



pravahini

# Monthly Compendium

SUCCESS MANTRA (GTB Nagar)

# **PREFACE**

It gives us great pleasure to release the monthly edition of the PRAVAHINI – Monthly e-Compendium & Weekly e-Periodicals of Current Affairs. The magazine's members have shown considerable cooperation as well as devotion. We at successmantra.in work tirelessly to create this magazine and bring it to you with a great sense of gratitude.

The PRAVAHINI April-2022 eBook covers the current events that happened in the month of April. Current Affairs is a crucial component of any competitive exams including CLAT, AILET, DU-LLB, HM, CAT, IAS, PCS, SSC, Banking, MBA and various other competitive examinations.

Current Affairs play the bigger role in many competitive and government exams. It holds the power of making or breaking your chance of success. Therefore, the candidates should cover the Current Affairs thoroughly and smartly.

The PRAVAHINI April-2022 eBook is divided into different sections keeping in mind the need of various exams. The sections covered namely International, National, Economy, Ecology and Environment, Science & Technology, Legal Affairs, Sports, States News Makers and few others.

We would also be pleased to receive any suggestion that could assist us with the upcoming editions.

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## Our Goal

Our goal at Success Mantra is to provide Quality education at rational price and thereby to create an environment that guides students towards the path of the success. Along with designing the curriculum and delivering the lectures, we work upon the ways the students think and approach problems asked.

*B. S. Shanti*



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**APRIL 2022**



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# PRAVAHINI

## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

### #SVANIDHI SE SAMRIDDHI PROGRAMME

- SVANidhi se Samriddhi program has been launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in additional 126 cities across 14 states and Union Territories.
- SVANidhi se Samriddhi scheme** aims at providing an affordable working capital loan to the street vendors. After the success of SVANidhi se Samriddhi Scheme phase 1, the Ministry has decided to launch the program expansion to additional 126 cities in India.



#### What is SVANidhi se Samriddhi Scheme?

- SVANidhi se Samriddhi Scheme was launched by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** on January 4, 2021, in 125 cities all over the country in Phase 1.
- The scheme covered approximately 35 lakh street vendors as well as their families.
- Under SVANidhi se Samriddhi Scheme** 22.5 lakh schemes sanctions have also been extended to the street vendors including 16 lakh insurance benefits under Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana as well as 2.7 lakh pension benefits under Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana, among other benefits.

#### Why the scheme has been extended to 126 cities?

- After the success of SVANidhi se Samriddhi scheme phase 1, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has decided to expand the scheme to additional 126 cities to cover 28 lakh street vendors and their families along with a total target of 20 lakh scheme sanctions for the Financial Year 2022-23.
- SVANidhi se Samriddhi Scheme** will also be extended gradually to the remaining cities of the country.

#### PM SVANidhi Scheme: All you need to know

- Prime Minister Street Vendors Atmanirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme** is a central scheme that has been implemented by the Government of India since June 1, 2020.
- The Government's scheme aims at providing an affordable working capital loan to the street vendors and the scheme has also successfully crossed the 30 lakh mark.
- PM SVANidhi: List of Schemes under PM SVANidhi Program

S. No.	Schemes under PM-SVANidhi
1.	Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana
2.	PM Suraksha Bima Yojana
3.	Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana

4.	Registration under Building and other Constructions workers Act
5.	Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana
6.	National Food Security Act (NFSA) portability benefit- One Nation Once Card
7.	Janani Suraksha Yojana
8.	Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana

### What is PM SVANidhi Scheme?

- Prime Minister Street Vendors AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) was announced as a part of the **Economic Stimulus-II under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**.
- It has been implemented since 1st June 2020, for providing affordable working capital loans to street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to **Covid-19 lockdowns**, with a sanctioned budget of Rs. 700 crore.
- Aims:** To benefit over 50 lakh street vendors who had been vending on or before 24th March 2020, in urban areas including those from surrounding peri-urban/rural areas.
- To promote digital transactions through cash-back incentives up to an amount of Rs. 1,200 per annum.
- Features:** The vendors can avail a working capital loan of up to Rs. 10,000, which is repayable in monthly installments in the tenure of one year.
- On timely/early repayment of the loan, an interest subsidy of 7% per annum will be credited to the bank accounts of beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer on a quarterly basis.
- There will be no penalty on early repayment of the loan.
- The vendors can avail the facility of the enhanced credit limit on timely/early repayment of the loan.



## #ARUNACHAL PRADESH & ASSAM BORDER DISPUTE

Recently, the Governments of **Arunachal Pradesh** and **Assam** have decided to form **district-level committees** for resolving boundary disputes.

- The **district committees** will undertake joint surveys in the disputed areas to find tangible solutions to the long-pending issue based on historical perspective, ethnicity, contiguity, peoples' will and administrative convenience of both states.



### What are the Border Disputes in the Country?

<b>Assam-Arunachal Pradesh:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assam shares an 804.10 km inter-state boundary with Arunachal Pradesh.</li> <li>The state of Arunachal Pradesh, created in 1987, claims some land that traditionally belonged to its residents has been given to Assam.</li> <li>A tripartite committee had recommended that certain territories be transferred from Assam to Arunachal. The two states have since been battling it out in the court over the issue.</li> </ul>
<b>Assam-Mizoram:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mizoram used to be a district of Assam before being <b>carved out as a separate union territory and later, becoming another state.</b></li> <li>Mizoram shares a border with the districts Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj of Assam.</li> <li>Over time, the two states started having different perceptions about where the demarcation should be.</li> <li>While Mizoram wants it to be along an inner line notified in <b>1875 to protect tribals from outside influence</b>, which Mizos feel is part of their historical homeland, Assam wants it to be demarcated according to district boundaries drawn up much later.</li> </ul>
<b>Assam-Nagaland:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The border dispute between the two states has been going on since the <b>formation of Nagaland in 1963.</b></li> <li>The two states lay claim to Merapani, a small village next to the plains of Assam's Golaghat district.</li> <li>There have been reports of violent clashes in the region since the 1960s.</li> </ul>

<b>Assam-Meghalaya:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meghalaya has identified close to a dozen areas on which it has a dispute with Assam about the state's borders.</li> </ul>
<b>Haryana-Himachal Pradesh:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The two northern states have a border dispute over the <b>Parwanoo region, which lies next to the Panchkula district of Haryana.</b></li> <li>▪ Haryana has laid a claim to a large part of the land in the area and has accused the hill state of encroaching on some of its area.</li> </ul>
<b>Ladakh-Himachal Pradesh:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The union territory of <b>Ladakh and Himachal both claim Sarchu</b>, a major halt point for those travelling through Leh-Manali highway.</li> <li>▪ The region is located between <b>Himachal Pradesh's Lahaul and Spiti district and Ladakh's Leh district.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Maharashtra-Karnataka:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Perhaps the biggest border dispute in the country is <b>between Maharashtra and Karnataka over the Belgaum district.</b></li> <li>▪ Belgaum has a sizable population of <b>both Marathi and Kannada speaking people</b> and the two states have wrestled over the region in the past.</li> <li>▪ The area used to be part of the Bombay presidency from the time of the Britishers but was included in Karnataka after the states reorganisation exercise in 1956.</li> </ul>

### What are the Naga Ceasefire Agreements?

- The Naga groups include National Socialist Council of Nagaland-NK (NSCN-NK), National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Reformation (NSCN-R) and National Socialist Council of Nagaland-K-Khango (NSCN-K-Khango).
  - All these groups are breakaway factions of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) and National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K).
- This agreement is a **significant boost to the Naga peace process** and in line with Prime Minister of India's vision of 'insurgency free, prosperous North East'.
- In September 2021, the Centre had **entered into a one-year ceasefire agreement** with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (K) Niki Group.
- The Centre had earlier signed a **"Framework Agreement" with the NSCN (IM)** in August 2015.

### What is the Naga Peace Process?

- After India became independent in 1947, the **Naga territory initially remained a part of Assam.**

- In 1957, after an agreement was reached between Naga leaders and the Indian government, the Naga Hills region of Assam and the Tuensang frontier division to the northeast were brought together under a single unit directly administered by the Indian government.
- **Nagaland achieved statehood** in 1963, however, rebel activity continued.

### What is the Vision of Insurgency Free, Prosperous North East?

- Recognises that the **North East is very important for the country** from the aspects of security.
- Thus, the **aim is to end all disputes in the Northeast by 2022** and usher in a new era of peace and development in the Northeast in 2023.
- Under this, the **Government is enriching the dignity, culture, language**, literature and music of the Northeast.
- Over the years, the government has also signed several peace agreements with military outfits in northeast India. For example,
  - **KarbiAnglong Agreement, 2021:** It involved a **tripartite agreement** signed among five insurgent groups of Assam, the Centre and the state government of Assam.
  - **Bru Accord, 2020:** Under the Bru accord, the permanent settlement of 6959 Bru families in Tripura with a financial package has been agreed between the Government of India, Tripura and Mizoram with representatives of Bru migrants.
  - **Bodo Peace Accord, 2020:** In 2020, the Government of India, Government of Assam and representatives of Bodo groups signed an agreement, wherein more autonomy is provided to **Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR)**, in Assam.
  - Peace agreement with various military outfits which are involved in **Naga Insurgency** like NSCN(NK), NSCN(R), and NSCN(K)-Khango, NSCN(IM).

## #ANDHRA CM INAUGURATES 13 NEW DISTRICTS

- The **Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh YS Jagan Mohan Reddy** inaugurated the 13 new districts of Andhra Pradesh on April 4, 2022. Andhra Pradesh now has 26 districts, double the earlier number of 13.
- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister has always maintained that the state should have more districts. He had even promised the creation of new districts before the Assembly election in 2019 **if YSRCP came to power. The southern state has 25 Lok Sabha Constituencies.**

### Andhra Pradesh new districts names list 2022

S. No.	AP New Districts
1	ParvathipuramManyam
2.	Anakapalli
3.	Alluri Seetharama Raju
4.	Kakinada
5.	Konaseema
6.	Eluru
7.	Palnadu
8.	Bapatla
9.	Nandyala
10.	Sri Sathya Sai
11.	Sri Balaji
12.	Annamaya
13.	NTR

### AP govt creates 13 new districts: How the idea was originated?

- The **Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh** has long maintained his demand for the **creation of new and smaller districts in Andhra Pradesh.**
- Soon afterward, **Andhra Pradesh Government issued** a draft notification under The Andhra Pradesh District Formation Act, 1974. It stated that the boundaries of existing districts will be redrawn to double the number of districts to 26.
- AP new districts: Why 13 new districts have been created and what will be the impact?**
- Andhra Pradesh govt has created 13 new districts for the following reasons:
  - The decentralization and the smaller administrative units will bring better transparency, administration, and more smoother and **effective delivery of welfare in Andhra Pradesh.**
  - With the creation of 13 new districts in Andhra Pradesh, the number of people living in each district has been brought down to 19.07 lakh. Earlier, 38.15 lakh people were living in 13 districts. It will further



facilitate better administration and complete focus on each district.

- The roles and responsibilities of collectors have **also widened from merely collecting revenues to heading the delivery mechanism of the welfare schemes.**
- Along with the **outreach to people, the focus of all the 26 district collectors will be now on meeting the sustainable development goals (SDGs).** It will help in bringing the administration closer to the people.

## #AFSPA IN NAGALAND, MANIPUR & ASSAM AFTER DECADES

- The central government has decided to reduce disturbed areas under Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in Nagaland, Assam and Manipur after decades. This was informed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on March 31, 2022.
- The decision will result in considerable reduction in areas under AFSPA in Assam, Nagaland and Manipur from April 1, 2022. The officials however clarified that AFSPA has not been completely removed.

# AFSPA

- **AFSPA areas reduced in Assam**
- The disturbed area notification has been in force in the whole of Assam since 1990. **Now, AFSPA will be completely removed from 23 districts of Assam and partially from one district with effect from April 1st.**

### AFSPA areas reduced in Manipur

- The AFSPA has been in force in the whole of Manipur except the Imphal Municipality area since 2004. **Now, 15 police stations of six districts will be excluded from AFSPA Act with effect from April 1st.**

### AFSPA areas reduced in Nagaland

- AFSPA has been in force in the whole of Nagaland since 1995.
- The centre has now accepted the *recommendation of a committee constituted in this regard to remove AFSPA from the state in a phased manner.*

### What is AFSPA?

- The **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958** grants special powers to the Indian Armed Forces to maintain public order in "disturbed areas".

- Under the **Disturbed Areas (Special Courts) Act, 1976**, an area that is once declared as 'disturbed', has to maintain the status quo for at least 6 months.

### AFSPA in India

- The **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act** was initially promulgated by the British to suppress the Quit India movement in 1942. **India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru** decided to retain the Act and brought in an ordinance and notified it as the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958.
- **The AFSPA Act was initially applicable to the Naga Hills**, which was then part of Assam. It spread to the other seven sisters in India's northeast one by one.
- AFSPA had expanded to all seven states of the **North-East - Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram** and even **Punjab, Chandigarh and Jammu and Kashmir**.

### AFSPA Act: What special powers does it give to Armed Forces?

- The AFSPA act empowers security forces to conduct operations anywhere and arrest anyone without any prior warrant. The act gives the security forces a certain level of immunity in case of an operation gone wrong.
- **Section 4 of AFSPA Act 1958** accords special powers to the armed forces, authorising the security forces to arrest anyone without a warrant, open fire, enter and search any property without any warrant.
- **Section 6 of AFSPA Act** grants immunity to the security forces from prosecution or any other legal proceedings.

### How many states in India have AFSPA?

- AFSPA is currently in force in Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, some areas of Arunachal Pradesh (Changlang, Longding and Tirap districts and areas falling within the jurisdiction of the eight police stations bordering Assam) and Jammu and Kashmir.
- **AFSPA in Meghalaya**
- The centre withdrew AFSPA completely from Meghalaya and eight out of 16 police stations in Arunachal Pradesh on March 31, 2018. The act had been in force in Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh for almost 27 years.
- **AFSPA in Tripura**
- The Tripura government lifted AFSPA from the state in 2015 after 18 years in 2015
- **AFSPA in Mizoram**
- The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 had also been withdrawn from Mizoram.
- **AFSPA in Punjab**
- The central government had enacted the AFSPA Act in the whole of Punjab and Chandigarh on October 15, 1983. The act was withdrawn in 1997, almost 14 years after it came to force.
- **AFSPA in Jammu and Kashmir**
- AFSPA was enforced in Jammu and Kashmir in September 1990 and has been in force since then.

### Background

- The Assam government on March 1, 2022 extended the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) in the entire state for six more months with effect from February 28, 2022. The AFSPA has been extended in the state every six months since 1990 after a review by the state government.
- The Nagaland Cabinet had recommended repealing of the AFSPA Act in the state after an incident in Mon district in which security forces gunned down 14 civilians. Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio had called for a repeal of AFSPA in their respective states.

What has made AFSPA unpopular among the people?

