

NEWS TODAY

GOVERNMENT FORMS A COMMITTEE ON SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

- The government set up a committee under former President Ram Nath Kovind to **examine the feasibility of simultaneous elections or one nation-one election.**
- Under **simultaneous elections, Lok Sabha and State Assemblies** elections will be synchronised **together** such that **voters in a particular constituency** vote for both on the same day.
 - **Simultaneous election** was the norm **until 1967**. But following the dissolution of some **Legislative Assemblies in 1968 and 1969** and that of **Lok Sabha in 1970**, elections to State Assemblies and Parliament have been held separately.
- **Recommendations on simultaneous elections**
 - The idea of **simultaneous elections** was proposed by the **Election Commission in 1983**.
 - In 1999, the **Law Commission's 170th report suggested simultaneous elections** to the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies with a view to ensuring stability in governance.
 - **Standing Committee of Parliament (2015)** and **NITI Aayog (2016)** suggested that **the election could be held in 2 phases**.

Arguments in Favour	Arguments in Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the cost of holding elections. • Imposition of the Model Code of Conduct for extended periods can lead to policy paralysis. • The engagement of security forces impacts their role in other security purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational feasibility such as how to synchronise the cycle for the first time. • Constitutional requirements such as curtailment and extension of terms of Lok Sabha/ State Legislative Assemblies, Amendment to provisions of Constitution (Article 83, 84, 172, 174, 356) etc. • National and state issues are different, holding Simultaneous elections may affect voter's judgment.

DIPAM INVITES REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL TO APPOINT AN ASSET VALUER FOR IDBI BANK'S STRATEGIC DISINVESTMENT

- The move by the **Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM)** aims to undertake the assets valuation and provide requisite assistance in the Strategic Disinvestment of IDBI Bank Limited.
- **Disinvestment** means the sale or liquidation of assets by the government, usually Central and state public sector enterprises, projects, or other fixed assets.
 - In the **Union Budget for 2023-24**, the government has set a **disinvestment target of 51,000 crore**.
- **Strategic Disinvestment** implies the **sale of a substantial portion of the Government shareholding** of a central public sector enterprise (CPSE) of up to 50%, or such higher percentage as the competent authority may determine, **along with transfer of management control**.
- **Strategic Disinvestment Policy, 2021**
 - **Coverage:** Existing CPSEs, Public Sector Banks and Public Sector Insurance Companies.
 - **Two-fold classification** of sectors to be disinvested:
 - **Strategic sector: Bare minimum presence of the CPSEs** and remaining to be privatised or merged or subsidiaries with other CPSEs or closed. It includes the following four sectors
 - **Atomic Energy, Space and Defense;**
 - **Transport and Telecommunication;**
 - **Power, Petroleum, Coal and other minerals;**
 - **Banking, Insurance and financial services.**
 - **Non-strategic sector:** All CPSEs will be privatised, otherwise shall be closed.

ABOUT DIPAM

- DIPAM is under the **Ministry of Finance** to oversee work related to **Strategic Disinvestment and Privatisation, Minority Stake Sales and Capital Restructuring**.

LASER INTERFEROMETER GRAVITATIONAL WAVE OBSERVATORY PROJECT (LIGO) INDIA: NEXT SCIENCE MOVE AFTER CHANDRAYAAN-3 AND ADITYA L1

• LIGO - India is a **planned advanced gravitational-wave observatory** to be located in India as part of worldwide network.

- It will be located in **Hingoli district of Maharashtra**, and expected to be **completed by 2030**.
- It had received the Indian Government's in-principle approval in 2016.
- It will be **built by Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Science and Technology**.

• Significance of LIGO-India

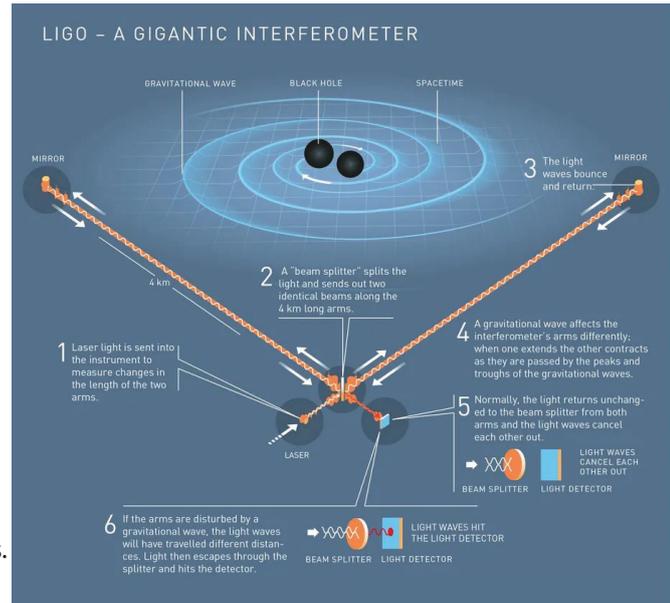
- **Provide insights into mysteries of universe**, including nature of black holes, neutron stars, and other celestial phenomena.
- Improve ability to **localize a source of gravitational waves anywhere in sky**.

