



# INSIGHTSIAS

SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION

## INDUS VALLEY CIVILISATION

A recent book has highlighted how climate and geography influenced early civilizations.

Indus Valley Civilisation differs from other ancient civilizations because inequality levels were far lower than in other civilizations.

13 MARCH - 18 MARCH 2023

## WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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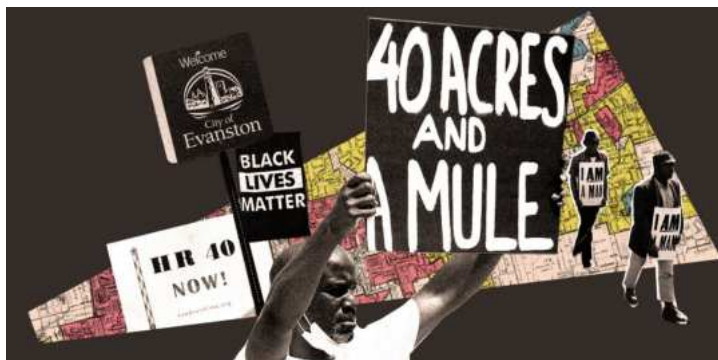
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## GS3

#### Economy

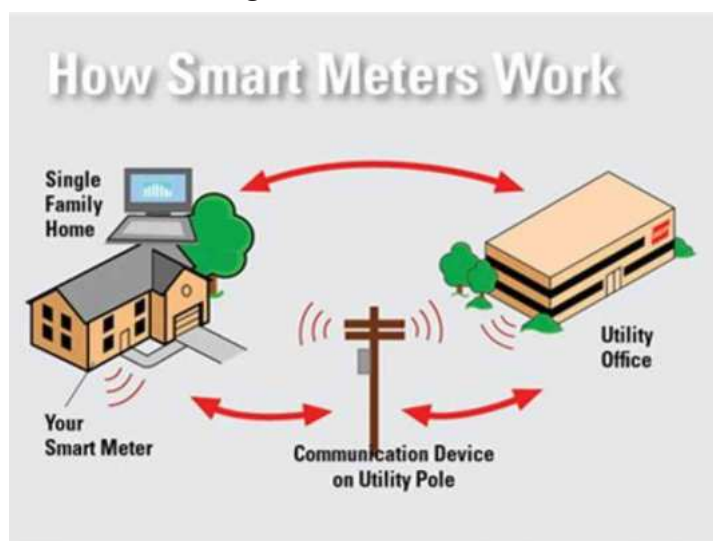
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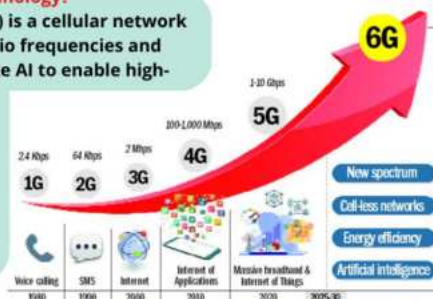
**6G** 6 G

**Context:** As per the government, Indian scientists, engineers, and academicians have acquired 100 patents for 6G technology

#### What is 6G technology?

A 6G network (successor of 5G) is a cellular network that operates in untapped radio frequencies and uses cognitive technologies like AI to enable high-speed, low-latency communication at a pace multiple times faster than fifth-generation networks.

- 6G networks are currently under research and development, yet to be released.



To know more Visit Insights IAS Daily Current Affairs

Parameter	5G	6G
Spectrum (Major Frequency Bands)	24 GHz to 100 GHz	95 GHz to 3 THz (Terahertz) (Can operate on higher frequency than 5G)
Latency (End to End Delay)	5 milliseconds	1 millisecond
Peak Data Rates	Up to 20 Gbps	Up to 1,000 Gbps
Significance	Accelerate adoption of cloud gaming, AR/VR technology, Internet of Things etc.	Support high-performance computing, edge computing, Technology Convergence etc.

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# CONTENT FOR MAINS ENRICHMENT (ETHICS/ESSAY):

## Society

- Hustle culture 63



This culture has been embraced by more individuals, especially with the rise of entrepreneurship and start-up culture.



Several studies have shown that overwork can lead to early-age burnout and severely damage people's health.

Several experts point out that 'Hustle culture' is being used by managers, giant corporations and firms to make their employees work harder and help them pocket more profits without giving high salaries and ensuring social benefits.

To know more Visit Insights IAS Daily Current Affairs

## Women Empowerment

- Global Feminist Movements 65
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# GS1

## Indian culture

## ANTIQUITIES ABROAD: WHAT INDIAN, INTERNATIONAL LAWS SAY

### Context:

According to an RTI, only 486 antiquities have been reported as missing (since Independence) from the 3,696 monuments protected and maintained by the ASI.



(L-R) The God Revanta 10th century, bronze, late Chalukyan, Karnataka / Andhra; Kamadeva, the God of Love 8th century, stone, early medieval Kashmir; Child Saint Sambandar – late 11th century, copper alloy, Chola period

### What is antiquity?

- India's [Antiquities and Art Treasures Act \(AATA\), 1972](#), defines “antiquity” as any coin, sculpture, painting, epigraph or other work of art or craftsmanship that has been in existence **for not less than 100 years**.
  - For a manuscript, record or other documents which are of scientific, historical, literary, or aesthetic value, this duration is not less than 75 years.
- The [UNESCO 1970 Convention](#) defines “cultural property” as the one designated by countries having importance for archaeology, prehistory, history, literature, art or science.

### How have Indian laws relating to the country's heritage evolved?

- Before Independence, the **Antiquities (Export Control) Act 1947** ensured that no antiquity could be exported without a license.
- After Independence,

- All the Union, State and Concurrent Lists of the Schedule VII of the Indian Constitution deal with the country's heritage.
- In 1958, [The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act](#) was enacted.
- A few incidents of theft of antiquities along with the UNESCO convention (1970), prompted the government to enact the AATA 1972.

### Salient provisions of the AATA 1972:

- Other than the Central Government, **no person can export any antiquity or art treasure**.
- No person can carry on the business of selling any antiquity **except in accordance with the terms and conditions of a licence** - granted by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- After the AATA was implemented (1976), the Centre asked traders in antiquities and art objects **to declare their possessions of antiquities**.
- Every person who owns, controls or is in possession of any antiquity **shall register such antiquity** and obtain a certificate.
  - What is the ‘provenance’ of antiquity? It includes the list of all owners from the time the object left its maker's possession to the time it was acquired by the current owner.

### Registered antiquities in India:

So far, the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (2007), **has registered 3.52 lakh antiquities among the 16.70 lakh it has documented**.

### Threats to antiquities:

- The **illicit import, export, and transfer of ownership** of cultural property are one of the main causes of the impoverishment of the cultural heritage of the countries of origin (UNESCO).
- Almost 50 years after the UNESCO convention, the illicit international traffic of cultural items **is sadly increasingly prolific** [INTERPOL report (2019)].

### Can India bring back antiquities?

- There are **three categories** - antiquities taken out of India pre-independence; taken out since

independence and until the implementation of AATA and antiquities taken out since 1976.

- **For items in the first category**, requests have to be raised bilaterally or on international fora.
- Antiquities in the **second and third categories** can be retrieved by raising an issue bilaterally with proof of ownership and with the help of the UNESCO convention.

### Why are laws incapable of stopping illicit activity?

- The registered antiquities in India **are a very small portion of the total number** (estimated to be around 58 lakh).
- In India, the problem with missing antiquities is that in many cases, **there is no FIR**, which is the first thing in order to prove ownership.
- The biggest challenge India is facing in bringing back antiquities is the **gap between the artefacts officially declared missing** and surfacing in

global markets/museums.

### Way ahead:

- **Robust database** of existing and stolen antiques and artefacts.
- **ASI must be provided with additional resources** for the protection and maintenance of antiquities.
- **International co-operation** constitutes one of the most efficient means of protecting each country's cultural property.




### Modern Indian history

## WOMEN AND NATION BUILDING: 1857 TO THE REPUBLIC






### Context:

On the occasion of the **133rd Foundation Day of the National Archives of India**, an exhibition has highlighted the contributions of women in nation-building and freedom struggle from 1857 to 1950.

Some examples of the [contributions made by women](#) in nation-building and the freedom struggle from 1857 to 1950:

Name		Example
Rani Lakshmi Bai		Rani Lakshmi Bai is famously known for her valiant stand against the British in the <b>Siege of Jhansi</b>
Begum Hazrat Mahal		Begum Hazrat Mahal was a key figure in the <b>Lucknow</b> uprising and led a force of rebels against the British in the <b>battle of Chinhath</b> .
Sarojini Naidu		Sarojini Naidu was a <b>prominent Indian nationalist</b> and was the <b>first Indian woman to be president</b> of the Indian National Congress. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participated in the Indian National Movement, and was a key figure in the <b>Non-Cooperation Movement</b></li> <li>• Her work as a poet earned her the title of '<b>Nightingale of India</b>' from Mahatma Gandhi</li> </ul>



Name		Example
Annie Besant		Annie Besant was an <b>Irish-born British writer, activist, and Theosophist</b> who supported Indian self-rule. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocated for Indian <b>self-rule (Home Rule Movement)</b> and supported the Indian National Congress</li> <li>• Her contributions include being one of the <b>founders of the Banaras Hindu University</b></li> </ul>
Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay		Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay was a <b>social reformer</b> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She played an important role in promoting Indian handicrafts and empowering women.</li> </ul>
Begum Rokeya		Begum Rokeya was a <b>writer, educator, and social activist</b> who worked for women's education and advocated for women's rights. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She was the founder of the <b>first school for Muslim girls</b> in British India.</li> <li>• Worked for <b>women's education</b> and was a pioneer of women's rights in India</li> </ul>
Madam Bhikaji Cama		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She was involved in the <b>home-rule movement</b></li> <li>• She was instrumental in <b>demanding equal rights for all Indians</b>, regardless of religion or gender.</li> <li>• She unfurled the Indian Tricolor Flag (this was the <b>first time an Indian flag was flown outside of India</b>) at Stuttgart (Germany) in 1907.</li> <li>• She is also known as the <b>'Mother of Indian Revolution'</b></li> </ul>
Aruna Asaf Ali		<p>She was a <b>political leader who participated</b> in the Quit India Movement of 1942.</p> <p>She <b>hoisted the Indian National flag</b> at the Gowalia Tank maidan, Bombay during the Quit India Movement in 1942</p> <p>She is known as the <b>'Grand Old Lady of Indian Independence'</b> for her role in the freedom struggle.</p>

### Limitations:

- **Social restrictions** that confined women to traditional roles,
- **Lack of education** that limited their participation and communication abilities,
- **Limited access to resources, gender discrimination** within the movement,
- A **patriarchal society** that did not consider women equal to men, resulting in their voices being silenced and opinions not taken seriously.

### Conclusion:

Despite these limitations, many women played a significant role in the independence movement, paving the way for future generations of women to follow.

### About National Archives of India (est. 1891, HQ: New Delhi):

The National Archives of India is an **attached office** under the Ministry of Culture. It has at present in its repositories a collection of over 18 crores pages of Public Records, which include files, volumes, maps, bills assented to by the President of India, treaties, rare manuscripts, oriental records, private papers, cartographic records, etc.

**Insta Links:** [The comic book 'India's Women Unsung Heroes' released](#)

### Mains Links:

**Q. Discuss the significance of contributions made by women freedom fighters during the second half of the**

## 20th century.

### Prelims Links:

Q. In the context of Indian history, the Rakhmabai case of (1884) revolved around? (UPSC 2020)

1. women's right to gain education
2. age of consent
3. restitution of conjugal rights

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**Answer: B**

## Colonization, decolonization

# THE COLONIAL PAST IS STILL RELEVANT

### Context:

[Colonialism](#) remains a relevant factor in understanding the problems and dangers of the world in which we live.

COLONIALISM	&	IMPERIALISM
✦ The policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, <b>occupying it with settlers</b> , and exploiting it economically		✦ The policy of extending a country's power and influence through colonization, use of military force, or other means
✦ One nation <b>conquers and rules</b> over other regions		✦ <b>Creating an empire</b> , expanding into other countries and exercising power through <b>sovereignty or indirect mechanism of control</b>
✦ A practice		✦ The idea that drives the practice
✦ <b>1500s - 1900s</b>		✦ <b>1900s onward</b>

### Messy legacies of colonialism:

- Jammu and Kashmir, Palestine, etc.
- Civil conflict along ethnic or regional lines:
  - **Boundaries drawn in colonial times still create enormous problems of national unity, especially in Africa. For example, between Ethiopia and Eritrea.**
  - **The administrative habit of "divide and rule" → British policy in the subcontinent after 1857 → unequal distribution of the resources → political divisions between Hindus and Muslims → tragedy of Partition.**

### Implications of these colonial legacies:

- **Crisis of governance:** For example, the collapse of effective central governments in Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Liberia, and Somalia.
- **Underdevelopment in post-colonial societies** ("weak states" - vulnerable to collapsing) is itself a cause of conflict.
- **The uneven development** in a poor country - creates fissures between those from "neglected regions" and those who are better served.

**What has made the situation worse?** Capitalism has furthered poverty and ecological collapse - portrayed by Robert Kaplan in his book **The Coming Anarchy** → suggesting the real danger of perpetual violence on the peripheries of our global village.

### Way ahead:

The need of the hour is not only to protect fundamental human rights and democratic governance but **an international order principled upon the notions of sovereignty and the equality of states.**

### Insta Links: [Colonialism and Decolonization](#)

### Mains Links:

**Q. Examine critically the various facets of economic policies of the British in India from the mid-eighteenth century till independence. (UPSC 2014)**

### [Geophysical phenomena](#)

## NEW OCEAN IN THE MAKING

### Context:

Scientists, in 2020, predicted **a new ocean would be created as Africa gradually splits into two separate parts.**

- The division of the continent is connected to the **East African Rift**, which appeared in the **desert of Ethiopia in 2005, triggering the formation of a new sea.**

### About rifting:

- Rifting refers to the geological process in which **a single tectonic plate is split into two or more plates separated by divergent plate boundaries.**



- # GS2

[illegible]

paise (UP gets ₹2.73 and Bihar gets back ₹7.06) **Parliament**

- This is because the **population is given a higher weightage**, rewarding those who have not been able to achieve population control.
- While the developed States that have lowered their TFR below replacement rate benefit from the drop in TFR, **the component's weight is considerably less**.

### What do the defenders of the formula say?

- The objective of the transfer of funds is to enable a State to provide comparable levels of services.
- The basic rationale is horizontal equity.

### What do the southern States say?

- They have **grown faster and contributed larger** revenue to the central kitty.
- Equity should not adversely impact **efficiency**.
- Why is the money that goes to poorer States not leading to their development?
- State-wise HDI and per capita NSDP depict a trend where **States which get more money from the Centre show sedate growth**, and the progress of those who get less is relatively much superior.

### Conclusion:

The new fiscal federal architecture must be developed via forums like the GST Council, Inter-state Council, and NITI Aayog to accommodate the specific needs and aspirations of states as the dynamics of fiscal federalism change in India.

**Insta Links:** [Centre to roll out process to set up 16th Finance commission soon](#)

### Mains Links:

**Q. How far do you think cooperation, competition and confrontation have shaped the nature of federation in India? Cite some recent examples to validate your answer. (UPSC 2020)**

## INCREASE IN THE MINIMUM AGE OF MARRIAGE FOR WOMEN TO 21 YEARS TWO YEARS AFTER BILL IS NOTIFIED: CENTRE

### Context:

The increase in the minimum age of marriage for women to 21 years as provisioned in the Prohibition of Child Marriage Amendment Bill, 2021, would come into effect two years after the Bill is notified following its passage in Parliament.

### Background:

- According to the NFHS-5, **23%** (47% in NFHS-3 and 27% in NFHS-4) of women between the age of 20 and 24 were married before 18 years of age.
- In India, the practice of child marriage was **first legally prohibited** through the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 (legal age G = 14 years and B = 18 years)
- This Act was amended in **1978** to increase the minimum age to 18 years for females, and 21 years for men.
- **The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006** replaced the 1929 Act, with the same minimum age limits.
- In 2020, the central government set up a task force (Chairperson: **Ms Jaya Jaitly**) to examine the correlation between the age of marriage and the mother, and the child's health.
- The Committee suggested increasing the age of marriage for females to **21**.

**The Prohibition of Child Marriage Amendment Bill 2021:** The Bill, introduced by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development** and currently with the Parliamentary Standing Committee, amends **the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006**.

## TO OVERRIDE ALL OTHER LAWS & CUSTOMS

➤ Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 proposes to raise legal age for women to marry from 18 to 21, on a par with men

➤ Seeks to amend other laws for uniformity in age of marriage – Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872; Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936; Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937; Special Marriage Act, 1954.



Hindu Marriage Act, 1955; Foreign Marriage Act, 1969

➤ Anyone married before the age of 21 can seek annulment up to 5 years instead of the current 2 from the time of attaining majority

➤ Amendments to override all other laws, customs, usage or practice

➤ Bill to come into force 2 years from the date it receives President's assent

2021 Bill	The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006	Object and reasons of the Bill	Key issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing the age of marriage for females to 21 years and also specifies that the provisions of the Act shall override any other law, custom, usage or practice.</li> <li>Increasing the time period for filing a petition to annul child marriage to five years (i.e., 23 years).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M = 21 years, F = 18 years</li> <li>A person who is married before the minimum specified age may apply to annul the marriage within two years of attaining majority (i.e., 20 years of age).</li> </ul>	<b>Improvement of -</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maternal and infant mortality rates (IMR and MMR)</li> <li><b>Nutrition levels</b></li> <li>Sex ratio at birth (SRB)</li> <li>Education, professional training and vocational courses</li> <li><b>Female labour force participation</b></li> <li><b>Gender equality, empowerment of women.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different ages for attaining <b>majority (18) and being allowed to marry (21)</b></li> <li>Prohibiting marriages between the ages of 18 and 21 years - <b>Violates Article 19, 21</b> (SC in the <b>Navtej Singh Johar case 2018</b>)</li> <li>A person married between 18 and 21 years may also apply for annulling the marriage</li> <li><b>Implementation challenges</b> - There has been limited success in curbing the marriage of girls below the age of 18 years.</li> </ul>



## Way ahead:

- Two years from the date of notification of the amendment would **provide ample time for citizens** to prepare for this momentous reform.
- A **staggered schedule** raising the age of marriage by one year at a time, starting one year after the notification of the amendment.

## Insta Links:

[The Prohibition of Child Marriage Amendment Bill 2021](#)

## Mains Links:

**Q. "Empowering women is the key to controlling population growth". Discuss. (UPSC 2019)**

## Judiciary

# SAME-SEX MARRIAGES CAN ROCK SOCIETAL VALUES: CENTRE

## Context:

The Centre has opposed the Supreme Court pleas seeking **legal validation of same-sex marriage**, saying it would cause **complete havoc with the delicate balance of personal laws and accepted societal values**.

- According to the government marriage between a biological man and woman is a **"holy union, a sacrament and a sanskar" in India**.
- Any "deviation" from this "statutorily, religiously and socially" accepted norm in "human relationships" **can only happen through the legislature and not the Supreme Court**.

## What were the petitioners' demands:

- Sought an **interpretation of the [Special Marriage Act, 1954](#) in a gender-neutral manner** where a person is not discriminated against due to his sexual orientation.
- The Special Marriage Act of 1954 provides a civil form of marriage for couples who cannot marry under their personal law.

## Governments arguments:

- The government argued that the **Court had only decriminalized sexual intercourse between same-sex persons in its 2018 judgment in [Navtej Singh Johar](#)**, and not legitimized this "conduct".
- The court, while decriminalizing homosexuality, **had never accepted same-sex marriage as part**

**of the fundamental right to life and dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution.**

- Registration of marriage of same-sex persons **would also result in violation of existing personal as well as codified law provisions.**

It is submitted that **there cannot be an untrammelled right under Article 21 and cannot override other constitutional principles**, adding that Parliament has designed and framed marriage laws, which are **governed by personal laws/codified laws relatable to customs of various religious communities, to recognise only the union of a man and a woman to be capable of legal sanction, and thereby claim legal and statutory rights and consequences.**

## Ethical aspects of Same-sex marriage

**Equality:** Denying same-sex couples the right to marry is seen as discrimination and a violation of basic human rights.

**Consent:** Same-sex couples should be able to marry if they are both consenting adults who are making a free and informed decision to enter into a lifelong commitment.

**Harm:** Opponents of same-sex marriage argue that it is harmful to society or to children who may be raised by same-sex couples.

- However, many studies have found that there is no evidence to support these claims and that children raised by same-sex parents do just as well as children raised by opposite-sex parents.

**Tradition:** Some people argue that same-sex marriage goes against traditional values and beliefs.

- However, tradition is not always a reliable guide to ethics, and there is no inherent ethical value in maintaining a tradition simply because it is old or familiar.

**Religious beliefs:** For some, same-sex marriage may conflict with their religious beliefs. While everyone has the right to their own beliefs, it is important to remember that religious beliefs should not be used to justify discrimination or deny equal rights to others.