- **Furtherance of Feeling of Alienation:** According to leaders of the Naga nationalist movement, the **use of force and AFSPA furthered the feeling of alienation of the Naga people, solidifying Naga nationalism.**
- **Draconian Law & Fake Encounters:** Various incidents of violence have been recorded in the Northeastern states, as AFSPA gives **sweeping powers to security forces.**
- In a writ petition filed in the **Supreme Court in 2012**, the families of victims of extra-judicial killings alleged **1,528 fake encounters had taken place in the state from May 1979 to May 2012.**
- The Supreme Court set up a commission to **scrutinize six of these cases, and the commission found all six to be fake encounters.**
- **Bypassing State:** There have been instances where the Centre has overruled the state, such as the imposition of AFSPA in Tripura in 1972.  
What attempts have been made to repeal AFSPA or reduce its area of operation in the past?
- **Protest by Irom Sharmila:** In 2000, the activist Irom Sharmila began a hunger strike that would continue for 16 years against AFSPA in Manipur.
- **Justice Jeevan Reddy:** In 2004, the then central government set up a five-member committee under former Supreme Court Justice Jeevan Reddy.
- The committee recommended the repeal of AFSPA and called it “highly undesirable”, and held that it had become a symbol of oppression.

## #KWAR HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECT

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the **540-megawatt Kwar hydroelectric project on the Chenab in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir**.

- This is part of the **Indus basin** and would be one of at least four projects coming up in the district, including the 1,000 MWs **PakalDul hydroelectric projects** and 624 MWs run-of-the-river **Kiru hydroelectric project**.



- Under the 1960 vintage **Indus Water Treaty (IWT)** between India and Pakistan, the two countries share the waters of six rivers in the Indus basin that flow through India towards Pakistan.
- Of these, India has complete rights over three eastern rivers - **Sutlej, Beas and Ravi, while Pakistan has rights over the western rivers - Chenab, Jhelum, and Indus**.
- The **Kwar project** will be implemented by Chenab Valley Power Projects Private Ltd (CVPPL), a joint venture company between NHPC Ltd and Jammu & Kashmir State Power Development Corporation (JKSPDC).
- The project is expected to generate 1975.54 million units in a 90% dependable year.
- The construction activities of the Project would result in direct and indirect employment of about 2,500 people.

### What are the Key Points of Chenab River?

- Source:** It rises in the upper Himalayas in the Lahaul and Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh state.
- The river is formed by the confluence of two rivers, Chandra and Bhaga, at Tandi, 8 km southwest of Keylong, in the Lahaul and Spiti district.
- The Bhaga River originates from Surya taal lake, which is situated a few kilometers west of the Bara-lacha la pass in Himachal Pradesh.
- The Chandra River originates from glaciers east of the same pass (near Chandra Taal).
- Flows Through:** It flows through the Jammu region of Jammu and Kashmir into the plains of Punjab, Pakistan, before flowing into the Indus River.

### Some of the important projects/dams on Chenab:

- Rattle Hydro Electric Project**
- Salal Dam- hydroelectric power project near Reasi
- DulHasti Hydroelectric Plant- power project in Kishtwar District
- PakalDul Dam (under construction)- on a tributary Marusadar River in Kishtwar District.
- Kiru Hydroelectric Project (Kishtwar District)



## #Ratle Hydroelectric Project:

- **Location:** It is a **run-of-the-river** hydroelectric power station on the **Chenab River**, **Kishtwar district** of the Indian Union Territory of **Jammu and Kashmir**.
- **Features:** It includes a **133 m tall gravity dam** and **two power stations** adjacent to one another.
- The installed capacity of both power stations will be **850 MW**.
- **Background:** In June 2013, the then Indian Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the dam.
- **Pakistan has frequently alleged** that it violates the **Indus Water Treaty, 1960**.
- **The Latest Approval:** It envisages an investment of about **Rs. 5282 crore** and the project shall be **commissioned within a span of 60 months**.

## Other Projects on Chenab Basin:

- **Kiru Hydro Electric (HE) Project:** The Kiru HE Project of 624 MW installed capacity is proposed on river Chenab (Kishtwar district).
- **PakalDul (Drangdhuran) Hydroelectric Project:** It is a reservoir based scheme proposed on river **Marusudar**, the main **right bank tributary of river Chenab** in Kishtwar Tehsil of Doda District in Jammu & Kashmir.
- **Dulhasti Power Station:** It is run-of-the-river with an installed capacity of 390 MW to harness the hydropower potential of **river Chenab** (Kishtwar district).
- **Salal Power Station:** It is a run-of-the-river scheme with an installed capacity of 690 MW to harness the Hydropower potential of **river Chenab**. It is located in **Reasi district of Jammu & Kashmir**.

## #AYODHYA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

- The **Civil Aviation Department of the UP Government** on April 7, 2022, signed a lease agreement with the Airports Authority of India. The agreement is regarding the transfer of 317.855 acres of land to AAI on lease for the **MaryadaPurshottam Shri Ram International Airport** in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh.
- The **Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath** was also present during the signing of the lease agreement between the **UP Government and the Airports Authority of India**. While speaking during the signing, the Chief Minister said that UP will be the largest state in India to be connected with air service.



## Five International airports in UP by 2023

- The **Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh** has assured that by 2023, UP will be in a position to provide five international airports to the country. He added that after making **10 new airports on which work is going on a war footing, 19 airports have already been made functional in UP so far**.
- Uttar Pradesh is also one of the few states that have made good progress for the best air service connectivity in the last 5 years.
- **Ayodhya International Airport: Significance**

- With UP and Central Governments hoping to make Ayodhya an international tourism hub after the work on Ram Temple has already started, Ayodhya International Airport is an ambitious project which will further help in boosting tourism and in providing air connectivity in adjoining areas.

### Ayodhya International Airport: Background

- Ayodhya International Airport is being constructed in Faizabad, Uttar Pradesh. The name of the airport was changed to MaryadaPushottam Shriram International Airport by the government in 2021.

### Ayodhya Vision 2047

- It emphasized on Ayodhya to be developed as a pollution-free, clean, water plus, water-secure, and safe city.
- UP Government has been planning on developing Ayodhya as the spiritual Capital of the world. **The officials are also directed to pay special attention to the security of tourists and local residents in Ayodhya.**

## #CONTROVERSY OVER CHANDIGARH B/W PUNJAB & HARYANA

Recently, the Punjab chief minister moved a resolution in the Assembly, seeking the immediate transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab.

- The longstanding **dispute between Punjab and Haryana over Chandigarh** flared up after the Centre notified **Central Service Rules for employees** in the Union Territory instead of the **Punjab Service Rules**.
- Punjab was reorganised through the **Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966**, wherein, the state of Punjab was reorganised into the **state of Haryana, Union Territory of Chandigarh (also joint capital of Punjab & Haryana)**, and some parts of Punjab were given to the then Union Territory of Himachal Pradesh.



### When and how did Chandigarh become the capital of Punjab?

- **After the Partition of India**, the Indian Government wanted a **modern city to replace Lahore as Punjab's capital**, and the **idea of Chandigarh was conceived**.
- In 1966, the state was **divided into Punjab and Haryana** with some parts coming under **Himachal Pradesh**.
- Until Haryana was born, **Chandigarh remained the capital of Punjab**.
- During the reorganisation of Punjab, the Centre Government announced that **Haryana would get its own capital**.
- In 1970, the Centre announced that **"the capital project area of Chandigarh should, as a whole, go to Punjab"**.
- Haryana was told to use the office and residential accommodation in Chandigarh **for five years** until it built its own capital.
- However, Chandigarh remained a Union Territory, as **Haryana didn't build a capital of its own**.
- According to the **Capital of Punjab (Development and Regulation) Act, 1952**, the properties in Chandigarh were to be **divided in a 60:40 ratio in favour of Punjab**.

### What claims on Chandigarh were made subsequently?

- **In August 1982**, the Akali Dal (political party), having expressed dissatisfaction over the Punjab Reorganisation Act, **launched the protests** with the object of **realising the goals of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution of 1973**.
- Anandpur Sahib Resolution adopted in 1973 by Akali Dal demanded that the Centre's jurisdiction should be restricted **only to defence, foreign affairs, communications, and currency** and the entire residuary powers should be vested in the states.
- Amongst other demands, **it asked for Chandigarh to be given to Punjab**.
- In 1985, the **Rajiv-Longowal Accord** was signed between then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Akali leader Harchand Singh Longowal.
- Among other things, the Centre agreed to give Chandigarh to Punjab, and **26<sup>th</sup> January 1986 was fixed as the date for the actual transfer**.
- However, less than a month after the signing of the accord, **Longowal was assassinated by militants**.
- What are Union Territories and How are they Carved out of states?
- Union Territories (UT) are **governed directly by the Union**.
- **Part VIII of the Constitution** is concerned with the administration of the Union Territories.
- The President of India appoints an **administrator or Lieutenant Governor for each UT**. In practice, this means that the **Union Territories follow the central government's will**.
- The concept of Union Territories was not in the **original version of the Constitution but was added by the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956**.
- There are differences in the governing of UTs depending upon **whether they have a legislative assembly or not**.
- The smaller ones are governed directly by the center, for example, **Chandigarh, Daman and Diu, and Dadar and Nagar Haveli** are UTs with no elected assemblies.
- On the other hand, **Puducherry and J&K** are UTs with a legislative assembly and government, along with an LG. New Delhi is altogether different and its status lies between a UT and a state.
- According to **Article 3 of the Indian Constitution**, the constitutional power to create new states and union territories in India is solely reserved to the Parliament of India.
- Parliament can do so by announcing new states/union territories, separating territory from an existing state or **merging two or more states/union territories or parts of them**.

## #WORLD'S HIGHEST TUNNEL AT SHINKU LA PASS

- The world's highest tunnel will be constructed by the **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** at Shinku La Pass at 16,580 feet. This tunnel will be connecting Himachal Pradesh to Ladakh.
- The construction of this tunnel by the **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** will begin by July 2022.
- This tunnel will be **connecting Ladakh's Zaskar Valley to Himachal Pradesh**. Project Yojak has been set up by the central government to execute this ambitious project.
- By the year 2025, the construction of this tunnel will be completed.
- The tunnel's south portal will be at **Shinku La**. The tunnel's north portal will be at **Lakhang**.
- **Importance of this tunnel:** This tunnel will help in boosting the economy of the Zaskar Valley as the travel time between Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh will be reduced after this tunnel is opened.



## About Border Roads Organisation

- The organization falls under the control of the **Ministry of Defence** since the year 2015.
- This organization is responsible for maintaining the border area road networks of the country.
- This organization plays an important role in the development of infrastructure in the border areas of the nation. Initially, this organization functioned under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- The **headquarters of BRO is in New Delhi** and the current Director General is Lt. Gen. Rajeev Chaudhary.

## #WORLD'S LONGEST HIGHWAY TUNNEL

- Atal Tunnel has officially been **certified by World Book of Records** as the 'World's Longest Highway Tunnel above 10,000 Feet'.
- World Book of Records, is an organisation that catalogues and verifies extraordinary records across the world with authentic certification.
- It was built by the **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)**.

## What are the features of the Atal Tunnel?

- The 9.02-km tunnel is the longest highway tunnel **in** the world above the height of 3,000 metres.
- It **cuts through a mountain west of the Rohtang pass** and shortens the distance between **Solang Valley and Sissu** by around 46 km and takes around 15 minutes to cover. Earlier, it would take nearly 4 hours to travel between the two points.
- **Rohtang Pass** (elevation 3,978 m) is located in the state of Himachal Pradesh.
- It is present on the **PirPanjal Range of Himalayas**.



## #103 YEARS OF JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE

Recently, the **Prime Minister** paid tributes to people killed in the **Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919**.

- He asserted that their unparalleled courage and sacrifice will keep motivating the coming generations. 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2022 marks the **103 years of the incident**.
- Earlier, the Gujarat government marked 100 years of the Pal-Dadhvav killings, calling it a massacre “bigger than the Jallianwala Bagh”.



### What is the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre?

- **About:** The Jallianwala Bagh massacre or the Amritsar massacre of **13<sup>th</sup> April 1919** accounts for the **gruesome execution of hundreds of innocent people** by the **Gurkha British Indian army** on the orders of the then **Anglo-Indian Brigadier R.E.H. Dyer**.
- These people were protesting peacefully against the **Rowlatt Act 1919**

### What was the Rowlatt Act 1919?

- During **World War I (1914-18)** the British government of India enacted a **series of repressive emergency powers** that were intended to combat subversive activities.
- In this context, this act was passed on the recommendations of the Sedition **Committee chaired by Sir Sidney Rowlatt**.
- It gave the government enormous powers to repress political activities and allowed detention of political prisoners without trial for two years.
- **Background:** Mahatma Gandhi wanted non-violent civil disobedience against such unjust laws, which would start with a hartal on **6<sup>th</sup> April 1919**.
- In Punjab, on **9<sup>th</sup> April 1919**, two nationalist leaders, **Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal**, were arrested by the British officials **without any provocation** except that they had addressed protest meetings, and taken to some unknown destination.
- This caused resentment among the Indian protestors who came out in thousands on **10<sup>th</sup> April** to show their solidarity with their leaders.
- To curb any future protest, the government put martial law in place and law and order in Punjab was handed over to **Brigadier-General Dyer**.
- **Day of the Incident:** On **13<sup>th</sup> April, Baisakhi day**, a large crowd of people mostly from neighbouring villages, unaware of the prohibitory orders in Amritsar gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh.
- Brigadier-General Dyer arrived on the scene with his men.
- The troops surrounded the gathering under orders from **General Dyer** and blocked the only exit point and opened fire on the **unarmed crowd killing more than 1000 unarmed men, women, and children**.

### Aftermath/Significance of the Incident

- Jallianwala Bagh became a key point in the **history of India's struggle** for independence and it is now an **important monument in the country**.
- The Jallianwala Bagh tragedy was one of the causes that led **Mahatma Gandhi** to begin organising his first large-scale and sustained nonviolent protest (satyagraha) campaign, the **Non Cooperation Movement (1920-22)**.
- The Bengali poet and **Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore** renounced the knighthood that he had **received in 1915**.
- The then government of India ordered an investigation of the incident (**the Hunter Commission**), which in 1920 **censured Dyer** for his actions and ordered him to resign from the military.

### RELATED: 100 YEARS OF PAL DADHVAV KILLINGS

- Recently, the Gujarat government marked **100 years of the Pal-Dadhvav killings**, calling it a massacre "bigger than the **Jallianwala Bagh**".
- A Gujarat government release on the centenary of the massacre described the incident as "more brutal than the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919.
- Earlier, Bihar Chief Minister announced that 15<sup>th</sup> February would be commemorated as "**ShahidDiwas**" in **memory of the 34 freedom fighters** who were killed by police in Tarapur town (now subdivision) of Bihar's Munger district 90 years ago.

### What was the Pal-Dadhvav Massacre?

- The Pal-Dadhvav massacre **took place on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1922**, in the **Pal-Chitariya and Dadhvaav villages of Sabarkantha district**, then part of Idar state (Now Gujrat).
- The day was **Amalki Ekadashi, which falls just before Holi**, a major festival for tribals.
- Villagers from Pal, Dadhvav, and Chitariya had gathered on the banks of river Heir as part of the '**Eki movement**', led by one Motilal Tejawat.
- The **impact of the protest** was felt in Vijaynagar, Dadhvaav, Poshina and Khedbrahma, which are now talukas of Sabarkantha; the Aravalli districts, Banaskantha and Danta of Banaskantha district; and KotdaChhavni, Dungarpur, Chittor, Sirohi, Banswada and Udaipur of Rajasthan, all of which were then princely states.
- The movement was **to protest against the land revenue tax (lagaan) imposed on the peasants** by the British and feudal lords.
- The British Paramilitary force was on hunt for Tehawat. It heard of this gathering and reached the spot.
- Nearly **200 bhils under the leadership of Tehawat lifted their bows and arrows**. But, the Britishers opened fire on them. Nearly 1,000 tribals (Bhils) fell to bullets.
- While the British claimed some 22 people were killed, the Bhils believe **1,200-1,500 of them died**.
- Tejawat, however, escaped and later "returned to the spot to christen it 'Veer Bhumi'".