• Working of LIGO

- **Observatory consist of 4-km-long vacuum chambers**, built perpendicular to each other.
- **Highly reflective mirrors** are placed at the end of the vacuum chambers.
- **Light rays are released simultaneously** in both vacuum chambers.
- In normal circumstances, light rays in both chambers would return simultaneously. But presence of a phase difference marks the **detection of a gravitational wave**.

• **Gravitational waves are 'ripples' in space-time caused by most violent and energetic processes** like collision of black holes, etc. in Universe.

- Albert Einstein predicted the existence of **gravitational waves in 1916 in his general theory of relativity**.



DELHI HIGH COURT PERMITTED STEM CELL THERAPY FOR TREATMENT OF AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

• **Stem Cell Therapy (SCT)** is a form of **regenerative medicine** designed to **repair damaged cells** within the body by **reducing inflammation** and **modulating the immune system**.

- **Regenerative medicine** focuses on developing and applying new treatments to **heal tissues** and **organs and restore function** lost due to **aging, disease, damage or defects**.

• **Process involved in SCT includes Harvesting** (process of collecting stem cells of a donor), **Conditioning** (prepare body for transplant), **Transplanting stem cells and Recovery**.

- As per '**New Drugs and Clinical Trial Rules 2019**' stem-cell derived products are to be used as "**new drugs**" which **means that any doctor** who uses **SCT** needs to **take permission from government**.

• **Stem cells** are **special human cells that are able to develop into many different cell types** such as muscle cells, blood cells, and brain cells.

• Types of stem cells

- **Embryonic stem cells** (supply new cells for an embryo as it grows and develops into a baby).

- **Adult stem cells** (supply new cells as an organism grows and to replace cells that get damaged).

- **Induced pluripotent stem cells, or 'iPS cells'** (stem cells that scientists make in laboratory).

ABOUT ASD (AUTISM)

- It is a **neurological and developmental disorder** that affects how people interact with others, communicate, learn, and behave. **About 1 in 100 children has autism.**

MISSION TO CLEAN THE GANGA REMAINS A WORK IN PROGRESS

• The government launched the **Namami Gange Programme** to rejuvenate River Ganga and its tributaries in **June 2014** for a period **up to 31st March 2021**.

- The programme was subsequently extended up to 31st March 2026.
- **There is no State-wise allocation under the Namami Gange Programme.**

• It is to be **implemented by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** and its state and district counterparts under the **Ministry of Jal Shakti**.

• **The main pillars of Namami Gange** include sewage treatment, River-Front development, River surface cleaning, Afforestation, Biodiversity, Public Awareness, Effluent management and Ganga Gram.

• Current Status of the Mission:

- Of the taken 409 projects only 232 projects were made operational (till Dec 2022).

- **The majority of the projects** pertain to the creation of sewage infrastructure as untreated domestic/industrial wastewater is the main reason for pollution in the river.

- Of the **11,765 million litres per day (MLD) of sewage generated across the 5 major basin states** (Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal), the centre is to set up Sewage Treatment Plants(STP) **only for 7000 MLD of sewage by 2026**.

KARNATAKA HIGH COURT DECLARES ELECTION OF MEMBER OF LOK SABHA FROM HASSAN CONSTITUENCY AS VOID

- The decision of disqualification is made on grounds of **guilty of corrupt practices** including wrong disclosure of value of properties, evading taxes, etc.
- **Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951** enables the High Court to **declare an election void** on certain grounds.
 - Once the election is declared void the **member has to vacate the office.**
 - The aggrieved person **can appeal to the Supreme Court** against the order of the High Court.
- **Disqualification of a lawmaker is prescribed in three situations**
 - **RPA, 1951:** Under Section 8(4), a lawmaker is disqualified for the period of imprisonment and a further six years **if convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for two years or more.**
 - **Tenth Schedule of the Constitution:** Provides for the disqualification of the members on grounds of defection.
 - **Articles 102 (1) and 191 (1):** For disqualification of a Member of Parliament and a Member of the Legislative Assembly respectively.
 - The grounds here include holding an **office of profit, being of unsound mind or insolvent or not having valid citizenship.**

ALSO IN NEWS



Mitakshara Law

- Recently, Supreme Court ruled that **children born out of void or voidable marriages is entitled to parents' share in a Hindu Undivided Family(HUF) governed by Mitakshara law.**
- **Mitakshara Law**
 - It is a Hindu law school that **governs the succession of property in a HUF.**
 - It holds that the son, grandson, and grandson's son have a **right to the family property through birth.**
 - It also **recognizes the right of daughters to inherit property,** albeit with certain limitations.



