) in the gaming industry.

Real Money Games attracted over \$700 million of the \$1.6 billion in investment and M&A received between January and September 2021. Game 24X7, Dream11, and Mobile Premier League are three unicorns in the gaming industry that came from India.

Why regulation in Online Gaming is important in India?

-Protection of the consumer: In the absence of adequate rules, online gaming may be subject to fraud, money laundering, and other criminal activities. Regulation would guarantee a fair and open gaming environment while also helping to safeguard customers from such practices.

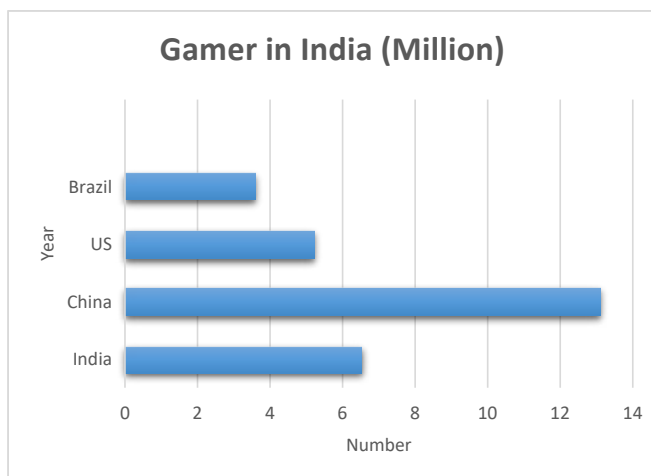
-Defending the weak: Children and problem gamblers may experience harmful impacts from online gaming due to its addictive nature. By establishing age restrictions, instituting responsible gambling policies, and offering resources to those who may have a gambling problem, regulation would serve to safeguard these vulnerable people.

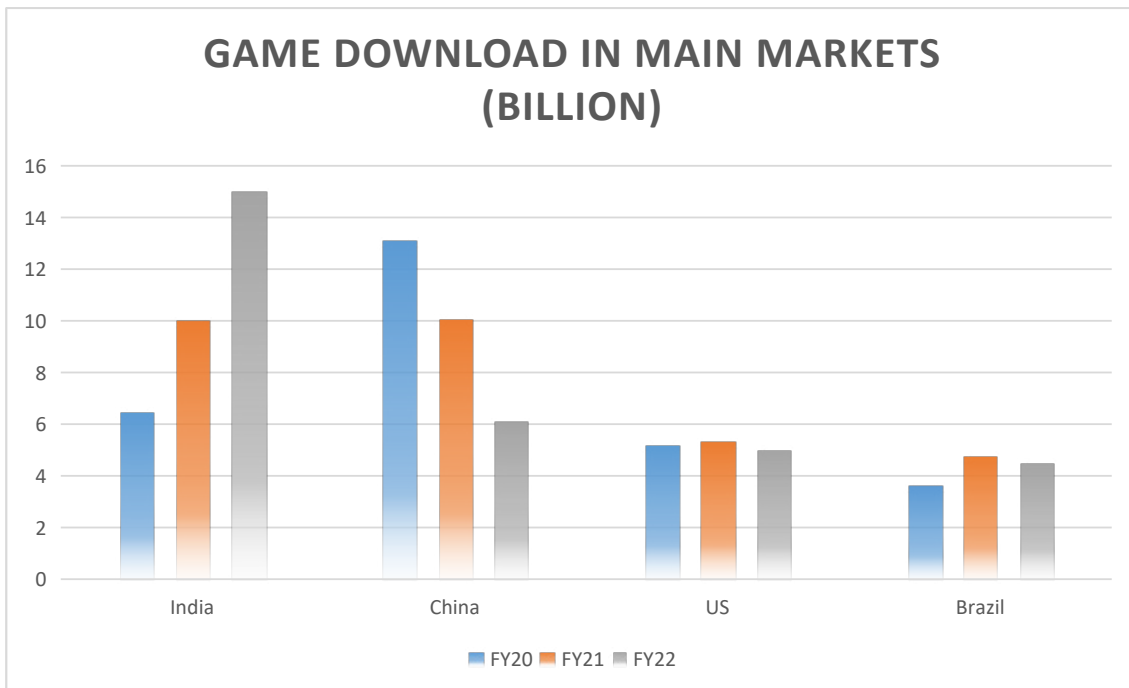
-Taxation: Online gaming generates a considerable amount of revenue, and with proper regulation, the government would be able to recoup taxes on that revenue for the benefit of the general public.

-Preventing illicit activity: Illegal operations like money laundering, tax evasion, and organized crime can use online gaming as a tool. By requiring online gaming providers to follow anti-money laundering and other regulations, regulation would aid in the prevention of these criminal acts.

-Legalizing and legitimizing the sector: The online gaming sector is expanding quickly, and effective regulation would help to legitimize and legalise it, increasing its accountability and transparency.

-Defending the domestic market: In the absence of regulation, foreign-based online gaming companies may seize a bigger market share, which would be detrimental to the expansion of the domestic gaming business.





Data Source: Lumikai

INDIA'S FIRST GREEN HYDROGEN BLENDING OPERATION IN PNG NETWORK

CONTEXT: India's first green hydrogen blending project is launched by NTPC Ltd. The NTPC Kawas Township on Surat's piped natural gas (PNG) network has begun blending green hydrogen. The project is a collaboration between Gujarat Gas Limited and NTPC (GGL).

BACKGROUND: The project is a collaboration between Gujarat Gas Limited and NTPC (GGL). After the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone on July 30, 2022, NTPC and GGL worked tirelessly to reach this milestone in record time. This system is ready to provide residents in the Kawas Township in Adityanagar, Surat, with H₂-NG (natural gas). In Kawas, water is electrolyzed to create green hydrogen using energy from an existing 1 MW floating solar project. The regulatory agency, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB), has authorised the initial 5% vol/vol blending of green hydrogen with PNG. The blending level will be increased gradually until it reaches 20%.

SIGNIFICANCE OF GREEN HYDROGEN IN INDIA:

-Clean Energy: Meeting India's expanding energy needs while also lowering greenhouse gas emissions is a difficult task. By offering a clean, renewable energy source that can be applied in a variety of ways, green hydrogen can assist to alleviate this problem.

-Transportation: Green hydrogen can be used as a zero-emission fuel for vehicles, assisting India in lowering emissions from this industry, which is a significant source of the nation's air pollution.

-Green hydrogen can also be employed as a kind of energy storage, enabling India to more effectively incorporate renewable energy sources into its electrical system.

-Industries: By using green hydrogen as an energy source for industrial activities like the production of steel and cement, India can lower emissions from its heavy industries.

-Job creation: Establishing a green hydrogen sector in India could boost employment and the nation's economy.

India is highly reliant on imported oil and gas, and the development of green hydrogen could lessen this reliance and provide energy security.

Green Hydrogen

-A type of hydrogen known as "green hydrogen" is created by harnessing renewable energy sources like sun, wind, or hydroelectricity.

-Because there are no greenhouse gas emissions during the production process, it is regarded as a "green" or clean energy source.

-By electrolyzing water to separate its hydrogen and oxygen, green hydrogen can be created. The electrolysis, which separates the hydrogen atoms from the oxygen atoms throughout this process, is powered by electricity generated from renewable energy sources.

-Green hydrogen has a wide range of possible applications, including as an industrial process energy source, a clean energy storage option, and a zero-emission fuel for transportation. Additionally, it can be utilised as a feedstock to create synthetic fuels as well as ammonia and other compounds.

-Given that it may aid in lowering greenhouse gas emissions in a number of industries and power production sectors, including transportation, industry, and industry, green hydrogen is seen as a crucial part of the transition to a low-carbon economy.

By 2030, the Indian government wants to generate 40% of its installed electrical capacity from non-fossil fuels; hydrogen has been highlighted as a key component of this strategy. However, the development of green hydrogen in India is still in its infancy, and additional investments in infrastructure, research, and development are required to make it scalable and affordable.



NEW ELECTROLYTE FOR BETTER AMMONIA SYNTHESIS

CONTEXT: It has been discovered that a fresh aqueous electrolyte can aid in the electrochemical production of ammonia. A novel electrolyte that serves as a “co-catalyst” for the creation of ammonia as well as a nitrogen transporter.

BACKGROUND: The insufficient solubility of nitrogen (N₂) in the aqueous electrolyte environment and the competitive hydrogen evolution process are the main constraints on the electrochemical ammonia production. The difficulty was that N₂ reduction had actually taken place in the aqueous media. The “ambient” circumstances are generally disregarded in an effort to address these problems. The development of catalysts is the main focus of research, while electrolyte improvisation is still in its infancy. A recent study found that just 4.7% of research projects on electrolytes were connected to the Nitrogen Reduction Reaction (NRR), with 90.7% of those projects focusing on developing acceptable catalysts.

NEW DISCOVERY: In order to produce high yields of ammonia (NH₃) under completely ambient experimental conditions, scientists have developed a new electrolyte called (NaBF₄) that not only serves as a N₂-carrier in the medium but also functions as a full-fledged “co-catalyst” in conjunction with the active material transition metal-doped Nano carbon (MnN₄).

The electrochemical reduction of the gaseous N₂ that has been purged (make the electrolyte N₂ saturated to convert N₂ to NH₃) is the primary source of NH₃, which has been fully investigated and proven. The high generation rate of NH₃ exceeded practically all typical catalysts in any other electrolyte media and was on an industrial scale.

AMMONIA

- Properties: Colorless, pungent-smelling gas that is composed of nitrogen and hydrogen atoms.
- It is a naturally occurring compound that is found in trace amounts in the Earth’s atmosphere, and is also produced by living organisms, such as plants and animals.
- Industrial Production: Haber-Bosch process, which uses high temperatures and pressures to combine nitrogen from the air with hydrogen derived from natural gas.
- Uses: Fertilizer, Refrigeration, Clean Energy, Industrial Chemicals and Medicine

VIROVORE

CONTEXT: According to researchers, the first known “virovore”—an organism that consumes viruses—has been discovered. John DeLong, a microbiologist from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the United States, and his colleagues made the discovery.

DISCOVERY: Researchers discovered that a species of Halteria, tiny ciliates that live worldwide in freshwater, may consume large quantities of contagious chloroviruses. Nucleic acids, a lot of nitrogen, and phosphorus make up their composition. They should be desirable to all creatures. There are so many creatures that will consume anything they can. DeLong and his team took pond water samples, extracted several microorganisms, and then introduced a lot of chlorovirus, a freshwater resident that infects green algae, to test the theory. The scientists monitored the population sizes of the viruses and the other bacteria over the following few days to see whether the latter were consuming the former.

VIRUS PATHOGENS

- They are contagious organisms made of genetic material (DNA or RNA) encased in a protein shell.
- Since they are unable to reproduce or maintain metabolism on their own, they are not regarded as living entities.
- To multiply and spread disease, they must infect host cells.
- Pathogenic viral types: There are numerous varieties of virus pathogens, including DNA viruses and RNA viruses (such as coronaviruses, influenza, and HIV) (such as herpesviruses, hepatitis B and C, and HPV).
- Prevention: Vaccinations, hygienic behaviours including routine hand washing, and avoiding close contact with diseased people are all examples of prevention techniques.

INDIAN TELEGRAPH (INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY) RULES 2022

CONTEXT: The Indian Telegraph (Infrastructure Safety) Rules 2022 were created by the Department of Telecommunications under the Ministry of Communications. Digital infrastructure and services are becoming more and more important factors of a nation’s development and prosperity.

