NEWS TODAY

ANNUAL STATUS OF EDUCATION REPORT (ASER) 2022 RELEASED BY NGO PRATHAM

- ASER (first conducted in 2005) is an **annual, citizen-led household survey** to understand whether **children in rural India are enrolled** in school and **whether they are learning.**
  - Whereas, **National Achievement Survey (NAS) is undertaken by Ministry of Education.** It provides structured feedback on student learning levels at District, State, and national levels.
- ASER 2022 is **first field-based 'basic' nationwide ASER** since 2018.
  - In ASER 2022, children in **age group of 3 to 16 years** were surveyed to record their **schooling status and assess their basic reading and arithmetic skills.**
- **Key findings**

Parameters	Data	Trend wrt 2018
Overall enrollment in age group 6-14	98.4% in 2022	**Increase** ↑
Proportion of 15-16-year-old girls not enrolled	7.9% in 2022	**Decrease** ↓
Children taking Paid private tuition classes from 1st to 7th standard	30.5% in 2022	**Increase** ↑
Reading ability of class 3 **Arithmetic ability (subtraction) of class 3**	20.5% in 2022 25.9% in 2022	**Decrease** ↓ **Decrease** ↓
Average teacher attendance	87.1% in 2022	**Increase** ↑
Schools with drinking water available	76% in 2022	**Increase** ↑
Schools with useable girls' toilets	68.4% in 2022	**Increase** ↑

NEW QUALITY CONTROL ORDERS (QCOS) FACE PUSHBACK FROM WTO MEMBERS AND DOMESTIC MANUFACTURERS

- India's step to introduce a **draft of QCO to curb Chinese import surge and boost exports to western markets** is facing objections at WTO.
  - Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is planning to issue 50 QCOs for products such as aluminium, copper items etc.
- QCOs are **issued by various Ministries/Departments of Government of India** in exercise of **powers conferred by section 16 of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Act, 2016.**
  - QCO aims to **ensure compliance of products to compulsory Indian Standards in public interest,** protection of human, animal or plant health, prevention of unfair trade practices, etc.
    - Items, under these orders, **cannot be produced, sold/traded, imported and stocked unless they bear BIS mark.**
- **QCO benefits:** Better quality products to consumers, helps in becoming India to be part of **global supply chain** through quality manufacturing.
- **Concerns raised**
  - **WTO members:** Can be misused as **trade restrictive measures and delay grant of permission for imports** from specific countries.
  - **Domestic Manufacturers:** Gives rise to supply-chain constraints, unreliability of Indian companies and **diversion of export orders** due to limited time given to industry to comply with Standards.
    - Example, QCO on viscose staple fibres gave the industry only 30 days to comply.

CENTRE PROPOSES CHANGES TO INSOLVENCY AND BANKRUPTCY CODE (IBC), 2016

- IBC is a **time-bound, market mechanism for reorganization and insolvency resolution of corporate loans** in financial stress.
  - ➢ It is implemented by **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI).**
- To strengthen its functioning, **Ministry of Corporate Affairs** has proposed below changes in **IBC, 2016.**

Area	Proposed Changes
Technology	• Developing an **e-platform to handle multiple processes under IBC** such as case management, delivery of notices etc. with minimum human interface.
Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) applications admission	• **Financial Creditors** to ascertain default or dispute occurrence at Information Utilities **before CIRP application.** • **Adjudicating Authority (AA)** to mandatorily admit application and initiate CIRP (if default is established), **appoint Interim Resolution Professional on IBBI recommendation** and it can impose penalties on IBC violations.
Insolvency Resolution Process	• **Redesigning Fast-track corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (FIRP).** • **Expanding Pre-packaged Insolvency Resolution Framework (PRIRP) applicability** to a broader range of companies in addition to MSMEs. • **Limiting real estate cases outcomes** to default projects only. • **Appointment of administrator** in specific CIRP by Central government etc.
Liquidation Process	• Recasting liquidation process to enable **Committee of Creditors (CoC)** to request AA for direct dissolution, if liquidation is not feasible. • Eliminating duplication of activities between CIRP and Liquidation Process. • **CoC to supervise and support** liquidator's functioning, and **take all decisions in liquidation** by simple majority etc.
Other Areas	• **IBBI** to **register** and **regulate** a special class of valuers for rendering all valuation-related services.

