

# NEWS TODAY

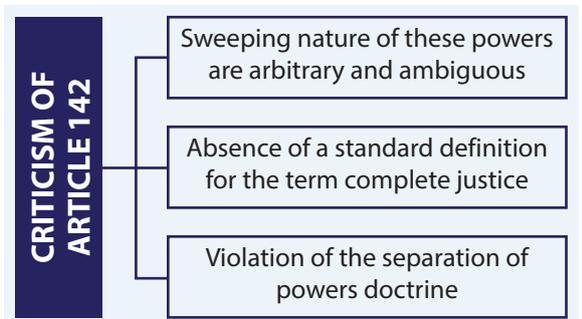
## WORLD BANK GROUP LAUNCHES BUSINESS READY (B-READY) PROJECT

- Business Ready reflects a more **balanced and transparent** approach towards evaluating a country's business and investment climate and to make it **ready for a dynamic private sector**.
- Business Ready **improves upon and replaces the World Bank Group's earlier Doing Business project**.
  - **World Bank had scrapped** Doing Business report (in 2021) after probe revealed that **rankings for China, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Azerbaijan had been altered**.
- **About Business Ready Project**
  - **It will focus on ten topics covering a firm's life cycle** –business entry, business location, utility services, labour, financial services, international trade, taxation, dispute resolution, market competition, and business insolvency.
  - **First report**, covering 54 economies, **will be published in 2024**. It will be further **scaled up to cover 180 economies by 2025-26**.
  - Will facilitate **private investment, generate employment, and improve productivity** in inclusive and sustainable ways.

Doing Business Project	Business Ready Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considered <b>perspective of certain individual firms</b> only.</li> <li>• <b>Some parameters considered de jure info</b> (statutory laws and regulations) <b>and some relied on de facto info</b> (practical implementation).</li> <li>• <b>Data and the calculation</b> process were <b>mostly opaque</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Covered only the major business city</b> in an economy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To evaluate <b>standpoint of private sector development as a whole</b>.</li> <li>• Aims to <b>collect both de jure information and de facto measurements for all parameters</b>.</li> <li>• To <b>publish all data's collected and calculation methodology</b> used, to <b>ensure transparency</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Expected to cover wide range</b> of cities in an economy.</li> </ul>

## SUPREME COURT (SC) RULES IT CAN DIRECTLY GRANT DIVORCE TO COUPLES UNDER ARTICLE 142

- SC held that it **could directly grant divorce**, in cases where marriage has **irretrievably broken down**, dispensing with period prescribed under **Hindu Marriage Act (HMA), 1955**.
  - As per Section 13-B of HMA, **after filing first motion** seeking divorce through mutual consent, **parties have to wait for a minimum of six and a maximum of 18 months** before moving the second motion.
- However, **SC clearly stated that grant of divorce** on ground of irretrievable breakdown of marriage is **not a matter of right, but a discretion**.
- **Article 142 provides SC power, to do "complete justice"** between parties, where, at times, law or statute may not provide a remedy.
- While **powers under Article 142 are sweeping in nature, SC has defined its scope and extent through various judgments**.
  - **Prem Chand Garg case (1962)**: Demarcated contours for powers under Article 142.
  - **Union Carbide Corporation vs Union of India**: SC in 1991, while highlighting wide scope of Article 142, ordered compensation for the victims.
  - **Supreme Court Bar Association vs Union of India (1998)**: Powers under Article 142 are supplementary and could not be used to supplant or override a substantive law.



# NITI AAYOG REPORT “BEST PRACTICES IN SOCIAL SECTOR” HIGHLIGHTS SCHEME FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSGENDERS

- Report mentioned “**Prayatna**” project, a livelihood and enterprise training program for transgenders in Delhi-NCR.
  - Prayatna aims to help beneficiaries to attain a basic quality of life and impart entrepreneurship skills to some of them.
  - Project was approved by Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) Executive Committee.
  - Nodal agency: Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), through its implementing agency National Skill Development Centre (NSDC).
- Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** defines Transgender person, as a person whose gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth.
  - It includes trans-man or trans-woman, person with intersex variations, person having such socio-cultural identities as kinner, hijra etc.
- Challenges faced by Transgenders:** Not able to attend skill training centres because of societal pressure, Enormous health disparities, including staggering rates of HIV infection, discrimination in education, prone to multiple forms of violence etc.
- Report also highlighted several best practices from various other social sectors including:

Sector	Scheme/Initiative
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crop Cluster Development Programme (Haryana)</li> <li>Climate resilient rice – fish farming (Assam)</li> </ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vidya Samiksha Kendra for monitoring of learning outcomes (Gujarat)</li> <li>Academic Bank of Credits (MeitY)</li> </ul>
Health and Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing Maternal and Newborn Deaths (ReMiND) (UP)</li> <li>Nutri Garden Initiative (Rajasthan)</li> </ul>
E-governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmer Registration and Unified beneficiary 139 Information System (FRUITS) Karnataka</li> <li>UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) by MeitY.</li> </ul>