**Insta Links:** [SC transfers to itself all pleas related to same-sex marriage](#)

## Mains Link:

**Q. How does Indian society maintain continuity in traditional social values? Enumerate the changes taking place in it. UPSC 2021**



## LGBTQ AND BLOOD DONATION: WHAT THE CENTRE SAID IN SC

### Context:

The Centre recently told the Supreme Court, that the exclusion of transgenders, gay people, and female sex workers as blood donors by including them in the “at risk” category for HIV, Hepatitis B, or C infections is based on **due consideration of scientific evidence**.

### Background:

- **Thangjam Singh**, a member of the transgender community, moved the Supreme Court seeking to strike **down the prohibition on gay and transgender people from donating blood** under the ‘Guidelines for Blood Donor Selection & Blood Donor Referral, 2017’ issued by the National Blood Transfusion Council (NBTC) and the National Aids Control Organisation in 2017.

### Petitioners’ argument:

- Exclusion based on one’s gender identity and sexual orientation is “**completely arbitrary, unreasonable, and discriminatory and also unscientific.**”
- Since the blood is tested for infectious diseases like AIDS/ HIV, Hepatitis C, and B; permanently excluding persons based on their sexual preference violates their right to equality.

### What is the government’s argument for the exclusion?

- The exclusion of transgender and gays from blood donation is **premised on scientific evidence**.
- The Centre referred to the **Annual Report of the Department of Health and Family Welfare (2020-2021)** pointing to a **three to six times higher HIV prevalence among adults who are Hijras, Transgenders, MSM (Men who have sex with men), and female sex workers**.

#### Related News:

**Children of lesbian, gay parents do not necessarily become lesbians, gays: SC informs government**

**Context:** Growing up with lesbian or gay parents will not necessarily make a child lesbian or gay, Supreme Court confronted the government’s concern about the “**psychological**” impact same-sex marriages may have on children.

The case involved an “**interplay**” between constitutional rights of life, liberty, dignity, and equal treatment of members of the LGBTQ+ community on one side and **specific statutory enactments** that consider only a married union between a biological man and woman on the other side.

### Insta Links:

- [LGBTQIA](#)
- [Section 377](#)

### Government policies and interventions

## THE RISE OF THE ESG REGULATIONS

### Context:

The evolution of [environmental, social and governance \(ESG\)](#) laws and regulations are still at a nascent stage in India.

### Background:

- Businesses should be measured not just on traditional economic metrics (shareholder return), but also by their -
  - **Environmental impact**,
  - **Commitment to social issues** and the
  - **The soundness of their corporate governance** and protection of shareholder rights.
- Companies have a **distinct responsibility as corporate citizens** and the ESG considerations in a company’s risk profile are needed to accurately assess the enterprise.

### How ESG differs from [corporate social responsibility \(CSR\)](#)?

- India has a robust CSR policy codified in the **Companies Act 2013**, mandating that corporations engage in initiatives that contribute to the welfare of society by **spending at least 2%** of their net profit over the preceding 3 years on CSR activities.
- ESG regulations differ in process and impact. **For example**, The U.K. Modern Slavery Act requires companies to **publish the efforts they have taken** to identify the risks of child labour in their supply chain, etc.

## Current focus of India:

Places more emphasis on protecting the environment or working conditions than on implementing the controls and disclosure that are essential components of modern ESG legislation.

## Attempts to bring ESG legislation in India:

- India has a number of laws and bodies regarding ESG issues, including
  - The **Environment Protection Act of 1986**,
  - Quasi-judicial organisations such as the **National Green Tribunal**,
  - A range of labour codes and laws governing **corporate governance practices**.
- While these provide important environmental and social safeguards, **new initiatives establish guidelines** for monitoring, quantification, and disclosure, akin to ESG.
- For example**, SEBI revised the annual Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (**BRSR**) required by the 1,000 largest listed companies in India, mandating disclosures from GHG emissions to **gender and social diversity**.

these new requirements and adjust their organisations accordingly.

**Insta Links:** [Strengthening the CSR framework is a profitable idea](#)

Issues relating to poverty and hunger.

## IPES REPORT HIGHLIGHTS GLOBAL HUNGER CRISIS AMID HIGH DEBT

### Context:

According to a special report by the IPES-Food, **at least 21 countries were nearing catastrophic levels of both debt distress and rising hunger in 2022.**

[International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems \(IPES-Food\)](#): Since 2015, this diverse and independent panel of experts has uniquely shaped the debate on global food systems reform, through policy-oriented research and direct engagement with policy processes.

### Highlights of the report - 'Breaking the cycle of unsustainable food systems, hunger and debt':

- Global public debt** was at its highest levels in almost 60 years and countries were having to choose between repaying debts and feeding people.
  - 21 countries (including Afghanistan, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Haiti, and Sri Lanka)** were nearing catastrophic levels of both debt distress and rising hunger.
- About **60% of low-income countries and 30% of middle-income countries** were considered at high risk of debt distress.
- The world's poorest countries **saw the costs of servicing their debt increase by 35% in 2022.**

### On India:

- Several countries are now stuck in what has been described as a 'fertilizer trap'**: India (with \$26 billion budgeted in 2022), Kenya, and the Philippines are among a host of governments ramping up fertilizer subsidies in the face of the crisis, alongside rising fuel import costs.

Challenges for Indian companies	Implications for Indian companies	Way ahead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compliance with ESG regulations (both originating in India and elsewhere - US, UK, EU), <b>pose a significantly different challenge</b> than India's CSR regulations.</li> <li>Ownership that is obscured through <b>shell companies</b> can present additional challenges.</li> </ul>	Compliance will be essential if India wants to fully benefit from the <b>growing decoupling from China</b> and play a <b>more significant role in global supply chains</b> .	Thorough due diligence (for assessing risks and controls) will play a key role.

**Conclusion:** Companies that wish to maximise their opportunities in the global economy need to embrace

**Success case study:**

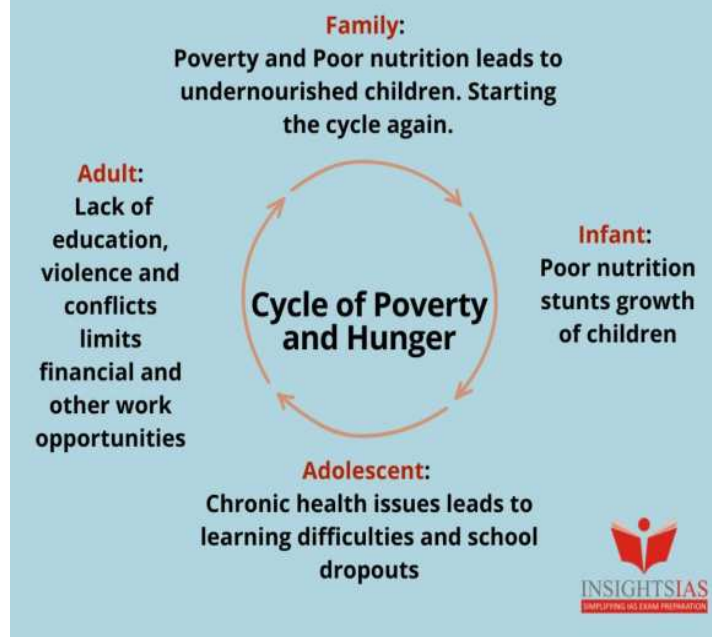
**Natural farming (Andhra Pradesh):** In contrast to Sri Lanka's botched top-down organic transition, the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh has engaged some **620,000 farmers** in a sequenced transition to chemical-free, '**natural farming**', with initial data suggesting higher household incomes, yield increases, cost savings, improved quality of soils and crops, as well as reduced stress and better health.

**Reasons behind this crisis:**

- **Import dependencies** (Africa's food import dependency has tripled → food price spikes), extractive financial flows, boom-bust commodity cycles and unsustainable/climate-vulnerable food systems.
- **Higher costs for imports and debt repayments.**
- This required them to **earn dollars via crop exports** (to pay down their debts) rather than meeting local food needs.

**How will this impact countries?**

- A debt crisis could plunge millions more into **hunger, and poverty**
- Reversing decades of progress and **sparking further instability and conflict**

**HOW HUNGER TRAPS PEOPLE IN CYCLE OF POVERTY****Way ahead:**

- The report called for **urgent action to provide debt relief and development finance** on a scale to meet the needs of
  - **COV'D-19 recovery,**
  - **Climate-resilient food systems and**
  - **Sustainable development goals (SDGs).**
- It also urged policymakers to **repair historical injustices** that have left countries **funneling profits and exports to the global North.**
- For this, **windfall taxes on food profiteers** and steps to achieve **tax justice**, and **climate justice** are needed as soon as possible.

### Recommendations to break the cycle of unsustainable food systems, hunger, and debt



**Insta Links:** [World facing a worst global hunger crisis](#)

## GUIDELINES ON MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE UNDER CONSIDERATION

### Context:

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has taken into consideration the **healthcare sector's long-standing demand to frame guidelines for determining medical negligence cases.**

### Background:

- It has been more than 17 years since the Supreme Court, for the first time in the **Jacob Mathew case in 2005**, directed the Centre to frame statutory rules in consultation with the then medical education regulator **Medical Council of India (MCI)** to deal with medical negligence cases as it impacts both doctors and patients.

### About Medical Negligence:

- Medical negligence, also known as **medical malpractice**, refers to a situation where a **healthcare professional fails to provide the appropriate standard of care to a patient, resulting in harm, injury, or death.**

### Supreme Court criteria on Medical Negligence:

- In **Kusum Sharma v. Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre**, a two-judge Supreme Court panel recognized several criteria to regulate medical negligence cases.

#### Bolam Test

- The Bolam test was created in 1957 as a result of the judgement of the House of Lords in **Bolam v Friern Barnet Hospital Management Committee**, which said that a **doctor may be able to escape a lawsuit for negligence if he can show that other medical practitioners would have behaved in the same manner.**
- The Bolam test, which argues that a doctor is not negligent if **what he has done would be approved by a responsible body of medical opinion in the relevant speciality at the time, remains the principal test to assess 'standard of care'.**

### Various incidents of medical negligence:

- Foreign matter left inside after surgery
- Wrong part Removed
- Doctor acting in a callous manner
- Death due to transfusion of blood from a wrong group

### Implications of medical negligence:

- Physical harm
- Emotional harm
- Financial harm
- Loss of trust
- Impact on the healthcare system

## INDIA'S POOR PERFORMANCE ON SPECIFIC INTERNATIONAL INDICATORS DUE TO METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

### Context:

According to the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), India's poor performance on specific international indicators **despite rising per capita income** is due to methodological issues.

### Socio-development indicators where system-



### atic biases exist:

- [Childhood Stunting](#),
- [Female Labour Force Participation Rate](#) and
- Life Expectancy

### The impact of methodological issues:

- **Conceptual ambiguity**, flawed benchmarks, and shoddy methodology → flawed estimation → overestimating the level of deprivation.
- The growing use of Environment Social and Governance (ESG) norms in investment and trade decisions will mean that **real-world decision-making** will be increasingly impacted by biased data.

### What aggravates the problem?

- The Indian statistical authorities do not publish accurate data on a regular basis.
- **For example**, the registrar general of India (RGI) publishes life expectancy estimates every year. However, the official estimates for 2019 were released in July 2022 by RGI.

### Case study:

- The **global hunger index (GHI)** of FAO captures three dimensions of hunger: insufficient availability of food, shortfalls in the nutritional status of children and child mortality (which is mainly attributable to undernutrition).
- The 2022 index has ranked India at **107 among 121 countries**.
- According to the Indian government, the index is **an erroneous measure of hunger and suffers from serious methodological issues**.
- Three out of the four indicators used for the calculation of the index are related to the **health of Children and cannot be representative of the entire population**.
- The fourth and most important indicator estimate of the Proportion of the Undernourished (PoU) population is **based on an opinion poll** conducted on a very small sample size of 3000.

### Recommendations:

- To counter the global mismatches, **Indian statistical authorities** must publish their own estimates proactively.

- In order to be on time, **this can be done based even on partial data**, which can be updated later. This is done in the case of **GDP**.

### FROM ALARMING TO SERIOUS: GHI; MISINFORMATION: GOVT



Index suffers from serious methodological issues: ministry

#### IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Sri Lanka	64
Nepal	81
Bangladesh	84
Pakistan	99
Afghanistan	108

**94**

India in 2020

**101**

India in 2021

2015 GHI methodology changed to include data on child stunting/wasting, and to standardise the values.

This change caused a major shift in GHI scores, and the GHI Severity Scale was modified to reflect this shift. In GHI reports published since 2015, almost all countries have had much higher GHI scores compared with their scores in reports published in 2014 and earlier. This does not necessarily mean their hunger levels rose in 2015 – the higher scores merely reflect the revision of the methodology.”

GHI REPORT

#### GOVT HITS BACK

“Three out of four indicators used for calculation of the index are related to health of children and cannot be

representative of the entire population. The fourth and most important indicator estimate of Proportion of

Undernourished population is based on an opinion poll conducted on a very small sample size of 3000.”

### Insta Links:

Global Hunger Index

### Mains Links:

**Q. Despite the Consistent experience of High growth, India still goes with the lowest indicators of human development. Examine the issues that make balanced and inclusive development elusive. (UPSC 2019).**

### Governance

## BILL IN LOK SABHA TO STRENGTHEN TRI-SERVICES COMMANDERS' POWERS

### Context:

The Union Defence Ministry has introduced the Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Bill, 2023 in Lok Sabha.

### Background:

The bill comes ahead of the impending move **to establish integrated or joint commands** → all the assets of the tr-services → **operational control of a single three-**

star general.

## How do Indian armed forces operate currently?

- India currently has **only two unified commands**, the A&N Command (2001) and the Strategic Forces Command (2003) to handle the country's nuclear arsenal.
- These were set up in and **after the Kargil conflict** with Pakistan in 1999.
- There are also **some tri-service organisations** like the Defence Intelligence Agency, Defence Cyber Agency, Defence Space Agency, etc.
- In contrast, there are as many as **17 single-service commands** (Army 7, IAF 7 and Navy 3), which have **little connection** in planning and operations as well as command-and-control structures.
- At present, military personnel are governed by **different acts** (the Air Force Act, 1950, the Army Act, 1950 and the Navy Act, 1957) and rules of their own respective services.

## Compared with China:

- China re-organised its 2.3-million People's Liberation Army into five theatre commands in 2016 to boost offensive capabilities.
- For example, its Western Theatre Command handles the entire 3,488-km Line of Actual Control from eastern Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh.
- India has four Armies and three IAF commands for the northern borders with China.

## The Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Bill, 2023:

### Key provisions of the Bill:

- The central government may constitute an Inter-services Organisation, which may include a **Joint Services Command**.
- Empowers the Commander-in-Chief**/the Officer-in-Command of Inter-Services Organisations to **maintain discipline and ensure proper discharge of duties** of all the personnel from the army, navy and IAF serving under his command.
- The Commander-in-Chief or the Officer-in-Command of an Inter-services Organisation **shall be the head of such Inter-services Organisation**.

## Significance:

- Enabling legislation for joint services organisations (where personnel from all tri-services are posted), without amending the respective Acts.
- It will ensure -
  - An officer from any one service can now exercise direct command over personnel from the other two services.
  - Requisite command and control of the existing inter-services organisations as well as the proposed integrated **theatre commands** to be created in the coming months.



**Empowering joint command heads**

**WHAT THE LAW SEEKS:** To empower heads of inter-services organisations to act against personnel from any of the three services

**WHAT CURRENTLY HAPPENS:** Officers of a service lack authority to exercise disciplinary and administrative powers over personnel from another service

**WHY THIS MOVE MATTERS**

- The government says the lack of such powers has a direct impact on command, control and discipline
- It believes the law will help speed up disposal of cases, save time, help better integrate the armed forces

**A KEY STEP IN THEATERISATION PUSH**

It comes amid a renewed push for theaterisation, a long-awaited military reform for the best use of resources to fight future wars

HT

**Insta Links:** [CDS must proceed with caution](#)

## E-governance

## A CHANCE FOR INDIA TO SHAPE A DATA GOVERNANCE REGIME

### Context:

[India's G-20 presidency](#) has provided an opportunity for the country to ensure that its digital strategies and data governance are **inclusive, transparent, secure and conducive to sustainable development**.

### Background:

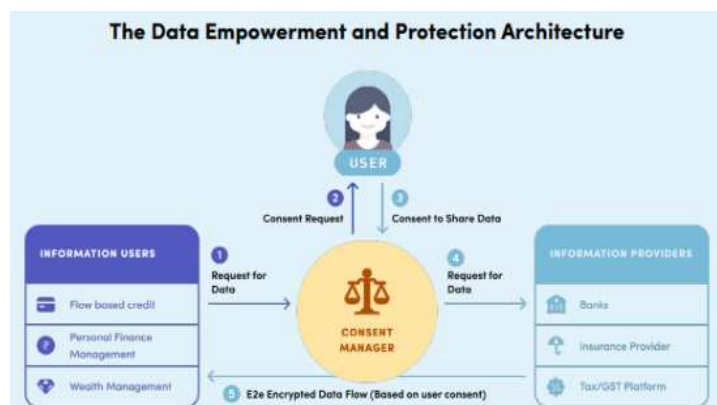
- In recent years, India has **made great strides in its digital strategies/data governance** → by em-

bracing technology (say, UPI) and digitalisation → driving economic growth → improving the lives of citizens.

- However, the **issues of ownership** and governance of data generated and collected and **data sovereignty** have become increasingly important.
  - **Data sovereignty is the idea that data is subject to the laws and governance structures of the nation where they are collected.**

### Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA):

- It was launched by the **NITI Aayog in 2020** on the premise that individuals themselves are the best judges of the '**right**' uses of their personal data.
- It is designed as an evolvable/agile **framework for good data governance** that empowers people to access their data and share it with third-party institutions seamlessly and securely.



### 3 key building blocks of DEPA:

- Enabling regulations,
- Cutting-edge technology standards, and
- New types of public and private organisations with incentives closely aligned to those of individuals.

### Advantages of DEPA:

- Potential to improve **data protection and privacy** for citizens
- Allowing individuals to **easily manage and control** their data consent
- **Build trust** in digital technologies and data governance.

### Risks associated with DEPA:

- Personal data could be **misused or misappropriated** if the consent management tool is not properly implemented.
- An implementation may be **inconsistent across different sectors and jurisdictions** → undermine effectiveness, **and create confusion** among citizens.

### Way ahead:

- The DEPA must be implemented in a **transparent, consistent, and secure** manner → requires close collaboration **between all the stakeholders**.
- Clear, transparent, and accountable data governance policies and regulations.
  - India Data Management Office (IDMO) proposed by MeitY will frame/manage review/revises the National Data Governance Framework Policy (NDGFP).
- Investment in the **necessary digital infrastructure and skills**.
  - [India Stack](#) is a unified software platform that provides digital public goods, and application interfaces and facilitates digital inclusion.
- Advances in financial inclusion (UPI) can be **replicated** successfully in other areas (health, agriculture).
- **International cooperation and collaboration** in addressing risks posed by the rapid growth of data and digital technologies.

### The Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture





### Conclusion:

It is important for India to navigate a **middle way** between restrictive data sovereignty and limitless data flow for the development of **ethical and responsible data governance practices**.

**Insta Links:** [Public Consultation on Draft National Data Governance Framework Policy](#)

### Bilateral relations

## INDIA AND AUSTRALIA RELATIONS

### Context:

Australian Prime Minister's visit to India for India-Australia Summit concluded recently

Dimension	Example
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bilateral trade (in 2022):</b> over <b>\$31 billion</b> (India's exports: over \$10 billion and imports at \$17 billion)</li> <li>• <b>Target:</b> Both countries aim to boost bilateral trade to \$100 billion by 2030</li> <li>• <b>Agreement:</b> Implementation of the <a href="#">Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)</a> (2022) and early completion of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>ECTA</b> slashed away duties on <b>96% of Indian exports and 85%</b> of Australian exports.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Defence and security cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Regular military exercises:</b> "<b>Malabar</b>" exercises in August 2023 (India, Australia, Japan, and the US), India has been invited to join the <b>Talisman Sabre exercises</b> in 2023</li> <li>• <b>Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA)</b> (signed between both countries in 2022) to enhance military interoperability</li> <li>• <b>The 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue</b> (2022)</li> <li>• <b>Membership:</b> Both are members of the <a href="#">Quad</a>, <a href="#">Commonwealth</a>, <a href="#">Indian Ocean Rim Association</a> (IORA), and have participated in the East Asia Summits.</li> <li>• <b>Indo-Pacific collaborations:</b> Both Australia and India support a rules-based international order against China</li> </ul>
Education and research collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Letter of Intent on Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement</b> to foster the exchange of skills.</li> <li>• <b>Mutual Recognition of Educational Qualifications (MREQ)</b> (2023)</li> <li>• <b>Deakin University and the University of Wollongong</b> are planning to open foreign university campuses in India.</li> <li>• <b>Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF)</b></li> </ul>
People-to-people ties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Indian Diaspora in Australia:</b> Over 10 lakh people in Australia reported their ancestry as Indian origin.</li> <li>• <b>Cultural exchanges:</b> Annual Confluence Festival of India in Australia and the Oz Fest in India.</li> </ul>



Dimension	Example
Shared Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pluralistic, Westminster-style</b> democracies</li> <li>• <b>Commonwealth</b> traditions</li> <li>• Strong, vibrant, secular, and multicultural <b>democracies</b></li> <li>• <b>Free press</b></li> <li>• An independent <b>judicial system</b></li> <li>• <b>English language</b></li> </ul>
Climate change and energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australia signed a <b>Uranium supply deal</b> with India (2014)</li> <li>• Letter of Intent on <b>New and Renewable Energy for cooperation</b> to reduce the cost of renewable energy technologies (signed in 2022)</li> <li>• India has given <b>10 million Australian dollars to Pacific Island Countries</b> under the <b>International Solar Alliance (ISA)</b>.</li> <li>• India-Australia <b>Critical Minerals Investment Partnership</b></li> </ul>
Strategic Indo-Pacific partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Shared vision: Free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, based on respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and international law.</b></li> <li>• <b>Multi-lateral engagements:</b> G20, India-Pacific Infrastructure Partnership (IPIP), the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).</li> <li>• <b>Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)</b> (between India, Australia and Japan)</li> </ul>
Science and Technology Cooperation	MoU between ISRO and Australian Space Agency (ASA) (2020) for space cooperation.
Historical	Official relations started with the consulate General of India first opened as a Trade Office in Sydney in 1941.