The Salient features of these rules are: (Credit: PIB)

-Any person wishes to exercise a legal right to dig or excavate any property which is likely to cause damage to a telegraph infrastructure shall give notice to the licensee, prior to commencement, through common portal.

-The information shall include the name and address of the person exercising the legal, agency details, contact details, date and time of start of the exercise, description and location of the exercise, and the reasons for such dealing.

-The licensee shall, as expeditiously as possible, provide through the common portal, the details of telegraph infrastructure owned/ controlled/ managed by them, falling under/ over/ along the property with which the person intends to deal, along with precautionary measures for coordination in avoiding damages to the telegraph infrastructure.

-Excavators/utility asset owners will be given alerts via SMS, email and in-app notification and will also have the facility of ‘Click to call’ from the app itself.



-In case no licensee provides details within the prescribed time, the person having legal right to dig or excavate shall be free to dig or excavate the property thereafter.

-Further, any person, who has dug/excavated any property causing damage to a telegraph infrastructure, shall be liable to pay the damage charges to the telegraph authority. The damage charges shall be computed based on such expenses as may be incurred in restoring damages.

-Once the asset owner agencies map their underlying assets with GIS coordinates on PM GatiShakti NMP platform, it will also be possible to know the presence of underlying utility assets, at the point of interest, before start of excavation.

History of Telegraph in India: India has had telegraph service from the middle of the 19th century. The first telegraph line in India was built in 1850 along a 30-mile stretch between Calcutta (now Kolkata) and Diamond Harbor. In the beginning, telegraph lines were built by the East India

Company, which at the time served as the British colonial administration in India, to enhance communication among its many administrative hubs. In the 1850s and 1860s, lines were established between important cities like Calcutta, Bombay (now Mumbai), and Madras to further extend India's telegraph network (now Chennai).

The Indian Telegraph Department, which was in charge of running and maintaining telegraph lines, was established in 1853 when the British Government took over telegraph operations in India from the East India Company. The Indian telegraph network grew further in the late 19th and early 20th century as new lines were constructed to link the nation's outlying regions. With the development of new technologies like the Morse code system and the usage of submarine cables to connect India to other nations, the telegraph system was also upgraded. The Indian Telegraph Act, passed in 1885, established a state monopoly over telegraph services and called for the nationalization of telegraphs.

AAMANTRAN PORTAL

CONTEXT: *Raksha Rajya Mantri launched an online invitation management portal as part of the government's e-governance drive to offer e-Invitations to dignitaries/guests and Online Sale of Tickets to the general public for viewing Republic Day and Independence Day celebrations going forward.*

PORTAL: The portal offers the option for dignitaries and their visitors to receive online passes as well as the ability for the general public to buy tickets online from anywhere in the world. The Aamantran portal will make the procedure user- and environmentally-friendly and fill the gap between the people and the government. The portal is a significant development for the "Digital India" effort and a step toward the Prime Minister's e-governance paradigm, which is focused on simple, efficient, affordable, and environmentally friendly government. The portal is a component of the government's commitment to ensuring every person has an easy way of life, with the addition that "Digital India" and "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance" are bringing the two together.

The Aamantran portal has following features:

- QR code-based authentication for enhanced security.
- Digital delivery of passes/tickets through emails/SMS.
- Non-cancellable and non-transferrable tickets.
- RSVP option for passes to seek acceptance from invitees
- Post Event Data Analytics for better management of the future events.

E-GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

-Launched in 2015, the flagship initiative known as "Digital India" aims to turn India into a knowledge-based society and economy.

-E-District: Using a single site, the e-District project intends to offer district-level government services.

-E-Panchayat: Using a shared platform, the e-Panchayat initiative aims to offer e-governance services at the village level.

-National e-Governance Plan (NeGP): Introduced in 2006, the NeGP seeks to provide citizens with access to all government services through a single portal.

-BharatNet: Established in 2011, BharatNet is a government-sponsored initiative with the goal of providing high-speed broadband internet to all gramme panchayats (village councils) in India.

-India Stack is a collection of APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) that enables developers, businesses, and the government to create services on top of a shared set of data. This covers products like e-sign, digital lockers, and digital identities (Aadhar).

-A single app called UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) allows users to access a variety of services offered by the Indian Government. Citizens can access a number of services through UMANG, including services for passports, PAN cards, income tax returns, and many more government functions.

INDIA'S FIRST 5G-ENABLED DRONE, SKYHAWK

CONTEXT: *The Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology (VSSUT) campus in Sambalpur, Odisha, gave rise to the startup company IG Drones, which has created a 5G-enabled drone with vertical takeoff and landing capabilities.*

BACKGROUND: These drones can be operated with much greater precision and can be directly controlled from the command centre rather than being on the field thanks to Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) that are offering 5G services across the nation.

It doesn't require a conventional runway because it can VTOL (vertical take-off and land) from any terrain. According to the business, drones may be used to monitor border intrusion as well as during routine military patrols when thermal imaging and artificial intelligence are included.

It has an IP67 rating and can be operated via a combination of NavIC and GPS satellites, which stay in contact at a higher altitude between 50 and 60 in the event of failsafe activation.

Drone industry in India: The draught drone policy, which outlines the rules and procedures for drone use in India, was made public by the Indian government in 2018. The policy intends to promote the development of the drone sector while also offering a safe and secure environment for the usage of drones. In India,



civil aviation is governed by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), which has also created regulations for drone use there. These regulations cover drone certification and registration requirements as well as restrictions on where drones may be flown.

The Drone Rules, 2021

Classification of unmanned aircraft systems. The unmanned aircraft system shall, based on the maximum all-up weight including payload, be classified as follows:

- Nano unmanned aircraft system: weighing less than or equal to 250 grams;
- Micro unmanned aircraft system: weighing more than 250 grams, but less than or equal to Two kilograms;
- Small unmanned aircraft system: weighing more than Two kilograms, but less than or equal to 25 kilograms;
- Medium unmanned aircraft system: weighing more than 25 kilograms, but less than or equal to 150 kilograms.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DRONES IN INDIA

- Drones can be used in agriculture to map, monitor, and spray crops. Farmers may be able to enhance agricultural yields as a result, cut costs, and run their businesses more effectively.
- Logistics: Drones can be used to transport and deliver items.

This can improve the speed and effectiveness of delivery while also saving businesses money and time on transportation expenditures.

- Drones can be used for surveying to map, 3D model, and evaluate infrastructure like bridges, roads, and buildings. In addition to enhancing worker safety, this can assist businesses and governments in saving time and money on surveying and inspection chores.
- Drones can be utilized in search and rescue missions as well as disaster relief efforts in the emergency services sector.
- Drones can be used for infrastructure monitoring and repair, such as on electricity lines and pipelines, which can increase safety, cut down on downtime, and save costs.
- Defense and security: Drones can be used for intelligence collecting, reconnaissance, and surveillance, which can help to safeguard public safety and national security.
- Drones can be used to monitor and safeguard forests, wildlife, and other natural resources for environmental preservation.

In India, a number of industries have the potential to undergo a revolution thanks to drones, which can boost productivity, reduce costs, and raise security. The Indian government has announced a number of policy initiatives to support the development of the drone market there, but the sector still faces significant obstacles before it can realize its full potential.

BHAROS

CONTEXT: Union Minister for Communications, Electronics and Information Technology and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan tested 'BharOS' an indigenous operating system developed by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras.

ABOUT OPERATION SYSTEM: The BharOS is an operating system built on the Android Open Source Project and created by JandK Operations Private Limited. IIT Madras served as the incubator for the nonprofit organisation The JandKops. BharOS is a brand-new mobile operating system that prioritises security and privacy. A mobile operating system, such as Android by Google or iOS by Apple, is a piece of software that serves as the main user interface on a smartphone. A free and open-source operating system (OS) for use in governmental and public systems is being created as part of the BharOS project, which is being supported by the Indian government.

There are no pre-loaded apps with this mobile OS. Customers will obtain the most of the storage space, unlike Android, where OEMs give the phone with certain native and pre-installed Google apps. If one uses BharOS, they won't be forced to use programmes they might not be comfortable or knowledgeable with. Additionally, customers will have access to dependable programmes through Organization Specific Private App Store Services via the OS (PASS). The developers claim that PASS gives users access to a carefully curated collection of apps that have passed strict testing and meet the organization's privacy and security standards. By knowing that the programmes they download are safe, users can feel comfortable.

IMMUNE IMPRINTING

CONTEXT: The researchers of investigations came to the conclusion that immunological imprinting may be the cause of the observed inefficiency of bivalent or variant-specific boosters.

BACKGROUND: Variant-specific or bivalent boosters have been introduced in nations including the UK and the US with the belief that they may offer superior protection against coronavirus infection compared to the original vaccine. Numerous recent research suggest that immunological imprinting, a characteristic in our bodies, may be rendering these new boosters much less effective than anticipated. Bivalent boosters, which are designed to protect against both the Omicron strains and the original Covid-19 strain, weren't shown to produce noticeably more antibody responses than an additional dose of the original mRNA vaccines, according to two papers that were published earlier in January in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM).

IMMUNE IMPRINTING: When exposed to a newer or somewhat different form of the same pathogen, the body has a tendency to repeat its immune response depending on the initial variant it encountered through infection or vaccination. This phenomenon is known as immunological imprinting.

According to a publication in the journal Nature, the phenomenon was first noticed in 1947 when researchers discovered that "patients who had previously had flu, and were then immunized against the current circulating strain, developed antibodies against the original type they had seen." Imprinting is now a common name for what was once called the "initial antigenic sin."

CSAT





COMPREHENSION



COMPREHENSION

Directions: Read the passage given below and then answer the questions given below the passage. Some words may be highlighted for your attention. Pay careful attention

The aisles at Lotte Mart in Beijing's Wangjing district were strangely quiet early this week. A few elderly shoppers pushed trolleys; shop assistants tidied the super market's shelves. Customers have been scarce since "something happened" a few weeks ago, says one cashier. That event was a deal signed on February 28th by Lotte, a South Korean firm, allowing America to build an anti-missile system on land the company owns in South Korea. China's government has responded by encouraging an outpouring of public anger directed not just at Lotte, whose shops in China are now being boycotted, but almost anything South Korean.

Nationalism is a familiar weapon in China's diplomatic armoury. The last time the government made such a sustained effort to whip it up was in 2012, shortly before Xi Jinping came to power, when officials encouraged protests against Japan's nationalisation of islands it controls in the East China Sea that are also claimed by China. South Korea is not a usual target. But China is furious at its decision to deploy the missile-defence system, known as THAAD (the first components of which arrived in South Korea on March 6th). America says THAAD will help defend the peninsula against North Korea. China says America will use the system's powerful radar to "snoop" on its missiles too, reducing their potency as a deterrent.

In recent weeks, state media have been publishing daily attacks on South Korea's "erroneous decision". The Global Times, a jingoistic newspaper in Beijing, has encouraged Chinese consumers to "become the main force in teaching Seoul a lesson". It said they should "make it hurt".

Censors often try to rein in online discussion when it threatens to boil over into real-world protests. But they are allowing netizens to vent rage at South Korea. One group of online nationalists called on "all patriots to unite and show South Korea what we can do". A famous beauty blogger exhorted the 2.7m followers of her microblog to boycott goods from the country and not to travel to it. A patriotic pop-song has been played more than 3.5m times since its release on March 8th. It includes the lyrics: "Chinese sons and daughters must stand up; everybody, stop buying Lotte; make them get out of China fast."

Lotte owns about 100 supermarkets in China, as well as other businesses. They have been badly hit. The company has been subjected to sudden and simultaneous tax and safety inspections. Ten of its shops have been shut for violating fire codes. The website of Lotte Duty Free crashed after a cyber-attack. Several e-commerce sites have stopped selling Lotte's goods and some suppliers have ceased doing business with the company.