## Other Initiatives Taken for Transgenders

<b>Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020</b>	<b>National Council for Transgender Persons</b>
<b>SMILE (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise)</b>	<b>National Portal for Transgender Persons</b>

## TWENTY POINT PROGRAMME (TPP): GOVERNMENT SHINES ON 11 PARAMETERS

- In a recent report, by Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MOSPI), out of 14 programmes tracked quarterly under TPP:
  - Government achieved a more than 90% target completion in six parameters (including National Rural Livelihood Mission, Electricity supplied etc.) and 80-90% in five (including PMAY(G), Targeted Public Distribution etc).
  - Performance in three parameters was below 80% target (included area covered under plantation and construction of roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana).
- A package of programmes comprising schemes relating to poverty alleviation, employment generation, education and health etc. called TPP has been in operation since 1975.
  - This programme was restructured in 1982, 1986 and again in 2006.
- Programme is meant to give a thrust to schemes relating to poverty alleviation, employment generation in rural areas, housing, education, health & family welfare, protection of environment etc having a bearing on quality of life, especially in rural areas.
- MOSPI monitors TPP on the basis of performance reports received from State Governments and Central Nodal Ministries.

## INDIA-UAE COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (CEPA) COMPLETED ONE YEAR

- India-UAE CEPA entered into force on 1st May 2022.
  - While a traditional Free Trade Agreement (FTA) focuses mainly on goods; a CEPA is more comprehensive and ambitious in terms of a holistic coverage of many areas like services, investment, IPR, government procurement, disputes etc.
  - India has also signed CEPA with Japan and South Korea.
- CEPA has made a significant impact on India’s Bilateral Trade with UAE.
  - Trade has increased from US\$ 72.9 billion (Apr 21-Mar 2022) to US\$ 84.5 billion (Apr 22-Mar 2023).
  - Indian exports to UAE increased from US\$ 28 bn to US\$ 31.3 bn.
  - Some of the key sectors that have witnessed significant export growth on account of CEPA include: Mineral Fuels; Electrical Machinery (particularly telephone equipment); Gems & Jewellery; Automobiles etc.
  - In the Goods Domain, UAE eliminated duties on 97.4% of its tariff lines corresponding to 99% of imports from India.
  - India has obtained immediate duty elimination on over 80% of its tariff lines corresponding to 90% of India’s exports in value terms.
  - Out of the 160 services subsectors, India has offered 100 sub-sectors to UAE and UAE has offered 111 sub-sectors to India.

# CONSULTATIONS ON RELOOK AT SEDITION LAW AT ADVANCED STAGE: CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO SUPREME COURT (SC)

- Information was provided during a **plea challenging the sedition law under Section 124A of Indian Penal Code (IPC)**.
- IPC defines sedition as an **offence committed when any person by words or otherwise brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards government established by law** by
  - words, either spoken or written.
  - signs.
  - visible representation, or otherwise.
- Sedition is a **cognisable, non-bailable and non-compoundable offence, entailing life imprisonment as maximum punishment**, with or without a fine.
- A person charged under sedition is **barred from a government job**. They have to **live without their passport and must produce themselves in court** at all times as and when required.
- SC on Sedition**
  - Kedar Nath Vs State of Bihar, 1962**: citizen has right to criticize or comment on government, or its actions, as long as he does not provoke violence.
  - P. Alavi vs State of Kerala, 1982**: sloganeering and criticizing of Parliament or Judicial setup is not sedition.
  - In May 2022, SC had held that sedition law should be effectively kept in abeyance** till Union Government reconsiders the provision.

## ALSO IN NEWS



### Cantonments

- As per reports, **Union government has started a plan to abolish 62 cantonments** around the country.
- Plan is to **carve out the military areas** in all cantonments and convert them into **"exclusive military stations"** with the Army exercising "absolute control" over them.
  - The civilian areas, in turn, will be **merged with the local municipalities** so as to provide them with the **benefits of various government schemes**.
- Cantonments are **different from the Military Stations** in that **the Military Stations are purely meant for the use and accommodation of the armed forces**.
  - Governed by **Cantonments Act of 2006**, a legislation enacted by the **Central government**.
  - Function **under Ministry of Defence**.



### Laundromat countries

- A recent report highlighted that **India leads five countries named as the "Laundromat" countries** that **buy Russian oil and sell processed products to European countries**.
  - Laundromat countries** mentioned in the report are **China, India, Turkey, UAE and Singapore**.
- It **results in sidestepping European sanctions** against Russia.



### Fit for 55

- European Commission has adopted a set of proposals termed Fit for 55**.
- Fit for 55 refers to the **EU's target of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030**.
  - It is a **set of proposals to revise and update EU legislation** and to **put in place new initiatives** to ensure that **EU policies are into line with the agreed climate goals**.
- This includes:**
  - Extension to **emissions from maritime transport**.
  - Reduction of **emissions allowances**.
  - Implementation of **the global carbon offsetting and reduction scheme for international aviation**.
  - Increase **funding for an innovation fund**.
  - Revision of the **market stability reserve**.