### Issues in the relation:

- The controversy over the Adani coal mine project, which caused tensions due to protests by activists.
- Visa restrictions for Indian students and professionals seeking to work in Australia.
- Attacks on the Indian diaspora and temples by Khalistan supporters have caused strains in the relationship.

### Way forward:

The India-Australia relationship has grown stronger due to shared interests, values, and goals. Both countries want a free, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region, and they aim to resolve any disagreements or conflicts through peaceful means.

**Insta Links:** [India-Australia Relations](#)

### Mains Links:

**Q. Australia's interests do not just align with India's; they are inextricably entwined. Discuss. (150 words)**

Prelims Links:

Q.1 Consider the following countries: (UPSC 2018)

1. Australia
2. Canada
3. China
4. India
5. Japan
6. USA

Which of the above are among the 'free-trade partners' of ASEAN?

- (a) 1, 2, 4 and 5  
 (b) 3, 4, 5 and 6  
 (c) 1, 3, 4 and 5  
 (d) 2, 3, 4 and 6

**Ans: C**

## WHAT IS THE MCMAHON LINE?

### Context:

Two United States Senators, have introduced a **bipartisan resolution in the upper chamber of Congress** reiterating that the **US recognises the McMahon Line as the international boundary between China and India**

## in Arunachal Pradesh.

- The resolution reaffirms **India's well-known and established position** that **Arunachal Pradesh, which China calls 'South Tibet', is an integral part of India.**



Fig: Disputed areas between India and China

## What is the McMahon Line?

- The McMahon Line serves as the **de facto boundary between China and India in the Eastern Sector.**
- It specifically represents the **boundary between Arunachal Pradesh and Tibet, from Bhutan in the west to Myanmar in the east.**
- China has historically disputed the **boundary and claims the state of Arunachal Pradesh as part of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR).**

## When was it drawn:

- The McMahon Line was drawn during the **Shimla Convention of 1914, officially described as the Convention Between Great Britain, China, and Tibet.**
- China was represented at the convention by the **government of the Republic of China, which was in power in the mainland from 1912 to 1949.**
- The McMahon Line **delimited the respective spheres of influence of Tibet and British India in the eastern Himalayan region in what is today India's Northeast and northern Myanmar.** The border in this region was undefined prior to the signing of the convention.

## What happened at the Shimla Convention of 1913-14?

- The convention attempted to **settle the question of Tibet's sovereignty and avoid further territorial disputes in the region.**
- The treaty divided the Buddhist region into

**"Outer Tibet" and "Inner Tibet"** – the former would "remain in the hands of the Tibetan Government at Lhasa under Chinese suzerainty", though China was not allowed to interfere in its affairs.

- The latter would be **under the direct jurisdiction of the newly formed Republic of China.**
- The latter of these newly decided boundaries would later be called the **McMahon Line** after McMahon, the chief British negotiator.

## Why China did not sign the convention:

- Arguing that Tibet had no independent authority to enter into international agreements.

## How was the border between British India and China decided?

- Following the **"highest watershed principle".** This principle, considered to be the **most logical way of drawing borders in mountainous regions by the British, basically drew the border along the highest ridge between two river plains.**

## Status of the McMahon line since 1914:

- After the communists took power in 1949, they **pulled China out of all international agreements and the so-called "unequal treaties".**



Fig: McMahon Line

**Insta Links:** [McMahon Line](#)

# INDIA-US ECONOMIC RELATIONS

## Context:

India and the United States of America held the 5th Ministerial level meeting of the bilateral Commercial Dialogue recently

## Various dimensions of India-US Economic relations:

Dimension	Examples
<b>Basis of commercial relations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Complementarity</b> of India-US economic system</li> <li>• <b>3D</b>= India's Domestic Demand, Democracy and Demography (skilled worker)</li> <li>• <b>Common security interests</b>: US supports India's emergence as a security provider in the Indo-Pacific as a region of peace, stability, and growing prosperity.</li> </ul>
<b>Trade</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India-US bilateral trade is <b>valued at \$157 billion (2021)</b></li> <li>• India has a <b>Trade surplus</b> with the US (about \$32bn in 2021)</li> <li>• <b>Top exports to the US</b>: Pharmaceuticals, Services, precious stones, and machinery</li> <li>• Mutual collaboration in <b>sharing of information to tackle offshore tax evasion</b></li> </ul>
<b>Investment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The US is one of the largest sources of <b>foreign direct investment</b> in India (FDI inflows of <b>over \$46 billion from 2000 to 2021</b>)</li> <li>• India is also one of twelve countries partnering with the United States on the <b>In-do-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Technology and Innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S.-India <b>Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)</b></li> <li>• MoU signed on establishing a semiconductor supply chain and innovation partnership for <b>Supply Chain Resilience</b>.</li> <li>• It will complement <b>India's Semiconductor Mission with US CHIPS and Science Act</b></li> <li>• Agreement on <b>establishing a Semiconductor Sub-committee under Commercial Dialogue</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Energy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The US is a supplier of oil and gas to India</b> (become 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Oil supplier in 2021; Currently: <b>Russia</b> is the top supplier)</li> <li>• Both countries will work together in <b>Global Biofuels Alliance</b> and also in hydrogen technologies</li> <li>• <b>U.S.-India Energy Industry Network (EIN)</b> for facilitating U.S. industry involvement in the Clean EDGE Asia initiative</li> <li>• United States joined the <b>International Solar Alliance</b></li> </ul>
<b>Defence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The US is 2<sup>nd</sup> largest supplier</b> of defence equipment to India (US supplied 16% of India's imported arms between 2016 and 2020, as per SIPRI)</li> <li>• <b>Major defence deals</b>: Purchase of Apache helicopters and P-8I maritime surveillance aircraft, C-17 Globemaster III transport aircraft, M777 howitzers</li> </ul>

## Challenges in Economic Relations:

- **Imposition of tariffs by the US** on Indian steel and aluminum products
- **India's Atmanirbhar Bharat Campaign** has been misunderstood as **protectionism**
- **Withdrawal of duty-free benefits to Indian exporters** under the GSP programme has affected India's export-oriented sectors
- US' hostility towards other **countries like Iran and Russia**, who are traditional allies of India, has also created differences.
- India's **purchase of S-400 from Russia** and the US' policy in Afghanistan are also challenges that are affecting the India-US relationship.

## Conclusion:

The demographic dividend in India provides a significant opportunity for technology transfer, manufacturing, trade, and investment between the US and India. There is huge potential for more commercial partnerships esp. as US companies are adopting the "China Plus One" strategy.

## Insta Links: [India-US](#)

### Mains Links:

**Q. What introduces friction into the ties between India and the United States is that Washington is still unable to find India a position in its global strategy, which would satisfy India's National self-esteem and ambitions'. Explain with suitable examples. (UPSC 2019)**

#### Prelim Links

**Q. India Government Bond Yields are influenced by which of the following? (UPSC 2021)**

1. Actions of the United States Federal Reserve.
  2. Actions of the Reserve Bank of India.
  3. Inflation and short-term interest rates.
- (a) 1 and 2 only  
(b) 2 Only  
(c) 3 Only  
(d) 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: D**

## IRAN-SAUDI DEAL: WHAT IT CAN MEAN FOR CHINA, WEST ASIA, AND INDIA?

### Context:

The Saudi-Iran detente/truce is China's major geopolitical manoeuvre in West Asia and sets the stage for political influence in the region that was formerly dominated by the US.

### Background:

- **The opening of diplomatic relations between the two** came after decades of enmity and a formal cutting of ties in 2016.
- Since 2014, the two countries had been in a **proxy war in Yemen**, where Iran is backing the Houthi rebels and the Saudis lead a coalition of Gulf states backed by the US.

### About the Saudi-Iran deal brokered by China:

The "joint trilateral statement", signed in Beijing, includes -

- **Resumption of diplomatic relations** and re-opening of embassies and missions;

- To respect for the sovereignty of states and the non-interference in the internal affairs of states;
- **To implement the Security Cooperation Agreement (2001)** and
- To implement the General Agreement for Cooperation in **Economy, Trade, Investment, Technology, Science, Culture, Sports, and Youth** (1998).

### Mutual Interests Drive Settlement Decision: Exploring Reasons Behind Agreement

- **For Saudi**, tense relations with the Biden Administration, **the absence of American security guarantees against Iran**, rapid changes in the Saudi economy (diversification) and China's rising profile in West Asia.
- **For Iran**, the isolation that came with the nuclear sanctions; **the Abrahamic accords** (2020) - the coming together of archenemy Israel-UAE-Bahrain-Saudi; the uprising of women; normalised relations with UAE and Kuwait.

### Significance of the deal:

- No one believes this deal will end all differences between the Sunni (Saudi) monarchy and Shia (Iran) republic.
- The deal may lead to **lasting peace in Yemen** and also end proxy Saudi-Iran hostilities in **Lebanon, Syria**, etc.
- May develop into a **four-way alignment (Saudi-Iran-China-Russia)**.
- **China is taking a new avatar** - peacemaker, power broker - giving the world a new alternative to the US (blamed for instability in the region - failed miserably in Iraq, and Afghanistan).

### World's response

- **US:** Welcomed the agreement and declined the assessment of diminished US influence in the region. **For example**, Saudi recently concluded a deal for 121 Boeing aircraft with the US.
- **Israel:** A clear setback for PM Binyamin Netanyahu's foreign policy - claiming to be the only country that could bring together an Arab-Israeli coalition against Iran.
  - **The Abrahamic Accords/the Arab-Israeli alliance, mediated by the Trump Administration, are shaken up by the Saudi-Iran agreement.**



- **India: Shocked** by China's (its principal adversary in a region where it has invested much diplomatic energy over the last decade) new avatar.
  - **India has always advocated dialogue and diplomacy to resolve differences.**

### Options available for India:

- **Cooperation** rather than confrontation with China in West Asia.
- Considering **both countries have a wide range of shared interests** in terms of energy security, open and free sea lanes, logistical connectivity, and most importantly, regional stability.

### Conclusion:

- China's big-ticket diplomacy in the region is sure to impact the [I2U2 \(Israel-India-UAE-US\)](#) grouping.
- It calls for India **to work on its ties to the region independently of the US** (for instance with Iran), and in ways that project its civilisational and cultural links and the positive contributions of the Indian diaspora.

### Insta Links:

In Saudi-Iranian normalization, new challenges emerge in West Asia

### Mains Links:

**Q. In what ways would the ongoing US-Iran Nuclear Pact Controversy affect the national interest of India? How should India respond to its situation? (UPSC 2018)**

### Effect of policies and politics

## 'LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRY' STATUS

### Context:

Bhutan will become the **seventh nation to graduate from the United Nations (UN) list of Least Developed Countries (LDC)**.

### What is a Least Developed Country (LDC)?

According to the UN, an LDC is defined as **"a country that exhibits the lowest indicators of socioeconomic**

**development, with low levels of income, human capital and economic diversification, high levels of economic vulnerability, and a population that is disproportionately reliant on agriculture, natural resources, and primary commodities."**

### The UN identifies three criteria for a country to be classified as an LDC:

- It must have a **gross national income (GNI) per capita below the threshold of USD 1,230 over a three-year average.**
- It must **perform poorly on a composite human assets index** based on indicators including **nutrition, health, and education.**
- The country must **demonstrate economic vulnerability** such as being prone to natural disasters and possessing structural economic constraints.

### How does a country get off the LDC list?

- A nation must have a **GNI per capita of at least USD 1,242 for two consecutive triennial reviews** in order to meet the income requirement.
- By using measures like education, health, and nutrition, a nation must show that it has improved its **human capital in order to achieve the human assets requirement.**
- A nation also must show that it has **improved its ability to withstand external economic shocks like natural catastrophes or shifts in commodity prices in order to pass the economic vulnerability test.**

### Advantages of being an LDC

- Being an LDC confers certain economic benefits to the listed country.
- LDCs also enjoy **duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) access to the markets of developed countries.**
- LDCs are also eligible for loans with special terms for development, which include loans with a lower interest rate and a longer repayment time than those given to other nations.

## Related News:

### Doha Political Declaration

**Context:** The **Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5)** concluded with the adoption of the 'Doha Political Declaration' by world leaders.

With just under eight years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the declaration focuses on implementing the **Doha Programme of Action (DPoA)** — the 10-year plan to put the world's 46 most vulnerable countries back on track to achieving the UN-mandated Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

DPoA (2022-2031) consisted of six key focus areas including eradicating poverty, leveraging the potential of science and technology to fight against multi-dimensional vulnerabilities and to achieve the SDGs, addressing climate change, and environmental degradation, recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and building resilience against future shocks for risk-informed sustainable development.

### Insta Links:

[China's status as a 'developing country' at the World Trade Organization \(WTO\)](#)

## GS3

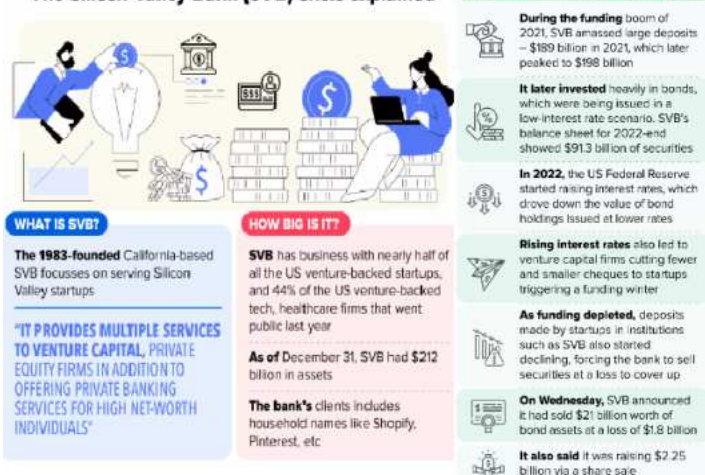
### Banking and issues

## WHAT CAUSED SILICON VALLEY BANK'S FAILURE?

### Context:

The downfall of the US-based Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) is the **largest failure of a financial institution** since the [global financial crisis of 2008](#).

### The Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) crisis explained



### What went wrong at SVB?

- The financial institution best known for its relationships with high-flying world technology startups and venture capital **experienced a bank run**.
- A **bank run**, which is **typically the result of panic** (customers withdraw their deposits simultaneously) rather than true insolvency, **pushes a bank into actual insolvency**.
- Bank runs have occurred throughout history including during the **Great Depression** and the **2008-09 financial crisis**.

### What happens next?

- The **SVB's large deposits** (startups and wealthy tech workers) are unsafe.
  - The **Federal government insures deposits** to \$250,000 and anything above it is considered uninsured and likely to be released in an orderly process.
  - But many businesses want to access funds to meet payroll and office expenses → could lead to furloughs/layoffs.
- There is no buyer of SVB.

### Is this a sign of a repeat of the 2008 global financial crisis?

- No**. SVB was large but had a unique existence by servicing nearly exclusively the technology world and VC-backed companies.
- Other banks are far more diversified** across multiple industries, customer bases and geographies and **could survive a deep recession and a significant rise in unemployment**.
- However, if the 'contagion effects' from SVB or

higher interest rates hit more foreign banks, a **flight to safety among global investors** could hit capital flows into emerging markets.

### Impact on the Indian economy?

- Many Indian start-ups [especially in the SaaS (software as a service) sector] **not only have accounts**, but the bank had also been an important **lender**.
- **For example**, an investment of a total of \$1.7 million in One97 Communications, the parent company of Paytm.
- As the funding for start-ups is dwindling, this could prove to be a major roadblock, especially for **young businesses**.
- The flight of capital could also impact the **rupee**.

### Insta Links: Ten years on, in uncharted waters

#### Prelims Links: (UPSC 2020)

Q. If another global financial crisis happens in the near future, which of the following actions/policies are most likely to give some immunity to India?

1. Not depending on short-term foreign borrowings
2. Opening up to more foreign banks
3. Maintaining full capital account convertibility

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

1. 1 only
2. 1 and 2 only
3. 3 only
4. 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: 1**

## WHAT ARE 'TOO-BIG-TO-FAIL' BANKS, AND WHAT MAKES INDIAN BANKS SAFE?

### Context:

Recent banking crisis in the US has raised the question of how secure Indian banks are in the age of start-ups and digitisation.

### Background:

- Despite the recent bank failures in the **US (SVB)**, which occurred more than a decade and a half after the 2008 global financial crisis, **Indian banks remained unaffected**.
- India has established **Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs)/Too-Big-To-Fail banks to protect itself from 2008/SVB-like episodes**.



## Too-Big-To-Fail banks:

What are D-SIBs?	How are they selected?	Significance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A bank that <b>might substantially disrupt the financial system</b> (because of its size, lack of substitutability, and interconnectedness) <b>in the event of its failure</b>.</li> <li>In <b>2010</b>, the Switzerland-based Financial Stability Board (FSB) recommended that <b>all member countries should put in place a framework</b> to reduce risks attributable to Systemically Important Financial Institutions (SIFIs) in their jurisdictions.</li> <li>The D-SIB framework was announced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in <b>2014</b>.</li> <li>RBI has classified <b>SBI, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank</b> as D-SIBs.</li> <li>These banks have to earmark additional capital and provisions to safeguard their operations.</li> <li><b>This avoids moral hazard</b> due to the perception that government support at times of distress encourages risk-taking, reduces market discipline, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The RBI follows a <b>two-step process</b>.</li> <li>First, a <b>sample of banks</b> to be assessed for their systemic importance is decided. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Banks (based on Basel-III Leverage Ratio Exposure Measure) having a size beyond 2% of GDP will be selected in the sample.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Next, the D-SIBs are segregated into buckets based on their systemic importance scores.</li> </ul> <p><b>G-SIBs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Basel accord, in consultation with the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS), has identified a list of G-SIBs.</li> <li><b>There are 30 G-SIBs currently</b> (none from India).</li> <li>Including JP Morgan, Citibank, HSBC, Bank of America, Bank of China, Barclays, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The failure of a large bank anywhere can have a <b>contagion effect</b> around the world.</li> <li>The failure of a bank → damages confidence in the banking system → affects the domestic/global economy due to the interconnected financial systems.</li> <li>As a result, government action was seen as being necessary for many jurisdictions to guarantee financial stability.</li> </ul>

## How is Indian banking unique?

- Sound regulatory practices and **government interventions** when banks have faced difficulties (**Yes Bank**).
- Different balance sheet structures** - household savings constitute a major part of bank deposits in India, which can't be withdrawn in bulk quantities.
- A large chunk of Indian deposits is with **public sector banks**, and with very strong private sectors lenders such as HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Axis Bank.

## TOO BIG TO FAIL

● Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) classified into five grades (buckets)	Bucket	Banks	Additional common equity tier I need as % of RWAs*
● RBI to announce list every August starting this year	5	—	1
● Banks will have to fulfil extra capital requirement norms (common equity tier I capital)	4	—	0.8
● Banks must meet the extra norms in three years by April 1, 2019	3	SBI	0.6
● Common equity tier I capital usually comprises a bank's equity capital, retained earnings and share premium	2	—	0.4
	1	ICICI	0.2

\*RWAs: Risk weighted assets

- **Expensive**, because it needs to be built to a minimum scale.
- **Often has a public good component**, which makes the social value of infrastructure higher than its private value to individual users → **making it relatively unprofitable for private investors**.
- **The traditional approach to financing infrastructure** → tax revenues or government borrowing.
- **Vicious trap** → poorer economies generate less tax revenue → increasing public borrowing domestically → crowd out private investment → limits infrastructure investment, growth of the economy → keep the country poor.

