

Logistics cost in India declined to 7.8-8.9% of GDP in FY2021-22

- **NCAER & DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade)** in its report found that logistic cost reduced due to initiatives taken by India.
 - ⊕ **DPIIT** works under the **Ministry of Commerce** to promote industries, entrepreneurship and innovation in the country.
 - ⊕ **Logistics** refers to the management of **supply** and **transportation** to deliver the goods on time and in good shape.
- **Benefits of Reducing Logistic Cost:**
 - ⊕ **Trade competitiveness** will enhance.
 - ⊕ Improves **supply chain efficiency**.
 - ⊕ Promotes **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)**.
- **Initiative which helped in Reducing Logistics cost:**
 - ⊕ **National Logistics Policy 2022:** It helped in improving **EXIM (Export-Import) logistics** and facilitation of development of **logistics parks**.
 - ⊕ **Land Port Management System (LPMS):** Digitised operations at the **Integrated Check Posts (ICPs)**.
 - ⊕ **National Logistics Portal (Marine):** Provides a single window platform.
 - ⊕ **FASTag-based electronic toll collection.**
 - ⊕ **Other:** PM Gatishakti, Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) ranking, e-Air WayBill (e-AWB) and e-Cargo etc.
- **Challenges in reducing logistics cost:** Skewed multimodal mix (Road-60%, Railways~30%), inadequate warehousing infrastructure etc.
- **Measures required to make logistics more Competitive:**
 - ⊕ Removal of **congestion points**.
 - ⊕ **Modal shift** towards rail and waterways.
 - ⊕ **Promoting digitalisation** (will reduce administration and management costs).



Report titled 'Coal 2023 Analysis and forecast to 2026' released by International Energy Agency (IEA)

- **Key findings:**
 - ⊕ Demand for coal will rise in India and China.
 - ◆ However, demand **will fall in almost all advanced economies** (European Union and United States, drop by around 20%) in 2023.
 - ⊕ **By 2026, India and Southeast Asia** are the only regions where **coal consumption is expected to grow significantly**.
- In India, **Coal** accounts for **55%** of the country's **energy** needs.
 - ⊕ It is mainly due to **coal reserves** (fifth largest in world).
- **Immediate transition toward other sources of energy** poses challenges such as-
 - ⊕ Threat to **energy security** (growing electricity demand to fuel India's economic growth)
 - ⊕ Loss of jobs (create over 7.25 lakh direct jobs), etc.
- **However, many initiatives have** been taken to **improve efficiency of coal usage**, which are as follows-
 - ⊕ **Supercritical technology** has been made mandatory for **Ultra Mega Power Projects (UMPPs)**.
 - ⊕ **Coal gasification** (Ministry of Coal has a set target of 100 Million Tonne (MT) coal by 2030).
 - ⊕ **Modernization** of old thermal power and installing **Electrostatics Precipitator (ESP)** to capture Fly ash and low NOx burners for reducing NOx emission.
 - ⊕ Perform Achieve Trade (PAT) scheme (**implemented by Bureau of Energy Efficiency**).

E-waste management in India

- The government informed the parliament that **Over 500,000 tonnes of e-waste had been collected and processed in the year 2021-22.**
- Based on the information provided by the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)**, 1.6 million Metric Tonnes of e-waste was generated in 2021-22.
 - ⊖ CPCB is a **statutory organization under the Water Act, 1974** with the principal mandate of controlling air and water pollution.
- **E-waste:** It refers to all items of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) and its parts that have been discarded by its owner as waste without the intent of re-use.
 - ⊖ **India is 3rd largest Electronic waste producer** in the world after China and the United States.
- **Impact of E-waste**
 - ⊖ **Health Hazard:** Exposure can cause headaches, irritability, nausea, vomiting, and eye pain.
 - ⊖ **Environment impact:** E-waste contains over 1,000 toxic materials, which contaminate soil and groundwater.
 - ⊖ **Social Impact** - Engagement of child labor in e-waste management, Rising disease burden, etc
- Management of e-waste is carried out under **E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022**
 - ⊖ It applies to every **manufacturer, producer, refurbisher, dismantler, and recycler.**
 - ⊖ It launched a new **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regime.**
 - ◆ EPR was introduced by E-waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011.