### National Schedule Caste - Schedule Tribe Hub

- It has **crossed over 1 lakh beneficiary registrations**.
- About National SC-ST Hub**
  - It is set up to **provide professional support to SC and ST Entrepreneurs** to fulfill the obligations under the **Public Procurement Policy for Micro and Small Enterprises Order 2012**.
    - Implementation: Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises** through the National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) a public-sector undertaking.
    - Several special subsidy schemes/programmes have been approved** under National SC/ST including Single Point Registration Scheme, Special Marketing Assistance Scheme etc.

 <p><b>Tea Plantation in India</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● FSSAI has operationalised <b>maximum residue limit (MRL) for five pesticides</b> used in tea plantation.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➢ Five pesticides are <b>emamectin, benzoate, fenpyroximate, hexaconazole, propiconazole, and quinalphos.</b></li></ul></li><li>● India is the <b>2<sup>nd</sup> largest tea producer and the largest black tea producer.</b></li><li>● <b>Climatic requirements:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➢ <b>Maximum temperature of 16-32°C.</b></li><li>➢ <b>A well distributed rainfall of about 150 cm per annum.</b></li><li>➢ <b>Area should not be prone to frost.</b></li><li>➢ <b>Soil should be acidic</b> (around pH 5.0) having <b>good drainage facility.</b></li></ul></li></ul>
 <p><b>Oxygen extraction from simulated Lunar soil</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>NASA scientists successfully extracted oxygen from simulated lunar soil.</b></li><li>● NASA's <b>Carbothermal Reduction Demonstration (CaRD) team</b> conducted the test <b>in conditions similar</b> to those found on the Moon <b>by using Dirty Thermal Vacuum Chamber.</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➢ This was the <b>first time that extraction was done in a vacuum environment,</b> paving the way for extraction and use of resources in a lunar environment.</li></ul></li><li>● This has the <b>potential to produce several times its own weight in oxygen per year</b> on the lunar surface, which will <b>enable a sustained human presence.</b></li></ul>
 <p><b>StarBerrySense</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● It is a <b>low-cost sensor</b> designed to <b>quickly calculate where the satellite is pointing and is being tested in space for the very first time.</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➢ It was <b>mounted on ISRO's</b> recently launched <b>PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM).</b></li><li>➢ It was <b>developed by scientists from Indian Institute of Astrophysics,</b> an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology.</li></ul></li><li>● <b>Main function</b> of StarBerrySense is to <b>image the field of view, correctly identify the stars it sees, and calculate the pointing direction.</b></li></ul>
 <p><b>Bluebugging</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Andhra Pradesh <b>police have cautioned the smartphone users</b> to be aware of Bluebugging.</li><li>● It is a form of hacking that <b>lets attackers access a device through its discoverable Bluetooth connection.</b></li><li>● On gaining access, <b>the hacker can listen to the calls, read/send messages and can gain access to contacts.</b></li><li>● Bluebugging <b>can happen whenever a Bluetooth enabled device is within a 10-metre radius of the hacker,</b> which can be boosted through antennas.</li></ul>
 <p><b>Places in News</b></p>	<p><b>Qatar (Capital Doha)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● UN holds <b>crucial Afghanistan talks in Qatar,</b> without the Taliban.</li><li>● <b>Political Boundaries</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➢ Qatar is located <b>on the west coast of the Persian Gulf.</b></li><li>➢ It <b>shares a border with Saudi Arabia and UAE.</b></li><li>➢ Island country of <b>Bahrain lies northwest of Qatar.</b></li></ul></li><li>● <b>Geographical features:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➢ Most of Qatar's area is flat, <b>low-lying desert. Sanddunes and salt flats, or sabkhahs, are the chief topographical features.</b></li><li>➢ <b>Highest Point:</b> Abū al-Bawl</li><li>➢ There are <b>no permanent bodies of freshwater.</b></li></ul></li></ul>  <p><b>Uzbekistan (Capital: Tashkent)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Uzbekistan holds referendum on new Constitution that puts human rights at forefront.</li><li>● <b>Political Boundaries</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➢ <b>Landlocked country</b> in Central Asia.</li><li>➢ Bordered by <b>Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Turkmenistan.</b></li></ul></li><li>● <b>Geographical features</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➢ <b>Major rivers: Syr Darya</b> (ancient Jaxartes River) and <b>Amu Darya</b> (ancient Oxus River).</li><li>➢ <b>Highest peak:</b> Khazret Sultan in Gissar Range.</li><li>➢ <b>Desert:</b> Shares <b>Aralkum Desert (former Aral Sea)</b>- youngest desert with Kazakhstan, Kyzylkum Desert.</li></ul></li></ul> 