The tourism industry has also been disrupted. South Korea is normally a popular destination, but many Chinese travel agencies have recently reduced or halted trips there (seemingly on the government's orders). Others have been warning customers that it is dangerous to go. Airlines from both countries have been reducing services. On March 11th about 3,000 Chinese tourists refused to leave their ship when it docked at the South Korean resort of Jeju, apparently in protest against THAAD.

But China's leaders worry about any popular movement that does not involve the Communist Party—even one that is led by nationalists who profess to be on the government's side. Mr Xi, despite his own nationalist rhetoric, has been wary of letting passions flare too high. Officials tried to dampen them last year when a tribunal in The Hague rejected China's claims in the South China Sea. Only a few small protests erupted. The party's main mouthpiece, the People's Daily, praised the public's low-key response at the time as evidence of a "brand-new level of patriotism".

In the case of THAAD, the government clearly believes that a more heated public response may persuade South Korea's next president, who is due to be chosen in May, to reconsider its deployment. But officials are still anxious. There were more police outside Wangjing's Lotte Mart this week than customers inside. Some dozed in vans, waiting in case of trouble.

A protest against South Korea on March 5th in the north-eastern city of Jilin conveyed a hint of what the government fears: that protesters may use displays of patriotism to vent other grievances. Some demonstrators in Jilin carried portraits of Mao Zedong (pictured). Despite appearances, these do not necessarily suggest agreement with the party line. People sometimes use them to poke at the current leadership—Mao symbolises an era that was, as some Chinese remember it, a better one for the underprivileged. Mr Xi worries about THAAD, but trouble at home disturbs him more.

1. What can be inferred about the people of China from their action of protesting against South Korea?

- a. The Government is very strong in China and people abide by its rules blindly.
- b. The Koreans are underprivileged and the Chinese know very well how to take advantage of it.
- c. The people of China are extreme nationalists and are overt about their love for the country without going into deep judgement.
- d. The Chinese are being blind or ignorant of their economic drawbacks because of their protests.
- e. The Chinese believe in super dominance and in no way would they support any step of USA.

2. How are the protests affecting Lotte, if at all?

- a. The Chinese wanted to make the Korean expansion lesser and strict policies are formed against them.
- b. Lotte is being affected financially as the products and shops are being banned and closed.
- c. Lotte is being banned all over the world thus it is facing a tough time in its business.
- d. The protests have led to the cancellation of the deal thereby affecting the good name of the firm.
- e. The protests have strengthened ties between USA and Korea.



e. The protests have strengthened ties between USA and Korea.

3. What is the concern of the President of China regarding protests of the people?

a. It should not backfire on him and his leadership should not be questioned.

b. The protests should be done in that extent that Korea reconsiders the deal.

c. China does not want its enmity with America to be seen so openly.

d. China does not want to be the target of the missile program because of these protests.

e. The President is worried about the ever slowing economic conditions affected due to banning Korean products.

4. What is the main objective of China behind all the protests done against Korea?

a. To make USA aware of its powers.

b. To make Korea understand that without China its economic relations would not stabilize.

c. To make Korea understand its supremacy.

d. To make the new President of Korea reconsider the deal with America.

e. To make Korea its permanent ally and weaken USA.

5. What is the main idea of the passage?

a. Nationalism used as a strong weapon against other countries.

b. Weakening economic ties helps to achieve better supremacy.

c. The strength of USA is indomitable and its influence is still the most.

d. China has started being against USA in an open manner.

e. China has become stronger than USA and its influence in Asia is the greatest.

6. How would the anti-missile system launched in Korea affect China?

a. It would make South Korea stronger.

b. It would make USA stronger.

c. It would lead to dangerous situations for China.

d. It would cause differences between North Korea and South Korea thereby affecting China.

e. It would lead to economic losses for China.

7. Which of the following has the opposite meaning of 'wary' as used in the passage?

a. Callous

b. Callow

c. Peaceful

d. Careless

e. Calm

8. What do you mean by the idiom 'make it hurt' as used in the passage?

a. Make someone cry

b. Make someone repent

c. Cause serious problems for someone

d. Destroy someone completely

e. Be hostile towards someone

ANSWER WITH EXPLANATION

Solution 01: Option 3 Explanation: From the protests of the Chinese people it can be clearly understood that the people are blind nationalists and follow any policy to show their dominance and protect their country. This is an example of their extreme nationalism.

Solution 02: Option 2 Explanation: As given in the passage that The Chinese protests have directly affected economic condition of Korea and specially Lotte. Their products have been banned and many shops have been shut down.

Solution 03: Option 1 Explanation: The President is concerned that the nationalist protests should not defame him or impugn his leadership. It should not raise any issue against him. In short it should not lead to any problem inside the country which is given in the first option whereas you can see in rest of the options it is not explained about the leadership.

Solution 04: Option 4 Explanation: It has been mentioned in the passage, "In the case of THAAD, the government clearly believes that a more heated public response may persuade South Korea's next president, who is due to be chosen in May, to reconsider its deployment."

Solution 05: Option 1 Explanation: The whole passage talks about extreme nationalism being followed by the Chinese people to support their country. Economic ties have been destroyed and business has suffered tremendously but the people have held their opinion whereas you can see in rest of the options nothing is talked about nationalism.

Solution 06: Option 2 Explanation: The anti-missile system would make USA strong and this means 'bad news' for China. This is given in the second option as it is also given in third option but it is not clearly explained what would lead to dangerous situation so option 3 cannot be the answer.

Solution 07: Option 4 Explanation: The word 'wary' means 'cautious'. Thus option 4 is the word that best expresses the opposite meaning. As we can see in this line despite his own nationalist rhetoric, has been wary of letting passions flare too high.

Solution 08: Option 2 Explanation: The idiom 'make it hurt' means 'cause serious problems for someone'. The Global Times, a jingoistic newspaper in Beijing, has encouraged Chinese consumers to "become the main force in teaching Seoul a lesson". It said they should "make it hurt". As we can infer from these lines that a newspaper in Beijing has encouraged Chinese consumers which may cause serious problems.



PASSAGE: The very first lesson that should be taught to us when we are of enough to understand it, is that complete freedom from the obligation to work is unnatural, and ought to be illegal, as we can escape our share of the burden of work only by throwing it on someone else's shoulders. Nature ordains that the human race shall perish of famine if it stops working. We cannot escape from this tyranny. The question we have to settle is how much leisure we can afford to allow ourselves.

1.The main idea of the passage is that (UPSC 2017)

- a.it is essential for human beings to work
- b.there should be a balance between work and leisure
- c.working is a tyranny which we have to face
- d.human's understanding of the nature of work is essential

PASSAGE 02: We are witnessing a dangerous dwindling of biodiversity in our food supply. The green revolution is a mixed blessing. Over time farmers have come to rely heavily on broadly adapted, high yield crops to the exclusion of varieties adapted to the local conditions. Mono-cropping vast fields with the same genetically uniform seeds helps boost yield and meet immediate hunger needs. Yet high yield varieties are also genetically weaker crops that require expensive chemical fertilizers and toxic pesticides. In our focus on increasing the amount of food we produce today, we have accidentally put ourselves at risk for food shortages in future.

2.Which among the following is the most logical and critical inference that can be made from the above passage? (UPSC 2016)

- a.In our agricultural practices, we have become heavily dependent on expensive chemical fertilizers and toxic pesticides only due to green revolution
- b.Monocropping vast fields with high-yield varieties is possible due to green revolution
- c.Monocropping with high-yield varieties is the only way to ensure food security to millions
- d.Green revolution can pose a threat to biodiversity in food supply and food security in the long run

ANSWER WITH EXPLANATION

Answer: (b) **Explanation:** The key point of the passage is that there should be a balance between work and leisure. Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.

Answer: (d) **Explanation:** Green Revolution has its disadvantages. Biodiversity is already at stake. Crops exposed to excessive chemicals or the genetically modified foods lack in nutritional content, in spite of boosting the yield. However, considering the long term aspect, green revolution could risk quality and health. Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.

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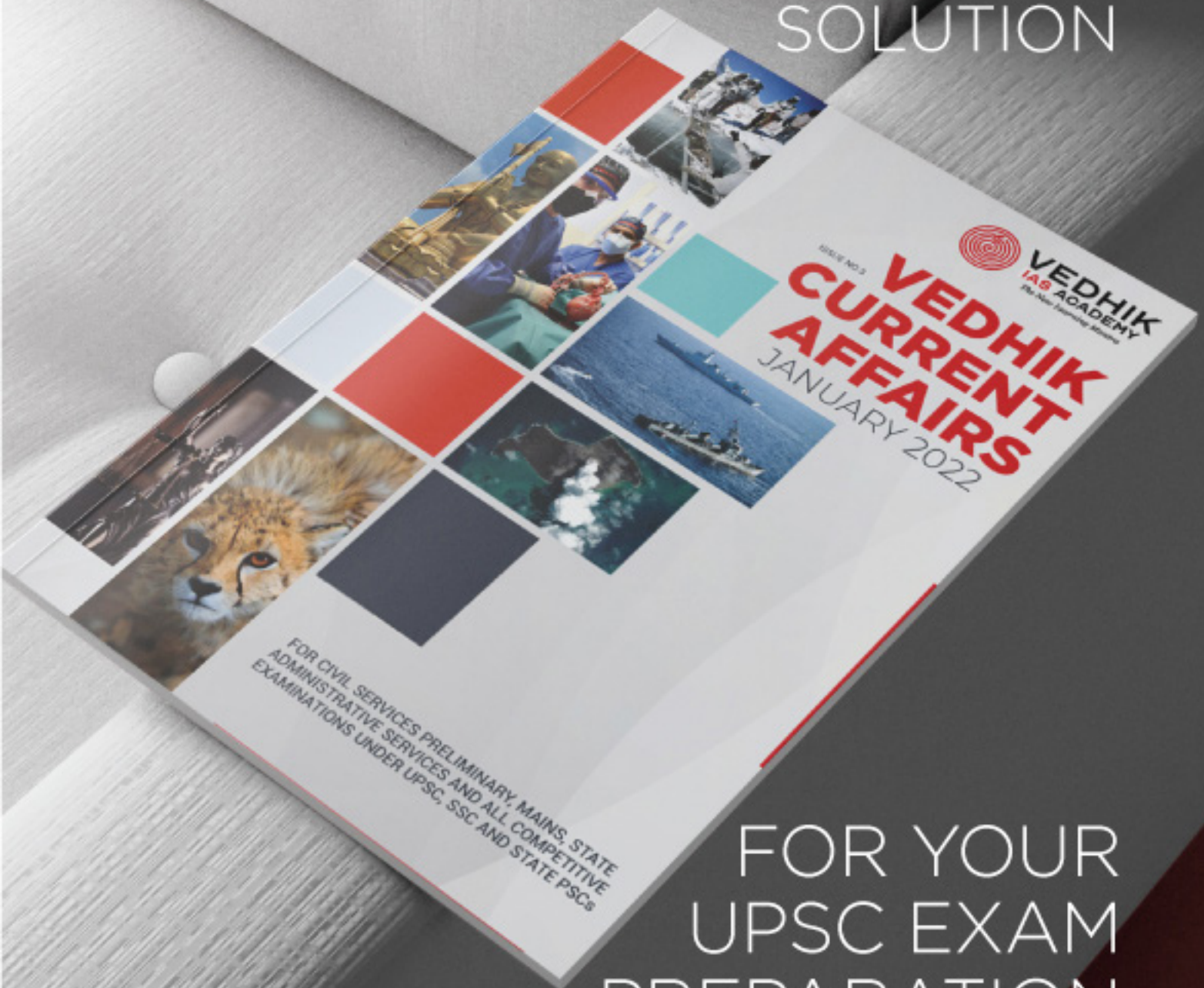
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ETHICS



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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ETHICS



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ETHICS

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming ubiquitous in our everyday lives. Whether you're aware of it, AI is built into many of the technologies you use on a regular basis. When Netflix recommends a show you might like, or Google suggests you book a trip online from the airport you usually fly from, artificial intelligence is involved.