### Way ahead:

- The RBI's guidelines of 2018 advising banks to create an **Investment Fluctuation Reserve** is just the kind of countercyclical tool that has relatively insulated Indian lenders from interest rate risks.
- Still, **the RBI must remain on guard** to ensure neither global contagion nor management missteps threaten any local lender.

### Infrastructure

## WILL THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONS MODEL OF INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT WORK?

### Context:

Infrastructure in emerging economies like India has seemingly become both a **demonstration of good and a necessity**.

### Importance of Infrastructure in emerging economies:

- Simultaneously works as a national aspiration good,
- A barometer of national progress,
- A mechanism for job creation,
- A vehicle for crowding in private investment, etc.

### Constraints on infrastructure provision are:

### Indian government's efforts to come out of this vicious trap?

- **Incentivise private sector participation** by providing targeted subsidies for infrastructure investments.
  - In the early 2000s, the Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) model was introduced.
  - While the program did result in the construction of a lot of infrastructure, it ended in an avalanche of non-performing assets with public sector banks → widespread corruption → change in government in 2014.
- The **"national champions" model**: It modified the [PPP approach](#) by assigning the bulk of the infrastructure provisioning for roads, ports, airports, energy, and communications to a few chosen industrial houses.

### How does this model overcome the difficulty of financing infrastructure?

- **Incentivising national champions** to build the projects identified by the government.
- **New aspects of the national champions model**:
  - **Champions given control over existing projects with strong cash flows** → helps them to achieve targeted returns and borrow from external credit markets → lowers the cost of finance, freeing up domestic savings for private investment
  - **The public association of the champions with the government's national development policy** → generates a com-

**petitive advantage in getting domestic and foreign contracts.**

### Issues with the national champions model:

- The **direct association of conglomerates with government policies** → markets, regulators treat them as too big to fail → **delayed discovery of problems**, spillover.
- The longer it takes for projects to generate large cash flows, the greater will be the need for the state to provide **access to additional cash flows**.
- These risks turning the country into an **industrial oligarchy**.
- **An uneven playing field** in terms of market access, regulatory relaxations → a significant deterrent for foreign investors → bad for **efficiency and productivity at the economy-wide level**

### Dilemma India is facing:

- Can infrastructure provision be the solution to India's growth aspirations?
- India is at an inflection point in its development path.

### Way ahead:

A development model based on a domestic **demand-driven production structure, powered by soft and hard infrastructure**.

### Insta Links: Investment models

### Mains Links:

**Q. Explain how private-public partnership agreements, in longer gestation infrastructure projects, can transfer unsuitable liabilities to the future. What arrangements need to be put in place to ensure that successive generations' capacities are not compromised? (UPSC 2014)**

### Energy

## RISE IN INDIA'S PETROLEUM PRODUCT EXPORTS TO THE EU

### Context:

India's petroleum product exports to the EU have in-

creased considerably over the past months as the region reduces imports of refined products from Russia, [due to the war in Ukraine](#).

### Background:

- India is a major refiner with an annual refining capacity of about **250 million tonnes**.
- While it is also one of the top consumers of crude oil, **India's refining capacity is higher than its domestic demand**.

### What does the data show?

- India's petroleum product exports to the EU **rose 20.4%** year on year in April-January to **11.6 million tonnes**, with the region climbing to the top 20 regions importing refined products from India.
- According to the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) data, **Indian refiners (particularly private) are rushing to partly fill the supply gap for the region**.

**Why does the rise matter? From the global oil markets perspective**, suppliers like India are helping maintain a demand-supply balance, while preventing extreme price shocks.

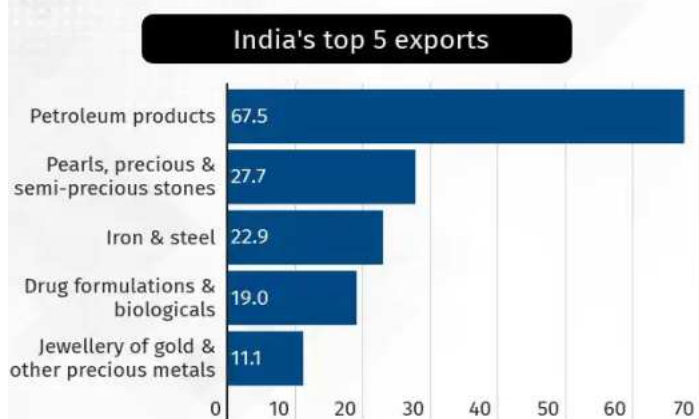
### Benefits for India:

- **Indian refiners**, particularly export-oriented private sector players (Reliance Industries and Nayara Energy), **stand to gain** (purchase Russian oil at a discount).
- India now finds itself **playing an increasingly prominent role in the global crude oil and refined products supply map**.

### What is the West's view on rising Indian exports to the EU?

- While the West was irked at India's rising purchases of Russian oil, countries like the US are **comfortable with the rising supply of Indian refined products to the EU**.
- They see it as **critical for the success of the price caps on Russian oil and refined products** (imposed by G7 countries) without causing a global supply shock.

## PETROLEUM PRODUCTS ACCOUNTED FOR ALMOST A SIXTH OF THE EXPORT EARNINGS



Figs in \$ billion for 2021-22  
Source: Ministry of Commerce

### Insta Links:

[Exports cross the \\$400 billion annual target as goods shipments jump](#)

### Mains Links:

Q. Account for the failure of the manufacturing sector in achieving the goal of labour-intensive exports rather than capital-intensive exports. Suggest measures for more labour-intensive rather than capital-intensive exports. (UPSC 2017)

## POWERING THE AMRIT KAAL

### Context:

An integrated approach that focuses on renewable energy along with the exploration of traditional fuels is the key to **energy security** in the next 25 years in India.

### Need for an integrated approach:

- **3As:** Ensuring energy **access, availability, and affordability** for India's large population.
- As the world's fastest-growing major economy with rising energy needs, India will **account for approximately 25% of the global energy demand growth between 2020-2040.**

### The success story of India:

- When petrol and diesel prices went up by 35-40% in the US, Canada, Spain and the UK, **prices of diesel in India have actually gone down** in the last 1 year.

- This is despite the fact that India imports over 85% of its crude oil and 55% of its natural gas requirements.

- When several countries in India's neighbourhood have had dry outs and power cuts to manage demand, **there has been no shortage of fuel anywhere in India.**

### How was this made possible?

Through a pragmatic and balanced energy strategy → ensuring **energy justice**.

### Focus on traditional fuels:

- The Centre and many states **announced massive cuts in excise duty and VAT rates.**
- **Oil PSUs absorbed huge losses** to ensure that the massive hikes in the prices of crude oil and natural gas were not passed on to Indian consumers.
- **Subsidised APM gas** for the city gas distribution sector was drastically increased.
- **Imposing an export cess** on petrol, diesel, and ATF.
- **A windfall tax on domestically produced petroleum products** to prevent refiners and producers from profiteering at the cost of domestic consumers.
- Over the years, India has expanded -
  - **Its network of crude oil suppliers from 27 nations to 39 nations.** For example, in the US, the energy trade has gone up **13 times** in the last four years.
  - **Its refining capacity (450 MMT by 2040)** - India is a global exporter of petroleum products [refining capacity is the 4th-largest after the US, China and Russia].
  - **Traditional fuel exploration - reduced the prohibited/no-go areas in its EEZ by 99%, releasing nearly 1 million sq km for exploration.**
  - **These strategic market cards not only ensured affordable energy for Indian consumers but also had a calming effect on global petroleum markets.**
- India is also pushing to move towards a **gas-based economy** by increasing the share of gas from the current **6.3 to 15% by 2030.**



## Focus on alternative fuels/energy transition:

- India announced its **net-zero emissions by 2070** and **cutting down emissions by 1 billion tonnes by 2030 targets**.
- At the **India Energy Week 2023**, India took a giant stride in its **biofuel revolution** by launching **E20** - 20% ethanol-blended gasoline, which will be rolled out in 15 cities in the next 2 years.
  - India's ethanol-blending gasoline has grown from just 1.53% in 2013-14 to 10.17% in 2023.
- India is also setting up **five 2nd-generation ethanol plants** that can convert agricultural waste into biofuel, further reducing pollution due to stubble burning, and generating income for farmers.
- The National Green Hydrogen Mission** has been launched with an outlay of Rs 19,744 crore to accelerate India's efforts towards **4 MT of annual green hydrogen production**.
  - It will save Rs 1 lakh crore in cumulative fossil fuel import savings by 2030.
- India is also supporting **electric vehicles through a production-linked incentive scheme** to make advanced fuel cells of 50-gigawatt hours.
- India is also targeting the installation of **alternative fuel stations (EV charging/ CNG/ LPG/ LNG/ CBG)** at 22,000 retail outlets by **May 2024**.

## Conclusion:

**Energy security and independence** remain the main objectives as India implements its Amrit Kaal plan to grow to a **\$ 26 trillion economy by 2047**.

**Insta Links:** [India wants energy transition on its own terms – without phasing out coal and with blue grants](#)

## Environmental pollution and degradation

# WHY DO LANDFILLS CATCH FIRE AND WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THEM?

## Context:

The Kochi landfill site around Brahmapuram that caught fire was a stark reminder that Indian cities need to be prepared for more such incidents as summer approach-

es.

## What triggers landfill fires?

- A landfill site is a **site for the disposal of waste materials** and is the **oldest and most common** form of waste disposal.
- The landfill sites in India are **not scientifically planned**. The efficiency of waste processing is **only 30-40%**, while India's municipalities are collecting over 95% of the waste generated in cities.
- The wastes are **not segregated** due to which the landfill sites receive mixed wastes which **include organic waste/ignitable material/plastics**.
  - Higher temperature + flammable material = a chance for the landfill to catch fire.**
- The anaerobic decomposition** (breakdown of organic waste in the absence of oxygen) generates **methane gas and heat**.
- As soon as the methane gas comes in contact with oxygen, the combustible materials at the dumping site catch fire easily.

## Challenges:

- The landfill fires take time to exhaust,
- The fires emit greenhouse gases,
- Multiple ignition points,**
- Lack of constant water supply** and
- The danger involved in climbing the tall mounds of garbage.

## Is there a permanent solution?

- Closing landfills in a scientific manner** (SoPs including managing the methane emissions). This solution is unsuitable in the Indian context as the land can't be used again for other purposes.
- Clear the piles of waste through bioremediation**, i.e., excavate old waste and use automated sieving machines to segregate the flammable refuse-derived fuel (RDF) from biodegradable material.
  - The recovered RDF (plastics, rags, and clothing) can be used as fuel in cement kilns, and the biosoil can be given to farmers to improve their soil.**
  - There will be a need to landfill the harmless portion.**

### Immediate measures to manage landfill fires:

- **Divide a site into blocks** depending on the nature of the waste.
- Blocks with fresh waste should be separated from blocks with flammable material.
- Different blocks should be **separated using a drain or soil bund** and a layer of soil should cap each block → turned regularly for aeration → helps cool the waste heap.
- The most vulnerable part of the landfill should be capped with soil.
- **In addition,**
  - **Sites should be equipped with water tankers with sprinklers**
  - **The municipality should have a plan of action in advance**
  - **Waste-processing workers should have response training, etc.**

### Way ahead:

- The Solid Waste Management Rules 2016 state that **only non-recyclable, non-biodegradable, and non-combustible waste** should go to a sanitary landfill.
- **The problem needs to be addressed at two levels** - at the level of public policy (domain of the government), and of the public itself (reducing waste generation/disposal, segregating waste).

#### Best practice (Indore) - "India's Cleanest City" for the sixth consecutive year:

- MP's largest city/state's commercial capital, with a population of 35 lakh, is **garbage bin-free**, even though it **generates 1,200 tons of dry waste and 700 tons of wet waste daily**.
- While segregation of garbage into 'dry' and 'wet' categories is common, in Indore it happens in **six categories at a collection point**.

**Insta Links:** [Solid-Waste Management](#)

### Mains Links:

**Q. What are the impediments in disposing of the huge quantities of discarded solid waste which are continuously being generated? How do we safely remove the toxic wastes that have been accumulating in our habitable environment? (UPSC 2018)**

### Prelims Links: (UPSC 2019)

As per the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 in India, which one of the following statements is correct?

- Waste generator has to segregate waste into five categories.
- The Rules are applicable to notified urban local bodies, notified towns and all industrial townships only.
- The Rules provide for exact and elaborate criteria for the identification of sites for landfills and waste processing facilities.
- It is mandatory on the part of the waste generator that the waste generated in one district cannot be moved to another district.

**Ans: (c)**

### Disaster and disaster management.

## A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO DISASTER MANAGEMENT

### Context:

The 3rd Session of the **National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR)** has concluded in New Delhi.

### About the Session:

- The session deliberated on [10-point agenda on Disaster Risk Reduction](#) given by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and [the Sendai Framework](#) apart from other issues.
- **Organized by:** Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)+ National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)+ National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)+ National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM)
- **Theme:** "Building Local Resilience in a Changing Climate"

### PM's 10-Point Agenda:

- **Importance of Local Resilience in Disaster Risk Reduction** E.g.
  - **Prime Minister's 10-Point Agenda:** Building local capacities and initiatives
  - **Kutch (Gujarat):** Bhunga houses of Kutch survived the earthquake to a large extent
  - **Kerala:** Traditional houses known as

**“Nalukettu,” are built with sloping roofs to prevent waterlogging during floods.**

- **Local Disaster volunteers: e.g. Apada Mitra, Yuvak Mandal and Sakhi Mandal**
- Need for **Development Sectors to Imbibe Principles of Disaster Risk Management**
- Importance of **Risk Coverage for All**
- **Women’s Leadership** and Greater Involvement in Disaster Risk Management
- Investment in **Global Risk Mapping**
- **Leveraging Technology** for Disaster Risk Reduction
- **Developing a Network of Universities** to Work on Disaster-Related Issues
- Utilizing **social media and Mobile Technologies** for Disaster Risk Reduction
- Learning from Disasters through **Post-Disaster Studies**
- **Need for Greater Cohesion in International Response** to Disasters E.g., in wake of the recent Earthquake in Syria and Turkey, **United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT)** activated its emergency GIS mapping service

## What is Disaster Risk Reduction?

Disaster risk reduction is **aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risks and managing residual risk**, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development.

## Initiatives for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

- **Global:**
  - **Sendai Framework (2015):** Successor instrument to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)
  - **Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2022**
  - **Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS)** ( Under the World Meteorological Organization): It provides access to early warnings in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
  - **Sectoral Guide on Climate Information & Early Warning Systems** (by Green Climate Fund): It identifies investment opportunities in him impact sector for DRR
- **India’s Initiatives:**
  - **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infra-**

**structure Society (CDRIS):** To increase the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks

- **National Disaster Management Plan 2016 (NDMP):** To coordinate response to natural or man-made disasters and for capacity-building in disaster resilience and crisis response.
- **India aims to achieve zero mortality in all disasters** in collaboration with state governments and response agencies
- **The Disaster Management Act, 2005,** seeks to mainstream disaster risk reduction into development planning

### About NPDRR

It is a National Platform (est. 2013, HQ: New Delhi), which helps in the formulation of future National Action Plan on DRR

### Related news

#### Government schemes to safeguard farmers vis-à-vis disasters and climate change

- **Gramin Krishi Mausam Sewa scheme:** Under it, Agrometeorological Advisory Services (AAS) being rendered for the benefit of farmers
- Implementing the **Per Drop More Crop scheme**
- **Focusing on Integrated Farming System (IFS)** for enhancing productivity and minimizing risks associated with climatic variability under the **Rainfed Area Development (RAD) Programme.**
- **The National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA)** project has been launched to develop and promote climate-resilient agriculture in vulnerable areas of the country.
- **The Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project (ICZMP)** has been implemented to assist in disaster management for the coastal environment.

### Insta Links:

[Risk-reduction strategies using traditional knowledge](#)

- [Disaster Management Basics](#)

### Mains Links:

**Q. Discuss the need for Disaster risk reduction in India. What are the challenges involved and explain the global efforts in this direction? (250 words)**

## Insurgency

# SOO AGREEMENT WITH TRIBAL INSURGENT GROUPS

### Context:

The state government of Manipur decided to withdraw from the **Suspension of Operations (SoO)** agreement with two hill-based tribal militant groups.

### Background:

Two hill-based tribal militant groups - **Kuki National Army (KNA)** and **Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA)** were allegedly influencing agitation among forest encroachers.

### The Kuki people:

- They are an **ethnic group native to the Mizo Hills** (formerly Lushai) - a mountainous region in the south-eastern part of Mizoram and Manipur in India.
- In Northeast India, they are present in **all states except Arunachal Pradesh** and some 50 tribes of Kuki peoples are recognised as STs.
- The **Chin** people of Myanmar and the **Mizo** people of Mizoram are related to the Kukis and are collectively termed the **Zo** people.



### What are the roots of the Kuki insurgency?

- The Kuki insurgency gained momentum **after ethnic clashes with the Nagas of Manipur** in the early 1990s.

- While the two tribes have shared a **hostile relationship since colonial times**, clashes took place in the 1990s when claims of “kuki homeland” in the Manipur hills **overlapped** with the imagined Naga homeland of Greater Nagaland/Nagalim.
- While the Naga movement is the country’s longest-running insurgency, **underground Kuki groups too have fought the Indian government for an ‘independent Kuki homeland’ since then.**

### What is the SoO pact?

- There are nearly 30 Kuki insurgent groups in Manipur, of which 25 are under **tripartite** Suspension of Operations (SoO) with the Government of India and the state.
- The SoO pact was signed on **August 22, 2008**, with the primary objective of **initiating political dialogue.**

### What are the terms of the SoO pact?

- The important terms under the pact are that security forces, including state and central forces, are **not to launch any operations**, nor can the underground groups.
- The signatories (like UPF, and KNO) shall **abide by the Constitution of India**, the laws of the land and the **territorial integrity of Manipur.**
- They are prohibited from committing all kinds of atrocities, extortion, etc.

### Impact of SoO pact:

- The Kuki outfits who were initially demanding a separate Kuki state have come down to a **‘Kukiland territorial council’**, which would have **financial and administrative powers** independent of the Manipur Assembly and government.
- **As a rehabilitation package**, the UG cadres living in the designated camps are given a monthly stipend of Rs 5000.
  - **Financial assistance is also being provided to maintain the designated camps.**

### What next?

- The revocation of the SoO agreement has now raised questions about the **government’s intent** to resolve the issue earliest.
- Feeling ignored, the outfits could once again start insurgency activities **threatening the internal security of a strategically located region.**



### Insta Links:

The history of the Kuki insurgency in Manipur

### Mains Links:

**Q. The northeastern region of India has been infested with insurgency for a very long time. Analyze the major reasons for the survival of armed insurgency in this region. (UPSC 2017)**

## GS4

### Human Values

## REPARATIONS FOR BLACK PEOPLE

### Context:

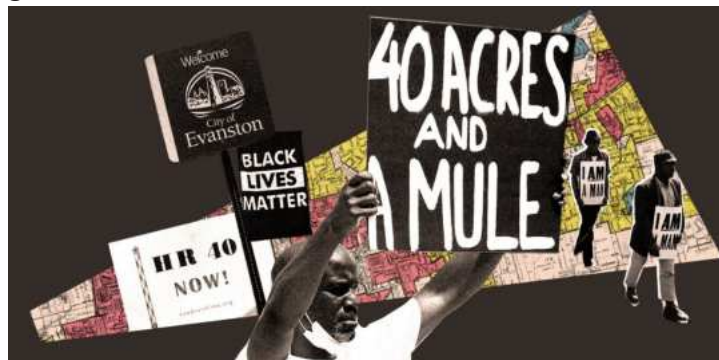
San Francisco supervisors have backed the idea of paying reparations to Black people

### What are Reparations?

Reparations are the act or process of **making amends for a wrong**. Effective and prompt reparation is intended to promote justice.

### Why Reparations?

The state of California and the cities of Boston and San Francisco are among jurisdictions trying to atone not just for chattel slavery, but for decades of racist policies and laws that systemically denied Black Americans access to the property, education, and the ability to build generational wealth.



**Fig:** US federal government's promise of granting "40 acres and a mule" (1865) to newly freed slaves was never realized

### Why Now?

The proposal for reparations is not new, but it has gained momentum after the murder of George Floyd, a Black man, who was killed in police custody in 2020 reparations movements began spreading in earnest across the country.

### Arguments:

- **For reparations:** The proposal includes giving a lump sum of \$5 million to each deserving individual, establishing an Afrocentric K-12 school, offering cash to at-risk students for hitting educational benchmarks, free mental health and rehab treatment, and prioritizing Black San Franciscans for job opportunities and training.
- **Concerns against the proposal:** Critics argue that it is unfair for taxpayers, some of whom are immigrants, to shoulder the cost of structural racism and discriminatory government policies.

### Ethical Perspectives:

- **Acknowledging and atoning for past wrongs:** San Francisco's move to consider reparations for Black people acknowledges the systemic racism and discriminatory policies that have disadvantaged them for generations.
- **Balancing competing interests:** Desire to atone for past wrongs Vs the potential financial burden on taxpayers.
- **Understanding the importance of perspective:** While a majority of Black people surveyed supported reparations, only 30% of all US respondents were in favour. There is a need for consensus and understanding and respecting different perspectives.
- **Holding individuals and institutions accountable** for their actions and working to correct past injustices.