Corporate Insolvency is a situation when the company is inefficient to settle its debts to the creditors. Under IBC, we have 3 types of resolution processes as:

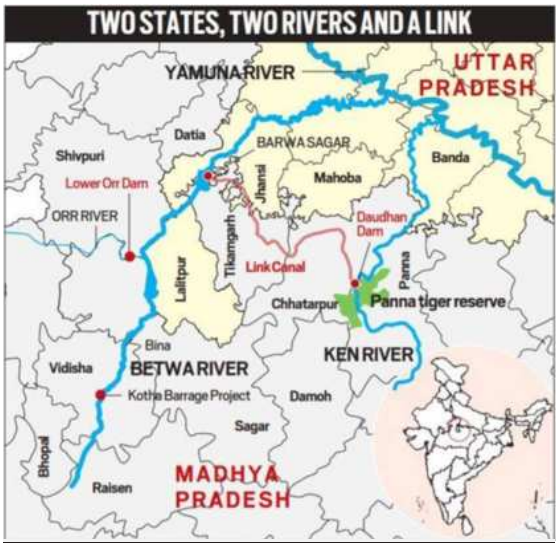
CIRP
- It is a **creditor-in-control model** to resolve the corporate insolvency of a corporate debtor for defaults of minimum amount of **₹1 crore.**
- It is to be completed within a period of **180 days** (with a maximum of **270 days**).

PRIRP
- It is a **debtor-in-possession model** for speedier resolution of MSMEs insolvency.
- It allows for a **Swiss challenge** to the resolution plan and to be completed within a period of **120 days.**

FIRP
- It covers **Small-sized companies, Start-Ups** and **Unlisted Companies** with a total asset value of **below ₹1 crore.**
- It is to be completed within a period of **90 days.**

THIRD MEETING OF STEERING COMMITTEE OF KEN-BETWA LINK PROJECT (SC-KBLP) HELD

- SC- KBLP meeting highlighted that **Greater Panna Landscape (GPL) council is being constituted for implementation of Landscape Management Plan (LMP)** and **Environment Management Plan (EMP) of project.**
  - ➢ Earlier, **Integrated LMP for GPL was released** by Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) in 2022. It was prepared in respect of KBLP.
    - It provides for **better habitat protection, and management of flagship species such as Tigers, Vultures, and Gharial.**
- KBLP is the **first project under National Perspective Plan (NPP) for interlinking of rivers.**
  - ➢ It envisages to **transfer water from Ken River to Betwa river.** They both are **tributaries of Yamuna.**
  - ➢ It lies in **Bundelkhand, a drought-prone region,** which spreads across 13 districts of **Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Madhya Pradesh (MP).**
- **Benefits of KBLP:** Provide water for irrigation, drinking purpose; solve droughts issue in Bundelkhand region, produce hydropower etc.
- **Concerns of KBLP:** Lead to **submergence of about 7.6% of total Panna Tiger Reserve area** (critical tiger habitat); **threats to faunal and floral diversity;** loss of two million trees etc.
- In addition, two wildlife sanctuaries namely **Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary and Rani Durgawati Wildlife Sanctuary of MP** and one, **Ranipur Wildlife Sanctuary of UP** have been approved by state government for bringing them under project Tiger.



- **NPP** was prepared in 1980 by **the then Ministry of Irrigation (now MoJS), to transfer water from water surplus basins to water-deficit basins.**
  - ➢ Based on NPP, National Water Development Agency (NWDA) identified 30 river links: 16 under Peninsular component (including KBLP) and 14 under Himalayan Component.

INDIA FAST-TRACKS ARUNACHAL DAMS, EXPEDITES STALLED PROJECTS FEARING WATER WAR BY CHINA

- In response to Chinese dams being built in north-east, India has initiated its **biggest hydroelectric project in Upper Subansiri in Arunachal Pradesh (AR)** to reduce the adverse effects of Chinese dam.
  - Also, India is **moving three stalled hydro projects in AP for possible allocation to National Hydroelectric Power Corporation** after recommendations of evaluation committee and in-principle permission by Ministry of Power.
- China plans to construct **60,000MW hydropower project on Yarlung Zangbo (Brahmaputra) at Medog** on border with AR.
  - After construction, China plans to **divert Brahmaputra water from the project** to its northern arid region.
  - **Three more projects** i.e., 640 MW project at Dagu, 710 MW project at Bayu & 800 MW project at Zhongyu is in **advance stage of planning.**
- **Concerns associated with increasing Chinese infrastructure**
  - **Impact lower riparian states, particularly India** including environmental consequences.
  - Diversion of water could **strain India's agricultural need in northeast region.**
  - Use of water infrastructure as a form of **territorial demarcation and control.**
  - **Causes flood like situation** in Assam and AR.

BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER

- It **originates from Kailash ranges of Himalayas.** After flowing through Tibet, it **enters India through AP** and **flows through Assam and Bangladesh** before joining Bay of Bengal.
- It accounts for around **30 percent of India's freshwater resources and 40 percent of its whole hydropower potential.**
- **Tributaries:** Subansiri, Borgong, Dhansiri (North) Manas, etc on North bank; and Noadehing, Buridehing, Desang, Dikhow, Bhogdoi etc on South Bank.