In fact, 91% of businesses today want to invest in AI. While AI may seem extremely technical, bordering on the sci-fi level, it's ultimately just a tool. And like any tool, it can be used for good or ill. Therefore, as AI takes on increasingly sophisticated tasks, it is important to ensure that an ethical framework is in place for its right use. Let's dive a little deeper into the key concerns surrounding ethics in AI, some examples of ethical AI, and most importantly, how to ensure ethics are respected when using AI in a business context.

ETHICS IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI ethics is a set of moral principles to guide and inform the development and use of artificial intelligence technologies. Because AI does things that would normally require human intelligence, it requires moral guidelines as much as human decision-making. Without ethical AI regulations, the potential for using this technology to perpetuate misconduct is high.

Many industries use AI heavily, including finance, healthcare, travel, customer service, social media, and transportation. Due to its ever-growing utility in so many industries, AI technology has far-reaching implications for every aspect of the world and therefore needs to be regulated.

Now, of course, different levels of governance are required depending on the industry and context in which AI is deployed. A robot vacuum cleaner that uses AI to determine a home's floor plan is unlikely to drastically change the world unless it uses an ethical framework. A self-driving car that needs to recognize pedestrians, or an algorithm that determines what type of person is most likely to be approved for a loan, can and will profoundly impact society if ethical guidelines are not implemented. By determining the top ethical concerns of AI, consulting examples of ethical AI, and considering best practices for using AI ethically, you can ensure your organization is on the right track to using AI.

ETHICAL CONCERNS

As previously mentioned, the key ethical concerns vary widely by industry, context, and the potential impact magnitude. But by and large, the biggest ethical issues when it comes to artificial intelligence are AI bias, concerns that AI could replace human jobs, privacy concerns, and using AI to deceive or manipulate. Let's go through them in more detail.

BIASES IN AI

As AI takes on sophisticated tasks and does the heavy lifting, don't forget that humans programmed and trained AI to perform those tasks. And people have prejudices. For example, if predominantly white male data scientists collect data on predominantly white males, the AI they design could replicate their biases.

But that's actually not the most common source of AI bias. What is more common is that the data used to train the AI models can be biased. For example, if the data collected is only from the statistical majority, it is inherently biased.

A poignant example of this is Georgia Tech's recent research into object recognition in self-driving cars. It was found that pedestrians with dark skin were hit about 5% more often than people with light skin. They found that the data used to train the AI model was likely the source of the injustice: the data set contained about 3.5 times as many examples of people with lighter skin, so the AI model could recognize them better. That seemingly small difference could have had deadly consequences when it comes to something as potentially dangerous as self-driving cars hitting people.

On the plus side, the good thing about AI and machine learning (ML) models is that the data set they're trained on can be modified, and with enough effort invested, they can become largely unbiased. In contrast, it is not feasible to let people make completely unbiased decisions on a large scale.

AI REPLACING JOBS

Almost every technological innovation in history has been accused of replacing jobs, and so far, it has never happened that way. As advanced as AI may seem, AI will not replace humans or their jobs any time soon.

Back in the 1970s, Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) were introduced, and people feared mass unemployment for bank employees. The reality was just the opposite. Since fewer cashiers were now required to operate a bank branch, the banks were able to increase the number of branches and the number of cashier jobs overall. And they could do it for less because ATMs took care of the simple, everyday tasks like processing check deposits and withdrawing cash.

This is reflected in what is currently happening with AI and its applications. An example is when AI was first introduced to understand and mimic human speech. People panicked as chatbots and intelligent virtual assistants (IVAs) replaced human customer service agents. The reality is that AI-powered automation can be extremely useful, but AI is unlikely to replace humans truly.

In the same way, ATMs took care of the mundane tasks that didn't require human intervention, AI-powered chatbots and IVAs can take care of the simple, repetitive requests and even understand questions in natural language using natural language processing to provide helpful, contextual answers.

But the most complicated queries still require a human agent's intervention. AI-powered automation may be limited in some ways, but the impact can be huge. AI-powered virtual agents reduce customer service fees by up to 30%, and chatbots can handle up to 80% of routine tasks and customer questions.

The future of AI is realistically one in which humans and AI-powered bots work together, with the bots handling the simple tasks and humans focusing on the more complex matters.

AI AND PRIVACY

Perhaps the most valid concern about ethics in AI is privacy. Privacy is recognized as a fundamental human right in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and various AI applications can pose a real threat to it. Technologies such as surveillance cameras, smartphones, and the internet have made it easier to collect personal data. When companies aren't transparent about why and how data is collected and stored, privacy is at risk.



Facial recognition, for example, is controversial for many reasons. One reason being how the images are recognized and stored by this technology. Being monitored without explicit consent is one of the AI applications many consider unethical. In fact, the European Commission banned facial recognition technology in public spaces until adequate ethical controls could be put in place.

The challenge in creating ethical privacy regulations around AI is that people are generally willing to give up some personal information to get some level of personalization. This is a big trend in customer service and marketing for a good reason.

Some examples are grocery or drug stores that offer coupons based on past purchases or travel companies that offer deals based on consumers' location. This personal data helps AI deliver timely, personalized content that consumers want. Still, without proper data sanitization protocols, there is a risk that this data will be processed and sold to third-party companies and used for unintended purposes.

For example, the now-infamous Cambridge-Analytica scandal involved the political consulting firm that worked for the Trump campaign and which sold the private data of tens of millions of Facebook users. These third-party companies are also more vulnerable to cyberattacks and data breaches, which means your private information could fall even further into the wrong hands.

Ironically, AI is a great solution for data protection. AI's self-learning capabilities mean that AI-powered programs can detect malicious viruses or patterns that often lead to security breaches. This means that by implementing AI, organizations can proactively detect attempts at data breaches or other types of data security attacks before information can be stolen.

USING AI ETHICALLY

With all the challenges AI brings, you might be wondering how to mitigate risk when implementing AI as a solution in your organization. Fortunately, there are some best practices for using AI ethically in a business context.

EDUCATING AROUND AI ETHICS

Start by educating yourself and your peers about what AI can do, its challenges, and its limitations. Rather than scare people or completely ignore the potential of unethical use of AI, making sure everyone understands the risks and knows how to mitigate them is the first step in the right direction.

The next step is to create a set of ethical guidelines that your organization must adhere to. Finally, since ethics in AI is difficult to quantify, check in regularly to ensure goals are being met and processes are being followed.

TAKE A HUMAN-FIRST APPROACH

Taking a human-first approach means controlling bias. First, make sure your data isn't biased (like the self-driving car example mentioned above). Second, make it inclusive. In the US, the software programmer demographic is approximately 64% male and 62% white. This means that the people who develop the algorithms that shape the way society works do not necessarily represent the diversity of that society. By taking an inclusive approach to hiring and expanding the diversity of teams working on AI technology, you can ensure that the AI you create reflects the world it was created for.

PRIORITIZING TRANSPARENCY

When AI is involved in data collection or storage, it's imperative to educate your users or customers about how their data is stored, what it is used for, and the benefits they derive from sharing that data. This transparency is essential to building trust with your customers. In this way, adhering to an ethical AI framework can be seen as creating positive sentiment for your business rather than restrictive regulation. Although AI is a relatively new field, tech giants that have been in the field for decades and objective third parties that recognize the need for intervention and regulation have created a framework against which you can align your own organization's policies.

FRAMEWORKS INSPIRING ETHICAL AI

Several impartial third parties have recognized the need to create guidelines for the ethical use of AI and ensure that its use benefits society.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international organization working to create better strategies for a better life. They created the OECD AI Principles, which promote the use of AI that is innovative, trustworthy, and respects human rights and democratic values.

The United Nations (UN) has also developed a Framework for Ethical AI that discusses how AI is a powerful tool that can be used for good but risks being used in a way inconsistent with UN values and runs counter to it. It suggests that a set of guidelines, policies, or a code of ethics needs to be created to ensure that the use of AI at the UN is consistent with its ethical values.

BUSINESSES AND ETHICAL AI

In addition to objective third parties, the biggest leaders in the space have also developed their own guidelines to use AI ethically.

Google, for example, has developed Artificial Intelligence Principles that form an ethical charter that guides the development and use of artificial intelligence in their research and products. And not only did Microsoft create Responsible AI Principles that they put into practice to guide all AI innovation at Microsoft, but they also created an AI business school to help other companies create their own AI support policies.

But you don't have to be based in Silicon Valley to advocate for ethical AI. Some smaller AI companies have followed suit and are beginning to include ethics as part of their driving values.

There are also ways that for-profit businesses can be certified as ethical and sustainable, such as the B Corp certification that validates that an organization uses business as a force for good.

Several for-profit AI companies have joined the B Corp standards, showing that AI is forever an emerging trend. While this type of accreditation is not exclusive to AI companies, it does signal a commitment to act ethically, and more tech companies can and should seek certification.

AI FOR GOOD

When discussing ethics in AI, the focus is more on the possible negative AI use cases and impacts, but AI is really doing a lot of good. It's important to remember that AI technology is not just a potential problem but a solution to many of the world's biggest problems.



There is AI to predict the effects of climate change and suggest actions to address it; robotic surgeons can perform or assist in operations that require more precision than a human can handle.

AI-assisted farming technology is increasing crop yields while decreasing crop yield waste. There are even non-profit organizations like AI for Good dedicated solely to making AI a force with global impact. And as natural as it may seem, AI makes simple, everyday tasks like navigating traffic or asking Siri about the weather easier.

GETTING BETTER

Artificial intelligence has become a powerful tool woven into your everyday life. Almost all of your services and devices

use AI to make your life easier or more efficient. And while it is, of course, possible to use AI maliciously, the vast majority of companies have ethical principles in place to mitigate the negative effects where possible.

As long as best practices are followed, AI has the potential to improve virtually every industry, from healthcare to education and beyond. It's up to the people creating these AI models to ensure they keep ethics in mind and constantly question how what they create can benefit society as a whole. When you think of AI as a way to scale human intelligence rather than replace it, it doesn't seem so complex or scary. And with the right ethical framework, it's easy to see how it will change the world for the better.


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TOPICS OF THE MONTH





**DOST THOU THINK, BECAUSE THOU ART
VIRTUOUS, THERE SHALL BE NO MORE
CAKES AND ALE**

- DR. Alexander Jacob IPS

SONS OF THE SOIL

-DR. Babu Sebastian

**DEMOCRACY SUBSTITUTES ELECTION
BY THE INCOMPETENT MANY FOR
APPOINTMENT BY THE CORRUPT FEW**

-DR. G. Prasanna Kumar

**TIME PAST AND TIME FUTURE, WHAT
MIGHT HAVE BEEN AND WHAT HAS
BEEN, POINT TO ONE END, WHICH IS
ALWAYS PRESENT**

-Mr. solomon John



DOST THOU THINK, BECAUSE THOU ART VIRTUOUS, THERE SHALL BE NO MORE CAKES AND ALE

If it doesn't sound like the Devil's Litany, virtue might be considered to be a form of self-punishment. Since Adam's day, temptation has been more alluring to man since he is only a collection of flaws. Dr. Faustus from Marlowe's play gave in to the lure of having divine abilities on earth and made a deal with the Devil, Lucifer, to sell his soul. Even though he had regularly received advice from his moral or Christian self to turn from his sin and pray for forgiveness, the allure of the life of indulgence blinded him. He turned to God, but it was too late, and the demon left with his soul. Opposite is the case of the bishop in T. S. Eliot's *Murder in Cathedral*; Tempters could not tempt him away from martyrdom. But latter is not the normal behaviour of man. Virtue demands us to conquer temptation and passions, even the reality is distorted and facts are ignored. It starts a process of auto-intoxication, brews quietly up within its own bowels that curious and appalling feeling called hatred for pleasure.