### Indian Context:

- **Against British Colonial Rules:** Shashi Tharoor in his book "An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India," argues that Britain owes India reparations for **the massive economic and cultural losses** inflicted during its 200-year rule.
- **For Dalits:** Indian constitution makers have included progressive measures for disadvantaged sections for social and historical injustices, in the constitution itself.

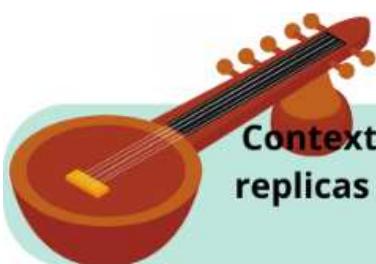
Insta Links: Q. According to you, what constitutes international ethics? (10M)

## FACTS FOR PRELIMS

### GSI

#### Indian Heritage and Culture

### BOBBILI VEENA



#### Bobbili Veena

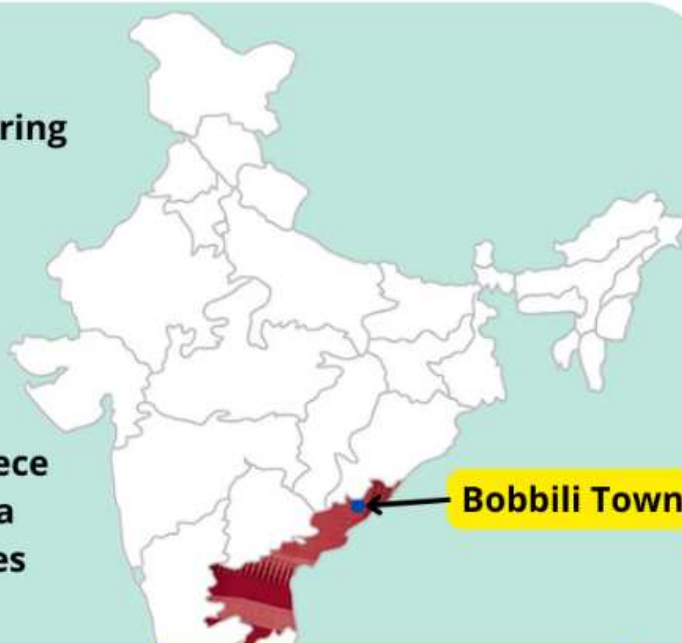


**Context:** The Andhra Pradesh government is preparing to present replicas of the **famous Bobbili Veena** to delegates at the upcoming G-20 conference in Visakhapatnam.

#### About Bobbili Veena

The Bobbili Veena, also known as the Saraswati Veena, is a large plucked string instrument used in Carnatic music.

- ✦ **Origin:** The craftsmanship of veena began in the 17th century
- ✦ **Name:** It derives its name from the town of Bobbili (Andhra Pradesh)
- ✦ **Material:** It is made from a single piece of jackwood tree, unlike other veena which are made by joining two pieces of wood. Hence, it is also called as '**ekanda veena**'.
- ✦ **GI tag (in 2012)** for its unique design and high-quality craftsmanship



**Bobbili Town**

During the reign of Pedda Rayudu (17th CE), the king of Bobbili Samsthanam promoted it

#### About Veena

Veena has been used at least **1000 BCE**. Its origin can be traced back to the ancient yazh, a stringed instrument, similar to the **Grecian harp**. Bharata, in his **Natya Shastra**, explains the theory of the 22 sruti-s in an octave with the help of two experimental veenas.

To know more Visit Insights IAS Daily Current Affairs

## INDUS VALLEY CIVILISATION

### Context:

A recent book has highlighted how climate and geography influenced early civilizations

[Indus Valley Civilisation](#) differs from other ancient civilizations because inequality levels were far lower than in other civilizations.

- **Reason:** This was because the Indus, unlike the other rivers, changed its course often. This changed the structure of the society of the Indus Valley Civilization.

Civilization	Indus Valley	Nile	Mesopotamia	Yellow River
<b>Period</b>	2600-1900 BCE	3100-1070 BCE	4000-2500 BCE	5000-3000 BCE
<b>Location</b>	South Asia (Pakistan and northwest India)	Northeast Africa (Egypt)	Middle East (Iraq and surrounding areas)	East Asia (China)
<b>Key Cities</b>	Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro	Memphis, Thebes	Ur, Uruk, Babylon	Anyang
<b>Writing System</b>	Undeciphered script	Hieroglyphics, hieratic script	Cuneiform	Oracle bone script
<b>Religion</b>	Polytheistic (mother goddess)	Polytheistic (emphasis on pharaoh as divine)	Polytheistic (emphasis on city-state patron deities)	Ancestor worship, with some evidence of <b>shamanism</b> and <b>totemism</b>
<b>Architecture</b>	Large, planned cities with brick buildings, public baths, and sewage systems	<b>Pyramids</b> , temples, and monumental tombs	<b>Ziggurats</b> , palaces, and monumental gates	<b>Large walled cities</b> with ceremonial architecture and burials of elite
<b>Trade</b>	Likely traded with Mesopotamia and Gulf region for luxury goods	Traded with Nubia, Levant, and Mesopotamia for luxury goods	Traded with Indus Valley and Persian Gulf region for luxury goods	Traded with Southeast Asia, Korea, and Japan for luxury goods
<b>Decline</b>	Unknown, potentially due to environmental factors or invasion	Conquered by foreign invaders and assimilated into larger empires	Declined due to political instability and invasion	Conquered and assimilated into larger empires

## RAMESHWAR PRASAD CASE

### Context:

Solicitor General **drew attention to a 2005 ruling of the Supreme Court in Rameshwar Prasad v Union of India** when asked whether [the Governor can call for a floor test](#) in case of internal dissatisfaction within a party.

- The recent Shiv Sena crisis in Maharashtra, where the Governor was criticized for using his powers to order a floor test, **brought back attention to this landmark ruling.**

### About Rameshwar Prasad v Union of India:



- In **2005, Bihar saw a hung Legislative Assembly** with no party or alliance able to reach a majority, leading to the **Governor recommending President's Rule under Article 365**.
- Later, the Governor recommended the dissolution of the Assembly, and **fresh elections were announced by the Election Commission of India**, leading to petitions challenging the constitutionality of the dissolution of the Assembly.
- The Supreme Court **struck down the President's Proclamation** dissolving the state Assembly as unconstitutional, and though it did not restore the Assembly, **it defined the contours of the Governor's powers to dissolve the Assembly**.

### Festival in News

## BUMCHU FESTIVAL

It is held annually at **Tashiding Monastery in West Sikkim** on the 15th day of the first month of the Lunar calendar (usually in February or March)

- **Name:** Bumchu means "**pot of sacred water**" in Tibetan
- **Features:** The festival is centered around the opening of a vessel containing holy water, which is believed to be an indicator of the fortunes of the coming year.
- **History:** It commemorates a **supernatural occurrence** that took place under Chogyal Chakdor Namgya (in the 18th century)

The festival attracts devotees from all over Sikkim and neighbouring countries such as Bhutan and Nepal.

### Modern History/Personality

## SRI AYYA VAIKUNDA SWAMIKA

### **Context:**

Prime Minister paid tributes to **social reformer Ayya Vaikunda Swamikal on his birth anniversary**.

### **About Sri Ayya Vaikunda Swamikal:**

- A **thinker and social reformer of the 19th century**.
- Contributed a great deal to the **modernization**

**of the Hindu society in South Travancore.**

- He tirelessly strived to **remove the inequality based on birth and to establish a casteless society**.
- He preached **equality among all the people** and advocated coordinated and effective measures to realise it
- He condemned those who **divided society into many groups and considered them "nisas"**. He wanted to unite all castes.

## ALLURI SITHARAMA RAJU AND KOMARAM BHEEM

### **Context:**

Inspired by the lives of Indian freedom fighters **Alluri Sitharama Raju, and Komaram Bheem** telugu movie 'RRR' is garnering attention on the global stage **after winning Best Original Song for 'Naatu Naatu' at the 2023 Oscars**.

### **About Alluri Sitharama Raju:**

- Raju **channelled the discontent of the hill people in Ganjam, Visakhapatnam, and Godavari** into an effective guerrilla resistance against the British.
- Colonial rule threatened the tribals' traditional **podu (shifting) cultivation**, as the government sought to secure forest lands.
- The **Forest Act of 1882 banned the collection of minor forest produce such as roots and leaves, and tribal people were forced into labour by the colonial government**.
- Strong anti-government sentiment, exploded into armed resistance in August 1922.
- **The Rampa** or **Manyam Rebellion** continued in the form of a **guerrilla war until May 1924, when Raju, the charismatic 'Manyam Veerudu' or Hero of Jungle, was finally captured and executed**.

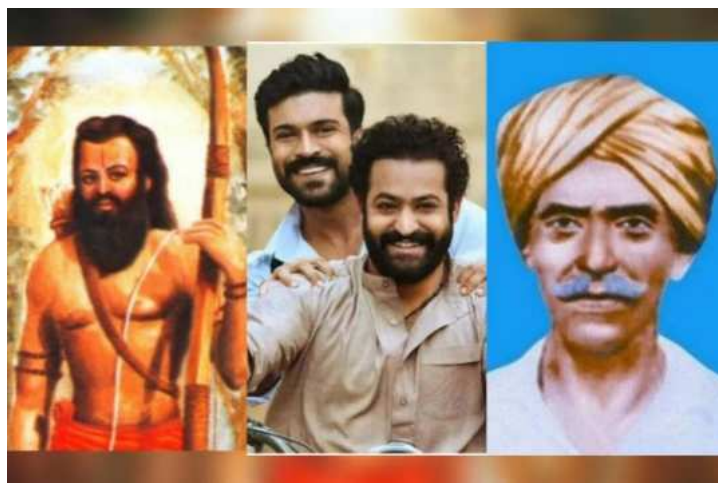
### **About Komaram Bheem:**

- **Komram Bheem** was born in the **Gond tribal community at Sankepally village** in Komarambheem District, **renamed after him in 2016**.
- The Nizam government used to collect tax in the



name of **‘Bambram’** and **‘Dupapetti’** from people grazing cattle and collecting firewood for cooking.

- In opposition, Bheem spread the message of **“Jal, Jangal, Zameen” (water, forest, land) among tribal people**. This has become a clarion call for indigenous people’s rights to natural resources, used in many parts of India to date.



## Society

# WOMEN AND MEN IN INDIA 2022

## Context:

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the 24th issue of **“Women and Men in India 2022”** (an **annual** statistics released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation)

## Importance:

The statistics present data disaggregated by gender, urban-rural divide, and geographical region, (on topics such as education, health, employment, and political participation) which helps us understand the disparities that exist between different groups of women and men.

## Major Findings:

Indicator	Value
Sex Ratio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current: <b>945</b> (2021)</li> <li>• Expected: <b>952</b> by 2036</li> </ul>
Life Expectancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current: Males: <b>68.4 years</b>, Females: <b>71.1</b> years (2015-19)</li> <li>• Expected: Males: <b>71.2 years</b>, Females: <b>74.7</b> years by 2031-36</li> </ul>
Infant Mortality Rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>28</b> in 2020</li> </ul>
Literacy Rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>77.7% (84.7% Male and 70.3% Female)</b> in 2017</li> </ul>
Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>41.3% (57.3% Male and 24.8% Female)</b> in 2021-22</li> </ul>

## SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF 'KUDUMBASHREE'

### Context:

The President of India applauded Kerala's Progress in Empowering Women and the Poor, Citing the Positive Impact on Human Development Indices

- Inaugurated **Kudumbashree** and **Unnathi**

### About Unnathi:

- **Unnathi** or '**Kerala Empowerment Society**' seeks to **create opportunities for employment** and self-employment, among the youth **belonging to SC and ST communities**.

### About Kudumbashree:

- The '**Kudumbashree**' [SHG](#) was started in **1998**.
- It was envisioned as a **part of the People's Plan Campaign and local self-governance**, with women at the centre of it.
- Thrift and credit activities at the grassroots level through the formation of saving groups are a common feature.

of a government servant who dies/retires on medical grounds.

- According to the DoPT, these appointments can only be made for **Group 'C'** posts against the direct recruitment quota.
- The measure can also extend to the family members of an **Armed Forces employee**.

### Who is empowered to make these appointments?

Either the Secretary/Joint Secretary of a Ministry or Department concerned or the Head of the Department in the case of attached and subordinate offices.

### What has the court said now?

- **Existence of a policy issued by the State Government** is a sine qua non for making appointments on a compassionate basis.
- Even if the policy existed, it would be of no use to consider the applications **several years after they were filed**.
- There **should not be any delay in such appointments** and the same should be provided immediately to redeem the family in distress.

## GS2

### Polity

## COMPASSIONATE APPOINTMENT: WHAT THE COURT HAS RULED?

### Context:

The SC rejected applications for 'compassionate appointment' that were filed by the dependents of deceased government employees in West Bengal, as it is not a vested right.

### What are compassionate appointments?

- The concept can be traced to the Indian Constitution's **Article 39 (DPSP)**, which talks about the **right to livelihood**.
- It aims to **provide employment on compassionate grounds** to the dependent family members

## GUN LICENSING

### Context:

The Punjab government in India has cancelled 813-gun licenses as part of its efforts to clamp down on the "**gun culture**" in the state

- Previously, the Punjab government had asked for the removal of content glorifying violence, drugs, and liquor from YouTube and other social media platforms.

### Recent Killings:

Murders of kabaddi player Sandeep Nangal Ambian (March 2022), Singer Sidhu Moosewala (May 2022) and Killing of Shiv Sena leader Sudhir Suri (November 2022)

### Legal Aspect:

- **The Indian Arms Act of 1959** stipulates that no one can acquire, possess, or carry firearms without a license.

- The Act bars **one person from carrying more than three firearms** (now amended to just one firearm)
  - Exceptions:** One can carry more firearms if the person is a licensed dealer, belongs to the armed forces of the Union, or is a member of a rifle club or association licensed or recognised by the Centre.
- The Arms act allows **Indian citizens aged 21 years** and above to get **Non-Prohibited Bore (NPB) guns** (Bore refers to the diameter of a gun's bullets)
  - NPB guns** adhering to .35,.33, .22, and .380 are permissible for a license.
  - Prohibited Bore guns** of bores .38, .455, and .303 can only be issued to defence personnel or persons facing imminent threats to life.
- Criteria for granting license:** A license can only be granted for purposes of self-defence, crop protection, or sports.
- Authority:** Applications for the grant of arms license for NPB weapons are dealt with by the State Government/DM concerned, based on background checks by local police.
- Period of Licence:** Five years.
- Arms Rules, 2016:** Applying for an arms license, rifle club, association, or firing range required one to **complete a safety training course** involving safe handling and carrying procedures.

Power available with ECI	Limitations
<b>Model Code of Conduct (MCC)</b> prohibits campaigning or seeking votes on basis of caste, creed or religion.	MCC can be enforced only during an election period and not during the non-election period
<b>Registration of Political Parties:</b> Section 29A of the Representation of People Act, 1951 provides for registration with ECI	However, there is <b>no provision in Law for review of registration</b> or for cancelling registration of any political party on any ground

#### About ECI

The Election Commission of India (est. **25th Jan 1950**; **HQ: New Delhi**) is a **constitutional body**. It conducts the elections to the offices of the President and Vice-President of India, Parliament, State Legislative Assemblies and Legislative councils and regulates electoral processes in the country.

#### Government Initiative and Policies

## FOREIGN LAWYERS AND FIRMS CAN OPERATE IN INDIA: BCI

#### Context:

The Bar Council of India (BCI) has notified the Rules for Registration and Regulation of Foreign Lawyers and Foreign Law Firms in India, 2022.

#### What does the Rule say?

It allows **foreign lawyers and law firms** to practise in India **but not appear in court**.

- Eligibility:** The lawyer or firm should be entitled to practice law in their home countries
- Limitations:** They cannot practice Indian law in any form or before any court of law, tribunal, board, or any other authority legally entitled to record evidence on oath.
- Permission:** They are only permitted to practice transactional work/corporate work (such as joint ventures, mergers, and acquisitions, IPR), can advise clients on foreign law, international law and international arbitration matters in India

## NO POWER TO BAN CASTE-BASED RALLIES

#### Context:

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has submitted before the Allahabad high court that it has no jurisdiction to **ban caste-based rallies of political parties** organised during the non-election period and nor does it have the power to ban such parties from contesting subsequent elections.

**Section 29 of the Advocates Act**, states that only advocates enrolled with BCI can practise law.

### Benefits:

It will help attract **foreign direct investment** and make **India a hub of international commercial arbitration**. The new rules enable foreign lawyers and law firms to register with the BCI to practice in India if they are. It will further incentivise **Legal Process Outsourcing (LPOs)** in India.

#### About BCI:

The Bar Council of India (est. 1961; HQ: New Delhi) is a **statutory body** established under **section 4 of the Advocates Act 1961** that regulates **legal practice and legal education** in India. Its members are elected from amongst the lawyers in India and as such represents the Indian bar.

### International News and Organization

## EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION

### Context:

The government has ruled out any duty concessions for gold or easing of the intellectual property rights (IPR) regime for the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries, led by Switzerland.

- **India imports Gold from Switzerland** (Gold imported from Switzerland accounted for almost half of India's total gold imports)
- **EFTA countries** have been demanding lower or zero import duty for Gold (India has rejected it).

#### About EFTA:

**EFTA** (est. 1960; HQ: Geneva) is an **intergovernmental** organisation of four countries Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland, for the promotion of free trade and economic integration between its members.

## GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX

### Context:

The tenth Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report was published by **Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)** showing global trends and patterns in terrorism.

### Key findings

- Global
  - **Afghanistan remains the country most impacted by terrorism for the fourth consecutive year** though violence has declined
  - The report excluded acts of state repression by the Taliban
  - **South Asia remains the region with the worst average GTI score**
  - **Deadliest terrorist groups in the world in 2022: Islamic State (IS); Al-Shabaab; Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), and Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM)**
  - **Climate change is helping terrorist groups to raise funds, propagandize and recruit people**
- India:
  - **India remained at 13th while Pakistan ranked 6<sup>th</sup> (more terror-prone)**

#### About IEP:

**The Institute for Economics and Peace (est. 2008; HQ: Sydney, Australia)** is a global think tank. It studies the relationship between peace, business, and prosperity, and seeks to promote an understanding of the cultural, economic, and political factors that drive peacefulness.

## ICC: ARREST WARRANT FOR VLADIMIR PUTIN

### Context:

The **International Criminal Court** issued an **arrest warrant for war crimes for President Vladimir Putin and a second Russian official**.

### Why did the International Criminal Court issued the warrants?

- **Putin bears individual criminal responsibility**



for the abduction and deportation of Ukrainian children since Russia's full-scale invasion.

- The court also issued a warrant for Maria Lvova-Belova, Russia's commissioner for children's rights, who has been the public face of a Kremlin-sponsored program in which Ukrainian children and teenagers have been taken to Russia.

### About International Criminal Court:

- The [International Criminal Court](#) was created as a standing body to investigate war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity under a 1998 treaty known as the Rome Statute.
- Previously, the United Nations Security Council had established ad hoc tribunals to address atrocities in places such as the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.
- Based in *The Hague, a Dutch city* that has long been a centre for international law and justice.

### What does the warrant mean for Putin?

- The court cannot try defendants in absentia and Russia has said it will not surrender its own officials.
- Russia's Foreign Ministry quickly dismissed the warrants, noting that it is not a party to the court.
- The warrant for Putin's arrest deepens his isolation in the West and could limit his movements overseas.
- If he travels to a state that is a party to the ICC, that country must arrest him, according to its obligations under international law.

### About PM Vikas:

- Announced in [Union Budget 2023](#).
- PM Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman (PM VIKAS)' aims at improving the quality, scale and reach of products/services of artisans/craftspeople by integrating them with the domestic and global value chains.
- Will give impetus to the MSME sector and empower the Vishwakarma community.
- Some of the key components of the scheme are:
  - Financial support
  - Access to advanced skill training
  - Knowledge of modern digital techniques and efficient green technologies
  - Brand promotion
  - Linkage with local and global markets
  - Digital payments
  - Social security

## NEWS FEED BY OTT

### Context:

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in India has clarified that over-the-top (OTT) platforms, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video, can stream digital feeds of TV news channels, even if they have 100% foreign direct investment (FDI).

- Such OTT platforms would not be bound by FDI norms (currently, there is an FDI limit of 26% in digital media).
- In November 2020, the government asked all news websites, portals, and aggregators to comply with the 26% FDI rule.