### Who was Motilal Tejawat?

- Born into a **merchant (Baniya) family in the adivasi-dominated Koliyari village**, Tejawat was **employed by a landlord, where he worked for eight years**.
- During this period he saw closely how the landlords exploited tribals and would threaten to beat them with shoes if they did not pay the tax.

- Outraged by the atrocities and exploitation of the tribal people, **Tejawat quit the job in 1920 and devoted himself to social work** and reform. To this day, local tribals recount the Pal-Dadhvav massacre in songs sung at weddings and fairs. One such song is '**Hansudukhi, duniyadukhi**'.

## #SUMAN BERY APPOINTED AS NEW VC OF NITI AAYOG

- Suman K Bery was appointed as the new Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog by the government on April 22, 2022, after the sudden resignation of former Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar. As per an official order, **Suman K Bery will take charge as the new Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog from May 1.**
- Rajiv Kumar, whose tenure as the Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog will end on April 30, is an eminent economist who took over as the Vice-Chairman in August 2017 **after the then VC Arvind Panagariya exited the Government think tank to return to the academics.**



## NITI Aayog new Vice Chairman: Who is Suman K Bery?

- **Suman K Bery who has been appointed as the new Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog** has earlier served as the Director-General (Chief Executive) of the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) in New Delhi.
- Bery was also a member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, the Reserve Bank of India's Technical Advisory Committee on Monetary Policy, and the Statistical Commission.
- Back in 2010, when Suman K Bery was a member of Manmohan Singh's Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, he had batted for the Reserve Bank of India to **tighten its monetary policy to reign in the rising inflation.**

## Rajiv Kumar's contribution as NITI Aayog Chairman

- Rajiv Kumar has played a key role in the policy-making of NITI Aayog, with a focus on asset monetization, agriculture, aspirational districts program, disinvestment, and electric vehicles, among others.
- Rajiv Kumar holds a **DPhil in Economics from Oxford University** and a PhD from Lucknow University. Kumar was also a senior fellow at the Centre for Policy Research.

## NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India)

- Planning has been in Indian psyche as our leaders came under influence of the socialist clime of erstwhile USSR. Planning commission served as the planning vehicle for close to six decades with a focus on control and command approach.
- Planning Commission was replaced by a new institution – **NITI AAYOG on January 1, 2015** with emphasis on 'Bottom -Up' approach to envisage the vision of Maximum Governance, Minimum Government, echoing the spirit of 'Cooperative Federalism'.
- Administrative Skeltal**
- Chairperson:** Prime Minister
- Vice-Chairperson:** To be appointed by Prime-Minister
- Governing Council:** Chief Ministers of all states and Lt. Governors of Union Territories.
- Regional Council:** To address specific regional issues, Comprising Chief Ministers and Lt. Governors Chaired by Prime Minister or his nominee.
- Adhoc Membership:** 2 member in ex-officio capacity from leading Research institutions on rotational basis.
- Ex-Officio membership:** Maximum four from Union council of ministers to be nominated by Prime minister.
- Chief Executive Officer:** Appointed by Prime-minister for a fixed tenure, in rank of Secretary to Government of India.
- Special Invitees:** Experts, Specialists with domain knowledge nominated by Prime-minister.

### Importance

- The 65 year-old Planning Commission had become a redundant organization. It was relevant in a command economy structure, but not any longer.
- India is a diversified country and its states are in various phases of economic development along with their own strengths and weaknesses.
- In this context, a 'one size fits all' approach to economic planning is obsolete. It cannot make India competitive in today's global economy.

### Objectives

- To foster cooperative federalism through structured support initiatives and mechanisms with the States on a continuous basis, recognizing that strong States make a strong nation.
- To develop mechanisms to **formulate credible plans at the village level and aggregate these progressively at higher levels of government.**
- To ensure, on areas that are specifically referred to it, that the interests of national security are incorporated in economic strategy and policy.
- To pay special attention to the sections of our society that may be at risk of not benefitting adequately from economic progress.
- To provide advice and encourage partnerships between key stakeholders and national and international like-minded Think Tanks, as well as educational and policy research institutions.



NITI Aayog	Planning Commission
It serves as an advisory Think Tank.	It served as extra-constitutional body.
It draws membership from a wider expertise.	It had limited expertise.
It serves in spirit of Cooperative Federalism as states are equal partners.	States participated as spectators in annual plan meetings.
Secretaries to be known as CEO appointed by Prime- Minister.	Secretaries were appointed through usual process.
It focuses upon 'Bottom-Up' approach of Planning.	It followed a 'Top-Down' approach.
It does not possess mandate to impose policies.	Imposed policies on states and tied allocation of funds with projects it approved.
It does not have powers to allocate funds, which are vested in Finance Minister.	It had powers to allocate funds to ministries and state governments.

## #INDIA'S 1<sup>ST</sup> PANCHAYAT TO BECOME CARBON NEUTRAL

- **Palli village located in the Samba district of Jammu** has become India's first panchayat to become carbon neutral, fully solar energy powered, and all its records have been digitized which will help in receiving all benefits of Central schemes easily.
- Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the **500 KW solar plant at this carbon-neutral panchayat.**
- With this inauguration Palli has become the country's first panchayat to become carbon-neutral. The 500 KW solar plant was set up at Palli in a record three weeks' time.
- Palli has played a major **step towards the Glasgow goal of making the country carbon-neutral.**
- Palli will now be looked at as a model panchayat, and this will motivate the other panchayats in Jammu and Kashmir, and India to become carbon-neutral.
- In Palli in a total area of 6,408 square metres 1,500 solar panels have been set up. These solar panels will be providing clean electricity to 340 houses that are located in the panchayat.
- The **electricity that will be generated will be distributed by the local power grid station.**



## Major push provided to the Panchayats

- The central government has been pushing for major technology-related measures, modes of payments, and e-swaraj with the aim of making Panchayats of the country more powerful.
- The government has plans to improve the Panchayats so that they reach new heights. **The panchayats are also being encouraged to reduce the usage of chemical fertilisers and waste segregation.**

## Carbon Neutrality

- This refers to achieving zero carbon dioxide emissions. **This can be achieved by balancing carbon dioxide emissions with their removal or through the elimination of emissions.**
- The term carbon neutral is used in the context of energy production, transportation, industry, and agriculture. The **term “net-zero” is used to describe a comprehensive commitment** to climate action and decarbonization.
- Net-zero emissions can be achieved only when an organization’s greenhouse gas (CO<sub>2</sub>-e) emissions are balanced by their removal.

## #WHAT IS ENTERPRISE INDIA INITIATIVE?

- Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Narayan Rane inaugurated the Ministry’s Mega Event “Enterprise India” under the celebrations of **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav** on April 27, 2022.
- Enterprise India is a series of commemorative entrepreneurship development events and activities that will be organised between April 27 and May 27, 2022.
- The event is being held to promote entrepreneurship culture in the country and spread awareness about the schemes and initiatives of MSME Ministry.



## Enterprise India: Objective

- The **key objective of enterprise India** is to create synergy between the Industry Associations and various Ministries/Departments concerned.
- According to MSME Minister Narayan Rane, the interaction with the MSME industry Associations will bring out fruitful ways for **existing schemes, policies and programmes to formulate relevant new initiatives in due course of time.**

## What is meant by MSME?

- MSME stands for micro, small and medium enterprises, which form the backbone of any developing economy.
- **How is MSME classified in India?**
- The Government of India has enacted the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act, 2006 to classify MSMEs on two factors, investment in plant and machinery and turnover of the enterprise.

## The definition of MSME under the act is-

- A micro enterprise is where investment in plant and machinery does not exceed Rs. 25 lakh and annual

turnover not more than Rs. 5 crore

- A small enterprise is an enterprise where the investment in plant and machinery is more than Rs. 25 lakh but does not exceed Rs. 5 crore and annual turnover not more than Rs 50 crore.
- A medium enterprise is where the investment in plant and machinery is **more than Rs 5 crore but does not exceed Rs 10 crore and annual turnover not more than Rs 250 crore.**

### Background

- The MSMEs are considered as growth accelerators, making a significant contribution to GDP and hence, it is pertinent to strengthen the structure. India aims to become self-reliant by developing the MSME sector.

### RELATED: MSME DAY OBSERVED ON 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE

- Every year, Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) Day is celebrated on **27<sup>th</sup> June** to recognise the **contribution of these industries** in the implementation of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

### History:

- The **United Nations (UN)** designated **27<sup>th</sup> June** as Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day through a **resolution** passed in the **UN General Assembly** in April 2017.
- In May 2017, a program titled '**Enhancing National Capacities for Unleashing Full Potentials of MSMEs in Achieving the SDGs in Developing Countries**' was launched.
- It has been funded by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund of the United Nations Peace and Development Fund.

### Initiatives to Promote MSME Sector

- The Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (M/o MSME) envisions a vibrant MSME sector by promoting growth and development of the MSME Sector, including Khadi, Village and Coir Industries.
- The **Micro; Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act was notified in 2006** to address policy issues affecting MSMEs as well as the coverage and investment ceiling of the sector.
- Prime Minister's Employment Generation programme (PMEGP): It is a credit linked subsidy scheme, for setting up of **new micro-enterprises** and to **generate employment** opportunities in **rural as well as urban areas of the country**.
- **Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI):** It aims to properly organize the **artisans and the traditional industries** into clusters and thus provide **financial assistance** to make them competitive in today's market scenario.
- A Scheme for Promoting Innovation, Rural Industry & Entrepreneurship (ASPIRE): The scheme promotes innovation & rural entrepreneurship through rural Livelihood Business Incubator (LBI), Technology Business Incubator (TBI) and Fund of Funds for start-up creation in the agro-based industry.
- **Interest Subvention Scheme for Incremental Credit to MSMEs:** It was introduced by the **Reserve Bank of India** wherein **relief is provided upto 2% of interest** to all the **legal MSMEs on their outstanding fresh/incremental term loan/working capital** during the period of its validity.

- **Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises:** Launched to facilitate easy flow of credit, guarantee cover is provided for collateral free credit extended to MSMEs.
- **Micro and Small Enterprises Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP):** It aims to enhance the productivity and competitiveness as well as capacity building of MSEs.
- **Credit Linked Capital Subsidy and Technology Upgradation Scheme (CLCS-TUS):** CLCSS aims at facilitating technology upgradation of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) by providing 15% capital subsidy for purchase of plant & machinery.
- **CHAMPION's portal:** It aims to assist **Indian MSMEs** march into the big league as **National and Global CHAMPIONS** by solving their grievances and encouraging, supporting, helping and hand holding them.
- **MSME Samadhan:** It enables them to directly register their cases about delayed payments by Central Ministries/Departments/CPSEs/State Governments.
- **Udyam Registrations Portal:** This new portal assists the government in **aggregating the data on the number of MSMEs in the country.**
- **MSME SAMBANDH:** It is a **Public Procurement Portal.** It was launched to monitor the implementation of the Public Procurement from MSEs by Central Public Sector Enterprises.

PRAVAHINI

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

### #INDIA & USA 2+2 MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE

- The **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** and the **External Affairs Minister of India S. Jaishankar** will be holding talks with their US counterparts on April 11 as part of India-US 2+2 Talks.



- On the other hand, Prime Minister Modi and US President Joe Biden are also set to hold virtual talks on the April 11 ahead of **India-US 2+2 Dialogue**.
- During India- US 2+2 Dialogue, **Rajnath Singh** and **S. Jaishankar** will hold talks with the **US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin** and **US State Secretary Antony Blinken** while participating in different meetings.

### India-US 2+2 Dialogue- All you need to know

- The **ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia** is likely to be a prominent topic of conversation at the India US 2+2 Dialogue.
- As per the White House, during the virtual meeting between **PM Modi and US President, Biden** will also press Prime Minister Modi to take a hard line against Russia and its invasion of Ukraine.
- India US 2+2 Dialogue will enable both the US and India to undertake a comprehensive review of cross-cutting issues in the India-US bilateral agenda that is related to defence security, foreign policy with the objective of providing the strategic guidance and a vision for consolidating the relationship.
- **2+2 Dialogue between India US** will also provide an opportunity to exchange views about significant regional and global developments and how they can work together to address the issues.

### India-US 2+2 Dialogue: Why Russia-Ukraine conflict will be the focus?

- Apart from other regional and global issues, the 2+2 India US Dialogue will see a major focus on the ongoing **Russia-Ukraine conflict** which **started with Russia's special military operation in the neighbouring country**.
- As the dialogues between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his US counterpart and EAM S. Jaishankar with the US Secretary of Defence will take place, the pressure will be on making India take a stand on the



ongoing conflict.

- Till now, India has maintained a **neutral position and has abstained from voting against Russia on numerous occasions.**
- India's neutral stance in the Russia-Ukraine war has raised concerns in Washington DC, while has earned praise from Russia, **who lauded the country for judging the situation in its entirety and not just in a one-sided way.**
- Background: 2+2 India-US Dialogue was held between the two countries in September 2021 in Washington. **The bilateral 2+2 inter-sessional meeting** saw the exchange of assessments on the developments taking place in **South Asia, the Western Indian Ocean, and the Indian-Pacific Ocean.**

### '2+2' Dialogue

- 2+2 Ministerial is the highest-level institutional mechanism between the two countries.
- It is a format of dialogue where the defence/foreign ministers or secretaries meet with their counterparts from another country.
- India holds such talks with **Australia, Japan and the USA.**

### #RELATED: 1<sup>ST</sup> EVER 2+2 DIALOGUE HELD B/W INDIA & AUSTRALIA

Recently, the foreign and defence ministers of India and Australia held the first India-Australia 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in New Delhi. (Sept.2021)

- The inaugural dialogue is held in pursuant to the elevation of India-Australia bilateral relations to **comprehensive strategic partnership** during the India-Australia **Leaders' virtual summit** in 2021.
- **Focus on Indo-Pacific:** To maintain an open, free, prosperous and rules-based Indo-Pacific region (in line with the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**).
- To support India's **Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative.**
- In this context, they welcomed the launch of the **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative** by the Trade Ministers of India, Australia and Japan.
- **Keeping-up with the Momentum:** Decided to meet at least once every two years in this format to keep up the momentum.

### Shared Vision on Afghanistan:

- Displayed a common approach to the Afghan crisis, after the recent **Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.**
- India held that the policy is summed up by the **United Nations Security Council** Resolution 2593.
- **Defence Relationship:** Australia has invited India for participation in future **Talisman Sabre exercises** which will raise interoperability while both sides explore longer term reciprocal arrangements in logistics support.

### Economic Agreements:

- There was renewed support expressed for finalization of bilateral Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement.