Pleasure serves as a distraction from the bondage of life, from the life of an official condemned to remain glued with the chair and table till, in the words of Charles Lamb "Wood enters into his soul". Russel in his Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech said, "... experience shows that escape from boredom is one of the really powerful desires of almost all human beings. When white men first established contact with some unspoiled race of savages, they offer them all kinds of benefits from the light of the gospel to pumpkin pie. These, however, much as we regret it, most savages receive with indifference. What they really value among gifts that we bring to them is intoxicating liquor which enables them for the first time in the lives to have the illusion for a few brief moments...." Evidently the philosopher wants to prove that 'cakes and ale' are instinctively demanded by all whether the virtuous relish it or not.

By putting the quote in its proper context, we may understand that Sir Toby is mocking Malvolio in Shakespeare's play "Twelfth Night." Malvolio, according to some critics, is an example of Puritans, who favoured disliking all forms of pleasure. Well-known critic J. B. Priestley claims that Sir Toby's statement, "Do you imagine there shall be no more cakes and ale?" is the ultimate response to all killjoys. He adds, Sir Toby with his rough philosophy, a tap-room epicureanism, lives drinking health, burning sacks, singing catches, baiting fools and enjoying a multitude of things like pickled herrings. He thinks that "with mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come" and would like to drink till there is a passage in his throat and wine in Illyria. Though Sir Toby goes to the extreme, yet we should not take life as an invalid takes his food that is with a sense of duty. All disenchantment is a malady and which nonetheless, when it occurs, is to be cured.

As they say, virtue brings its own reward. The proverb "virtue gets no other reward" strikes me as a little ironic; the virtuous are labelled as fools who sabotage their present in an effort to improve their future. A defeated person's solace is to disregard reality and live in a world of idyllic fantasies. In the era of diplomacy, morality must bow down to evil if a country is to have any success in world affairs. Nations lose their status if crimes are not presented as virtues; the Non-Proliferation Treaty seems to be the goodness of the major countries despite the fact that they possess a lot of atoms.

Similar to how the Greek and Turkish invasion of Cyprus would be justified as a serious attempt to save the nation. In the name of the nation's liberation, Vietnam is destroyed. India has been reaching out in friendship to all countries, really hoping to improve the state of the world. As a result of our good deeds, China tricked us, Pakistan invaded us, and the United States threatened us. No diplomat in this day and age can be successful unless he twists the truth to fit his country's needs and is a complete hypocrite. How can we believe that people won't adopt a bad lifestyle when sinners are the masters and success is the sole yardstick of effort? Gandhi may have added morality to his acts and thought process, and Lincoln may have fought for the rights of slaves, but society never long accepted them. Nixon's disregard for morals and Bhutto's opportunisms were extreme examples of the weakness of the average person to enjoy living an immoral existence. Even repeated moral lessons failed to influence the man's perspective.

Since the beginning of time, there have been churches and moralists who have consistently preached morality. Have they been successful in fostering morality and converting everyone to a good Christian? Even though a moral paradise, it is difficult for even one good person to achieve suitable rank unless everyone is good. Giving up life's joys is not something that one has to do; rather, one's mental attitude is more a result of his upbringing in a social setting and environmental influences. Imposing morality can inspire rebellion if societal conditions do not support the development of moral worldview. Emancipation from the church, Reformation and Counter-Reformation have been irrelevant and had people accepted the moral way of life.

The actual workers who shed their blood for the growth of industry receive one meal per day and pleasure for themselves is elusive like the mirage in the deserts, while the affluent get richer, live in luxury, and pursue all forms of pleasure, even oppressing others. In an effort to curb capitalism brutality and put a stop to exploitation, communism instead created a new kind of it. Freedom of expression is restricted, and individuals who disagree with the ruling class's policies are persecuted. Where are the ethical standards that they claim to uphold? The sheer spreading of these concepts may temporarily bias people's minds since ethical principles are frequently sacrificed for personal beliefs.

We have known from ancient times that we must live and live well. Before we can paint, write, or speculate, we need to eat, find a place to live, and get dressed. Humans must have access to food, water, clothes, and shelter before they can become interested in politics, art, or religion, according to Marx, who turned this contrast between life and the good life into a theory. Evidently, the major element influencing all others is productive forces. This implies that "cakes and ale" are the needs of existence, and anybody who refuses to eat or drink them is leading an aberrant austere lifestyle. People, if left to themselves, will never emulate the virtuous; Shaw has succinctly said, "obedience stimulates subordination as fear of police stimulates honesty", saintliness is artificial whereas sinning is attractive, charming and life-like.

Bernard Shaw beautifully expresses the idea that vice is a diversion for individuals who are bored of acting morally and virtue is a mask used to maintain appearances in one of his characters in *Man and Superman*.



Vices cannot be erased by virtue, and virtues cannot be destroyed by vice. The character claims that man is tested by everything, including heaven and hell, and that history is nothing more than a chronicle of how the universe oscillates between these two extremes. Every swing from heaven to hell is liberation, and every swing from hell to paradise is development. An epoch is but a swing of the pendulum.

Reforms, advancement, and continuous rise are all "infinite comedies of illusion." In fact, no one can resist the conclusion that those who are good are vain because they are good, while those who are evil are brazen and daring because they are evil. There is nothing new beneath the sun, and virtue and evil symbolise nothing but vanity.

SPACE FOR ROUGH NOTES





SONS OF THE SOIL

The threat to unity comes not just from agitations, but also from mental attitudes. What keeps a nation united? Basically, the love and readiness of the people to labour and make sacrifices for it. Of course, this is not fully selfless because everyone is aware of the inherent connection between their interests and the destiny of their nation. Who lives if India dies, as Chittaranjan Dass put it?

The young want a cause to fight for and something to rebel against. There is no dearth of it either in India or in the world. Nor is there need for this attitude to change with age, but too often and too soon the zeal cools down or is dissipated in trivialities and irrelevancies. This and confrontation for its own sake or for narrow ends are self-destructive and even harmful for the nation. Let us not forget that India is a special country at a particularly crucial point in its development, when the world around is in turmoil. We can get bogged down or we can pull ourselves out of the morass. It depends on you—the younger generation and the intellectuals.

There are of course immediate problems which cause worry. One can understand and sympathize with the feeling of insecurity for fear of unemployment. It is our major concern too because of the human problem and suffering involved and because our progress depends on making the fullest use of manpower. There must not only be enough jobs which befit the qualifications and expectations of our bright trained young people they must also contribute towards strengthening the nation.

It should be our sincere effort to provide the people jobs close to home because few people can migrate to other areas of the country for work. However, the “sons of the soil” argument is a harmful one that deprives the region of greater and more diverse potential. Perhaps the assumption that conditions would improve and more employment will become accessible for locals if Bengalis leave Assam or Bombay is a natural one. However, there are no such easy fixes. And any such narrow-mindedness, particularly when it causes agitations, has effects everywhere, hinders progress, and prevents employment from growing. Some schemes help in the short term but basically there is only one solution to unemployment and that is development in agriculture and industry in a big way. And that needs a nation-wide effort and nation-wide mobility for experts and trained personnel.

India's brilliance has been attributed to her talent at blending cultures and ideas. She has always welcomed everyone who came to her, whether they were seeking education, teaching opportunities, or safety. One evolves via greater connections and engagement with new ideas and stresses, not by placing limitations on oneself or isolating oneself. Cultures that embraced and promoted such enlarging experiences have endured and grown richer. Aside from India, the USA offers incentives to draw talent and minds from wherever they may be found, making it the finest example in our day.

Our route is littered with many traps. Neocolonialism in some form and other nations' constant efforts to shape our policies to meet their global strategies – conceived in the context of their national interests – represent the danger from without. The techniques used might be covert or overt and can occasionally include a lot of pressure

It is desired to establish circumstances in which we have few choices. Absence of conclusive evidence does not imply nonexistence of foreign activities. Our naive embrace of foreign ideas, whether they come from the West or the East or the left or the right, is itself a sign of how sneakily these influences operate. It is not our intention to become better versions of other nations or other systems, nor should we emulate them. We Indians aspire to create a better India, a nation that is distinct in its history, experiences, and vision for the future. In its broadest meaning, education aims to create well-rounded individuals who can handle life's ups and downs without becoming overly stressed.

Though humanity has made significant strides in understanding, our thoughts are still mainly constrained by outdated images and established routines. Our use of the phrase “corners of the world,” which refers to the form of the earth, is an example of out-of-date terminology cited by Buckminster Fuller. Mr. De Bono claims that “the current vertical tendency is concerned with producing or growing concept patterns, whereas lateral thinking restructures such patterns (which is what is known as insight) and offers new ones (which is what is known as creativity).” The two are not mutually exclusive. He makes the point that the goal of thinking is to utilise it to get the proper conclusions rather than to be correct at every stage. The validity of a specific pattern is less important than how beneficial it is for creating new patterns.

Mr. de Bono gives examples: “Lee de Forest discovered the immensely useful thermionic value through following up the erroneous idea that an electric spark altered the behaviour of a field. Marconi succeeded in transmitting wireless waves across the Atlantic Ocean through following up the erroneous idea that the waves would follow the curvature of the earth.”

What do you hope to get out of life? And how can you prevent being let down? “If a man is primarily expanding a personality, then he can capitalise whatever that life does to him,” said Plato. “If a man is primarily growing a riches, then the world can beat him; if he is primarily growing a pleasure, then the world can defeat him.” And that is already half the fight.



DEMOCRACY SUBSTITUTES ELECTION BY THE INCOMPETENT MANY FOR APPOINTMENT BY THE CORRUPT FEW

Alexander Pope, a poet from the eighteenth century, was right when he declared, "For forms of government let fools contest, whichever administered best is best" If democracy is the worship of incompetence, aristocracy is the exploitation of the masses, and dictatorship is the tyranny of one. Ministers are inexperienced and typically ineffective managers, in contrast to a dictator. In an effort to find the ideal political or social institution, man has always experimented with different ones.

The most recent test of man, democracy, may turn out to be a failure. It is predicated on a number of suppositions, including that people are skilled in self-government, that they are generally kind and willing to make sacrifices, that they are intelligent enough to understand their rights and obligations, and that their judgements are unwavering. Voters choose their representatives in indirect or representational democracies by casting ballots. Democracy aspires for the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people, hence majority opinion cannot be wrong since it is for the welfare of the greatest number. The sole need for voting is reaching a certain age, which is the point at which a person is capable of discriminating and ability to form an autonomous opinion. Democracy is the ruling ideal of the day. But as Renan says, "Institutions are destroyed by their triumphs".

Few control the government in cases of monarchy, dictatorship, or aristocracy. The ordinary man is born to be dominated in their eyes; they simply have their own interests in mind. These chosen few are corrupt in that they have the ability to manipulate events to their benefit, obtain power by deceit, and put down any opposition. They sometimes instil some unrestricted goals, and in order to realise them, they mobilise all of their resources. Elections replace the appointment of the government by a select few, which Shaw considers to be inefficient. Half of it is true.