## GS3

### Economy

## PM VISHWAKARMA KAUSHAL SAMMAN (PM VIKAS)

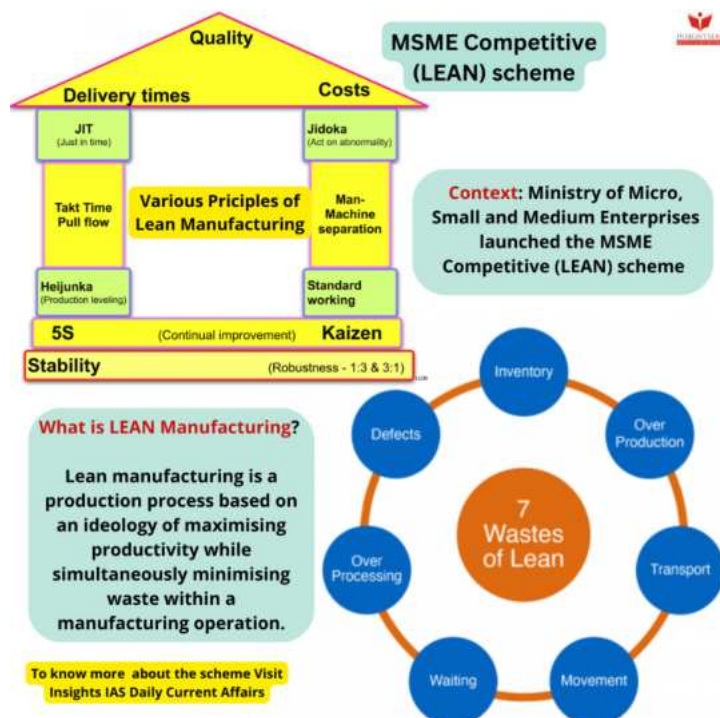
### Context:

PM addresses a post-budget webinar on 'PM Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman (PM VIKAS)'.

### What are OTT platforms?

An over-the-top media service is a media service offered directly to viewers via the Internet. OTT bypasses cable, broadcast, and satellite television platforms: the types of companies that have traditionally acted as controllers or distributors of such content.

## CENTRE LAUNCHES MSME COMPETITIVE (LEAN) SCHEME



### About the Scheme:

- **Aim:** To provide a roadmap to increase the competitiveness for the MSMEs of India through LEAN Manufacturing.
- **Eligibility:** All MSMEs registered with the UDYAM registration portal will be eligible to participate. Also open to **SFURTI and Cluster Development Program Schemes**.
- **Funding:** Central government will **contribute 90% of the implementation cost** for handholding and consultancy fees.
  - **An additional contribution of 5%** for the MSMEs which are part of SFURTI clusters, owned by women/SC/ST and located in the North-East Region
- **Benefit:** MSMEs can reduce wastages substantially, increase productivity, improve quality, work safely, expand their markets, and finally become competitive and profitable

## HIGH PRICE DAY AHEAD MARKET (HP-DAM) AND SURPLUS POWER PORTAL (PUSHP)

### Context:

The **Ministry of Power** has launched a High Price Day Ahead Market and Surplus Power Portal (PUSHP) – an initiative to ensure greater availability of power during the peak demand season.

- The portal will allow **DISCOMs to indicate their surplus power**, which can be requisitioned by those in need

### About HP-DAM

HP-DAM will offer costly power (from gas-based, imported-coal-based power plants, and renewable energy stored in battery-energy storage systems) on a need basis through power exchange

**Day-Ahead Energy Market:** Participants purchase and sell electric energy for the following day.

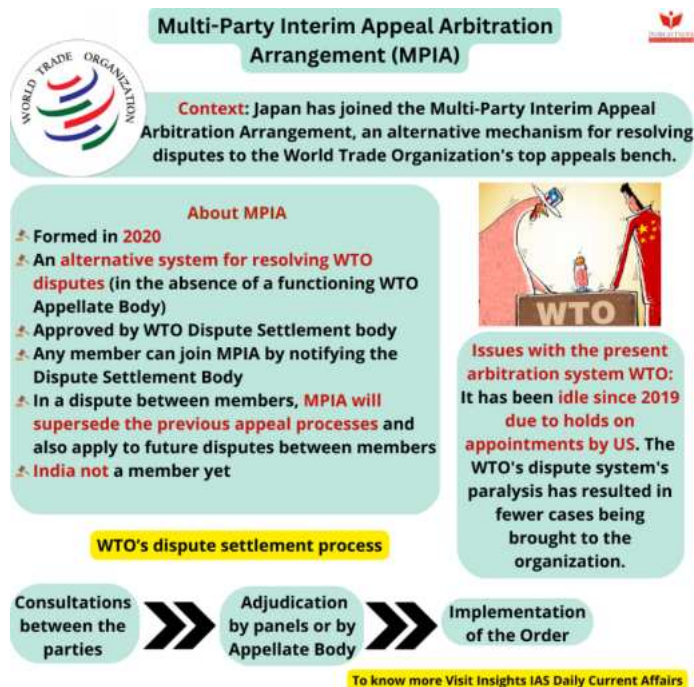
### About PUSHP

PUSHP will ensure **better utilization of power capacity** at a reasonable rate and prevent power producers from charging exorbitant prices. It will **aggregate excess power generation capacity** on a national basis, offering Discoms a view of the supply and demand scenario

### Other Portals:

- **PRAKASH Portal** (improving coordination between the power, coal, and railway ministries to ensure coal supplies to power plants)
- **GARV App** (for monitoring rural electrification programme)

### Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement (MPIA)



## Significance of the move:

Japan's move is seen as **pressuring other countries** to join the alternative arrangement, which already has **26 members including the European Union, Canada, and Brazil**.

## IREDA

### Context:

RBI has granted an 'Infrastructure Finance Company (IFC)' status to Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA).

- It was earlier classified as an 'Investment and Credit Company (ICC)'

### Benefits of the IFC status:

- Now IREDA will be able to **take higher exposure to RE (Renewable Energy) financing**
- It will be able to **access a wider investor base** for fund mobilisation, resulting in competitive rates for fundraising.
- It will **increase the investors' confidence**, enhance the brand value, and generate a positive outlook in the market.

### Significance:

The grant of IFC status is a **recognition of IREDA's 36 years of infrastructure financing** and development with focused development of Renewable Energy.

### About IREDA

IREDA (est. 1987, HQ: New Delhi) has been promoting, developing and financing new and renewable sources of energy with the motto: **"Energy for Ever"**. It finances all RE technologies and value chains such as solar, wind, hydro, bio-energy, waste to energy, energy efficiency, e-mobility, battery storage, biofuel and new and emerging technologies. It is an important agency for the implementation of India's **target of 500 GW installed capacity of non-fossil fuels by 2030**

## ATAL INNOVATION MISSION'S ATL SARTHI

### Context:

**Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)** – NITI Aayog launched **ATL Sarthi**, a comprehensive self-monitoring framework to **strengthen the ever-growing ecosystem of Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL)**.

### About ATL Sarthi:

- As the name suggests, Sarthi is a **charioteer** and **ATL Sarthi will enable the ATLs to be efficient and effective**.
- The initiative has **four pillars** ensuring the performance enhancement of ATLs through regular process improvements
  - like a **self-reporting dashboard** known as **'MyATL Dashboard'** and
  - Compliance SOPs** for schools to ensure financial and non-financial compliance,
  - On-ground enablement of ATLs** in collaboration with relevant local authorities through a **Cluster-based Approach** and
  - Providing ownership to schools** to analyze their performance through **Performance-Enablement (PE) Matrix**.

### About AIM:

The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) is the Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.



## ARMS TRADE

### Context:

**Ukraine** became the world's third-largest arms importer in 2022 after Qatar and India, **accounting for 2% of global arms imports** in the past five years (as per the new data on global arms transfers Report by SIPRI)

### Other Major Findings of the Report

#### Global:

- **Europe:** Between 2013-2017 and 2018-2022, European countries increased their imports of major arms by 47%, while global transfers of arms decreased by about 5%
- **US (top exporter):** The US's share of global arms exports increased from **33% to 40%**, while Russia's share (2<sup>nd</sup> most top exporter) fell from 22% to 16%, and France's (3<sup>rd</sup> most top exporter) share increased from about 7% to 11%.

#### India

- **India's share of global arms import** was **highest** in the past five years, followed by Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Australia.
- India's arms import has decreased
- **Russia > France > US > and Israel** were the major exporter to India

### Initiatives by the Indian government for Defence Indigenisation:

- **Priority to domestic manufacturers** (under [Defence Acquisition Procedure \(DAP\)](#)-2020)
- **Positive Indigenisation Lists**
- **74% FDI** under automatic route
- **SRIJAN portal** (to promote Indigenisation by Indian Industry)
- **Two Defence Industrial Corridors** (in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu)
- **Mission DefSpace;** Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) scheme etc.

#### About SIPRI

**Stockholm International Peace Research Institute** (est. 1966, HQ: Stockholm, Sweden) is an independent **international institute based in Stockholm**. It provides data, analysis and recommendations for armed conflict, military expenditure, and arms trade as well as disarmament and arms control.

## TRADE IN RUPEE

### Context:

RBI has permitted banks from 18 countries to open **Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRAs)** to settle payments in rupees

### What is the Internationalisation of the Rupee?

It is a process of increasing rupee acceptance across the world for cross-border trading.

- **Benefits:** India will have to rely less on foreign currencies and holding foreign exchange reserves; Reduced Vulnerability to External Shocks and Currency Risks; Increasing bargaining power of Indian Enterprises

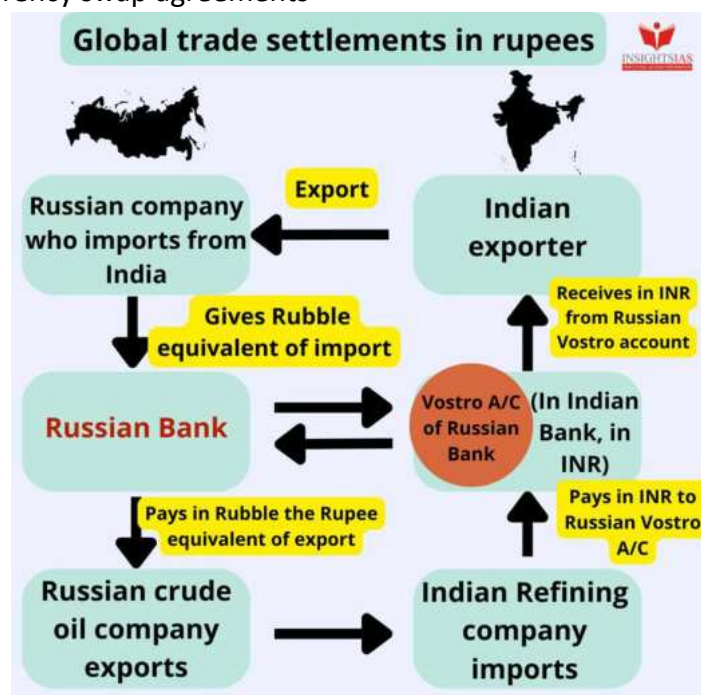
### What is SVRA?

SVRA is an account that **domestic banks hold for foreign banks in the former's domestic currency**, the rupee, which allows domestic banks to provide international banking services to their clients who have global banking needs without having to be physically present abroad.

- RBI had issued a framework for Trade settlement in Rupee (in July 2022) through SVRA

### Other initiatives for the Internationalization of Rupee are:

Cross border trading in Rupee (e.g. Masal Bond); Currency swap agreements





## REACHOUT

### PM MITRA SCHEME

#### Context:

The Ministry of Textiles will shortly name the **States identified for implementation of Prime Minister MITRA (Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel) scheme.**

#### About “PM-MITRA” Scheme:

- The scheme aims to realize the vision of building an [Aatmanirbhar Bharat](#) by positioning India strongly on the Global textiles map.
- The PM MITRA parks will provide the **best ecosystem for the textile industry to be collectively present in one location**, with plug-and-play infrastructure, and improve the competitiveness of the textile value chain.
- It will also give a boost to the **five F (farm, fiber, factory, fashion, foreign) vision of the Prime Minister.**

### HOW CAN THE EU’S CARBON TAX HURT INDIA?

#### Context:

The European Union formalised a method to **stop ‘carbon leakage’ or moving production of high-polluting products to nations outside of the EU** in its bid to go green called the **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.**

- CBAM is part of the EU’s plan to **cut greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, under the European Climate Law.**

#### How India will be impacted:

- It places carbon **charge on countries that originally did not primarily cause climate change.**
- CBAM tax can charge **between 20 – 35 % which is far higher** than the EU’s average import tariff of 2.2 per cent on manufactured products
- India’s Exports to the EU account **for 15% - So exports will be affected.**
- FTA will also be affected – as **high CBAM will make them meaningless.**

#### Context:

Ministry of Earth Sciences is implementing an umbrella scheme Research, Education and Training Outreach (REACHOUT) for capacity building

#### Aim of the scheme:

To support various R&D activities, develop useful collaborations with international organizations, develop skilled and trained manpower in Earth Sciences etc.

#### It consists of the following sub-schemes:

- R&D in Earth System Science (RDESS)
- International Training Centre for Operational Oceanography (ITCOcean)
- Program for Development of Skilled manpower in Earth System Sciences (DESK)

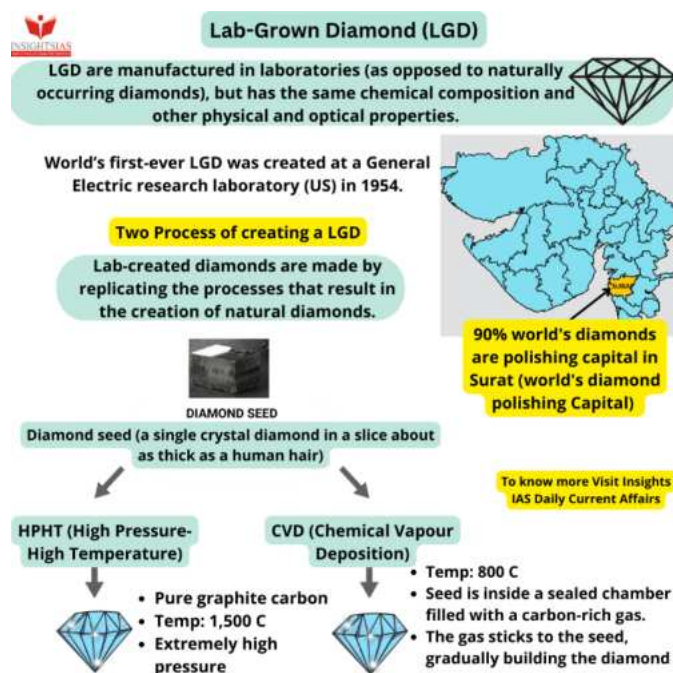
### LAB-GROWN DIAMONDS (LGDS)

#### Context:

The government has abolished a **5% tax** on imported diamond seeds and is putting a special focus on Laboratory-Grown Diamonds (LGD) (Budget 2023-24)

#### Aim:

To make India a major player in the lab-grown diamond industry.



## Diamond Industry in India:

- India, currently, **contributes 15% of the world's lab-grown diamonds**
- **India is the world's largest cutting and polishing centre for diamonds**, accounting for over 90% of polished diamond manufacturing globally.
- **India contributes 19% of the total diamond exports in the world.**

## Features of LGD:

- **Cheaper alternative:** Lab-grown diamonds can be made for around 20% less than natural diamonds.
- **Environmental footprint:** Lower than naturally occurring diamond.
- **Potential:** LGD sector has seen explosive growth in the last 10 years, and experts say the cost of producing lab-grown diamonds has halved every four years since the early 2000s.

## Use:

- Industrial purposes in machines and tools
- In electronics as a heat spreader for high-power laser diodes
- For making designer Jewellery

## Agriculture

# THE MISSION FOR INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF HORTICULTURE (MIDH)

## Context:

**MIDH** under the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has approved three new Centres of Excellence (CoEs) for horticultural crops:

- CoE for Kamlam (Dragon Fruit) in Bengaluru
- CoE for Mango and Vegetables in Jajpur, Odisha
- CoE for Vegetables and Flowers in South Goa

## Benefits:

- Serve as **demonstration and training** centers
- CoEs will be used as a **source of planting material** for fruits and vegetable seedlings for protected cultivation
- It will **facilitate the transfer of technology** and know-how in diverse areas, including post-har-

vest management, irrigation, and fertigation.

## About MIDH:

- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** (Centre (60%) States (40%)) for holistic growth of the horticulture sector covering fruits, vegetables, root & tuber crops, mushrooms, etc.
- **Implementing Agency:** National Horticulture Board (NHB)
- Schemes under MIDH
  - **National Horticulture Mission (NHM)**
  - **Horticulture Mission for North East & Himalayan States (HMNEH)**
  - **National Bamboo Mission (NBM)**
  - **Coconut Development Board (CDB)**
  - **Central Institute for Horticulture (CIH)**

## About Horticulture crops:

They are characterised by high-value crops, higher productivity per unit of area and lower requirement of irrigation and input cost.

- **India is the second-largest producer of horticulture**, producing about 12 per cent of the global fruit and vegetable production.
- **In India, 10%** of land in horticulture contributes to 33% of Agricultural Value.
- **Uttar Pradesh** produced the largest share of horticultural crops in India

# BASIC ANIMAL HUSBANDRY STATISTICS 2022

## Context:

Ministry of Animal Husbandry & Fisheries has unveiled the department's **annual publication**, the 'Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics 2022'

## Importance:

It is the primary source of data on livestock population, production, animal diseases, infrastructure, and estimates of four Major Livestock Products (MLPs) like Milk, Egg, Meat and Wool

## Key findings:

Livestock Statistics	Figures
Per-capita milk availability	444 grams/day
Top milk-producing States	Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh
Top meat-producing States	Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana
Top wool-producing States/UTs	Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh
Top egg-producing States	Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, West Bengal, Karnataka
Contribution of the Livestock sector to agriculture	30% (2020-21)
While the production of Milk, Meat and Egg has increased in India, the production of Wool has declined w.r.t previous years	

## Science and Technology

### 'GLOWSCOPE'

#### Context:

Researchers have created a design for a 'glowscope', a device that could democratise access to fluorescence microscopy.

#### What is fluorescence microscopy?

- A fluorescence microscope views an object by studying how it reemits light that it has absorbed, i.e., how it fluoresces.
- The object is illuminated with light of a specific wavelength. Particles in the object absorb this light and reemit it at a higher wavelength (i.e., different colour). These particles are called **fluorophores**; the object is infused with them before being placed under the microscope.

### 'LEARNING SCIENCE VIA STANDARDS'

#### Context:

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), has launched 'Learning Science via Standards', a unique initiative for students.

#### About the initiative- 'Learning Science via Standards':

- It focuses on a series of lesson plans aimed to use scientific concepts, principles, and laws to help students understand their practical applications in manufacturing, functioning and testing of quality characteristics of different products as stated in the relevant Indian Standards.
- The series is in a continuum with an earlier BIS initiative under which 'Standards Clubs' are being established in educational institutions across India.

#### Benefits:

- Bridges the gap between theory and real-life usage of science education.
- Contributes towards the capacity building to successfully engage in a variety of economic sectors in the country.

#### About BIS:

The Bureau of Indian Standards (est. 1986, HQ: Old Delhi, Statutory body) is the **National Standards Body of India** under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution. It is established by the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016 which came into effect in October 2017.

### STRANGE METHOD

#### Context:

Researchers have proposed the STRANGE method to address bias in animal behaviour research.

#### About STRANGE Method:


- STRANGE stands for **social background, Trapability and self-selection, Rearing history, Acclimation and habituation, Natural changes in responsiveness, Genetic makeup, and Experi-**




ence.

- Researchers are beginning to recognize that animals have **individual tendencies, habits, and life experiences** that can affect how they perform in experiments, so much published research on animal behaviour may be biased.
- By considering STRANGE factors with every experiment and being transparent about how they might affect their results, **scientists can work to reduce these biases**.

## OPEN SOURCE



**Open Source**



**Context:** Elon Musk, who recently acquired Twitter, plans to make the microblogging site's algorithm open source.

**What is Open Source?**


Open Source refers to a type of software where the source code is made available for anyone to view, modify, and distribute.

Examples of Open-Source software include the **Linux operating system, the Firefox web browser, and the Apache web server**

**What is Application Programming Interface (API)?**

It is a set of protocols, routines, and tools for building software applications. It defines how software components should interact with each other, allowing different applications to communicate with each other

**Analogy of a Restaurant ("Open-Source")**



**'Waiter' is like an API**

Take restaurant as 'open source'. This means that the recipe for the **food and the method of cooking** it is all available for anyone to see and use. Here, **API is like a waiter in a restaurant**. Just as a waiter takes your order, communicates it to the kitchen, and brings you the food, an API takes a request from one software component, communicates it to another software component, and returns the response.