- Apart from this, both countries also pitched for early resolution of the issue of taxation of offshore income of Indian firms under the India Australia **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement**.
- **Others:** While reaffirming support for the Indian candidacy for permanent membership of the UNSC, grants of Australian \$ 1 million to the **International Solar Alliance**, and Australian \$10 million to the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient infrastructure** (both India-led initiatives).

## #US REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDIA

Recently, the US State Department released a strong and critical report on **human rights in India in 2021**.

- The report is submitted each year to the US Congress which is **retrospective and contains a country-wise discussion** of the state of internationally recognised individual, civil, political and worker rights, as set forth in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and other international agreements.
- In December 2021, data related to human rights violations in states was provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs in **Rajya sabha**.



### What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Arbitrary Arrest and Detention:** Indian law “prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention but both occurred during the year”, with police using “special security laws to postpone **judicial reviews** of arrests”.
- Pretrial detention was **arbitrary and lengthy**, sometimes exceeding the duration of the sentence given to those convicted.
- **Violations of Privacy:** Citing media reports on journalists being targeted for surveillance through the **Pegasus malware**, the report flagged violations of privacy by government authorities, “including the use of technology to arbitrarily or unlawfully surveil or interfere with the privacy of individuals”.
- **On Freedom of Association:** The report highlighted the cases of Amnesty International India, whose assets were frozen by the **Enforcement Directorate**, and the suspension of the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA)** license of **Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)** for alleged violations.

### What are Human Rights?

- These are **rights inherent to all human beings**, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status.
- These include the **right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture**, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more.
- **Nelson Mandela had stated** ‘To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity’.

### Human Rights Related Provisions in India:

- **Fundamental Rights: Articles 12 to 35** of the Constitution. These include the Right to Equality, Right to Freedom, Right Against Exploitation, Right to Freedom of Religion, Cultural & Educational Rights, Saving of Certain Laws and Right to Constitutional Remedies.
- **Directive Principles of State Policy:** Article 36 to 51 of the Constitution.
- These include 'right to social security, right to work, to free choice of employment, and protection against unemployment, right to equal pay for equal work, right to existence worthy of human dignity, right to free & compulsory education, equal justice & free legal aid and the principles of policy to be followed by the State.

### Statutory Provisions:

- **Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993** (as amended in 2019) provided for the constitution of a **National Human Rights Commission** at the Union level, which steers State Human Rights Commission in States and Human Rights Courts for better protection of Human Rights and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- **Section 2(1)(d) of the PHRA defines Human Rights** as the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India.
- India took an active part in drafting of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**.
- These **30 rights and freedoms include civil and political rights**, like the right to life, liberty, free speech and privacy and economic, social and cultural rights, like the right to social security, health and education, etc.

## RELATED: HUMAN RIGHTS DAY: 10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

- Every year **Human Rights Day** is celebrated on **10<sup>th</sup> December** all around the world.
- **Freedom in the World 2021** report released earlier this year had **downgraded India's status** from 'Free' to 'Partly Free'.

### World Human Rights Day:

- On that day, the **United Nations General Assembly** adopted, in 1948, the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**.
- The UDHR **established a set of common basic values** both with regard to the view of human beings and to the relationship between the state and the individual.
- **Theme 2021:** "EQUALITY – Reducing inequalities, advancing human rights".

### International Human Rights Conventions and Bodies:

- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):** The 30 rights and freedoms include civil and political rights, like the right to life, liberty, free speech and privacy and economic, social and cultural rights, like the right to social security, health and education, etc.
- **India took an active part** in drafting of the UDHR.
- The **UDHR is not a treaty**, so it does not directly create legal obligations for countries.
- The **UDHR**, together with the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** and its two Optional Protocols (on the complaints procedure and on the death penalty) and the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its Optional Protocol**, form the so-called International Bill of Human Rights.
- **Other Conventions:** These include the **Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948)**, the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)**, the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)**, the **Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)** and the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)**, among others.
- India is a party to all these Conventions.
- **Human Rights Council:** The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the **United Nations** system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights. It is made up of **47 United Nations Member States** which are elected by the UN General Assembly.
- The most innovative feature of the Human Rights Council is the **Universal Periodic Review**. This unique mechanism involves a review of the human rights records of all 192 UN member states once every four years.
- The **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** serves as the secretariat for the Human Rights Council.
- **Amnesty International:** An **international organisation** of volunteers who campaign for human rights. This organisation brings out independent reports on the violation of human rights all over the world.

## National Human Rights Commission

- **Statutory Body:** NHRC was established on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 1993. The statute under which it is established is the **Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993** as amended by the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2006.
- The PHRA Act also provides for the creation of a State Human Rights Commission at the state level.
- **In Line with Paris Principles:** **Paris Principles** were adopted for the promotion and protection of human rights in October 1991, and were endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1993.
- **Watchdog of Human Rights in the country:** The NHRC is an embodiment of India's concern for the promotion and protection of human rights.
- **Section 2(1)(d) of the PHRA defines Human Rights** as the rights relating to **life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual** guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India.
- **Composition:** The commission is a multi-member body consisting of a chairman and four members. **A person who has been the Chief Justice of India or a judge of the Supreme Court is a chairman.**
- **Appointment:** The chairman and members are appointed by the President on the recommendations of a six-member committee consisting of the Prime Minister as its head, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, leaders of the Opposition in both the Houses of Parliament and the Union Home Minister.
- **Tenure:** The chairman and members **hold office for a term of three years or until they attain the age of 70 years**, whichever is earlier.
- The **President can remove the chairman or any member** from the office under some circumstances.



## #UK PM BORIS JOHNSON TO VISIT INDIA

- **UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson** will pay an official visit to India from April 21-22, 2022. This will be Boris Johnson's maiden visit to India as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

- **Significance**
- **The UK PM's visit to India has been overdue for a long after being canceled twice due to the COVID-19 outbreak.** He was first invited as a Chief Guest of India's Republic Day celebrations in early 2021 but it was canceled due to a massive COVID-19 spike in the United Kingdom.
- He was then scheduled to visit India in April 2021 but it again was canceled due to the pandemic situation in India around the time.

### UK PM India Visit: Things You Should Know

- The UK Prime Minister will visit **Delhi and Gujarat for the first-ever time as Prime Minister**, as a part of the UK's Indo-Pacific tilt.



- His meeting with PM Narendra Modi is expected to focus on boosting **defence, security, economic and tech cooperation amid shared global challenges.**
- The two leaders will discuss the strengthening of bilateral ties against the backdrop of the ongoing India-UK Free Trade Agreement negotiations.
- They are expected to review the **implementation of the Roadmap 2030** and set their vision for further intensifying cooperation across the full spectrum of bilateral ties.
- They will also exchange views on regional and global issues of mutual interest.
- The UK PM is expected to announce new science, health and technology projects in Gujarat.

## Free-Trade Deal Negotiations

- The UK PM and Indian PM will also discuss the **strengthening of bilateral ties against the backdrop of ongoing India-UK Free Trade Agreement Negotiations.**
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson said, "Investment from Indian companies already supports 95,000 jobs across the UK, which is expected to be boosted by upcoming announcements and a future free trade deal."
- The Russia-Ukraine conflict is likely to be discussed during the meeting of the two leaders.

## Background

- India and the United Kingdom adopted a **10-year roadmap (Roadmap 2030)** in the India-UK virtual summit held in May 2021 to expand ties in the key areas of trade and economy, defence and security, climate change and people-to-people connections.

## India-UK Trade Relations

- India and the UK are vibrant democracies, with a **partnership built on our shared history and rich culture.**
- The diverse **Indian diaspora in the UK, which acts as a "Living Bridge"**, adds further dynamism to the relations between the two countries.
- The **UK is one of the largest investors in India**, among the **G20 countries.**

## Significance of FTA between India & the UK:

- **Increasing Exports of Goods:** Trade deals with the UK could boost exports for large job-creating sectors such as **textiles**, leather goods, and footwear.
- India is also expected to register a **quantum jump in the export of Marine Products** through the recognition of 56 marine units of India.
- **Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs)** on Pharma could provide additional market access.
- There is also great potential for increasing exports in service sectors like IT/ITES, Nursing, education, healthcare, including **AYUSH** and audio-visual services.
- Visa restrictions have been a key issue for India to boost services trade.
- **Exit from RCEP:** India opted out of the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership deal** in November 2019.
- Therefore, there is a renewed focus on trade deals with the US, the European Union and the UK, which are key markets for Indian exporters and are keen to diversify their sourcing.

## #RELATED ARTICLE: RUSSIA BARS ENTRY OF UK

- Russia's foreign ministry said on Saturday it had barred entry to the country for British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, Defence Secretary Ben Wallace and 10 other British government members and politicians. The move was taken "in view of the unprecedented hostile action by the British Government, in particular the imposition of sanctions against senior Russian officials," the ministry said in a statement, adding that it would expand the list soon. The Kremlin has described Johnson, who has been one of Ukraine's staunchest backers, as "the most active participant in the race to be anti-Russian".
- A week ago, Johnson visited Kyiv where he and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy praised each other for their cooperation since the Russian invasion, which Moscow calls a "special operation". "The UK and our international partners stand united in condemning the Russian government's reprehensible actions in Ukraine and calling for the Kremlin to stop the war," a British government spokesperson said in response to Moscow's decision to bar Johnson and other British politicians.

## #POLITICAL CRISIS IN PAKISTAN

- On 10<sup>th</sup> April 2022, Imran Khan's term as Pakistan's Prime Minister ended after days of constitutional chaos in Pakistan that left him with no choice but to be voted out of the office or to resign.
- The lower house of **the Pakistani parliament will be meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022 to vote for a new acting prime minister of the country.**
- In Pakistan, this is the first time that a no-confidence motion against a prime minister of the country has been successful.
- In 2018, **Imran Khan was elected as the Prime Minister of the country.**



- Since Pakistan's independence in 1947, no prime minister of the country has been able to complete a five-year term in office.

### How was Imran Khan voted out?

- Imran Khan was voted out after he blocked a similar attempt earlier.
- The no-confidence motion that was passed in the parliament requires 172 votes out of the 342-seats to be given the green light.
- The no-confidence motion against Khan was supported by 174 parliamentarians.
- The motion was passed after Pakistan's Supreme Court ruled that Khan acted in an unconstitutional manner after blocking the earlier process and dissolving parliament. On 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022, the Supreme Court restored the country's parliament after it was dissolved by **President ArifAlvi on the recommendation of Imran Khan**.
- Khan has accused the opposition of conspiring with the **US to depose him and has urged his followers to protest against his removal**.

### #SHEHBAZ SHARIF ELECTED AS 23<sup>RD</sup> PM OF PAKISTAN

- Shehbaz Sharif, the 70-year-old younger brother of former **Pakistani PM Nawaz Sharif**, has been elected as the 23rd Prime Minister of Pakistan.
- Sharif was elected unopposed as the new Pakistani PM with 174 votes in favour amid a walkout by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) MLAs. The ousted Pakistan PM Imran Khan announced his resignation as a member of the National Assembly saying that he will not sit in the assemblies with 'thieves'.
- **Shehbaz Sharif was the Leader of Opposition** in the National Assembly since August 2018.
- He is also the **President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)**. His candidature for Prime Minister was revealed by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari during a joint press conference of the opposition parties earlier.
- His election comes after **Imran Khan lost the no-confidence motion** tabled against him in the assembly, becoming the first Pakistan PM to do so.
- The Imran Khan-led coalition government lost the no-trust vote with 174 votes in favour of the motion in the 342 member assembly.

### Who is Shehbaz Sharif?

- **Shehbaz Sharif is the younger brother of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who served as Pakistan PM for three terms.** Born in Lahore in 1950, Sharif is a graduate of Government College University, Lahore.
- Shehbaz Sharif had been serving as the Chief Minister of the crucial Punjab province of Pakistan for the previous three terms.
- He had last staked a claim for the position of the PM in 2018 but **PPP's decision to abstain from the PM vote had paved the way for the election of PTI's Imran Khan as the Prime Minister**.
- Shehbaz Sharif was nominated as the leader of the **opposition in the National Assembly**.
- He initially joined his family's steel business and then become the president of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industries in 1985.
- His **elder brother Nawaz Sharif** was inducted into the **Punjab Provincial Cabinet as Finance Minister in 1983 under the dictatorship of Zia-ul-Haq**.
- He entered the Punjab Provincial Assembly in 1988 and was elected to the National Assembly in 1990. He



became the leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly in 1993.

- He became the Chief Minister of Punjab for the first time in 1997 but his term was cut short by Pervez Musharraf's military coup of 1999. He became the Punjab CM again in 2008, returning from political exile after almost a decade.
- Shehbaz Sharif was elected as the President of PML-N unopposed in February 2018 after his brother, then Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was disqualified from key positions after being named in the 'Panama Papers'.

### Corruption Charges

- **Shehbaz Sharif** also faces serious corruption charges similar to his elder brother.
- The **National Accountability Bureau (NAB)** had frozen 23 properties belonging to Shehbaz Sharif and his son, Hamza in December 2019 accusing them of money laundering. The NAB arrested him in the same case in September 2020 and he was released on bail in April 2021 by the Lahore High Court.

### Pakistan Supreme Court Verdict

- **Pakistan's Supreme Court in a historic judgment** on April 8th had declared Imran Khan's decision to advise the President to dissolve the National Assembly as unconstitutional and had also set aside the ruling of the Deputy Speaker rejecting the no-trust vote against Imran Khan Government.
- The top court had called for the convening of the session of the National Assembly.

### #RUSSIA AS 'STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM'

Recently, Ukraine has requested US to **designate Russia as a "state sponsor of terrorism"**.

- The designation would activate perhaps the harshest suite of sanctions available with the US against Russia.



### What is Terrorist Designation?

- The US Secretary of State has the power to designate countries that "have repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism" as "State Sponsors of Terrorism".
- The US can **place four categories of sanctions on countries** that are on this list:
  - Restrictions on US foreign assistance
  - A ban on defence exports and sales
  - Certain controls over exports of dual use items
  - Miscellaneous financial and other restrictions
- Sanctions can **also be placed on countries and persons** that engage in certain trade with designated countries.

### Countries on the List:

- As of now, there are **four countries on the list** of state sponsors of terrorism.
- **Syria** (Designated on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1979)



- **Iran** (Designated on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1984),
- **North Korea** (Designated on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017).
- **Cuba was re-designated** as a state sponsor of terrorism on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021
- What are the Statutes which authorise Designation?
- There are currently **three statutes that authorise the Secretary of State to designate a foreign government** for repeatedly providing support for acts of international terrorism:
- **Foreign Assistance Act of 1961**: It prohibits the transfer of most aid,
- **Arms Export Control Act (AECA)**: It prohibits exports, credits, guarantees, other financial assistance, and export licensing overseen by the State Department.

### RELATED: US RE-DESIGNATED CUBA IN THE SAME LIST

- USA State Department has designated Cuba as a **State Sponsor of Terrorism** for repeatedly providing **support for acts of international terrorism** in granting safe harbour to terrorists.
- Cuba was delisted in 2015 and has been blacklisted again.
- **Cuba Designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism:**
- The USA government had been accusing the Castro regime for:
- Illegitimate interference in internal politics Venezuela.
- Oppressing the people of Cuba.
- Supporting international terrorism.
- Subversion of the USA justice.