In a democracy, a voter must be an adult with common sense in order to exercise his or her right to vote. This requirement lays an undue emphasis on the average man's capacity for logical thought and political judgement. At first glance, the whole representative election process appears to be sound since elected officials continue to be accountable to and responsive to the people long after elections. Experience demonstrates that it is only a "cult of incompetence," as Faguet likes to refer to it. The fascists said that democracy undermined the sense of national unity and exalted mediocrity and incompetence. Communists contend that in order to achieve social, political, and economic equality, the democratic system must fall. However, because they themselves support widespread involvement, the communists' critique is only directed at a specific type of governance. In addition, democracy is an extremely expensive system of governance, where 10 people can do in ten days what one person can in one. Shaw learns that the electorate is incapable of carrying out its duties.

No matter how politically aware a country may be, neither the political climate nor the candidates' qualifications can be evaluated objectively. They will never be able to think independently, objectively, and dispassionately due to the biased reporting of the news and the dedication of publications to specific policies. The meticulously crafted misinformation taints their judgements and colours their attitudes. News is censored, manipulated, and fabricated; information regarding all issues is not available.

The ruling party has plenty of resources to bolster its propaganda apparatus. If at all some pieces of correct information trickle down through the opposition parties, a common man is not prepared to give much credit to it.

Man is a hero worshipper at heart, and those in positions of authority have greater possibilities to enhance their public image. When someone begins to adore individuals, their judgement becomes clouded. Again, it is quite challenging to have a complete grasp of the candidate; even intimate interaction with the individual may not reveal much about his motivations. Even if the electorate has a negative impression of the representatives, the government can persuade them otherwise by offering specific concessions. The public has an extremely short memory, which the powerful may use to their advantage. In addition, one's judgement is influenced by their intellectual background, surroundings, and education. Here also the initiative lies with those who do not share the responsibility of power—the press lords, the political leaders and those who control the media of information and persuasion.

The majority of voters lack the ability to exercise their constitutional right to vote. The exercise of rights may be hampered by social customs, historical experience, religious affiliations, and a variety of other reasons. People will be led by religious concerns if religion has a stronger grasp on their minds. They could have biases in favour of a specific party if history has taught them to vote for that party. The success of a political party lies less on upholding its promises than in captivating the populace with manifestos and effectively manipulating public opinion through propaganda.

Democracy gives the general populace the authority to run the affairs of the state. The average male is viewed by psychologists as having below average intelligence. The army in the United States performed IQ tests, and the results showed that 60% of the population has average or below average intellect. People are expected to comprehend and handle difficult issues in democracies. They are unable to comprehend the subtle hints and diplomatic manoeuvres. Lecky criticised democracy as the ignorance-based and anti-liberty regime for this reason.

Shaw would want to support his position in this way. But we must not lose sight of the fact that Jesus destroys idols and challenges conventional wisdom. Although not entirely accurate, some of his claims are true. People have demonstrated a remarkable talent for making judgements. With all his wisdom, Aristotle thought that the collective virtue and capacity of the people was superior to the virtue and ability of a certain segment of the community. If the majority of the populace is illiterate, they should use common sense to elect competent officials and lawmakers and to rein in their bad behaviour.

Democracy as a form of popular democracy shouldn't be viewed as a government of the uninformed. The most important training ground for people to become mature, self-assured, responsible, and civic-spirited is democracy itself. There is no better education than being a citizen of a democratic country and taking part in democratic processes, as J. S. Mill once observed. Although monarchy or aristocracy may be more effective than democracy, the structures they build only survive as long as the people in charge can exercise their power. The entire structure collapses like a house of cards the instant that hand gets frail.



The reason for this is that monarchy or aristocracy depends on certain people or groups, whose continuous existence is subject to chance. The people under these two types of regimes don't seem to care, therefore the moral side of a person's personality never fully develops. Only in democracies are the people able to give their institutions permanence and stability.

The histories of the United States and the United Kingdom provide unequivocal evidence for the viability of democratically elected forms of governance. The fact that democracy is a kind of self-government is one of its greatest strengths. People can handle their own issues more effectively than outsiders because they are more familiar with them than their rulers.

SPACE FOR ROUGH NOTES





TIME PAST AND TIME FUTURE, WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN AND WHAT HAS BEEN, POINT TO ONE END, WHICH IS ALWAYS PRESENT

The present is the seed of the future, while the past is the source of the present. Even the pastness of the past has a present of its own. If the present is the climax of the past, the future is also launching from this moment. Whether we approach them from the perspective of human existence, nature, or human institutions, it is obvious that all three have an organic relationship. In the process of evolution, human existence leaves behind a trail, a worn path, a tradition, or a tradition that crystallises into that nation's culture. Similarly Nature, as it is, has retained much of ancient character though it had been evolving all through. Nature, in no case, can be considered something amorphous, transient and for the present only.

Human institutions from the past and present are closely related to one another. For instance, religion, which once dominated people's lives and thought processes, has been downgraded to the status of a private matter. It is possible that a religious perspective that places more emphasis on moral values will become more significant. Some believe that religion is the only thing that can make the world better. Religion is the sole treatment for irreligion, according to S. Radhakrishnan. It is impossible to study the past, present, and future in isolation.

Some people can believe that the past and future are irrelevant since neither can be accurately remembered nor predicted. But it's incorrect. The pedestal on which a nation's greatness stands is its culture, which is the collected knowledge produced by the forces of social development. Without cultural legacy, there would be no place in the international society, no way of thinking, and no way to advance. The past is the parasite that gives the present its identity and uniqueness. International culture is developing, and as a result, national cultures will pool their resources and each one will be adjusted and altered in accordance with the most recent advances. To avoid letting the past rule the present, Mr. Nehru reportedly observed, "We must break with much of our history." The past that merely exists as a monument in memory or as decoration for historical records has no bearing on the present. We unknowingly accept the past that might be useful to us in the present as part of the natural process of thinking and life. Evidently, the past's legacy serves to strengthen the present. Traditionalists advocate the present of the past, just like Eliot did in literature.

Some religious "pundits" give the future an excessive amount of importance. The proponents of such religions say that life on earth should serve as preparation for an improved future. To assure a better existence after death, they are willing to make sacrifices in the here and now. The rewards promised in exchange for surrendering the present include salvation and a life free from the cycle of birth and death. The promise of a bright future tempts individuals to endure physical and mental suffering. This is not to say that the future does not indicate the present. People may be seduced by the halo that surrounds such concepts, which claim that we can only prepare for the future in the here and now.

The utilitarian mindset of the modern day is recognisable; everything is evaluated in terms of financial benefit. We don't discuss or consider "art for the sake of art" or "work for the sake of labour." Because every action has a material component, man's thinking is constrained to short-term benefit.

On the altar of short-term wealth, compassion, love, and many other nobler characteristics are sacrificed. Evidently, the future is a realm of dreams—uncertain, hazy, and unborn—to someone with such a mindset. Its applicability in the current situation—specifically, how much labour, money, etc., has to be invested now—is more important. It is useless to just imagine oneself living in the future, travelling vicariously through its ethereal realms, or in the past—the vanished past. We are "feeding on an idle picture" or "moving on the stilts of aery imagination" when we spend our days hoping for a bright future or comforting ourselves with the memory of a magnificent past. The present, which deals with facts that are alive and breathing, is responsible for the past's fame, while the future submits to the leather thong of the present.

The present enables us to achieve our goals and appease our ego. Man desires praise, and his good and admirable labour can bring him instant honours. Because idealists labouring for the future never receive instant recognition, those who satisfy the needs of the present demonstrate their mettle. Because of this, talent is never valued in society; Copernicus was burned alive, Socrates was made to drink poison, and Gandhiji was assassinated. A simple man cannot elevate his mental height to that of a person who considers the future while living in the present.

The immediate needs of the moment are served by the human subconscious and unconscious. It is challenging to break free from the amalgam of memories and dreams. But the present is always what drives and shapes them. The current environment, which exerts great pressure on a person's psyche, prevents the wilted yet treasured-up memories of the past from making an appearance. They start to pale in comparison to our fervour for the here and now. Experience and ideas can be found in the past. Since human nature is essentially unchanged, the knowledge gained from past experiences can assist us in dealing with the challenges we face today. Situations are similar, and history repeats itself with just small variations. The past's struggles, endeavours, setbacks, and victories may be simply and productively applied to the present. The same is true of the values that the future motivates. Despite the possibility that they won't be realised until the far future, we continue to work toward those objectives today.

The present is used to assess the past, and the present is where the future is created. We may brag about our beautiful past, but they are just memories, which might lead to resentment or inaction. The keystones of our achievement are the current merriment and laughing (there is nothing beyond). People in our immediate vicinity cannot enter the past since their senses are stronger than their imagination. Similar to this, ideals reflect whatever is lacking in our lives now. Though man may pursue knowledge like a falling star, everything is dependent on the circumstances that exist right now. The League of Nations was created as a result of the destruction caused by World War I because of how urgent it was in those circumstances. A somewhat more powerful global organisation, the U. N. O., was created as a result of the Second World War's greater devastation.

The rhythm of life is made up of the past, the present, and the future; the unheard songs of the past and the future are more beautiful than the heard melodies of the present. Even still, the present is a struggle with its hard truths and conundrums, whilst the past may be lurking in the background



like a shadow and the future may be shining brightly in front of us. The shadow cannot be recognised and the glare will have no purpose unless the obstacles are embraced and conquered.

The present is sustained by the past, and the present is the foundation for the future. The past's successes and failures are carried over into the present, which in and of itself forms the foundation for the future.

SPACE FOR ROUGH NOTES





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UPSC Civil Services (Mains) MOCK QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the implications of Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies adopted at Geneva WTO Conference, 2022 upon India.
2. Examine the ramifications of recent issues over sharing of water in the Indus river system on the India-Pakistan bilateral relations.
3. "The strengthening of climate-change induced geo-physical events is likely to create additional challenges to countries like India." Examine the statement.
4. The problem of jurisdictional conflicts between Delhi's elected government and the Lieutenant Governor (LG) is attributable to the conundrum called Article 239 AA of the Indian Constitution. Do you agree? Should the Supreme Court intervene and correct the anomaly? Comment
5. What is mean by the concept of heat domes? What are the major reasons for the cause of heat domes? Suggest suitable measures to mitigate the same (250 Words)
6. Examine the significance of the green bonds in the context of India and evaluate how these green bonds can help India to achieve net zero emission. (250 Words)
7. Why regulation in Online Gaming is important in India? Examine whether the proposed Draft Rules for Online Gaming is sufficient to make Online Gaming in India.
8. What is mean by Green Hydrogen? Examine the significance of Green Hydrogen to secure the energy security of India.
9. Safeguarding the Indian art heritage is the need of the moment. Comment.
10. Discuss the Tandava dance as depicted in the Nataraj bronze sculptures of Chola period.



UPSC (Mains) MODEL ANSWER

3. Kalhana's Rajatarangini is the best example of history writing tradition in early India. Discuss

It is often said that the only truly historical work produced in ancient India was the Rajatarangini, or the river of kings, authored by Kalhana, (12th century CE). The Rajatarangini is a history of Kashmir since its inception (the account begins with the creation of the land from primeval waters). It consists of eight books or tarangas, and is composed in verse.

The first three tarangas deal with the history of the region till the 7th century CE, tarangas 4 to 6 carry the story forward till the 11th century, while the last two tarangas (which are also the longest) deal with the 12th century.