To know more Visit Insights IAS Daily Current Affairs

## SMART METERING

### Context:

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has flagged concerns over the deployment of advanced **metering infrastructure** using unlicensed spectrum in the **865-868 MHz frequency band**

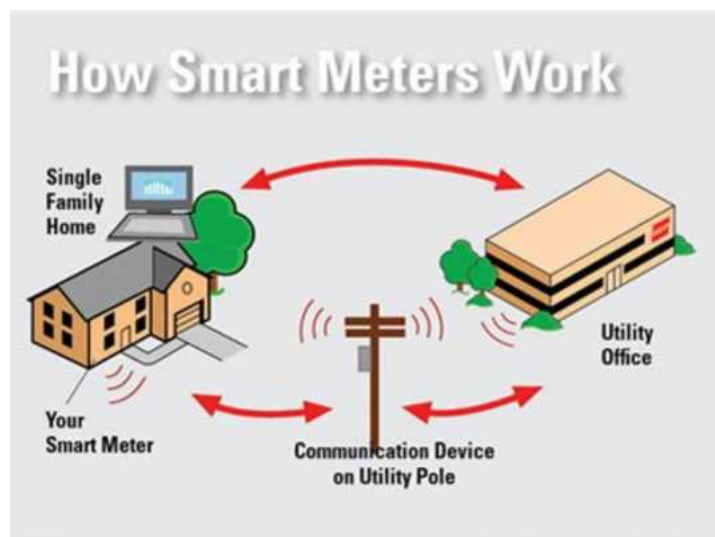
### What is Smart Meter?

A **smart meter** is an electronic device that records information such as consumption of electric energy, voltage levels, current, and power factor.

- **Smart meters communicate** the information to the consumer for greater clarity of consumption

behavior, and electricity suppliers for system monitoring and customer billing.

- **Smart meters are part of the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) solution** that records consumers' electricity usage at different times of the day and sends it to an energy supplier.



### What is Smart Grid?

Smart grids are energy networks that can automatically monitor energy flows and adjust to changes in energy supply and demand accordingly.

### What is the Issue?

The use of **unlicensed spectrum** for communication for Smart grid meters will make these systems much more prone to vulnerabilities, threats, and cyber-intrusions.

### Why does Power utility use an unlicensed spectrum?

- Unlicensed spectrum is considered an **inexpensive and barrier-free option** for meeting communication requirements.
- They currently use of **865-868 MHz band** for "Tracking, Tracing and Data Acquisition Devices" and "Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Applications".

### Initiatives taken:

Integrated Power Development Scheme; National Smart Grid Mission; Smart Meter National Programme; Prepaid Smart metering (under Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS))



## INDIAAI ECOSYSTEM

### Context:

The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MEITY) set up a task force for framing a draft roadmap for the artificial intelligence ecosystem

### About the INDIAai (The National AI Portal of India) platform:

- **Aim:** It will help in boosting research and facilitate tools required for the growth of the start-up community.
- **Implementation:** It is a joint venture by MEITY, NEGD and NASSCOM
- **Potential:** AI is expected to add **USD 967 billion** to the Indian economy by 2035

### Other Initiatives taken for AI:

MeitY's FutureSkills PRIME initiative (for re-skilling of IT professionals); National AI Portal; National Programme on Responsible Use of AI for Youth; National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence; Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) (India founding member)

#### Related News

##### AlphaFold

It is an AI system that could **predict the structure of almost every protein** catalogued by science, which could lead to breakthroughs in discovering medicines. It has been developed by **DeepMind**, a subsidiary of Alphabet

## A SMALL SHOCK FROM A METALLIC SURFACE

### Context:

There have been stray reports from different parts of India of commuters experiencing a small electric shock when they touch metallic surfaces in public.

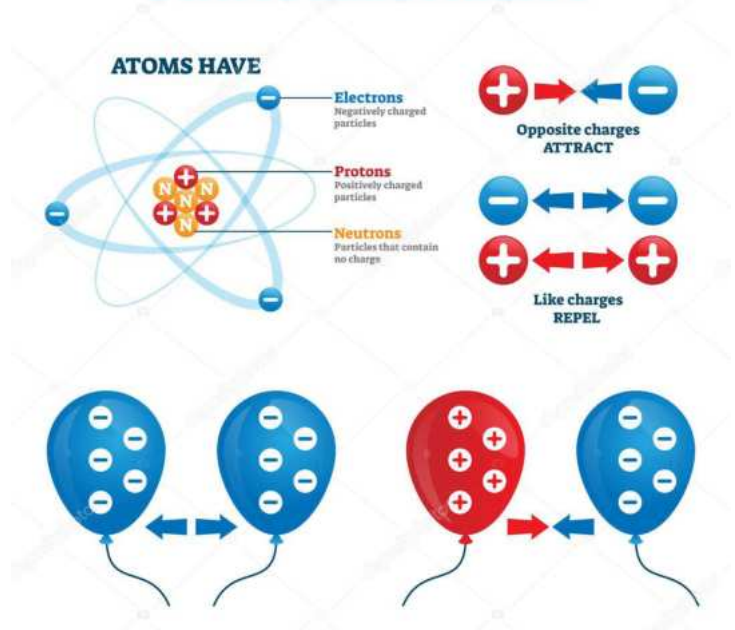
### About Static shocks:

- Static shocks are technically called **electrostatic discharges**.
- The 'shock' is the product of the **transfer of electrons from one material to another** because they have different electrical permittivity.

### Why does it matter?

- Electrostatic discharge happens when **electric charge (usually electrons)** has accumulated somewhere.
- If it happens when you **touch metallic surfaces in public, such as railings or lampposts**, it's because these entities haven't been grounded properly.
- In drier weather, **without moisture, improperly grounded objects** can accumulate small charges on the surface.
- Static shocks are limited to a **minor discomfort as long as the exposure duration** (a fraction of a second) and the amount of current transferred are both small.

## STATIC ELECTRICITY



**GPT-4**

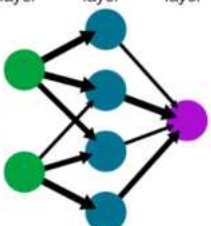
**GPT-4**

**Context:** Recently, OpenAI has announced GPT-4, a new large multimodal model that accepts images as input and is better than ChatGPT

**What is ChatGPT?**  
**ChatGPT (Generative Pre-Trained Transformer)** is an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered chatbot which can comprehend and generate natural language or human text

**How does it work?**  
 GPT relies on **deep learning techniques** (a form of machine learning utilizing neural network) to produce **human-like text based on inputs**. Neural networks attempt to simulate behavior of human brain allowing it to learn from large amounts of data.

A simple neural network



input layer    hidden layer    output layer

GPT uses an algorithm known as Transformer to learn how to generate text that is similar to human conversation.

Features	GPT-4	ChatGPT
Multimodality	Yes (accepts images, but output is text only)	No ( doesn't accept image and output is text only)
Information Processing	64,000 words	8,000 words
Accuracy	Higher	Lower
Language	Better at understanding languages that are not English	Less capable in understanding other languages
Robustness	Harder to trick	Easier to trick

To know more Visit Insights IAS Daily Current Affairs

## Evolution of GPT:

- **2018:** OpenAI introduced the first version of GPT
- **2019:** OpenAI launched GPT-2, a more advanced version.
- **2020:** Beta version of ChatGPT, a chatbot that uses the GPT-3 language model to generate responses to user queries.
  - **GPT-3 could generate text that was virtually indistinguishable from text written by humans.**
- **2021:** ChatGPT-3.5 (more user-friendly and had improved response accuracy)
- **2023:** GPT-4 (multimodal language model that can understand both text and images)

## 1ST INDIGENOUS QUADRUPED ROBOT, EXOSKELETON DEVELOPED IN INDIA

### Context:

Svaya Robotics (Hyd) has developed India's first indigenous quadruped (four-legged) robot and exoskeleton for the defence sector.

- India currently **imports these robots from the US and Switzerland.**

### About these robots:

- Quadruped robots are **four-legged robots** which can walk or **run on uneven and rough terrains.**

- **Active exoskeletons**, when worn by soldiers, can **carry such heavy loads** without expending much effort. Even if they are carrying 25 kg, soldiers feel as if they are carrying six or seven kg, thus **they are not fatigued easily.**

Both are dual-use robots and **have multiple use cases in industry and healthcare as well.**

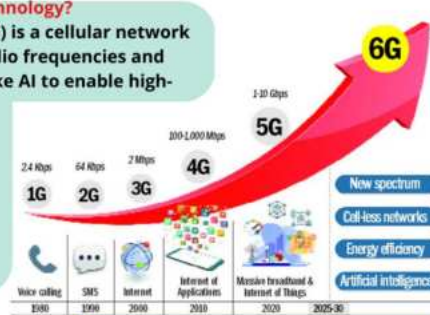
## 6G

**6G**

**Context:** As per the government, Indian scientists, engineers, and academicians have acquired 100 patents for 6G technology

**What is 6G technology?**  
 A 6G network (successor of 5G) is a cellular network that operates in untapped radio frequencies and uses cognitive technologies like AI to enable high-speed, low-latency communication at a pace multiple times faster than fifth-generation networks.

- 6G networks are currently under research and development, yet to be released.



**6G** features: New spectrum, Cell-less networks, Energy efficiency, Artificial intelligence

To know more Visit Insights IAS Daily Current Affairs

Parameter	5G	6G
Spectrum (Major Frequency Bands)	24 GHz to 100 GHz	95 GHz to 3 THz (Terahertz) (Can operate on higher frequency than 5G)
Latency (End to End Delay)	5 milliseconds	1 millisecond
Peak Data Rates	Up to 20 Gbps	Up to 1,000 Gbps
Significance	Accelerate adoption of cloud gaming, AR/VR technology, Internet of Things etc.	Support high-performance computing, edge computing, Technology Convergence etc.

### Other announcements:

- **Rollout of 5G networks** has far exceeded the government's target of 200 cities by March 31, 2023 (coverage in 397 cities at present)
- **India has started exporting telecom products**, including radio equipment, to the US
- **99% of mobile phones** used in India are now made locally

## Health

## JAPANESE ENCEPHALITIS

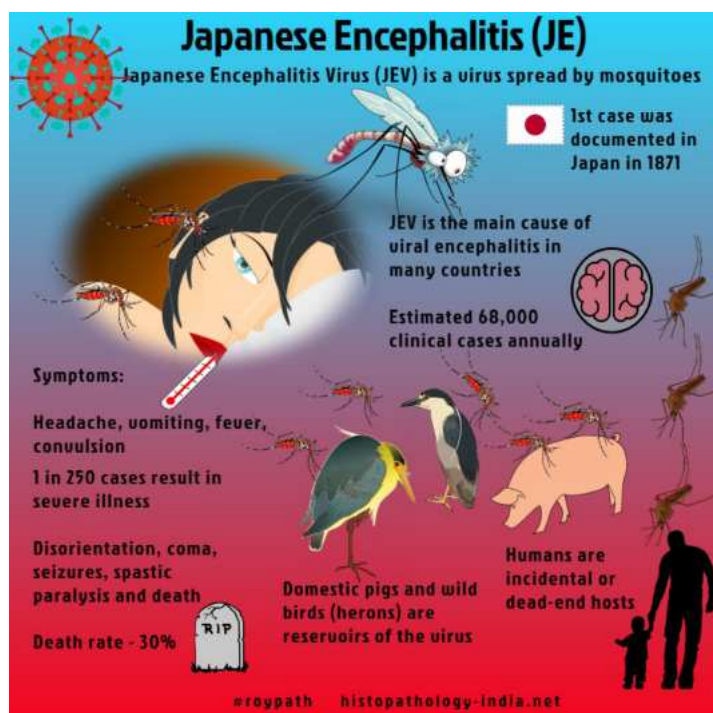
### Context:

A small study revealed that children who had received two doses of a live, attenuated Japanese encephalitis vaccine **found very low levels of neutralising antibody**

ies IgG.

## About Japanese encephalitis:

- Japanese encephalitis is a disease **caused by a flavivirus** that affects the membranes around the brain.
- **Transmission:** The disease is transmitted to humans through bites from **infected mosquitoes of the Culex species**.
- **Symptoms:** a small percentage of infected people develop inflammation of the brain (encephalitis), with symptoms including sudden **onset of headache, high fever, disorientation, coma, tremors, and convulsions**.
- **Treatment:** There is **no antiviral treatment** for patients with JE.



## What is PGM?

Genetic mapping can offer firm evidence that a disease transmitted from parent to child is linked to one or more genes.

- **Potential:** PGM is expected to grow by **2.4 times** by 2032.
- **Benefits:** PGM can identify and assess genes associated with a disease, and help with health-care choices and precision medicine. PGM provides **clues about which chromosome contains the gene** and precisely where the gene lies on that chromosome.
- **Concerns:** Ethical concerns exist around the possible use of PGM data for “**designer**” babies and the high cost involved and potential data abuse.

## Space

## MULTI-ANGLE IMAGER FOR AEROSOLS (MAIA)

### Context:

The space agencies of the **United States (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)** and **Italy - Agenzia Spaziale Italiana (ASI)** will launch the [Multi-Angle Imager for Aerosols \(MAIA\)](#) missions to investigate the health impacts of air pollution in the world's most populated cities

### About MAIA:

- MAIA is a **state-of-the-art** satellite instrument producing data that **will be used in health studies to examine the health effects of various types of air pollution**.
- The MAIA mission will **collect and analyse data from the observatory, sensors on the ground and atmospheric models**
- Its measurements of sunlight **reflecting off airborne particles will help researchers determine the abundance, size and optical properties of certain pollutants in the atmosphere**.

Using such data in conjunction with surface-based measurements will help researchers decipher the particles' chemical composition. Those results will then be **related to human birth, death and hospitalisation records to answer pressing questions about the health impacts of solid and liquid particles contaminating the**

## PERSONAL GENOMIC MAPPING (PGM)

### Context:

Reliance Industries will introduce personal genomic mapping (PGM) to the Indian market.

### What is Genome?

All the genetic information of an organism is called its genome. It consists of nucleotide sequences of DNA.



air we breathe.

## ACTIVE VOLCANO IN VENUS

### Context:

A new analysis of radar images obtained earlier has yielded new evidence indicating **Venus is currently volcanically active**.

### More about the analysis:

- Researchers said radar images taken by **NASA's Magellan spacecraft** showed that a **volcanic vent about 1.6 km wide on the Venusian surface expanded and changed shape over an eight-month span in 1991**.
- The vent is **situated on Maat Mons**, which at about 9 km tall is the planet's highest volcano and second-highest mountain.

### About Venus:

Venus is slightly smaller than Earth. Its thick atmosphere - **mainly carbon dioxide** - **traps heat in a runaway greenhouse effect**, rendering Venus the solar system's hottest planet.

### Environment

## STEPS TAKEN FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

### Context:

Data given by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) (which monitors groundwater levels throughout the Country) shows about **60% of the wells monitored** have registered a rise in groundwater levels.

- However, the groundwater levels in some parts of the country are declining continuously.

Steps Taken by Central government	Description
<a href="#"><u>National Water Policy 2012</u></a>	It advocates conservation, promotion, and protection of water, augmenting the availability of water through rain-water harvesting, direct use of rainfall, water demand management, increasing water use efficiency, water pricing including incentivisation of recycling & reuse of water etc.
<b>Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) (launched in 2019)</b>	Implemented by the Government of India to effectively harvest the monsoon rainfall through the creation of artificial recharge structures, watershed management, recharge and reuse structures, intensive afforestation, and awareness generation etc.
<b>Amrit Sarovar Mission (2022)</b>	It is aimed at developing and rejuvenating <b>75 water bodies</b> in each district of the country as a part of the celebration of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.
<b>Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA)</b>	Constituted under the " <b>Environment (Protection) Act, 1986</b> " for the purpose of regulation and control of groundwater by industries, mining projects, infrastructure projects etc in the country.
<b>Atal Bhuja Yojana (2019)</b>	Implemented by the Central Government with an outlay of Rs. 6,000 crores, in collaboration with States, in certain water-stressed areas of Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
<b>National Aquifer Mapping Program (NAQUIM) (2012)</b>	Implemented by CGWB to cover an area of over 25 lakh sq km and share the NAQUIM study report along with management plans with States/UTs for suitable interventions.
<b>Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater-2020</b> Prepared by the CGWB with States/UTs providing a broad outline of the project and expected investments. The Master Plan envisages the construction of over 1 crore Rainwater harvesting and artificial recharge structures in the Country to harness 185 billion Cubic Metres (BCM) of water.	



Water is a **state subject** and the **construction of large reservoirs** for storage of water to meet the water requirement falls under the purview of the States.

## SMOKE PARTICLES FROM WILDFIRES CAN ERODE OZONE LAYER: MIT STUDY

### Context:

According to a new study the **smoke from recent wildfires is threatening to slow and even reverse the recovery of Earth's ozone layer.**

### About the Ozone layer:

- The ozone layer is the protective **cover shielding the Earth from the Sun's damaging ultraviolet radiation.**

### More about the study:

- Researchers in the US noted that a **wildfire can pump smoke up into the stratosphere, where the particles drift for over a year.**
- The researchers **identified a new chemical reaction by which smoke particles from the Australian wildfires made ozone depletion worse.**
- By triggering this reaction, **the fires likely contributed to a 3-5% depletion of total ozone at mid-latitudes in the Southern Hemisphere, in regions overlying Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Africa and South America.**

## A GREEN, SELF-POWERED DESALINATION PLANT IN LAKSHADWEEP

### Context:

For the first time in the world the **Chennai-based National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)** is working at making **Low-Temperature Thermal Desalination (LTTD) technology** process free of emissions.

- An initiative of providing **potable water in six islands of Lakshadweep.**

### Current Situation:

- Currently, the desalination plants, each of which provides at least **100,000 litres of potable wa-**

**ter every day, are powered by diesel generator sets.**

### How LTTD works:

- LTTD exploits the difference in temperature (nearly 15°C) in the ocean water at the surface and at depths of about 600 feet.
- This cold water **condenses water at the surface, which is warmer but whose pressure has been lowered using vacuum pumps.**
- Such de-pressurised water can evaporate even at ambient temperatures and this resulting **vapour when condensed is free of salts and contaminants and fit to consume.**

### National Institute of Ocean Technology:

- The NIOT, an institute under the **aegis of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**, has worked for years on **harnessing energy from the ocean.**

## BARDA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

### Context:

The Gujarat government has planned to **translocate 40 adult and sub-adult lions to the Barda Wildlife Sanctuary** in the state.



### Asiatic Lions

**Context:** The Gujarat government has planned to translocate 40 adult and sub-adult lions to the Barda Wildlife Sanctuary (Gujarat).

The Asiatic Lion (also known as the Persian Lion or Indian Lion) is a member of the Panthera Leo Leo subspecies that is restricted to India.

Its previous habitats consisted of West Asia and the Middle East before it became extinct in these regions.

**Protection Status:**  
 IUCN Red List: Endangered  
 CITES: Appendix I  
 Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Schedule I



**DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ASIATIC AND AFRICAN LION**  
 Asiatic lions are slightly smaller than African lions.

The most striking morphological character, which is always seen in Asiatic lions, and rarely in African lions, is a longitudinal fold of skin running along its belly.

### About Barda Wildlife Sanctuary:

Barda sanctuary, about **100 kilometres away from Gir National Park**, has been identified as a **potential site to accommodate the Asiatic Lions**.

#### Need:

- A second home would protect the lion population **from extinction in case of diseases, Natural disasters etc**

#### Other initiatives:

- Members of the **Maldhari community will also have to be relocated along with the big cats as it is important to restore around 1,000 km of 'exclusive lion habitat'** under Project Lion through incentivised voluntary relocation of forest villages.
- Maldharis are local pastoral communities settled within Gir Protected Areas and the Barda WLS.**

## NAMDAPHA NATIONAL PARK AND TIGER RESERVE



### Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve

**Context:** A rare sighting of a tiger in India's Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve led officials to uncover several timber depots in the core area of the reserve.

#### Namdapha flying squirrel (CR)

##### About the park

- Namdapha National Park (est. 1983)** is nearly 2000 km<sup>2</sup> large protected area in Arunachal Pradesh (in the biodiversity hotspot in the Eastern Himalayas)
- Name:** From the name of a river originating in the park and it meets Noa-Dehing river (tributary of the Brahmaputra)
- Lies between the **Dapha bum range of the Mishmi Hills and the Patkai range.**



The park lies in close proximity to Indo-Myanmar-China trijunction.



**Hoolock Gibbons (the only 'ape' species found in India)**

- Namdapha is the Fourth largest national park in India** (Hemis NP (Ladakh) > Desert NP (Rajasthan) > Gangotri NP (Uttarakhand)
- On the **Tentative Lists of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India.**
- Only Park in the World to have the four Feline species: **Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard and Clouded Leopard**

To know more Visit Insights IAS Daily Current Affairs

**Hoolock Gibbon: IUCN: Endangered**

**Q. Which one of the following National Parks has a climate that varies from tropical to subtropical, temperate and arctic? (UPSC 2015)**

- |     |                        |          |      |
|-----|------------------------|----------|------|
| (a) | Khangchendzonga        | National | Park |
| (b) | Nandadevi              | National | Park |
| (c) | Neora Valley           | National | Park |
| (d) | Namdapha National Park |          |      |

**Ans: D**

**Q. Consider the following pairs: (UPSC 2013)**

- Nokrek Biosphere Reserve: Garo Hills
- Loktak (Loktak) Lake: Barail Range
- Namdapha National Park: Dapha Hills

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

- |     |            |      |
|-----|------------|------|
| (a) | 1          | only |
| (b) | 2 and 3    | only |
| (c) | 1, 2 and 3 |      |
| (d) | None       |      |

**Ans: A**

**Nokrek Biosphere Reserve** (West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya). **Loktak Lake** (located near Moirang in Manipur State). **Barail** is the highest hill range in Assam and it separates the State of Manipur from the State of Nagaland. **Namdapha National Park** (located between the Dapha Bum range of the Mishmi Hills and the Patkai range)

### Climate Change

## CORAL BREACH IN THE GULF OF MANNAR

### Context:

The government plans a seaweed park in Tamil Nadu, ignoring the threat that **Kappaphycus**, a widely grown **invasive seaweed**, poses to corals in the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park.