### USA-Cuba Relationship:

- The United States and Cuba have had a strained relationship for more than sixty years, rooted in Fidel Castro's overthrow of a USA-backed government in 1959.
- Presidents Barack Obama and Raul Castro took several steps to normalize bilateral relations, including restoring diplomatic ties and expanding travel and trade.
- The Trump administration has reversed aspects of the past agreements by reimposing restrictions on tourism and other commerce.

### Havana Syndrome:

- In late 2016, USA diplomats and other employees stationed in Havana (capital of Cuba) reported feeling ill after hearing strange sounds and experiencing odd physical sensations.
- The symptoms included nausea, severe headaches, fatigue, dizziness, sleep problems, and hearing loss, which have since come to be known as the **Havana Syndrome**. The USA had accused Cuba of carrying out "attacks", but Cuba denied any knowledge of the illnesses.

### Historical Reasons for Strained Relationship:

- **Cuban Revolution:** The tumultuous USA-Cuba relationship has its roots in the Cold War. In 1959, Fidel Castro and a group of revolutionaries seized power in Havana (city capital of Cuba). They overthrew the USA-backed government of Fulgencio Batista.
- **Cuban Missile Crisis:** The United States **severed diplomatic ties with** Cuba and began pursuing covert operations to overthrow the Fidel Castro regime in 1961.

- The missile crisis arose after **Cuba allowed the Soviet Union to secretly install nuclear missiles** on the island following an attempt by the USA agencies to topple Cuban Government, known as the **Bay of Pigs invasion**.
- In the end, Soviet Union head Khrushchev agreed to withdraw the missiles in exchange for a pledge from Kennedy (USA) not to invade Cuba and to remove the USA nuclear missiles from Turkey.
- **Trade with Soviet Union:** After the Cuban Revolution, the United States recognized Fidel Castro's government but began imposing economic penalties as the new regime increased its trade with the Soviet Union, nationalized American-owned properties, and hiked taxes on the USA imports.
- **Embargo by Kennedy Government (1962):** After slashing Cuban sugar imports, the USA instituted a ban on nearly all its exports to Cuba, which President John F. Kennedy expanded into a full economic embargo that included stringent travel restrictions.

### India's Stand:

- **Supports Lifting Economic Blockade of Cuba:** Recently when the **USA opposed Cuba's membership in UNHRC** in 2019, India joined the majority of countries from all continents that raised their voices in the UN General Assembly to demand an end to the unjust and long economic blockade of the United States against Cuba.
- **Criticised the USA Embargo:** In the UN General Assembly, India stressed that the continued existence of this siege by the USA against Cuba contravenes world opinion, undermines multilateralism and the credibility of the United Nations.

### #INDIA VOTE AT UNHRC (RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT)

- India abstained on a vote at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. The Council moved the resolution to set up an international commission of enquiry **into** Russia's actions in Ukraine.
- The move is significant in the terms that the vote followed even after **India's meeting with Quad countries**. India has also abstained from similar resolutions in the **United Nations General Assembly** and **United Nations Security Council**.
- India also abstained from the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** resolution that was related to safety at four nuclear power stations and a number of nuclear waste sites including Chernobyl, as the Russians seized control of them.

### What is the UN Human Rights Council?

- The HRC is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of **human rights** around the world.
- The Council was **created by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006**. It replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
- The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) serves as the **Secretariat** of the Human Rights Council.
- OHCHR is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

## Members:

- It is **made up of 47 United Nations Member States** which are **elected by the UN General Assembly (UNGA)**.
- The UNGA takes into account the candidate States' contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as their voluntary pledges and commitments in this regard.
- The Council's Membership is based on equitable geographical distribution. Seats are distributed as follows:
  - African States: 13 seats
  - Asia-Pacific States: 13 seats
  - Latin American and Caribbean States: 8 seats
  - Western European and other States: 7 seats
  - Eastern European States: 6 seats

## RUSSIA SUSPENDED FROM UNHRC

- Russia has been suspended from the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) after there were allegations that its soldiers violated human rights in Ukraine. The member nations of the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) voted to suspend Russia**.
- The UNHRC is an inter-governmental body under the United Nations. It is responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights across the world.
- The UNHRC also **investigates human rights breaches and addresses various human rights issues**.
- On 15<sup>th</sup> March 2006, this council was established by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
- The UNHRC replaced the earlier formed United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
- There are **47-member states in the UNHRC** and they serve for three years. They cannot be re-elected immediately after serving two consecutive terms. Federico Villegas is the current president of the UNHRC.
- ***The process of removal of a country***
- The UNGA can suspend any Council member that committed human rights violation during its membership term. A two-thirds majority vote is required by the General Assembly to suspend a member.



## Suspension of Russia

- The United States first moved the resolution to suspend Russia over its military aggression in Ukraine.
- The resolution to remove Russia was titled '**Suspension of the rights of membership of the Russian Federation in the Human Rights Council**'.
- Under this resolution, grave concerns regarding human rights abuses committed by Russia in Ukraine were highlighted.
- The campaign to suspend Russia started after photos and videos of **civilians killed by the Russian army in Bucha came to the fore**.

### India and UN Human Rights Council:

- Recently, a group of **Special Rapporteurs to the United Nations (UN)** has written to the Indian government **expressing concerns over the draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification 2020.**
- In 2020, India's **National Human Rights Commission** submitted its mid-term report to the Council as a part of the third round of the **Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process.**
- India **was elected to the Council** for a period of three years beginning 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019.

### Background:

- Ukraine and Russia share hundreds of years of **cultural, linguistic and familial links.**
- For many in Russia and in the ethnically Russian parts of Ukraine, the **shared heritage of the countries** is an emotional issue that has been exploited for electoral and military purposes.
- As part of the Soviet Union, Ukraine was the **second-most powerful Soviet republic after Russia**, and was **crucial strategically, economically and culturally.**

### Cause of Conflict:

- **Balance of Power:** Ever since Ukraine split from the Soviet Union, both Russia and the West have vied for greater influence in the country in order to keep the balance of power in the region in their favour.
- **Buffer Zone for Western Countries:** For the US and the **European Union**, Ukraine is a crucial buffer between Russia and the West.
- As tensions with Russia rise, the US and the EU are increasingly determined to keep Ukraine away from Russian control.
- **Russian Interest in Black Sea:** The **unique geography of the Black Sea region** confers several geopolitical advantages to Russia.
- Firstly, it is an **important crossroads and strategic intersection** for the entire region.
- Access to the Black Sea is **vital for all littoral and neighboring states**, and greatly enhances the projection of power into several adjacent regions.
- Secondly, the region is an **important transit corridor for goods and energy.**

### Ukraine's NATO Membership:

- **Ukraine has urged the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to speed up his country's membership in the alliance.**
- **Russia has declared such a move a "red line", and worried about the consequences of the US-led military alliances expanding right up to its doorstep.**
- **The Black Sea is bordered by Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. All these countries are NATO countries.**
- **Due to this faceoff between NATO countries and Russia, the Black sea is a region of strategic importance & a potential maritime flashpoint.**

### Minsk Agreements:

- **Minsk I:** Ukraine and the Russian-backed separatists agreed a **12-point ceasefire deal in the capital of Belarus** in September 2014.

- Its provisions included prisoner exchanges, deliveries of humanitarian aid and the withdrawal of heavy weapons.
- The agreement quickly broke down, with violations by both sides.
- **Minsk II:** In 2015, an open conflict was averted after the 'Minsk II' peace agreement was signed, under the mediation of France and Germany.
- It was designed to end the fighting in the rebel regions and hand over the border to Ukraine's national troops.
- It was signed by Representatives of Russia, Ukraine, the **Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)** and the leaders of two pro-Russian separatist regions.
- OSCE is the world's largest security-oriented intergovernmental organisation. Its mandate includes issues such as arms control, promotion of human rights, freedom of the press, and fair elections.

## #RUSSIA WITHDRAWN ITSELF FROM UNWTO

- UNWTO announced that Russia has withdrawn from the **United Nation's tourism body ahead of a vote to suspend Russia's membership over its invasion of Ukraine.**
- Moscow has announced its intention of withdrawing from the **United Nations World Tourism Organisation and added that Russia's suspension is 'effective immediately'.**

### Will there still is voting?

- **UN World Tourism Organization** said that the voting by the member states of the body will go ahead even though Russia has said that it is withdrawing from it to give member states their say.
- **Why UNWTO is suspending Russia?**
- **Secretary-General ZurabPololikashvili** said that UNWTO's statuses are clear: universal respect for human rights and promotion of tourism for peace. Only the member that abides by these two rules can be part of the UN World Tourism Organisation.



## Russia-Ukraine war: What will be the impact on global tourism?

- As per UNWTO, **the conflict in Ukraine with Russia** will delay the global tourism sector's uneven recovery from the impact of the COVID pandemic.
- The organization estimates that the disruption of the Russian and Ukrainian outbound travel alone can cause losses of up to \$14 billion in tourism revenues in **2022 and the impact will be felt most strongly in the island and coastal destinations.**

## UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization)

- **UNWTO is an intergovernmental body** that promotes tourism and also facilitates international trade between nations around the world. =
- The UN's tourism body has been placed in Madrid ever since it was founded in 1975. The agency employs nearly 150 people.



## United Nations World Tourism Organization

- It is the **United Nations Specialized Agency** responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.
- It was **established in 1975** with **headquarters at Madrid, Spain**.
- UNWTO encourages the implementation of the **Global Code of Ethics for Tourism**, to maximize tourism's socio-economic contribution while minimizing its possible negative impacts.

## #RELATED: INDIA ELECTED TO 4 MAJOR BODIES OF UN-ECOSOC

- India has been elected to the **four major bodies of the United Nations Economic and Social Council**, including the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.
- India's Permanent Mission to the United Nations thanked all the member states for **electing India to four key bodies of UN ECOSOC**.
- Ambassador Preeti Saran has also been re-elected to the Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Senior Indian diplomat Saran, earlier in December 2018 was elected unopposed to the Asia Pacific seat on the UN's Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Her first four-year term started on January 1, 2019. Saran had joined the Indian Foreign Service back in August 1982.



## India elected to four UN ECOSOC bodies

- According to India's Permanent Mission to the UN tweet, **India has been elected to 4 UN ECOSOC bodies**:
- Committee on NGOs, Commission for Social Development, Commission on Science and Technology for Development and Ambassador Preeti Saran has been re-elected to the Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

## Commission of Social Development (CSocD)

- Since the **World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen**, the Commission for Social Development (CSocD) has become the key body of the United Nations which is in charge of the follow-up and the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme for Action.
- The **purpose of CSocD is to advise ECOSOC on social policies** of a general character, and in particular on all the matters in the social field that are not covered by specialized inter-governmental agencies.

## Committee on Non-Governmental Organisations

- It is a standing Committee of the Economic and Social Council which was established in 1946. The main tasks of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organisations are the consideration of applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification submitted by the non-governmental organisations.

## UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development

- CSTD is a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council which holds an annual intergovernmental forum for the discussion on timely and pertinent issues affecting technology, science, and development.
- Outcomes of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development include **providing the UNGA**

and ECOSOC with high-level advice on the relevant science and technology issues.

### Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

- CESCR is a body of 18 independent experts that monitors the implementation of the International **Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights** by its State Parties.
- Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights enshrines the rights to adequate food, adequate education, health, housing, water and sanitation, and work.

### #CONTROVERSY OVER JERUSALEM'S AL-AQSA MOSQUE

- Over the decades, this site in **Jerusalem's Old City** has frequently been a **flashpoint for violence between Palestinians and Israeli forces** and hardline groups and is at the **heart of for historical claims**.
- These recurring clashes are part of the ongoing Israeli–Palestinian conflict.



### What is al-Aqsa Mosque & Associated Conflict?

- The al-Aqsa Mosque is **one of Jerusalem's most recognized monuments**.
- The site is part of the **Old City of Jerusalem, sacred to Christians, Jews and Muslims**.
- The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**, has classified the Old City of Jerusalem and its walls as a **World Heritage Site**.
- The mosque's complex is the reason for the conflict **between Israel & Palestine (Islam & Judaism)**.
- **Al-Aqsa Mosque is one of Islam's most revered locations, and the Temple Mount is the holiest site in Judaism.**
- The Temple Mount is a walled compound inside the Old City in Jerusalem, and is the site of two structures:
- The **Dome of the Rock to the north and the Al-Aqsa Mosque to the south.**
- To the **southwest of the Temple Mount, is the Western Wall**, a remnant of the Second Temple and the **holiest site in Judaism**.
- **In Islam**, the **Dome of the Rock** is a seventh-century structure, **an important Islamic shrine**, believed to be where the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven.
- Before modern borders were drawn up in the region, **pilgrims to the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina** would stop over in Jerusalem to pray at this mosque.
- **In Judaism**, it is believed to be the site where **God gathered dust to create Adam**.
- According to the Bible, in **1000 BC King Solomon built the First Temple** of the Jews on this mountain, which **Babylonian troops** tore down some 400 years on the orders of the **Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar**.
- In the first century BC, Jews returned from their banishment and **built the Second Temple**.

## What are the Geopolitics of Conflict over Jerusalem?

- Jerusalem has been at the center of the **Israeli-Palestinian conflict**.
- According to the original 1947 **United Nations (UN) partition plan**, Jerusalem was proposed to be an **international city**.
- However, in the first **Arab Israel war of 1948**, the Israelis captured the western half of the city, and Jordan took the eastern part, including the Old City that houses Haram al-Sharif.
- Following the **Six-Day War in 1967**, an armed conflict between Israel and a coalition of Arab states primarily comprising Jordan, Syria and Egypt, the Waqf Ministry of Jordan that had till then held control of the al-Aqsa Mosque, **ceased to oversee the mosque**.
- Israel captured East Jerusalem from Jordan in the **Six-Day War 1967** and annexed it later.
- Since its annexation, Israel has **expanded settlements in East Jerusalem**.
- Israel sees the whole city as its **"unified, eternal capital"**, whereas the Palestinian leadership across the political spectrum have maintained that they would not accept any compromise formula for the future Palestinian state unless East Jerusalem is its capital.

## India's Policy Towards Israel and Palestine:

- The **Israeli-Palestinian conflict** dates back to the end of the nineteenth century. It is linked to the **age-old tussle over identity and land** starting with Jerusalem.
- In 1947, the **United Nations (UN)** adopted **Resolution 181**, known as the Partition Plan, which sought to divide the **British Mandate of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states**.
- This led to unresolved conflict between Israel and Palestine.
- Traditionally, India's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine has been a **hyphenated foreign policy**.
- However, **hyphenating the ties with Israel – linking them to ties with the Palestinian Authority** – essentially **prevented** India from pursuing a pragmatic policy of what was in **India's best interests**.
- In recent times, India is being seen shifted towards a **Dehyphenation of Policy**.

## #ABRAHAM ACCORD

- The **Abraham Accord** between **Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain** is mediated by the USA. It is the **first Arab-Israeli peace deal in 26 years**.
- Previous Agreements:** There were the **only two peace deals** between Israel and the Arab States in more than a quarter of a century.
- Egypt was the first Arab State to sign a peace deal with Israel in 1979.
- Jordan signed a peace pact in 1994.