What makes Kalhana's work unique is that he mentions at the outset the sources he consulted. These included sasanas or royal proclamations pertaining to religious endowments, prasastis or eulogies, and the sastras.

He also attempts to distinguish between the plausible and the fantastic, and offers explanations for changes in fortune. Kalhana is scathing in his critique of earlier writers, whose works, according to him, were full of errors and lacked style.

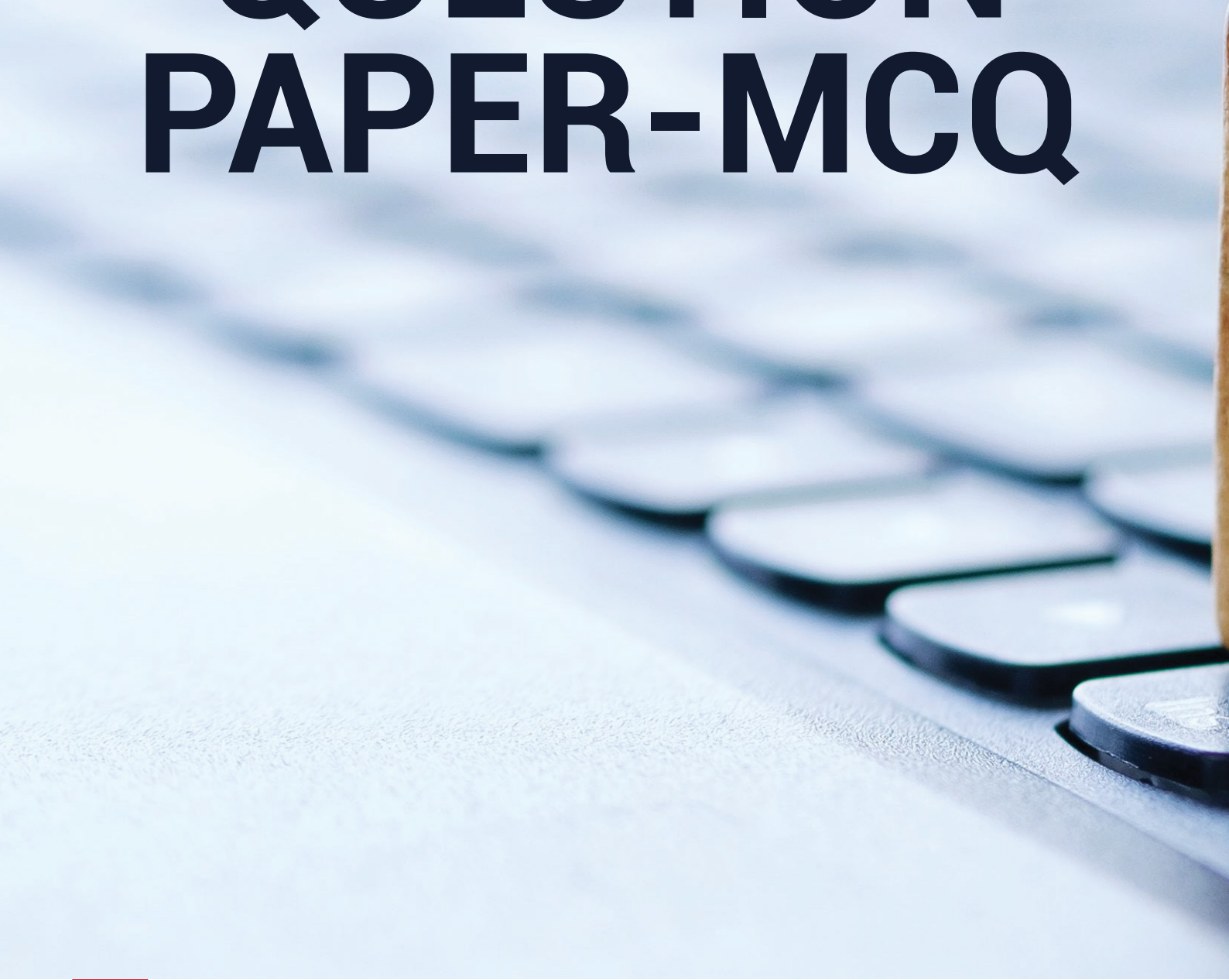
Kalhana regarded himself as a poet. Ideally, according to him, a poet was supposed to be endowed with divine insight, (divyadrsti), and was almost as powerful as Prajapati, the god recognised as the creator within the brahmanical tradition. He also envisaged his work as a didactic text, meant especially for the education of kings. There is an emphasis on trying to offer impartial judgments, and to cultivate a sense of detachment.

There are also sections where the horrors of war and the destruction it leaves in its trail are graphically highlighted. Interestingly, although Kalhana was clearly close to the court, he was not the court poet.

Hence, impartial in its approach to the historical context of the period, even though influenced by the author's subjective views on the event, Kalhana's Rajatarangini is considered as one of the earliest example of history writing tradition in India.

(Source: IGNOU)--

MODEL QUESTION PAPER-MCQ







1. Following is a description of a personality: A 'Rammargi' Vaishnava saint of 15th century, he pioneered the Ramanandi sect and campaigned against caste system and used Hindi for preaching bhakti thus breaking the hegemony Brahmins who used Sanskrit language for holy texts. His 12 disciples included Anantananda, Sursurananda, Sukhanand, Naraharidāsa, Bhavanand, Bhagat Pipa, Kabir, Sen, Dhanna, Ravidas and two women disciples viz. Sursuri and Padyawati. Identify the personality:

- a. Dadu
- b. Kabir
- c. Ramananda
- d. Tulsidas

2. Why did Buddhism start declining in India in the early medieval times?

- 1. Buddha was by that time considered as one of the incarnations of Vishnu and thus became a part of Vaishnavism.
- 2. Invading tribes from Central Asia till the time of last Gupta king adopted Hinduism and persecuted Buddhists.
- 3. Kings of Gupta dynasty were strongly opposed to Buddhism.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

3. With reference to the Bahamani Sultanate, consider the following statements:

- 1. Nasiruddin Ismail Shah founded Bahamani Sultanate in 1347 as an independent Islamic State in the Deccan regions consolidating the Southern provinces of the Delhi Sultanate.
- 2. Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq served as the Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate during the founding of the Bahamani Sultanate.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are NOT true?

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

4. Consider the following:

- 1. First Battle of Panipat
- 2. Battle of Surajgarh
- 3. Battle of Chausa
- 4. Battle of Ghaghara
- 5. Battle of Khanwa

Arrange the above in the correct chronological order:

- a. 1 - 4 - 5 - 2 - 3
- b. 1 - 5 - 4 - 2 - 3
- c. 4 - 1 - 5 - 3 - 2
- d. 4 - 1 - 3 - 5 - 2

5. Which among the following can be cited as a reason for the Sher Shah Suri discourage the Jagirdari system?

- a. Assuage the grievance of the nobility class to gain their support for the Sultan
- b. Maximise the receipts for financing the military campaigns to expand the rule
- c. End the exploitation of middle-level officers on taxpayers and restricts the influence of nobility
- d. None of the above is correct

6. With reference to the Partition of Bengal, 1905, consider the following statements:

1. The Bengal partition constituted a Hindu majority western Bengal Province and a Muslim majority province of Eastern Bengal & Assam.

2. The Bengalis became a linguistic minority in the reorganised State of Bengal following the Partition of Bengal, 1905.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

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

7. Professor Satyendranath Bose (S N Bose), a crusader for teaching of science in vernacular languages founded the Bengali science magazine

- a. Bigyan-mitra
- b. Bharateeyabigyan
- c. Gnanamangalam
- d. Gyan-o-Bigyan

8. Following is a description of an Indus Valley site: The Indus Valley site is a World Heritage site declared in 2021. The site has a triennial division unlike other Indus Valley civilization sites where we can witness Upper Town and Lower Town. The site has a giant water reservoir with dams; embankments that displays the knowledge of hydrology of Harappans. Besides, the site can boast of having a stadium and rock – cut architecture. Identify the Indus Valley Civilisation site:

- a. Dholavira
- b. Harappa
- c. Mohenjodaro
- d. Lothal

9. With reference to the Indus Valley Civilisation, consider the following statements"

- 1. Harappans were aware of almost all major metals and developed metallurgical processes to extract iron, copper, bronze, lead, silver and tin.
- 2. Harappans developed and used a decimal system of weights and measures for all practical purposes.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

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



10. With reference to the Harappan seals, consider the following statements:

1. Harappan seals were made predominantly from silver.
2. Merchants used unique individual seals of different shapes and designs, with carvings of animal or human figures for the identification of property and to stamp clay on trade goods.

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

11. With reference to the Preamble of the Indian Constitution, consider the following statements:

1. The Preamble are neither defended or guaranteed by the Constitution.
2. The Preamble neither empowers nor restrict the State with powers.

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

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

12. With reference to the terms "Indian territory", consider the following:

1. the State territories;
2. the Union territories specified in the First Schedule; and
3. territories later acquired.

Which among the above is / are constituents of the "Indian territory"?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

13. Consider the following statements:

1. The State Reorganisation Acts and bilateral-multilateral Land Boundary Agreements shall not be treated as an Constitutional amendment under Article 368.
2. The Parliament of India can enact State Reorganisation Bills under Article 3 to cede Indian territory to a foreign country.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

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

Consider the following statements:

1. The Union Council of Ministers can introduce the State Reorganisation Bills in either House of Parliament with prior recommendation of the President.
2. The President is not required to submit such a Reorganisation Bill to the Union Parliament with assent of State Legislature(s).

14.3. The Parliament of India can unilaterally alter the boundaries or name of any State / UT by a simple majority. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

15. Consider the following statements:

1. Part II of the Indian Constitution deals with the Citizenship of India.
2. India adopted the feature of single citizenship from the United States of America Constitution.
3. The single citizenship is a unitary feature of Indian Constitution.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

16. With reference to the Fundamental Rights of the Indian Constitution, consider the following statements:

1. The Constitution of India adopted the Fundamental Rights from the Bill of Rights of the US Constitution.
2. Fundamental Rights contain an exhaustive and comprehensive list of 'justiciable' Rights guaranteed to Indian citizens only without any discrimination by the Indian Constitution.

3. Fundamental Rights have already been achieved and enjoyed by individuals and are most essential for the comprehensive and holistic development of the individuals.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

17. With reference to the Fundamental Rights of the Indian Constitution, consider the following:

1. Promote the ideals of economic democracy
2. Qualified privileges and not absolute in nature
3. Self-executory in nature
4. Justiciable in a court of law

17.5. Basic structure of the Indian Constitution

Which among the above is / are feature of the Fundamental Rights of the Indian Constitution?

- a. 1, 2, 3 and 4 only
- b. 2, 3 and 4 only
- c. 2, 3, 4 and 5 only
- d. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Consider the following:

1. Urban Local Bodies
2. Statutory authorities



18.3. Aided Minority Educational Institution

Which among the above falls under the scope of the term 'State' under Article 12 of the Indian Constitution?

- a.1 and 2 only
- b.1 and 3 only
- c.2 and 3 only
- d.1, 2 and 3

19.Consider the following:

- 1.Constitutional Amendments
- 2.Laws enacted by the Parliament or the State Legislatures
- 3.Ordinances issued by the President or the State Governors
- 4.Statutory instruments like order, Bye-law, rule, regulation or notification
- 5.Non-legislative sources of law - custom or usage having the force of law

Which among the above falls under the scope of the term 'Law' under Article 13 of the Indian Constitution?