9 Dash Lines

- **Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand and Philippines** have rejected the new map of China as it depicts 9 Dash-lines as a Chinese Territory.
- **China stakes claim to 90% of the South China Sea,** and this claim is based on the **U-shaped imaginary nine-dash line etched on map in the 1940s by China.**
 - It covers various islands including **Paracels, Spratlys and many other islands**
- **Permanent Court of Arbitration** of UNCLOS has ruled that **China's claim** in the area has no **legal basis.**



Export control of dual-use items

- Government aims to enhance **export control over dual-use items** to prevent their access to non-state actors and terrorists.
- **Dual-use items** are goods, software and technology that can be **used for both civilian and military applications. E.g.,** chemical and biological tools, etc.
- Currently, export of dual use items in India's Control List called **SCOMET list (Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment, and Technologies)** is regulated as per India's Foreign Trade Policy.
 - Export of items in this list is **either prohibited** or is **permitted under an export authorization** from various designated licensing authorities notified by Government of India.



Rationalization of Coal linkages

- **Ministry of Coal** has initiated a **policy initiative called rationalisation of Coal Linkage.**
 - It aims to **reduce the distance in transportation of coal from Coal Mines** to consumers, thereby **decreasing transportation costs** and **increasing efficiency** in coal-based power generation.
 - Through this initiative, Coal PSUs are **fostering a more sustainable energy ecosystem.**
- So far, **four rounds of rationalization of linkage have taken place,** covering 73 Thermal Power Plants.
 - The move has resulted in **rationalising of total 92.16 million tonnes of coal** and has **saved around 6420 crores to Government.**

 <p>Bhoramdeo Wildlife Sanctuary (BWS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chhattisgarh HC has dismissed a plea that aimed to designate BWS as a tiger reserve. ● BWS is situated in Kawardha district of Chhattisgarh and shares its border with Kanha National Park in Madhya Pradesh. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Flora: Sal, Saja, Teinsa, Kara and Haldu species. ➤ Fauna: Animals like leopard, hyena, fox, bear, cheetal, wild buffalo, nilgai etc. ➤ Vegetation: Mix of dense forests and open grasslands. ➤ River Sakari flows through the sanctuary.
 <p>Sukapaika River</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Odisha government has decided to rejuvenate the Sukapaika river. ● It is a distributary of Mahanadi River. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It branches away from the Mahanadi at Ayatpur and flows for about 40 km before rejoining its parent river. ● Mahanadi originates from Sihawa Mountain in Chhattisgarh. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Major Tributaries: Birupa, Chitroptala, Genguti and Lun ➤ Left bank Tributaries: The Seonath, the Hasdeo, the Mand, and the Ib. ➤ Right bank Tributaries: The Ong, the Tel, and the Jonk.
 <p>Deemed to be University status</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NCERT has been granted the status of deemed to be university. Deemed university status will now allow NCERT to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ offer its own graduate, post-graduate and doctoral degrees and ➤ have autonomy in terms of introduction of programmes, course structure, conducting examinations and management, among others. ● An institution of higher education, other than a university, doing the work of high standard in a specific area, can be declared as an institution deemed to be university. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Declared by Central Government under section 3 of University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956.
 <p>Pulikali (Tiger Dance)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pulikali is a folk dance of Kerala. ● During the Onam festival, artists paint their bodies like tigers with stripes of yellow, red and black. ● They dance to the rhythm of traditional percussion instruments such as thakil, udukku and chenda. ● Main theme of the dance is tiger hunting with participants playing the role of tiger and hunter.
 <p>Mahendragiri (Y - 12654)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The seventh and last stealth frigate of Project 17A, Mahendragiri, was launched at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mahendragiri, named after a mountain peak in Eastern Ghats located in Odisha. ● Project 17A Frigates are the follow-on class of the Project 17 (Shivalik Class) Frigates, with improved stealth features, advanced weapons & sensors and platform management systems. ● Project 17A ships have been designed in-house by Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau.
 <p>Personality in news</p>	<p>Malati Mem (aka Mangri Orang)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● She is remembered as one of the first woman martyrs of Assam in India's freedom struggle. ● She is one of the leading members of anti-opium campaign in tea gardens of Assam. ● In 1921, she was killed for leading a fight against foreign liquor and opium pushed during the colonial period. ● Values: Determination, courage etc.
 <p>Places in News</p>	<p>Libya (Capital: Tripoli)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Political boundaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Location: North Africa. ➤ Bordered by: Egypt, Sudan, Niger, Chad, Tunisia and Algeria. ● Geographical Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Major physical features are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nafūсах Plateau and the Al-Jifārah (Gefara) Plain, Akhḍar Mountains (Green Mountains), Saharan plateau. ➤ There are no permanent rivers in Libya. Numerous wadis that drain uplands are filled by flash floods during the rains. ➤ Highest Point: Bikku Bitti 