Challenges with E-waste management

Lack of private participation in recycling

Infrastructure gap between present recycling and the quantum of E-waste

Informal nature of the waste management industry

Limited awareness of consumers

“Enhancing Insurance inclusivity and bridging the protection gap in India” report

- It was released by the **National Insurance Academy(NIA)**.
 - ⊖ NIA was founded **by the Ministry of Finance** in 1980 to equip the insurance industry with the best of talents.
- Key findings of the report
 - ⊖ A **73% health protection gap** exists.
 - ⊖ **Pension coverage lags**, with just 24% enrolled in employee retirement schemes.
 - ⊖ The **insured area and sum insured for crop insurance** have decreased.
- **Challenges:**
 - ⊖ **Low penetration and density rates.**
 - ◆ **Insurance penetration** is the percentage of insurance premiums to Gross Domestic Product.
 - ◆ **Insurance density** is the ratio of premiums to population (per capita premium).
 - ⊖ Deficient rural participation and life insurers’ skewed focus **on urban areas.**
 - ⊖ **Issues pertaining to crop insurance:**
 - ◆ The government made **crop insurance optional for loanee farmers**, leading to non-renewals.
 - ◆ Some state governments have opted out of the **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna scheme, affecting coverage.**
- **Recommendations given in the report**
 - ⊖ Collaboration between the government, NGOs, and industry groups **to create micro health insurance with simplified products.**
 - ⊖ Implementing innovative solutions like **Waiving GST on premiums for low-income and unorganized sector workers.**
 - ⊖ Implementing **mandatory natural catastrophe (Nat CAT) protection covers.**
 - ⊖ **Compulsory crop insurance** for loanee farmers, supported by premium financing from microfinance institutions.

Government Initiatives to promote insurance:

- **Ayushman Bharat (Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana)** aims at providing a health cover of Rs. 5 lakh.
- Insurance cover under **PM Suraksha Bima and PM Jeevan Jyoti Yojana.**
- **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana** to provide affordable crop insurance.
- Union Budget 2021 increased the **Foreign Direct Investment limit in insurance from 49% to 74%.**

Maharashtra legislative council passes Maharashtra Lokayukta Bill 2022

- The bill aims to repeal the Maharashtra Lokayukta and Upa-Lokayuktas Act, 1971.
 - ⊖ **Maharashtra** was the **first state** to establish Lokayukta in 1971 followed by Odisha.
- In India, **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013** provides for establishing Lokpal at the Union level and Lokayukta in states.
 - ⊖ They are institutions of **Ombudsman** which inquire into allegations of **corruption** against certain public functionaries.
 - ◆ These institutions are based on the **Swedish** parliamentary Ombudsman.
- Despite the enactment of 2013 Act, the potential of Lokayuktas have not been utilised.
- **Challenges faced by Lokayuktas**
 - ⊖ **Law Not Amended after 2013-** Few states/UTs have not initiated any amendments in their Lokayukta Acts to **bring the acts in line** with the Act of 2013.
 - ◆ For instance, jurisdiction varies from state to state etc.
 - ⊖ **Vacancy:** Members are not appointed as per sanctioned strength.
 - ⊖ **Infrastructure:** Due to budget constraint, they lack adequate infrastructure to complete investigation of cases on time.
 - ◆ This has enhanced pendency of cases.
 - ⊖ **Powers:** They lack prosecution powers and suo motu powers.
- **Measures needed to deal with challenges:** Amending state Lokayukta laws on the line of 2013 Act, promoting digitisation etc.

DRDO Successfully Tests Autonomous Flying Wing Technology Demonstrator

- It is an **indigenous high-speed flying-wing** Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV).
 - ⊖ It has a **tailless fixed-wing aircraft** that houses its payload and fuel in its main wings.
 - ⊖ It is a scaled-down version of its futuristic **unmanned combat aerial vehicle**.
- It is designed and developed by DRDO's **Aeronautical Development Establishment**.
- **Significance**
 - ⊖ **Allow take-off and landing from any runway** with surveyed coordinates(using GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation (GAGAN)).
 - ⊖ India joined the elite club to master the **flying wing technology**.
 - ⊖ It can be employed as a **covert stealth combat drone**.
- **Need of drones for defense**
 - ⊖ **Intelligence gathering:** used to identify enemy positions, assess the terrain, and track movements.
 - ⊖ **Precision strike:** They are equipped with precision-guided munitions, which can be used to target enemy positions.
 - ⊖ **Search and rescue operations:** used to locate and rescue personnel in hazardous or inaccessible areas.
 - ⊖ They are **faster and easier to deploy** as they provide operational flexibility.
- **Challenges to India's drone potential**
 - ⊖ **Communication gaps** between lawmakers and drone makers.
 - ⊖ **Import dependence** of key components and materials required for drones.
 - ⊖ Insufficient **research and development**
 - ⊖ Supply-side issues of **standardization of components and its mass production**.

Government Initiatives to promotes Drones

- **Drone Shakti scheme** for institutionalizing and creating a framework where multiple stakeholders can work together.
- **Production Linked Incentive (PLI)** scheme for drones and drone components.
- **India's Drone Rules 2021** to help start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises.