## The Agreement:

- As per the agreements, the UAE and Bahrain will establish:
- Embassies and exchange ambassadors.
- Working together with Israel across a range of sectors, including tourism, trade, healthcare and security.
- The Abraham Accords also open the door for Muslims around the world to visit the historic sites in Israel and to peacefully pray at Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the **third holiest site in Islam**.
- In the Islamic tradition, **the Kaaba in Mecca** is considered the holiest site, followed by **the Prophet's Mosque** in Medina, and **Al-Aqsa Mosque** in Jerusalem.

- **Reason:** Bringing Israel, the UAE and Bahrain together reflects their shared concern about **Iran's rising influence** in the region and development of ballistic missiles. Iran has been critical of both deals.

## Arab-Israel Relation

- Since Israeli independence in 1948, it has fought several wars with Arab neighbouring countries.
- The persecuted Jews saw Israel as their promised home while Arabs saw it as an occupation.

## #CHINA'S GLOBAL SECURITY INITIATIVE

Recently, a new **Global Security Initiative (GSI)** was put forward by Chinese President. The GSI looks to counter the US Indo-Pacific strategy and the **Quad (India, US, Australia, Japan grouping)**.

- However, China did not provide much clarity or details about the proposed global security initiative.



### What is GSI, as Envisaged by China?

- **Principle of Indivisible Security:** With growing threats posed by unilateralism, hegemony and power politics, **and** increasing deficits in peace, security, trust and governance, mankind is facing more and more intractable problems and security threats.
- Thus, China held that the Global security initiative is envisaged to uphold the **principle of "indivisible security"**.
- **The principle of "indivisible security"** means that no country can strengthen its own security at the expense of others.
- **Asian Security Model:** GSI calls for a **"common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable"** security and building an Asian security model of mutual respect, openness and integration".
- **Opposing Sanctions:** This would oppose the use of unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction, appearing to refer to Western sanctions.
- **Tackling New Cold War:** Indo-Pacific' strategy to divide the region and create a 'new **Cold War**', and the use of military alliances to put together an **'Asian version of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**.
- According China, the Quad grouping was equivalent to the **"Five Eyes" intelligence alliance** involving Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the U.S. and U.K. and the **AUKUS pact**, as a key element in what he called U.S. plans to build an "Asian NATO".

### What are Reactions of Quad Members?

- **Quad is not a Military Alliance:** The members of the Quad have **rejected the notion that it is an Asian NATO or a military alliance**, and pointed to its broad-based cooperation, including on vaccines and technology.
- **Double Standards of China:** Chinese criticism of unilateralism, hegemony and double standards is usually aimed at the US.
- **Impact of Russia-Ukraine War:** China's new advances in the Pacific could be related to the stagnation of the **Belt and Road Initiative**, due to the **Ukraine war**.

## What are Events Signaling a New Cold War?

- **China's Development:** For several decades, China's aggressive development under the relatively enlightened authoritarianism of Deng Xiaoping and his successors was seen positively in the United States.
- However, under Xi Jinping (President), China has evolved from a **soft to a hard authoritarianism**.
- There is now a president-for-life with a **budding personality cult**.
- **US' Counter:** In order to contain rising China's assertiveness, the US under its '**pivot to Asia policy**' Has launched a **Quad initiative & Indo pacific narrative**.
- Most recently, the US proposed to **expand G7 to G-11 without including China in it**.
- **China's Stance on South China Sea:** China's actions in the **South China Sea**, first by land reclamation and then constructing artificial islands for extending extra-territorial claim, has seen sharp criticism from the US and its allies.
- **Challenging Economic Hegemony:** China has come out with alternative governance mechanisms to the U.S.-dominated **International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organization** with its all-encompassing **Belt and Road Initiative** and institutions like **Asia infrastructure investment bank**, Contingency Reserve Agreement (CRA) of **New Development Bank**.

## What should be Role of India?

- India is a rising global power and citing its importance both the US and China sought to attract India in its camp. **Foreign policy experts in the US argue India Is a Natural US Ally in the New Cold War.**
- On the other hand, Chinese's Ambassador in India has suggested writing "**together a new chapter**" with "**a shared future for mankind**". In this context:
- India can promote new **multilateralism** under the aegis of **VasudhaivaKutumbakam**- which relies on restructuring both the economic order and societal behavior for equitable sustainable development.
- India must take up intensified diplomacy with global powers so that Asian Century can be defined in terms of peaceful co-existence and global interest.
- Apart from it, India should acknowledge that national security now relies on technological superiority in Artificial Intelligence (AI), cyber and space, and not expensive capital equipment.
- Thus, India should become self-sufficient in the domain of **critical technologies**.



## #SECURITY DEAL B/W CHINA & SOLOMON ISLANDS

A recent leaked document has revealed that the **Solomon Islands in the South Pacific has reached a deal with China** which outlines an unprecedented level of security cooperation.

- This is the **first deal of its kind for China in the region**, which is not yet signed and it is not fully known whether the provisions mentioned in the leaked document are present in the final draft.



### What are the Key Highlights about Solomon Island?

- The Solomon Islands is **part of the ethnically Melanesian group of islands** in the Pacific and lies between Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.
- The islands were initially controlled by the **British Empire during the colonial era**.
- It went through the **hands of Germany and Japan** and then back to the U.K., after the Americans took over the islands from the Japanese during **World War II**.
- The islands became **independent in 1978 to become a constitutional monarchy** under the British Crown, with a parliamentary system of government.
- Still, the country, **a member of the Commonwealth**, is independent, and the governor-general is appointed on the advice of the unicameral National Parliament.

### What are the Provisions under the Proposed Deal?

- The document **explicitly enables China to send its “police, armed police, military personnel and other law enforcement and armed forces”** to the islands on the latter government’s request, or if the former sees that the safety of its projects and personnel in the islands are at risk.
- It also provides for China’s naval vessels to **utilise the islands for logistics support**.
- What are the Reasons for China’s Interest in the Solomon Islands?

### Role of Taiwan:

- The Pacific islands are among the few regions in the world **where China has competition from Taiwan for diplomatic recognition**.
- China considers Taiwan to be a renegade territory awaiting reunification, and opposes its recognition as an independent state on the international stage.
- Hence, any country which has to officially establish relations with China will have to break diplomatic ties with Taiwan.
- The Solomon Islands **was one among the six Pacific island states** which had official bilateral relations with Taiwan.
- However, in **2019, the Solomon Islands, along with Kiribati, switched allegiance to China**. Now, **only four regional countries backing Taiwan**, mostly belonging to the **Micronesian group of islands** which are under the control of the US.

### What are the Implications for Geopolitical Configuration in the Region?

- All Pacific countries have a stake in protecting the stability and security of the region.

- Pacific Islands Forum members, including Australia, agreed in the 2018 **Boe Declaration to address regional security challenges collectively.**
- A bilateral agreement such as the one proposed between China and Solomon Islands **undermines that sentiment and shows a limited appreciation for the security of the region** as a whole.
- Earlier, the **US announced plans to open an embassy in the Solomon Islands**, laying out in unusually blunt terms a plan to increase its influence in the South Pacific nation before China becomes “strongly embedded”.
- The smaller island nations of the region are heavily dependent on them, **especially Australia as it is a resident power.**

### Related: Conflict between China and Taiwan (Background):

- China and Taiwan **separated amid civil war in 1949** and **China considers Taiwan part of its territory** to be taken control of by force if necessary.
- But **Taiwan's leaders** say that **Taiwan is a sovereign state.**
- After decades of hostile intentions and angry rhetoric, relations between China and Taiwan **started improving in the 1980s.**
- **China put forward a formula, known as "one country, two systems",** under which Taiwan would be given significant autonomy if it accepted Chinese reunification.
- In Taiwan, the offer was rejected, but the **government did relax rules** on visits to and investment in China.
- There were also limited talks between the two sides' unofficial representatives, though Beijing's insistence that Taiwan's Republic of China (ROC) government is illegitimate prevented government-to-government contact.
- China's implementation of a **national security law in Hong Kong** in 2020 was seen by many as yet another sign that Beijing was becoming significantly more assertive in the region.

### #CONTROVERSY OVER 'KURIL ISLAND'

- Japan has said that four islands near the Kamchatka Peninsula have been illegally occupied by Russia. The Japanese call these **islands 'the Northern Territories' while Russia calls them 'Kurils.'**
- The islands stretch north across the Pacific Ocean from Japan's Hokkaido to Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula's southernmost tip.
- These islands have been in the midst of a **longstanding issue between Japan and Russia.**
- The Japanese government led by Fumio Kishida has upped its ante over these islands' ownership. **For the first time in around 20 years Japan has called the islands to have been illegally occupied.**
- This term was last used in 2003 by the foreign ministry of Japan.



### About the dispute

- This **dispute dates back to the end of the Second World War** when the Soviet Union, a part of the allied

forces, won the war against the Axis powers of Japan, Italy, and Germany.

- Russia believes that since they won the **Second World War the ownership of the islands is theirs as Japan lost the territory due to its loss in the war.**
- Japan argues that the Japanese travelled to these islands in the 16th century **which is nearly 200 years before the arrival of the Russians and hence, the islands are rightfully theirs.**
- **After the end of the Second World War, Japan signed the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty** with the Allied Forces where Japan renounced all right, claim, and title to the Kuril Islands.
- This did not solve the issue as Russia was not a part of this treaty and the **government of Japan has never recognised the four islands occupied by Russia as part of the Kuril chain.**

### Proposal of returning the islands

- In the 50s, Russia had proposed returning the two islands that are closest to Japan but the country rejected the offer. The islands that are considered by Japan as their own are named Etorofu, Kunashiri, Habomai islets, and Shikotan.
- **Military Drills:** Russia has performed military drills on these islands intensifying fears that the peace of the Indo-Pacific region will remain threatened due to the Kuril Islands dispute.

### #EMMANUEL MACRON RE-ELECTED AS PRESIDENT OF FRANCE

- On 24<sup>th</sup> April 2022, **Marine Le Pen** has been defeated by Emmanuel Macron to be re-elected as the President of France. Leaders across the world welcomed his re-election.
- Marine Le Pen is a far-right leader who was defeated by Macron. **Macron is the first French sitting president in the past 20 years to have been re-elected.**
- Both candidates did not receive any vote from one out of three voters. The turnout of the election was just under 72 percent which is the lowest since 1969.
- Over three million **people had cast blank or spoilt votes. Macron received 51.5 percent of the votes while Le Pen received 41.5 percent.**



### About Emmanuel Macron

- Since 14<sup>th</sup> May 2017, **Emmanuel Macron has been serving as the president of France.**
- During his presidency, he has overseen many reforms to taxation, labour laws, and pensions. **Renewable energy transitions were also pursued by him.**
- A proposed fuel tax by him resulted in the yellow vests protests in 2018 yellow vests protests. Since 2020, he has been leading the response of France to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rollout of vaccination.
- In his foreign policy, he asked for reforms in the European Union and also signed bilateral treaties with Germany and Italy.
- He also presided over a dispute with Australia and the United States over the AUKUS security treaty and continued French involvement in the civil war of Syria, He also severely criticized and responded against the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

## What are the Areas of Cooperation in India-France Relations?

- **Background:** France was one of the first countries with which India signed a “strategic partnership” after the end of the **Cold War**, in January 1998.
- France was one of the very few countries to **support India’s decision to test nuclear weapons in 1998**.
- Today, France has emerged as **India’s most reliable partner** on issues relating to terrorism and Kashmir.
- **Defence Cooperation:** Both countries have a defence dialogue at the Ministerial level.

## The three services have regular defence exercises, viz.

- **Exercise Shakti (Army)**
- **Exercise Varuna (Navy)**
- **Exercise Garuda (Air Force)**
- Recently, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has inducted **French Rafale multi-role combat aircraft**.
- India entered into a contract with a French firm to build **six Scorpene submarines in India’s Malegaon dockyards** through a **technology-transfer arrangement in 2005**.
- The two countries also signed the Agreement regarding the **Provision of Reciprocal Logistics Support**.
- **Bilateral trade and Economic relations:** The **India-France Administrative Economic and Trade Committee (AETC)** provides an appropriate framework to assess and find ways to further promote bilateral trade and investment as well as to speed up the resolution of market access issues to the benefit of economic operators
- **Global agendas:** Climate change, biodiversity, renewable energy, terrorism, cybersecurity and digital technology, etc:
- There have been joint efforts to limit climate change and develop the **International Solar Alliance**.
- Both countries have agreed on a road map on cybersecurity and digital technology.

## #PM OF NEPAL VISITED INDIA

The Prime Minister of Nepal visited India and held a summit meeting with the Indian Prime Minister. Earlier, the Union Cabinet had cleared a plan to build a **new bridge connecting India and Nepal** over the **Mahakali River** and link Dharchula in Uttarakhand with Nepal’s Dharchula.

## What are the Highlights of the Visit?

- **Connectivity:** Launched the **35-km cross-border railway line linking Jaynagar in Bihar to Kurtha in Nepal**.
- This is the **first broad-gauge passenger rail link between the two sides** and it **will be extended to Bardibas in Nepal** under a project supported by an Indian grant of Rs 548 crore.
- **Solu Corridor:** The Indian side handed over the Solu Corridor, a **90-km, 132 kV power transmission line** built for Rs 200 crore under an Indian line of credit.
- The line **will help bring electricity to several remote districts in northeastern Nepal** by connecting them to the country’s national grid.
- **RuPay card:** Launched India’s RuPay card in Nepal.



- The domestic variant of the RuPay card will now work at 1,400 point-of-sale machines in Nepal, and the move is expected to facilitate bilateral tourist flows.
- Nepal is the **fourth country, after Bhutan, Singapore and the UAE**, where RuPay is live.

### MoUs:

- Nepal signed a framework agreement to join the India-led ISA (becoming the 105<sup>th</sup> member country).
- Signed three more pacts – a memorandum of understanding (MoU) **on enhancing technical cooperation in the railways sector**, and **two agreements between Indian Oil Corporation and Nepal Oil Corporation for the supply of petroleum products** for five years and for sharing of technical expertise.

### What are the Key Points of India - Nepal Relations?

- **Historical Ties:** Nepal is an important neighbour of India and occupies special significance in its foreign policy because of the geographic, historical, cultural and economic linkages/ties that span centuries.
- India and Nepal share similar ties in terms of **Hinduism and Buddhism** with Buddha's birthplace Lumbini located in present day Nepal.
- The two countries **not only share an open border and unhindered movement of people**, but they also have close bonds through marriages and familial ties, popularly known as **Roti-Beti ka Rishta**.
- The India-Nepal **Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950** forms the bedrock of the special relations that exist between India and Nepal.
- Rivers originating in Nepal feed the **perennial river systems** of India in terms of ecology and hydropower potential.
- **Trade and Economy:** India is Nepal's largest trade partner and the largest source of foreign investments, besides providing transit for almost the entire third country trade of Nepal.
- **Connectivity:** Nepal being a landlocked country, it is surrounded by India from three sides and one side is open towards Tibet which has very limited vehicular access.
- India-Nepal has undertaken various connectivity programs to enhance people-to-people linkages and promote economic growth and development.
- MOUs have been signed between both the governments for laying an electric rail **track linking Kathmandu with Raxaul in India**.
- India is looking to develop the inland waterways for the movement of cargo, within the framework of trade and transit arrangements, providing additional access to sea for Nepal calling it linking **Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) with Sagar (Indian Ocean)**.