- a.1, 2 and 5 only
- b.1, 3 and 5 only
- c.2, 3, 4 and 5 only
- d.1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

20.With reference to the 'judicial review under a procedure established by law', consider the following statements:

1. The courts only scrutinise the constitutional scope of powers exercised and procedures followed by the legislature and the executive at all levels.
2. The 'judicial review' scrutinise the powers exercised and procedures followed by the executive and legislative wings at all levels.

20.Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

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

21.Consider the following statements:

1. The 'writ of Mandamus' cannot be issued to enforce contractual obligations; Departmental instructions of non-statutory nature, discretionary duties etc.
2. Habeas Corpus can be filed by an aggrieved party directly related to the detained individual.
3. The High Court enjoys the original and exclusive jurisdiction to deals and issue 'writs of non-prerogative nature'

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- a.1 and 2 only
- b.1 and 3 only
- c.2 and 3 only
- d.1, 2 and 3

22.Consider the following statements:

22. Consider the following statement:

1. The Constitution (Forty – fourth Amendment (44th)) Act, 1978 removed the Right to property from Fundamental right and transferred to legal rights.
2. An aggrieved party deprived of rights guaranteed under Article 300 A of the Indian Constitution can approach the Supreme Court of India for legal remedies.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

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

23.The Ninth Schedule to the Indian Constitution was added by

- a.First Amendment
- b.Eighth Amendment
- c.Ninth Amendment
- d.Forty Second Amendment

24.Consider the following pairs:

1. Conrad Discontinuity: Transition zone between Outer core and Inner core.
2. Mohorovicic Discontinuity: Transition zone between the Crust and Mantle.
3. Repiti Discontinuity: Transition zone between Outer mantle and Inner mantle.
4. Gutenberg Discontinuity: Transition zone between Mantle and Core.
5. Lehman Discontinuity: Transition zone between upper and lower Crust.

Which among the above pairs is / are correctly matched?

- a.1, 2, 3 and 4 only
- b.2, 3 and 4 only
- c.3, 4 and 5 only
- d.All of the above

25.Consider the following statements:

1. Primary Waves propagate through solids, liquids and gases.
2. Primary Waves propagate as compressions and rarefactions parallel to the direction of propagation.
3. Primary Waves stretch and squeeze the medium of propagation.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- a.1 and 2 only
- b.1 and 3 only
- c.2 and 3 only
- d.1, 2 and 3

26.With reference to the 'Continental Drift Theory', consider the following statements.



26.1. The Continental Drift Theory was able to explain the formation of Fold Mountains and volcanic chain Islands along the plate boundaries.

2. Alfred Wegner proposed the possibility of existence of a “convection currents” operating in the entire mantle as responsible for drifting of continents.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are NOT true?

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

27.With reference to evidences of Continental Drift Theory, consider the following statements:

1. Matching of continental shorelines of Africa and South America, across the Atlantic ocean
2. Similar geomorphologic history of present non-contiguous landmasses
3. Distribution of flora and fauna from present non-contiguous landmasses
4. Formation of Fold Mountains and volcanic chain islands along the plate boundaries

Which among the above is / are evidences of the Continental Drift Theory?

- a.1, 2 and 3 only
- b.1, 2 and 4 only
- c.1, 3 and 4 only
- d.1, 2, 3 and 4

28.With reference to the qualifications of the Supreme Court Judge, consider the following:

1. Serving State High Court Judge for a period not less than 5 years.
2. Advocate practicing in a Court not inferior to that of State High Court for a period not less than 5 years.
3. Distinguished jurist# in the opinion of the President of India.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- a.1 and 2 only
- b.1 and 3 only
- c.2 and 3 only
- d.1, 2 and 3

29.With reference to the Sagarmala Yojana, consider the following:

1. Port modernisation
2. Port connectivity
3. Port led industrialisation
4. Coastal community development.

Which among the above is / are component(s) of Sagarmala Yojana?

- a.1, 2 and 3 only
- b.1, 3 and 4 only
- c.2, 3 and 4 only
- d.1, 2, 3 and 4

30.Following is a description of a currency: Crypto assets managed via Distributed Ledger Technologies where the issuer would maintain a minimum liquidity to provide a buffer against fluctuations in value from sudden large withdrawals by users, and from insolvency. Identify the asset:

- a.Digital currency
- b.Stable coins
- c.Fiat currency
- d.None of the above

31.With reference to the Central Bank Digital Currency, consider the following statements:

1. Traditional money issued by a distributed autonomous communities in digital form
2. Appreciates and depreciates based on the domestic monetary policies, trade surpluses
3. Electronic tokens whose token value is backed by an equivalent value of financial assets.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are NOT true?

- a.1 and 2 only
- b.1 and 3 only
- c.2 and 3 only
- d.1, 2 and 3

32.With reference to the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC), consider the following statements:

1. The Centre constituted the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) in 2010 based on the recommendations of the Urjit Patel Committee on Financial Sector Reforms (2008).

2. The Union Finance Minister serves as the Chairperson of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC).

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

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

33.Consider the following:

1. Trade settlement in Indian Rupees.
2. Bilateral and multi-lateral Currency Swap Agreement
3. Devaluation of Indian Rupees
4. Full Capital Account Convertibility Regime

Which among the above can necessarily help ensure drain in foreign exchange reserves during an adverse macro-economic scenario?

- a.1 and 2 only
- b.1, 2 and 3 only
- c.2, 3 and 4 only
- d.1, 2, 3 and 4

34.Which among the following publishes the World Press Freedom Index 2022?

- a.World Journalist Association
- b.Reporters without Border



- c. World Economic Forum
- d. Red Cross

35. With reference to the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), consider the following statements:

1. The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) is an Inter-Governmental Organisation (IGO) that aims to promote disaster-resilient infrastructure.
2. The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) focus upon promoting research and knowledge sharing in the fields of infrastructure risk management, standards, financing, and recovery mechanisms.
3. The secretariat of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) is located at Paris.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are NOT true?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

36. Consider the following statements:

1. The Climate Centre for Cities (C-CUBE) is an initiative of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA).
2. The Climate Centre for Cities (C-CUBE) initiative seeks to improve resilience of Indian cities against events emerging from climate change.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

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

37. With reference to classification of Hydrogen based on the source of production, consider the following pairs:

1. Brown Hydrogen: Hydrogen produced as a product of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions intensive industrial process.
2. Grey Hydrogen: Hydrogen produced using electricity produced in Thermal Power Plants - combustion of fossil fuels.
3. Blue Hydrogen: Hydrogen produced from treatment of permafrost deposited at sea-bed in the ocean floor.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

38. With reference to Leishmaniasis/ kala-azar, consider the following statements:

1. Leishmaniasis/ kala-azar is a parasitic borne disease transmitted by culex mosquitoes.
2. Both zoonotic transmission and anthroponotic transmission are recorded for Leishmaniasis/ kala-azar.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

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

39. With reference to the Regional Rural Bank (RRB), consider the following statements:

1. The Narasimha Working Group (1975) recommended for constitution of the Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) to provide affordable credit in rural areas.
2. The Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) have to fulfil Priority Sector Lending (PSL) of 40 % on their Net Demand and Time Liabilities (NDTL).

Which among the above statement(s) regarding the Priority Sector Lending (PSL) is / are true?

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

40. With reference to Chit funds, consider the following statements:

1. The State Registrar of Chits appointed by respective state governments under Section 61 of Chit Funds Act, 1982 serve as the regulator of chit funds.
2. The Chit funds can be categorised as a Non-Banking Financial Institution (NBFI).

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

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

41. With reference to the Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS), consider the following statements:

1. The Union Ministry for Skill Development serves as the nodal ministry of the Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS).
2. The Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS) provide industry-specific apprenticeship opportunities to fresh graduates belonging to technical courses.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are NOT true?

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

42. Following is a description: Conceptualized and implemented in India, it is a set of open Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) and digital public goods that aim to unlock the economic primitives of identity, data, and payments at population scale that would help promote financial and social inclusion and position India towards internet age. Identify the above statement.



- a. Digital Advancement of Rural Post Office for a New India
b. India Stack
c. Unified Payments Interface
d. None of the above

43. With reference to Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), consider the following statements:

1. Reduce the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions intensity as a proportion of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) BY 33% - 35% by 2030 compared to 2005 levels.

2. The Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) are voluntary pledges undertaken by respective countries and are not legally binding upon the Government.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

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

44. Match the following pairs:

1. Basel Convention: Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade

2. Rotterdam Convention: Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal

3. Stockholm Convention: Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

4. United Nations Minamata Convention: Mercury

Which among the above pairs(s) is / are correctly matched?

- a. 1, 2 and 3 only
b. 2, 3 and 4 only
c. 3 and 4 only
d. 1, 2, 3, and 4

45. With reference to Ramsar Wetland Sites, consider the following statements:

1. The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) is an international treaty for conservation and sustainable utilization of wetlands.

2. The Montreux Record is a register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

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

46. With reference to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), consider the following statements:

1. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is an inter-governmental organization comprising of Southeast Asian countries South East Asian Nations to protect and safeguard their collective political and economic interests.

46.2. The Bangkok Declaration, 1968 founded the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

3. The secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is located at Jakarta.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- a. 1 and 2 only
b. 1 and 3 only
c. 2 and 3 only
d. 1, 2 and 3

47. With reference to 'Agricultural subsidies', consider the following pairs:

1. GREEN BOX SUBSIDIES: Hardly cause any production or trade distortions.

2. BLUE BOX SUBSIDIES: Cause significant production and trade distortions

3. AMBER BOX SUBSIDIES: Support production-limiting programmes that still distort trade.

Which among the above pair(s) is / are correctly matched?

- a. 1 only
b. 1 and 3 only
c. 2 and 3 only
d. 1, 2 and 3

48. With reference to the Unique Identification Authority (UIDAI), consider the following statements:

1. The Unique Identification Authority (UIDAI) is a statutory authority constituted under the Aadhar Bill, 2016.

2. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs serve as the parent body of the Unique Identification Authority (UIDAI).

3. The Unique Identification Authority (UIDAI) would assign a 12-digit unique identification (UID) number (Aadhaar) to all the citizens of India.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- a. 1 only
b. 1 and 3 only
c. 2 and 3 only
d. 1, 2 and 3

49. With reference to the National Commission for Safai Karmacharis, consider the following statements:

1. The National Commission for Safai Karmacharis was constituted as a statutory body established under National Commission for Safai Karmacharis Act, 1993

























2. The National Commission for Safai Karmacharis was established in 1994 to deal with the grievances of persons engaged in manual scavenging.

3. The National Commission for Safai Karmacharis has a sanctioned strength of four members and a chairperson.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- a. 1 only
b. 1 and 3 only
c. 2 and 3 only
d. 1, 2 and 3

OMR ANSWER SHEET

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<p>Candidate Sign</p>	<p>INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING THE SHEET</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This sheet should not be folded or crushed. 2. Use only blue/black ball point pen to fill the circles. 3. Use of pencil is strictly prohibited. 4. Circles should be darkened completely and properly. 5. Cutting and erasing on this sheet is not allowed. 6. Do not use any stray marks on the sheet. 7. Do not use marker or white fluid to hide the mark. <p>WRONG METHODS CORRECT METHOD</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  ✗ </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  ✗ </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  ✗ </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  ✓ </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  ○ </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  ○ </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  ○ </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  ● </div> </div>																																																																																																																																																	
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SPACE FOR ROUGH NOTES





**SAMKALP
vedhik
CURRENT
AFFAIRS**
January 2023

VEDHIK IAS ACADEMY

Head Office: M4 - Houz New Delhi - 16
Registered Office : Mercy Estate 4th Floor,
Ravipuram, Pin - 682 015