Also in News



Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD)

- Recently, a death has been reported in Karnataka due to **KFD virus (KFDV)**.
 - ⊖ It derives its name from **Kyasanur Forest Range** of Karnataka where it was first spotted.
- **About KFD:**
 - ⊖ It is a **zoonotic disease** caused by KFDV.
 - ⊖ KFDV is transmitted through the **bite of ticks**.
 - ⊖ It is also known as **Monkey Disease/Monkey Fever** as Bonnet, and black-faced langurs are highly susceptible.
 - ◆ They play a significant role in the spread of the virus in the human population.



Dark Fibre

- **Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT)** has quashed SEBI's order of imposing a fine on the National Stock Exchange in the dark-fibre case.
- **About Dark Fibre:**
 - ⊖ A **dark fibre (unlit fibre)** is an **unused optical fibre** which is **not connected** to any active equipment or has no traffic or service running on it.
 - ⊖ They are named dark because **no light pulse is transmitted** through these cables.
 - ⊖ Even after these fibres are used, they are referred as dark fibre, as they are independent of other network cables.
- **Benefits:** Low latency, high security etc.



Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB) Scheme

- Government announced to bring Series III of **Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme (SGBs)** (2023-24).
- **About Scheme (2015):**
 - ⊕ **Objective:** Reduce the demand for **physical gold**.
 - ⊕ SGB are **government securities** and issued under **Government Securities Act, 2006**.
 - ⊕ **Issued by:** RBI on the behalf of Government of India.
 - ⊕ SGBs are restricted for sale to **resident individuals, Hindu Undivided Family (HUFs), Trusts, Universities and Charitable Institutions**.
 - ⊕ **Tenor:** Period of **eight years** (has **premature redemption after 5th year**)
 - ⊕ **Minimum investment:** One gram.
 - ⊕ **Maximum limit:** 4 Kg for individual, 4 Kg for HUF and 20 Kg for trusts per fiscal year.



Biosimilar and Generic drugs

- A **biosimilar** is a medicine that is very close in structure and function to a biological medicine (medicine made in a living system, such as yeast).
 - ⊕ **Process:** Highly specialized
 - ⊕ Very similar but **not identical to the original**.
- **Generic drugs** contain the same active ingredients as their brand-name counterparts and are usually synthesized from chemicals.
 - ⊕ **Process:** simple to produce.
 - ⊕ **Identical to brand drugs**.



Right of First Refusal (RoFR)

- **Ministry of Ports, shipping and Waterways** has recently changed the priority order of RoFR for the local shipping companies in private tenders.
- **About RoFR:**
 - ⊕ It is a **contractual right** which gives its **holder** the **preferential option** to **transact** with another **contracting party** before others can.
 - ◆ If the party with this **right** declines to enter into a transaction, the **obligor** is free to entertain other offers.



Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB)

- TIWB launched a programme in **Saint Lucia** and **India** has been chosen as the **Partner Administration**.
 - ⊕ India will provide **Tax Experts** for this program
- **About TIWB programme:**
 - ⊕ It is a **joint initiative of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**.
 - ⊕ It facilitates the **transfer of tax audit knowledge and skills** to **developing country tax administrations** using a practical, "**learning by doing**" approach.



Mosasaur

- The researcher named a Mosasaur founded in 2006 as **Wakayama Soryu**, which means **Blue Dragon**.
- It has been named after Japan's **Wakayama Prefecture** where its **fossil was found**.
- **About Mosasaur:** It is an extinct group of large marine reptiles that lived during the **Late Cretaceous period**.
 - ⊕ They are related to **snakes and monitor lizards**.
 - ⊕ They **lived near the surface of the water** since they breathed air.

KRUTRIM

Krutrim

- Ola has recently launched the **Krutrim**, which is a **large language model (LLM)** trained specifically for **Indian languages**
 - ⊕ Krutrim can understand **22 Indian languages** and **generate content in about 10**.
- **About LLM:** They are **deep learning algorithms** that can recognize, summarize, translate, predict, and generate content using very large datasets.
 - ⊕ They are also referred to as **neural networks (NNs)**, which are computing systems inspired by the human brain.
 - ⊕ **Some of the famous LLMs** are Open AI's ChatGPT, Google's Gemini, etc.

Places in News



Iran (Capital: Tehran)

- Iran has decided to unilaterally cancel visa requirements for Indian visitors.
- **Political Features:**
 - ⊕ It lies in the **South-western Asia**.
 - ⊕ It is bordered by **Armenia and Azerbaijan (North)**, **Turkmenistan (North East)**, **Afghanistan and Pakistan (East)**, and **Iraq and Turkey (west)**.
 - ⊕ It also borders with **Caspian Sea (North)**, and **Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman (South)**.
- **Geographical features:**
 - ⊕ **Major Mountains:** Elburz and Zagros
 - ⊕ **Major Rivers:** Karun, Karkeha and Zayandeh
 - ⊕ **Major Deserts:** Dasht-e Kavir and Dasht-e Lut
 - ⊕ **Highest Point:** Mount Damavand



AHMEDABAD



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI



SIKAR