### About the seaweed:

- Kappaphycus** is a **genus of red algae**. Species are distributed in the **waters of East Africa, Indonesia, Malaysia, Hainan Island, the Philippines, and Micronesia.**
- The seaweed is dangerous because it **grows fast, doubling its size in 15-30 days**, and seeks out live corals to thrive on — unlike native seaweeds, which typically grow on dead corals.

## Why plan a seaweed park?

National research institutes and companies are for increased cultivation of *Kappaphycus* to improve **live-lihoods, and profits and to reduce India's import of kappa-carrageenan**, a polysaccharide extracted from the alga that finds use in industrial gums and as a **smoothing agent in ice cream, toothpaste, jellies, medicines and paint.**



## Pollution and Waste

# NET-ZERO WASTE TO BE MANDATORY FOR BUILDINGS

### Context:

According to the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, all upcoming housing societies and commercial complexes in the country will soon mandatorily have to ensure **net zero waste.**

### Background:

- The directive is part of the **Manhole to Machine-hole scheme** for the complete removal of manual scavenging and has been formulated as a convergence of programmes like **Swachh Bharat, NAMASTE** and **AMRUT.**
- India currently generates **72,368 million** litres per day of urban wastewater of which only 28% is treated.
- According to a 2021 report - '**Circular Economy in Municipal Solid and Liquid Waste**', if the sale of treated sewage is institutionalised, it can add close to ₹3,285 crore annually.
- The **UN SDG 6.3** aims at halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially

increasing recycling and safe reuse globally by 2030.

## What does achieving net zero waste mean?

- Reducing, reusing, and recovering waste streams (sludge) to convert them to valuable resources so that **zero solid waste is sent to landfills.**
- Net zero waste along with the treatment of liquid discharge will be part of the government's push for **reforming and modernising the sewage disposal system.**

## The Ministry is also looking at:

- Integrating septic tank design** into the building by-laws,
- Geo-tagging** all septic tanks and manholes for proper tracking,
- Reducing GST on mechanised cleaning vehicles.

# 'TERRIFYING' PLASTIC ROCKS ON A REMOTE ISLAND

### Context:

Melted plastic has become intertwined with rocks on the island, located 1,140 km (708 miles) from the south-eastern state of **Espirito Santo**, which researchers say is evidence of humans' growing influence over the earth's geological cycles.

### More about it:

- The kind of plastics are in the rocks called "**plastiglomerates**" because they are **made of a mixture of sedimentary granules and other debris held together by plastic.**

## Species in News

# INDIAN WOLF (CANIS LUPUS PAL-LIPES)





### Indian wolf (*Canis lupus pallipes*)

**Context:** The Gujarat Forest Department is planning to release 10 Indian grey wolves from a conservation breeding centre at Junagadh's Sakkarbaug Zoological Park

**Aim:** To check the population of wild herbivores, including blue bulls (nilgais), wild boars, etc., which have been causing significant crop damage in these parts.

This is a **first for India**, although captive-bred wolves have been successfully released in the wild in the United States



#### Species of Wolf



### Status of the wolf in India:

- The population of wolves in India was estimated to be **3,100** — Gujarat's wolf population was estimated to be 494, the third highest after Madhya Pradesh (772) and Rajasthan (532).
- The **Central Zoo Authority (CZA)** and the **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)** are also working on the conservation breeding of endangered cat species (Asiatic lion, Bengal tiger, snow leopard and clouded leopard), canine species (Tibetan wolf) and bustard species (great Indian bustard, lesser florican).

## EURASIAN OTTERS



### Eurasian otters

**Context:** Scientists from the University of Jammu's Institute of Mountain Environment have camera-trapped three Eurasian otters in the **Neeru stream of the Chenab catchment** in Jammu and Kashmir



#### About: Eurasian Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

- It is an **elusive, solitary otter species** that is found in parts of three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa.
- Range in India:** Northern, northeast and southern India (mostly in cold hills and mountain streams)
- IUCN: **Near Threatened**
- CITES: **Appendix I**
- Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule II



**Threats:** The species is persecuted in some countries, and its populations in Europe and Asia have declined in recent years due to hunting, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change.

**Significance of spotting Eurasian Otters:** Eurasian otters are regarded as a **flagship species and indicator of high-quality aquatic habitats**. Its presence is encouraging for the health (pollution free) of the Neeru stream.

To know more Visit Insights IAS Daily Current Affairs

## Defence

### VAYULINK

#### Context:

The Indian armed forces are set to deploy a new home-grown system called Vayulink, which will help commanders identify friendly forces in a joint battlespace.

- Vayulink can avert Budgam-like fratricide, give real-time data

#### Working:

It will connect all entities, combat and non-combat, through a single link and help identify friendly forces in a combat situation whether airborne or on the ground through secure, jammer-proof communication.

- It will also arm pilots with accurate weather data before they fly.
- It helps in improving situational awareness and consequently aiding in effective decision-making.

### Military Exercises in News

- Exercise Bold Kurukshetra (Jodhpur):** Singapore Army and Indian Army
- Exercise La Perouse:** Multilateral exercise conducted by French Navy for enhancing coordination amongst the participating navies in Indo-Pacific Region. India, the USA, Japan, Australia, the UK etc. are participants
- Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX):** It is a naval exercise conducted with multiple friendly countries like Japan, France etc

### Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) project

The Indian Army has awarded the **first-ever procurement order for an Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) project** (to Indian startup M/s Hyper Stealth Technologies Pvt Ltd.) for procurement of an **indigenously developed Integrated Mobile Camouflage System (IMCS)** for Armoured Fighting Vehicles

The iDEX (under the Ministry of Defence) initiative was launched to **encourage technological development in defence and aerospace** by engaging R&D institutes, academia, and industries, including MSMEs, startups, and individual innovators.



## PRESIDENT'S COLOUR AWARD TO INS DRONACHARYA

### Context:

The President of India presented the President's Colour to INS Dronacharya in Kochi

### About INS Dronacharya

It is the gunnery school of the Indian Navy. It is located in Kochi, Kerala. It is responsible for training 820 officers and 2100 ratings per year in small-arms, naval missiles, artillery, radar and defensive countermeasures

### About President's Colour Award:

- The President's Colour is a **prestigious honour**, awarded by the **President to armed forces or a police unit** that has **rendered exceptional service to the nation**.
- The award serves as a **recognition of the sacrifices made by police personnel** in the line of duty, and as a tribute to their unwavering commitment to serving and protecting its people.

### Security Related News:

**1. Colombo Security Conclave (CSC):** It is a trilateral security grouping between India, Sri Lanka and Maldives (Mauritius joined later as the fourth member). Indian **Coast Guard Region (North East)** is conducting the fourth edition of the **Tabletop exercise** (simulated emergency) under CSC.

- **Aim:** It focuses on maritime security, marine pollution response and maritime search & rescue

**2. EXERCISE SEA DRAGON 23:** India is participating in the US-led **multi-national annual** exercise focussing on Anti-submarine warfare tactics in the Indo-Pacific region.

investigation (CBI) has extradited 33 fugitives involved in various criminal activities in the past year.

**Process:** CBI raises requests through Interpol channels and seeks their deportation or extradition through a formal route.

- CBI uses **Interpol's Star Global Focal Point Network** and analysis of financial crime files to not only trace suspects but also the proceeds of financial crimes.

Also, recently, India has called upon G20 countries to adopt **multilateral action** for faster extradition of '**fugitive economic offenders**.'

### Who are 'fugitive economic offenders' (FEO)?

FEO is defined as an individual against whom a warrant of arrest in relation to a scheduled offence has been issued by any court in India and the value of the offence is **at least Rs. 100 crores**.

**Fugitive economic offenders act, 2018** aims to seize the property of economic offenders who have fled the nation to avoid being prosecuted or who refuse to come back to face charges.

### Places

## MAPPING

### Internal Security

## OPERATION TRISHUL

### Context:

Under its '**Operation Trishul**,' the Central Bureau of In-

## Places in news - World

### Nile River

Large-scale pollution from untreated agricultural drainage and the change in river turbidity under increased upstream damming is endangering the delta system of the Nile. Nile (Origin: Rwenzori Mountains National Park, Uganda; Flows into the Mediterranean Sea) is the world's longest river.

### Black Sea grain deal extended

Russia and Ukraine signed the U.N.-backed Black Sea Grain Initiative in Turkey in July 2022. It allowed grain and other food products to be exported from Ukrainian ports, helping lower global food prices from record highs.

### Willow Project

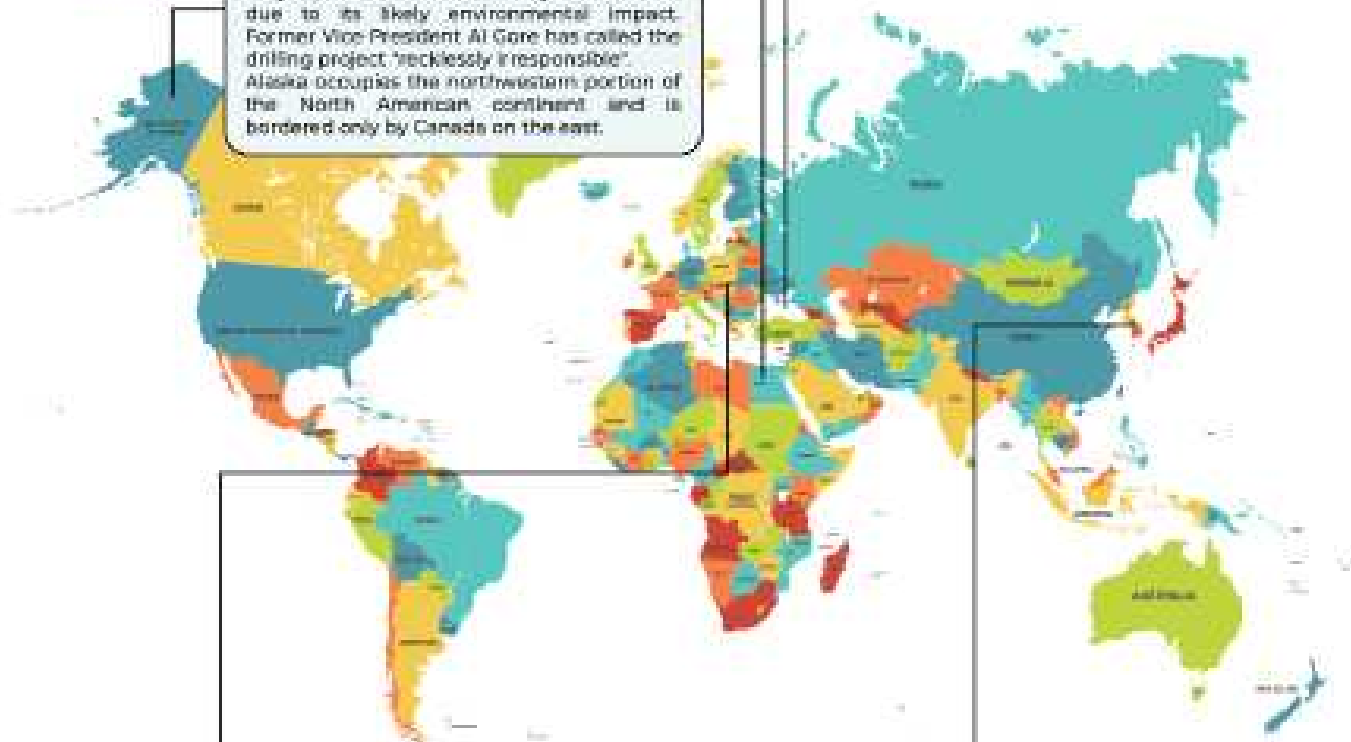
The US has approved an \$8 billion oil drilling project in Alaska, known as the Willow Project, which has been fiercely controversial due to its likely environmental impact. Former Vice President Al Gore has called the drilling project 'recklessly irresponsible'. Alaska occupies the northwestern portion of the North American continent and is bordered only by Canada on the east.

### Slovakia agrees to give Ukraine a fleet of Soviet warplanes

Slovakia (Capital: Bratislava; previously part of the Soviet Union), is a landlocked country in Central Europe. It is bordered by Poland to the north, Ukraine to the east, Hungary to the south, Austria to the southwest, and the Czech Republic to the northwest.

### Japan and South Korea

Japan and South Korea will meet to revive regular visits and overcome tensions. Japan colonised the South Korean peninsula between 1910 and 1945. South Korea has long asked for compensation and apology for wartime forced labour.



## Places in news - India

### Zoji La Pass: Srinagar-Leh national highway

Border Roads Organisation has reopened Zoji La Pass on the Srinagar-Kargil-Leh highway for record 68 days. Zoji La Pass (Kargil district of Ladakh) connects Ladakh to Srinagar and the rest of India. Currently, Zoji La Tunnel (over 14 km in length and India's longest road tunnel and Asia's longest bidirectional tunnel) is being constructed to provide all-weather connectivity to Ladakh.

### India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline

Recently, India-Bangladesh jointly inaugurated Friendship Energy Pipeline (for high-speed diesel). This is the first cross-border energy pipeline between India and Bangladesh.

### Sanjay Tiger Reserve

A tigress allegedly died of electrocution in a buffer zone of Sanjay Tiger Reserve. Sanjay Tiger Reserve (also known as Guru Ghasidas National Park) covers Chhattisgarh as well as Madhya Pradesh. It is named after the Satnami guru, Guru Ghasidas and was the last known habitat of the Asiatic cheetah in India.

### Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary

The mass nesting of Olive Ridley Sea turtles, known as 'arribada', began in Odisha's Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary (the world's largest nesting beach for Olive Ridley Turtles). It extends from the Dhamra River mouth in the north to the Brahmani river mouth in the south. Odisha has imposed a ban on fishing activities inside the sanctuary from November 1 to May 31 to protect the turtles. The Olive Ridley Sea turtles (IUCN: Vulnerable) are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 as a Scheduled 1 animal.

# CONTENT FOR MAINS ENRICHMENT (ETHICS/ ESSAY):

## Society

### HUSTLE CULTURE



**Usage:** The word 'Hustle Culture' can be used to denote modern-day lifestyle and work culture and issues related to it in the Essay/Ethics and Society papers

<b>Dry and Wet Waste Management Technologies</b>	<b>Atal Incubation Centre (AIC) – Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC)</b> (established under the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog) has demonstrated various technologies for waste management. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>SHESHA:</b> It is a compact <b>helical-shaped waste converter</b> aimed to manage <b>biodegradable waste generated in small housing societies</b>, restaurants, etc</li> <li>• <b>Rapid composting technology:</b> It decomposes Kitchen waste using cellulolytic fungi <i>Trichoderma koningiopsis</i> (isolated from tree bark).</li> </ul> <p><b>The aim of AIC-BARC</b> is to foster synergy between government research facilities and tech entrepreneurs.</p>
<b>Plastic Waste Management</b>	<p><b>A solar-powered system</b> that can convert plastic waste and CO<sub>2</sub> into <b>syngas and glycolic acid</b> (both used for the production of several by-products) has been developed by the University of Cambridge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The system uses <b>catalysts that are integrated into a light absorber</b> and can work at room temperature and pressure.</li> </ul>



<b>Feminist foreign policy movement</b>	<p><b>A feminist foreign policy (FPP)</b> is a policy of a state that prioritizes peace, gender equality, and environmental integrity; and seeks to disrupt colonial, racist, patriarchal, and male-dominated power structures.</p> <p><b>E.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Germany</b> mandates that gender equality be prioritized in its diplomatic engagement and development goals. It will allocate <b>8% of its development funds</b> to projects that specifically target gender equality, and protecting women, girls, and marginalized groups from violence.</li> <li>• <b>Similarly, other countries</b>, including Canada, Chile, Mexico, France, Mongolia, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, have also adopted a feminist approach to foreign policy.</li> </ul>
<b>Step to make Lakhpati Didis</b>	<p>In a historic step to make <b>Lakhpati Didis (Women with annual earnings of Rs. 1 lakh and more) from the Self-Help Groups (SHGs)</b>, the Ministry of Rural Development has signed an MoU with the Ministry of Ayush to provide training to rural youth and women in the <b>Ayush healthcare system</b>, aiming to empower them and <b>develop skilled personnel</b> through the <b>Deen Dayal Upadhyaya-Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>This step is part of the <b>government's efforts to empower rural women</b> and achieve the target of having <b>10 crore SHG members by 2024</b></p> </div>
<b>Perumal Murugan's novel 'Pookkuzhi,' or 'Pyre'</b>	<p><b>Tamil writer Perumal Murugan's novel 'Pookkuzhi,' or 'Pyre' in English translation</b>, has been nominated for the International Booker Prize 2023 longlist, making it the <b>first Tamil novel</b> to be nominated for the award.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The novel narrates the tale of</b> a young inter-caste couple who elope, exploring caste-based violence in rural Tamil Nadu during the 1980s.</li> </ul> <p><b>About his social work:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Murugan is a professor of Tamil literature</b>, and his works primarily critique the caste system and its use of oppression and violence.</li> <li>• <b>Literature can be a powerful tool for change</b></li> <li>• Murugan collaborated with Carnatic musician T M Krishna on <b>a poem about <a href="#">manual scavengers</a></b>.</li> </ul>

**Religion and Environment: Sika deer (Nara, Japan)**

A recent study in Japan found that the **Sika deer living near the Kasuga Taisha Shrine and Todaiji Buddhist Temple** in the city of Nara have unique mitochondrial DNA due to a ban on their **hunting for almost 1,500 years**, given their status in **Shintoism**, Japan's national religion.

- Sika deer are revered in Nara as the messengers of the Shinto gods.

**Usage:** Similar to Indian religious values of conservation of cultural heritage, this example can be used to show how religion can help in the conservation of flora and fauna.



## Women Empowerment

## GLOBAL FEMINIST MOVEMENTS

Movement	Impact
<b>Ni Una Menos ("Not One Woman Less") (Argentina, 2015)</b>	It brought to light the issue of <b>femicide and gender violence</b> in Argentina and other Latin American countries
<b>Me Too (US, 2017)</b>	It exposed the extent of <b>sexual harassment and abuse</b> in the entertainment industry. It highlighted the <b>power dynamics that allow sexual violence</b> to continue and led to accountability for perpetrators.
<b>International Women's Strike (Global, 2017)</b>	It was a call to action for women to go on strike and protest against the oppression of women and gender non-conforming people. It aimed to highlight the <b>value of women's work and the need for gender equality</b> in all aspects of life.
<b>Black Lives Matter (US, 2013)</b>	Although not exclusively a feminist movement, it addresses the intersectional issues of racism, sexism, and violence against Black women. It highlights the need for racial and gender equality.
<b>Say Her Name (US, 2015)</b>	This movement focuses on the violence experienced by Black women, including police brutality and sexual violence.
<b>Pinjra Tod (India, 2015)</b>	Pinjra Tod is a feminist collective formed by women students in Delhi in 2015 to fight against discriminatory hostel rules for women.

### Impact:

It had an impact on raising awareness about **gender inequality and the need for systemic change**. They have also **empowered women** to speak out about their experiences and demand accountability for perpetrators of violence.

## OSCARS

### The Elephant Whisperers



### The Elephant Whisperers



The Indian documentary **"The Elephant Whisperers"** has won this year's Oscar for Best Documentary Short.

#### Values depicted by the documentary:

-  **Compassion and empathy towards animals:** It shows how the indigenous caretakers of the two baby elephants, Raghu and Ammu, exhibit compassion, patience, and empathy towards the animals recognize their intelligence, emotions, and value.
-  **Importance of involving local communities in conservation efforts:** It shows the role of the Kattunayakan community in the conservation of the Mudumalai National Park
-  **The beauty and value of natural ecosystems:** It shows the importance of conserving biodiversity and the need to protect natural habitats.
-  **Women Empowerment:** It shows that the women caretaker (Bellie) is a strong and capable woman who, despite facing personal tragedies, continues to dedicate herself to the care of the elephants.

It tells the story of the **relationship between two orphaned elephants and their caretakers**, an indigenous tribal couple in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Tamil Nadu.



The film is directed and produced by two women, Gonsalves and Guneet Monga

#### About Mudumalai Tiger Reserve

Mudumalai Tiger Reserve is located in the **Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu** state at the tri-junction of three states, viz, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. It is a **part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve** (1st Biosphere Reserve in India). The Reserve has tall grasses, commonly referred to as 'Elephant Grass'.



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<b>STUDY GROUPS</b>	Groups will be formed based on common optional subjects.
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