HYDERABAD TO HOST INDIA'S FIRST FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION (IR) CENTRE ON HEALTHCARE, LIFE SCIENCES

- **Centre for Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR)** will be set up in collaboration with World Economic Forum (WEF), an **autonomous organization (HQ: Geneva, Switzerland).**
  - C4IR will be the 18th centre in WEF's **fourth IR network,** spanning four continents, and it will focus on life sciences and healthcare.
- Fourth IR, also known as **Industry 4.0,** is a **collective term for converging technologies** which blurs the distinction between **physical, digital and biological realms.**
  - **Industry 4.0 builds upon Industry 3.0** which was largely based on use of electronics and information technology. (refer image for various IR's).
- **Significance of Industry 4.0:** Impacting advances in Science and Technology as well as processes of businesses, **Industry 4.0 brings multiple possibilities such as:**
  - Personalized and affordable healthcare, integrating MSMEs in global value chains, Ease of living, ensuring long-term gains in efficiency and productivity etc.
- **Concerns:** Job Loss (due to automation), Increased inequalities, Privacy and Security concerns etc.

INDIA'S INITIATIVES

- To tap Industry 4.0 benefits a number of **Large scale initiatives** to harness digital technologies are taken such as **Unified Payments Interface, Aadhar, E-shram portal, e-NAM, Direct Benefit Transfer, Startup India etc.**

ALSO IN NEWS

Environmental, Social or Governance (ESG)

- International Financial Services Centres Authority issued a **framework for disclosure by Fund Management Entities for ESG Schemes.**
  - Estimates suggest that by 2025, over a third of assets under management globally, shall pertain to ESG.
- ESG is a **framework to helps stakeholders to understand how an organization is managing risks and opportunities** related to environmental, social, and governance criteria.
  - **Environmental factors include** Climate change, Air and water pollution, Biodiversity etc.
  - **Social factor includes** Customer satisfaction, Data protection and privacy, Gender and diversity etc.
  - **Governance factors include** Board composition, Audit committee structure etc.

 Advance Authorization Scheme (AAS)	• Directorate General of Foreign Trade has **notified amended rules for extending Export Obligation under AAS.** ➢ Move will help **automate entire Export Obligation extension process with minimal human intervention** and lead to ease of doing business. • AAS is a **duty exemption scheme** issued by Government of India **under Foreign Trade Policy 2015-2020.** ➢ It **exempts payment of import duties on raw materials/inputs** required for manufacturing products for export. ➢ **It allows duty free import of inputs,** which are physically incorporated in an export product. ➢ It **additionally allows packaging material, fuel, oil, catalyst** which is consumed / utilized in production of export product.
 Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH)	• National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) has notified India's first national assessment regulator, PARAKH. • PARAKH was **launched under National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 by Ministry of Education.** ➢ It **facilitates a platform for students for self-assessment** of learning outcomes and 21st-century life skills acquired by students. ➢ It **works on setting norms, standards and guidelines for student assessment** and evaluation for all recognised school boards in country. ➢ Assessment guidelines will **help in removing disparities in scores of students** enrolled with different state boards.
 Nature Risk Profile (NRP)	• UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and S&P Global has launched Nature Risk Profile. • NRP is aimed at **enabling financial sector to measure and address nature-related risk** by providing scientifically robust and actionable analytics on nature impacts and dependencies. ➢ Its methodology is based on **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF),** adopted in December 2022. ➢ GBF includes a **target for governments to take legal, administrative or policy measures** to encourage and enable businesses to regularly monitor, assess, and transparently disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity.
 Bharat Pravah	• Union Minister of Shipping, Waterways and Ports launched an initiative 'Bharat Pravah - India along its River and Shores'. • Bharat Parvah will **highlight the role of rivers-ports-shipping in everyday life** of a common man through literature, dialogue and communication through regional, national and international events. • Rivers and Seas have deep connotations and connect with the social psyche of India. ➢ They are **part of economic activities, rituals and religious texts, connecting people and their hearts across India** such as Dwarka in West, Guwahati in East, Varanasi in North or Rameswaram in South.
 Grameen Udhyami Programme	• **Ministry of Skill development and Entrepreneurship facilitated 200 tribal women** under Grameen Udyami Programme. • Programme aims to **build skills and spirit of entrepreneurship among tribal communities** for their inclusive and sustainable development. ➢ **Under it, multiple vocational and functional skills are being imparted to India's youth** to increase their employment opportunities. ➢ Programme is held **under Sansadiya Sankul Pariyojana (SSP).** ▪ SSP aims to **expand rural and local economy, enhance employment opportunities,** reduce forced migration and lead to conservation of natural resources.