### Defence Cooperation:

- Bilateral defence cooperation includes assistance to Nepalese Army in its modernization through provision of equipment and training.
- The Gorkha Regiments of the Indian Army are raised partly by recruitment from hill districts of Nepal.
- India from 2011, every year undertakes joint military exercise with Nepal known as **Surya Kiran**.

### Border Dispute Between India and Nepal

- Currently, India and Nepal have border disputes over **Kalapani - Limpiyadhura - Lipulekh trijunction between India-Nepal and China** and **Susta area (West Champaran district, Bihar)**.



### ▪ Kalapani Region:

- Kalapani is a valley that is administered by India as a part of the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand. It is situated on the Kailash Mansarovar route.
- Kalapani is advantageously located at a height of over 20,000 ft and serves as an observation post for that area.
- The **Kali River** in the **Kalapani region** demarcates the border between India and Nepal.
- The **Treaty of Sugauli** signed by the **Kingdom of Nepal and British India** (after **Anglo-Nepalese War**) in **1816** located the Kali River as Nepal's western boundary with India.
- The discrepancy in locating the **source of the Kali river** led to boundary disputes between India and Nepal, with each country producing maps supporting their own claims.

### Susta Region:

- The **change of course by the Gandak river** is the main reason for disputes in the Susta area.
- Susta is located on the bank of the **Gandak river**.
- It is called Narayani river in Nepal.
- It joins Ganga near Patna, Bihar.

### Nepal's Stand:

- Kali river originates from a stream at Limpiyadhura, north-west of Lipulekh. **Thus Kalapani, and Limpiyadhura, and Lipulekh, fall to the east of the river and are part of Nepal's Dharchula district.**
- **Lipulekh was deleted from the country's map by the kings to get favours from India.**
- **The territory of Kalapani was offered to India by King Mahendra after the 1962 India-China war who wanted to help India's security concerns due to perceived lingering Chinese threats.**
- **Kalapani was not a part of Nepal-India dispute. It was Nepal's territory that the king had allowed India to use temporarily**
- **The new map is in fact a document that was in circulation in Nepal till the 1950s.**

### India's Stand:

- Kali river originates in springs well below the **Lipu-lekh pass**, and the **Sugauli Treaty does not demarcate the area north of these streams.**
- The administrative and revenue **records of the nineteenth century also show that Kalapani was on the Indian side**, and counted as part of Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand.

### Efforts to Solve Border Dispute:

- In the 1980s, the two sides set up the **Joint Technical Level Boundary Working Group** to delineate the boundary.
- The group demarcated everything except Kalapani and Susta area.
- Officially, **Nepal brought the issue of Kalapani before India in 1998**. Both sides agreed to demarcate the outstanding areas (including Kalapani) by 2002 at the prime ministerial level talk held in 2000. But that has not happened yet.

# PRAVAHINI

## ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

### #ELON MUSK TAKEN CONTROL OF TWITTER

- In **one of the tech world's biggest deals**, Elon Musk has taken control of the social media site Twitter. Through this deal, he will be acquiring the social network for around USD 44 billion with the shares of the company being valued at \$54.20.
- On 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022, **Musk announced his plans of taking over Twitter. Elon Musk has plans to make twitter a private organization.**
- Musk wanted to buy Twitter as he wants to use the platform as a mechanism for free speech.



- There are plans to make the digital platform into a much more important place where anyone can discuss any topic freely.
- Also, there are plans of making the platform better by enhancing the digital product with new features, getting rid of spambots, and authenticating all humans who will be using Twitter. **The algorithms will also be made open source to increase trust.**

### Initial bid

- The **initial bid by Musk saw Twitter implement a 'poison pill defence'** to fight against the hostile takeover. However, after announcements by Musk regarding the securing of funding, the board started negotiations.
- Musk has raised USD 25.5 billion of fully committed debt and has raised margin loan financing from around a dozen banks so as to back the bid. After the competition of this deal, Twitter will become a privately held organization.

### Running of Twitter

- Chairman Bret Taylor and Chief Executive Officer Parag Agrawal are still in their respective roles for now.

But, Musk has repeatedly expressed his dissatisfaction with the board of Twitter and the running of the company.

- After a change in a company's ownership, management changes are a common thing but **Musk is already CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, so his capacity to function as the CEO of Tesla could be limited.**
- **Musk plans to utilize this platform as a haven for free speech.**
- He also has plans of turning the headquarters of the company into a homeless shelter. **Ads will be removed for the paid users and there will be better authentication checks.**

## #RELATED: INDIAN-ORIGIN PARAG AGRAWAL TO BE NEXT TWITTER CEO

- **Twitter Co-founder Jack Dorsey** announced on November 29, 2021, that he will be stepping down as the Chief Executive of Silicon Valley.
- With his latest decision, Dorsey has paved the way for an IIT-Bombay Graduate and Indian-origin **Parag Agrawal to be the new CEO of Twitter.** Parag Agrawal has also become the youngest CEO in top 500 companies after the Board of Directors appointed him unanimously.
- The CEOs from India are known for excelling and leaving their mark everywhere in the world, particularly in technology. **For decades, the Indian-origin CEOs** have been playing a significant role in the tech industry and have been contributing in many ways.
- As an IIT-Bombay Graduate **Paras Agrawal takes over as CEO of Twitter,** here is a list of other **Indian-origin CEOs in Silicon Valley.**



Indian-Origin CEOs in Silicon Valley	Companies
Parag Aggarwal	Twitter
Satya Nadella	Microsoft
Shantanu Narayen	Adobe Inc.
Arvind Krishna	IBM
Nikesh Arora	Palo Alto Networks
SundarPichai	Google and Alphabet
George Kurian	NetApp
Jayshree Ullal	Arista Networks

### What is Silicon Valley?

- **Silicon Valley** is home to many Start-Ups and global technology companies including Google, Facebook, Apple, which are among the most prominent ones.
- **Silicon Valley is in the Southern San Francisco Bay Area of California.** The place is also the site of the technology-focused institutions that are centered around Palo Alto's Stanford University.
- Silicon valley in the US also includes the headquarters of more than **30 businesses in the Fortune 1000 and thousands of start-up companies.**

### Why Silicon Valley is significant?

- It was in Silicon Valley in the United States that the Silicon-based integrated circuit, the microcomputer, and the microprocessor, among other technologies, were developed. As of the year 2013, **Silicon Valley has employed about a quarter of a million information technology workers.**

### #RELATED: CENTRE V. TWITTER CONTROVERSY

In 2021, **government of India reprimanded Twitter (micro-blogging website) for not complying with its order to block more than a thousand accounts** for alleged spread of provocative content and misinformation on the **farmers' protest.**

### Current Issue:

- The Centre has issued notice to the micro-blogging site after it restored more than 250 accounts that had been suspended earlier on the government's 'legal demand'.
- The government wants the platform (Twitter) to comply with its earlier order of **31<sup>st</sup> January, 2021** by which it was **asked to block accounts** and a controversial hashtag that spoke of an impending 'genocide' of farmers for allegedly promoting misinformation about the protests, adversely affecting public order.
- The **micro-blogging site** reinstated the accounts and tweets on its own and later **refused to go back on the decision, contending that it found no violation of its policy.**

### Law Related to Blocking of Internet Services/Content:

- **Information Technology Act, 2000:**
- In India, the **Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000**, as amended from time to time, governs all activities related to the use of computer resources.
- It covers all '**intermediaries**' who play a role in the use of computer resources and electronic records.
- The **role of the intermediaries** has been spelt out in separate rules framed for the purpose in 2011- **The Information Technology (Intermediaries Guidelines) Rules, 2011.**
- **Section 69 of the IT Act:**
- It confers on the Central and State governments the **power to issue directions "to intercept, monitor or decrypt any information** generated, transmitted, received or stored in any computer resource".
- The **grounds on which these powers may be exercised** are:
  - In the interest of the sovereignty or integrity of India, defence of India, the security of the state.
  - Friendly relations with foreign states.
  - Public order, or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence relating to these.
  - For investigating any offence.



### Process of Blocking Internet Websites:

- **Section 69A**, for similar reasons and grounds (as stated above), **enables the Centre to ask any agency of the government, or any intermediary, to block access to the public of any information generated**, transmitted, received or stored or hosted on any computer resource.
- Any such request for blocking access **must be based on reasons given in writing**.
- **Intermediaries as per the IT Act 2000:**
- Intermediary is defined in **Section 2(1) (w)** of the IT Act 2000.
- The term 'intermediaries' includes **providers of telecom service, network service, Internet service and web hosting**, besides **search engines, online payment and auction sites, online marketplaces and cyber cafes**.
- It includes any person who, on behalf of another, **"receives, stores or transmits" any electronic record**. **Social media platforms** would fall under this definition.

### Liability of Intermediaries:

- **Section 79** of the IT Act 2000 makes it clear that **"an intermediary shall not be liable for any third-party information**, data, or communication link made available or hosted by him".
- **Third party information** means any information dealt with by a network service provider in his capacity as an intermediary.
- This **protects intermediaries** such as Internet and data service providers and those hosting websites **from being made liable** for content that users may post or generate.
- **Sections 79** also introduced the concept of **"notice and take down"** provision.
- **Supreme Court's Stand Related to Intermediaries in IT Act 2000:**
- In **Shreya Singhal vs Union of India (2015)**, the **Supreme Court** read down the provision to mean that the **intermediaries ought to act only upon receiving actual knowledge that a court order has been passed**, asking [them] to expeditiously remove or disable access to certain material.

### #INDIA-AUSTRALIA ECONOMIC COOPERATION & TRADE AGREEMENT

Recently, India signed a historic trade agreement with Australia, the **India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement** (Ind- Aus ECTA).

- In February 2022, **India and Australia announced** that they were going to sign such an agreement.
- The negotiations for India-Australia ECTA were formally re-launched in September 2021 and concluded on a fast-track basis by the end of March 2022.

### What is the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement?

- It is the first **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** that India has signed with a major developed country in over a decade.
- In February, **India signed an FTA with the UAE** and is currently working on FTAs with **Israel, Canada, UK and the European Union**.
- The Agreement encompasses cooperation across the entire gamut of **bilateral economic and commercial relations between the two friendly countries**, and covers areas like:

- Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin.
- Trade in Services.
- Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT).
- **Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS)** measures.
- Dispute Settlement, Movement of Natural Persons.
- Telecom, Customs Procedures.
- Pharmaceutical products, and Cooperation in other Areas.



- ECTA **provides for an institutional mechanism to encourage and improve trade** between the two countries.
- The ECTA between India and Australia **covers almost all the tariff lines dealt in by India and Australia respectively.**
- India will benefit from **preferential market access provided by Australia on 100% of its tariff lines.**
- This includes all the **labour-intensive sectors of export interest to India** such as Gems and Jewellery, Textiles, leather, footwear, furniture etc.
- On the other hand, **India will be offering preferential access to Australia on over 70% of its tariff lines**, including lines of export interest to Australia which are primarily raw materials and intermediaries such as coal, mineral ores and wines etc.
- Under the agreement, **Indian graduates from STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) will be granted extended post-study work visas.**
- Australia will also set up a programme to grant visas to young Indians looking to pursue working holidays in Australia.

### Significance of the Agreement

- It will provide **zero-duty access to 96% of India's exports** to Australia including shipments from key sectors such as engineering goods, gems and jewellery, textiles, apparel and leather.
- It will **boost bilateral trade in goods and services to USD 45-50 billion over five years**, up from around USD 27 billion, and generate over one million jobs in India, according to a government estimate.
- It will also **give about 85% of Australia's exports zero-duty access to the Indian market**, including coal, sheep meat and wool, and lower duty access on Australian wines, almonds, lentils, and certain fruits.

### What are Free Trade Agreements?

- It is a **pact between two or more nations to reduce barriers** to imports and exports among them.
- Under a free trade policy, goods and services can be bought and sold across international borders with little or no government tariffs, quotas, subsidies, or prohibitions to inhibit their exchange.
- The concept of **free trade is the opposite of trade protectionism or economic isolationism**.
- FTAs can be categorised as Preferential Trade Agreement, **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)**, **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**.

### How has been the India- Australia Trade Relation so far?

- India and Australia **enjoy excellent bilateral relations that have undergone transformational evolution** in recent years, developing along a positive track, into a friendly partnership.
- This is a special partnership characterised by shared values of **pluralistic, parliamentary democracies, Commonwealth traditions, expanding economic engagement, long standing people-to-people ties and increasing high level interaction**.
- The India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership initiated during the **India-Australia Leaders' Virtual Summit** held in June 2020 is the cornerstone of India-Australia multi-faceted bilateral relations.
- Growing India-Australia economic and commercial relations **contribute to the stability and strength of a rapidly diversifying and deepening bilateral relationship** between the two countries.
- India and Australia have been each other's important trading partners.
- **Australia is the 17<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner of India and India is Australia's 9<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner.**
- India-Australia bilateral trade for both merchandise and services is valued at **USD 27.5 billion in 2021**.
- India's merchandise exports to Australia grew 135% between 2019 and 2021. India's exports consist primarily of a broad-based basket largely of finished products and were **USD 6.9 billion in 2021**.
- India's merchandise imports from Australia were **USD 15.1 billion in 2021**, consisting largely of raw materials, minerals and intermediate goods.
- India and Australia are partners in the trilateral **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)** arrangement along with Japan which seeks to enhance the resilience of supply chains in the **Indo-Pacific Region**.
- Further, India and Australia are also members of the **QUAD grouping (India, the US, Australia and Japan)**, also comprising the US, and Japan, to further enhance cooperation and develop partnership across several issues of common concern.

## #RELATED : HISTORIC INDIA-UAE CEPA SIGNED

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a virtual summit with Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed Forces, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan on February 18, 2022.
- The joint statement issued by the two leaders establishes a clear roadmap for a future-oriented partnership between India and UAE. It also identifies focus areas and outcomes.
- The two leaders released a **Joint Commemorative Stamp** to celebrate 75th anniversary of India's independence and the 50th year of UAE's foundation.
- India and UAE also signed a **historic India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**. The CEPA was signed Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and UAE's Economy Minister Abdulla bin Touq Al Marri.
- India and UAE also signed two other MoUs, one to expand cooperation in **climate action** and **another on education**.



### India-UAE CEPA

- India and UAE signed the historic **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**, which is aimed at boosting the bilateral trade between the two countries to USD 100 billion in the next five years.
- India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement is a complete and comprehensive economic partnership agreement finalised in the shortest possible time.
- The CEPA is expected to lead to increase in bilateral trade from the **current USD 60 bn to USD 100 bn in the next 5 years**.
- The agreement will provide significant benefits to Indian and UAE businesses, including enhanced market access and reduced tariffs.
- The India-UAE CEPA is the **first bilateral trade accord concluded by the UAE**. It is also India's first bilateral trade agreement in the MENA region.
- The agreement will transform bilateral economic and investment ties between the two nations and could possibly open up emerging **trade routes between Asia and Africa**.

### Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

- It is a **kind of free trade pact** which covers negotiation on the trade in **services and investment**, and other areas of economic partnership. It may even consider negotiation on areas such as trade facilitation and customs cooperation, competition, and **Intellectual Property Rights**.
- Partnership agreements or cooperation agreements are more comprehensive than **Free Trade Agreements**.
- CEPA also looks into the **regulatory aspect of trade** and encompasses an agreement covering the regulatory issues.
- India has signed CEPAs with South Korea and Japan.



### Other Types of Trade Agreements

- **Free Trade Agreement (FTA):** It is an agreement in which **two or more countries agree to provide preferential trade terms, tariff concession etc.** to the partner country.
- India has negotiated FTA with many countries e.g. Sri Lanka and various trading blocs as well e.g. **ASEAN**.
- **Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA):** In this type of agreement, two or more partners give **preferential right of entry to certain products**. This is done by reducing duties on an agreed number of tariff lines.
- Tariffs may even be reduced to zero for some products even in a PTA. **India signed a PTA with Afghanistan.**
- **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA):** CECA generally **covers negotiation on trade tariff and TRQ (Tariff Rate Quotas) rates only**. It is not as comprehensive as CEPA. India has signed CECA with Malaysia.
- **Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT):** It is a bilateral agreement in which **two countries sit together and decide the conditions for private investments** by citizens and firms of the two countries.

### India-UAE Bilateral Relations

- India and UAE have strengthened their bilateral ties in all areas in recent years. The two nations had initiated negotiations for the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in September 2021 and they got completed now.
- The **United Arab Emirates is already India's third-largest trade partner.**
- The two nations have shared robust bilateral trade, investment and energy relations and is expected to get a further boost.
- The two nations have also witnessed high-level visits on both sides. While PM Narendra Modi had visited the UAE in 2015, 2018, and 2019, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi visited India in 2016 and 2017.
- Several ministerial visits have also taken place between the two sides including **three visits of External Affairs Minister and a visit of Commerce and Industry Minister to UAE in 2021.**
- The two sides had also signed an **Air Bubble Arrangement during the pandemic in 2020** to ensure seamless movement of people between the two countries despite the challenges posed by Covid-19.
- They are also strengthening their cooperation in new areas including startups, renewable energy and fintech. **India had participated in the Dubai Expo 2020 with one of the largest pavilions.**
- **Indian diaspora in UAE**
- **UAE is home to a large Indian community that numbers to almost 3.5 million.** The UAE leadership has been extremely appreciative of the Indian community's contribution in the country's development.

### Gulf Cooperation Council

- GCC was **established by an agreement** concluded in 1981 among **Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE** in view of their special relations, geographic proximity, similar political systems based on Islamic beliefs, joint destiny and common objectives.
- The **structure** of the GCC consists of the Supreme Council (the highest authority), the Ministerial Council and the Secretariat General. The **Secretariat** is located in **Riyadh**, Saudi Arabia.
- It is a **political, economic, social, and regional organisation** according to its charter.



## India's Relations with the GCC

- **Political:** The governments of the GCC members are **India-friendly** and **Indian-friendly**.
- The Prime Minister of India has received the '**Order of Zayed**', the highest civilian order of the UAE and the '**King Hamad Order of the Renaissance**', the third-highest civilian order of Bahrain.
- In the recent past, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have **not adopted hostile posture** to India's domestic developments such as **removing the special status for Jammu & Kashmir under Article 370**.

## #RAMP SCHEME FOR MSME SECTOR

Recently, the Union Cabinet approved the "**Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance**" (RAMP) scheme which would commence in FY 2022-23. It is in line with the **recommendations made by U K Sinha Committee, KV Kamath Committee and Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (PMEAC)**.



- The **Reserve Bank of India** had constituted an '**Expert Committee on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises**' under the Chairmanship of Shri U K Sinha in 2019 to **suggest long-term measures for the economic and financial sustainability** of the MSME sector.
- The scheme was announced by the finance minister in the **Union Budget 2022-23**.

## What is the RAMP Scheme?

- **About:** It is a **World Bank assisted Central Sector Scheme**, supporting various **CoronaVirus Disease 2019 (Covid) Resilience and Recovery Interventions** of the **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME)**.
- **Aimed at:**
  - Improving access to market and credit
  - Strengthening institutions and governance at the Centre and State
  - Improving Centre-State linkages and partnerships
  - Addressing issues of **delayed payments and greening of MSMEs**

## Components:

- Important component of RAMP is **preparation of Strategic Investment Plans (SIPs)**, in which all states/UTs will be invited.
- The SIPs would **include an outreach plan for identification and mobilisation of MSMEs under RAMP**, identify key constraints and gaps, set milestones and project the required budgets for interventions in priority sectors including **renewable energy**, rural & non-farm business, wholesale and retail trade, village and cottage industries, women enterprises etc.
- The overall monitoring and policy overview of RAMP would be done by an **apex National MSME Council**.
- The council will be **headed by the Minister for MSME**, including representation from various Ministries and supported by a secretariat.

### Funding:

- The total outlay for the scheme is **Rs. 6,062.45** crore out of which **Rs. 3750 crore** would be a loan from **the World Bank** and the remaining Rs. 2312.45 crore would be funded by India.
- **Implementation Strategy:**
- Funds would flow through RAMP into the Ministry's budget against **Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs)** to support ongoing MoMSME programmes, focusing on improving market access and competitiveness.
- The disbursement of funds from World Bank towards RAMP would be made on fulfilling the following **Disbursement Linked Indicators**:
  - Implementing the National MSME Reform Agenda
  - Accelerating MSME Sector Centre-State collaboration
  - Enhancing effectiveness of Technology Upgradation Scheme (CLCS-TUS)
  - Strengthening Receivable Financing Market for MSMEs
  - Enhancing Effectiveness of Credit Guarantee Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) and "Greening and Gender" delivery
  - Reducing the incidence of delayed payments

### How will this Scheme be Beneficial?

- **Address Challenges in the MSME Sector:** The RAMP programme will **address the generic and Covid related challenges in the MSME sector** by way of impact enhancement of existing MSME schemes, especially, on the competitiveness front.
- **Address inadequately Addressed Blocks in MSME:** The programme will bolster the inadequately addressed blocks of capacity building, handholding, skill development, quality enrichment, technological upgradation, digitization, outreach and marketing promotion, amongst other things.
- **Generate Employment:** RAMP programme, through enhanced collaboration with States, will be a **job-enabler, market promoter, finance facilitator**, and will support vulnerable sections and greening initiatives.
- **Complement the Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission:** RAMP will **complement the AtmanNirbhar Bharat mission by fostering innovation and enhancement in industry standards**, practices and providing the necessary technological inputs to the MSMEs.

### What is the Significance of MSMEs in the Indian Economy?

- They are the growth accelerators of the Indian economy, contributing about 30% of the country's **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**.

In terms of exports, they are an integral part of the supply chain and **contribute about 48% of the overall exports**.

MSMEs also **play an important role in employment generation**, as they employ about 110 million people across the country.

Interestingly, **MSMEs are intertwined with the rural economy as well**, as more than half of the MSMEs operate in rural India.

### Related Schemes:

- MSME Innovative Scheme
- Prime Minister's Employment Generation programme (PMEGP)
- Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)
- A Scheme for Promoting Innovation, Rural Industry & Entrepreneurship (ASPIRE)
- Interest Subvention Scheme for Incremental Credit to MSMEs
- Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises
- CHAMPIONS portal

## #IMF'S WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

The latest edition of the **International Monetary Fund's (IMF) World Economic Outlook** cut its forecast for India's **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** growth in FY 2022-23 to 8.2%, making it the **fastest-growing major economy in the world, almost twice faster than China's 4.4 %**.

### What is the IMF's Growth Forecast?

- **Indian Scenario:**
- It has also lowered India's growth projection by 0.8 % points for 2022-23 from its previous forecast (9%) for the same period in 2021.
- In 2021, **India registered a growth rate of 8.9 %**.
- In 2023-24, India is estimated to grow at 6.9 %.
- India was "suffering like many other countries because of the **Russia –Ukraine war** and negative terms of trade shock "due to higher food and energy prices weighing down trade balances.
- Additionally, **external demand was also softening as the rest of the world's growth was impacted.**

### Global Scenario:

- The IMF has projected **global growth at 3.6 % in 2022 and 2023**, 0.8 and 0.2 % lower than in the January 2022 forecast, respectively.
- A **deceleration in global growth dampens India's growth prospects** especially because it would lead to lower demand for Indian exports.
- The downgrade largely reflects the war's direct impacts on Russia and Ukraine and global spillovers.
- The recent **lockdowns** in key manufacturing and trading hubs such as Shenzhen and Shanghai (China) due to the resurgence of covid cases would likely compound supply disruptions elsewhere in the region and beyond.

### What is the International Monetary Fund?

- The **IMF was set up along with the World Bank after the Second World War** to assist in the reconstruction of war-ravaged countries.
- The two organizations agreed to be set up at a conference in Bretton Woods in the US. Hence, they are known as the **Bretton Woods twins**.
- Created in 1945, the IMF is governed by and accountable to the 189 countries that make up its near-global membership. **India joined on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1945.**

- The IMF's primary purpose is to **ensure the stability of the international monetary system** — the system of exchange rates and international payments that enables countries (and their citizens) to transact with each other.
- The Fund's mandate was updated in 2012 to include all macroeconomic and financial sector issues that bear on global stability.
- **Reports by IMF:**
- **Global Financial Stability Report.**
- **World Economic Outlook.**
- **World Economic Outlook**
- It is a survey by the IMF that is usually published twice a year in the months of April and October.
- It analyzes and predicts global economic developments during the near and medium term.
- In response to the growing demand for more frequent forecast updates, the WEO Update is published in January and July, between the two main WEO publications released usually in April and October.

## #WORLD BANK FORECASTED INDIA'S GDP GROWTH

- For the fiscal year 2022-23, **India's GDP forecast** has been slashed by the World Bank from 8.7 percent to 8 percent. The reason given for the change in forecast is due to rising inflation and worsening global supply caused due to the Russia-Ukraine war.
- South Asia's growth outlook, **excluding Afghanistan has also been slashed to 6.6 percent.**
- According to the World Bank, India's household consumption will be constrained due to the labour market's incomplete **recovery from inflationary and COVID-19-related pressures.**
- High food and oil prices due to the war in Ukraine will also have a negative impact on the real incomes of the people.



## Asian Development Bank Outlook 2022

- The Asian Development Bank Outlook 2022 had earlier said that India will be maintaining its position as the fastest-growing major economy. The nation in 2022-23 will have a growth rate of 7.5 percent on the basis of strong investment prospects.
- In January to December 2022, the **growth prospect of China has been stated to be 5 percent.**

## India's Growth in 2023-24 according to the ADB

- **In the next fiscal of 2023-24, India's growth** will be accelerating further to 8 percent while in 2023 China will be witnessing a decline in growth to 4.8 percent.

## World Bank's forecast for other regions

- **Pakistan:** Pakistan's growth forecast for the current year which will be ending in June has been raised from 3.4 percent to 4.3 percent. Next year's growth outlook has been kept unchanged at 4 percent.
- **Maldives:** The growth forecast of Maldives for this year has been slashed from 11 percent to 7.6 percent.
- **Sri Lanka:** The growth forecast for Sri Lanka has been raised from 2.1 percent to 2.4 percent but has also issued a warning for the crisis-hit country that the outlook was uncertain due to fiscal imbalances.

## RELATED: INDIA TO BECOME 2<sup>ND</sup> LARGEST ECONOMY BY 2030

According to the Information Handling Services (IHS) Markit report, **India is likely to overtake Japan as Asia's second-largest economy by 2030.**

- Currently, **India is the sixth-largest economy**, behind the U.S., China, Japan, Germany and the U.K.
- IHS Markit is a **global leader in information, analytics and solutions** for the major industries and markets that drive economies worldwide.
- **Note:** The size of a nation's overall economy is typically **measured by its Gross Domestic Product, or GDP**, which is the value of all final goods and services produced within a country in a given year.

### GDP Projection:

- In terms of value, the **size of the Indian economy stood at USD 2.7 trillion** in 2021, which is projected to grow to USD 8.4 trillion by 2030.
- This boom is enough to overtake Japan, making India the second largest economy in the **Asia-Pacific region** by 2030.
- **India's growth rate is projected to be 8.2% in 2021-22**, compared to a decline of 7.3% in the previous fiscal.
- However, the momentum of the current **financial year (FY)** will continue in 2022-23 as well and India will achieve 6.7% growth.

### Government Initiatives for Boosting Economy

- **'Make in India' and the National Policy on Electronics 2019 (NPE 2019)**
- **Production-linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) in Various Sectors**
- **Major Telecom Sector Reforms:**
- Major telecom sector reforms have been approved in September 2021, which are expected to **boost employment, growth, competition, and consumer interests.**
- The rationalisation of adjusted gross revenue, the **rationalisation of bank guarantees (BGs), and the encouragement of spectrum sharing** are among the key reforms.
- **Deep Ocean Mission:** The Indian government approved the **Deep Ocean Mission (DOM)** in August 2021, with a budget outlay of Rs. 4,077 crore (USD 553.82 million) over the next five years.
- **Focus on Renewable Sources:**
- In order to generate energy, **India is focusing on renewable sources.** It plans to achieve 40% of its energy from non-fossil sources by 2030, up from 30% currently, and to increase its renewable energy capacity from to **175 gigatonnes (GW) by 2022.**
- In line with this, India and the United Kingdom jointly launched a **'Roadmap 2030'** in May 2021 to collaborate and combat climate change by 2030.



## LEGAL AFFAIRS

### #MULLAPERIYAR DAM VERDICT: SC

- The Supreme Court in its interim order on April 8, 2022 directed the **reconstituted supervisory committee of Kerala's Mullaperiyar Dam** to carry out all the statutory functions until a regular authority is established. The court ruled that the Supervisory Committee shall be accountable in all matters relating to the safety of the dam till the National Dam Safety Authority is fully functional.
- The **ruling was delivered by a three-judge SC bench headed by Justice AM Khanwilkar.**
- The bench also comprised Justices AS Oka and CT Ravikumar. The bench was hearing pleas raising issues about the **safety of the 126-years old Mullaperiyar Dam**, which was built in 1895 on the Periyar river in the Idukki district of Kerala.



### Supervisory Committee on Mullaperiyar Dam

- The reconstituted supervisory committee will include three experts, one from Kerala, one from Tamil Nadu and the third from the Centre. The apex court had earlier asked both Kerala and Tamil Nadu governments to not go into the history of the dam but focus on its future.

### Mullaperiyar Dam History

- The **126-years old Mullaperiyar Dam** is located on the **Periyar River in Kerala's Idukki district.**
- **It is, however, managed by the Tamil Nadu government.**
- The century-old dam was built by the British in 1895 to meet the water requirements of Tamil Nadu and Madurai.

### What is the Mullaperiyar Dam Dispute?

- The **Mullaperiyar dam** has been a point of dispute between the state of Kerala and Tamil Nadu for a long time.
- A 999-year lease agreement was signed between the Maharaja of Travancore and the British Secretary of

State for India in October 1886.

- In 1956, the government of the newly formed Kerala state demanded to renew the agreement. In 1959, Tamil Nadu government began generating power from the dam with Kerala's consent. **A hydro-power project was commissioned in 1965 with four units with 35 megawatts each.**
- In the 1960s, concerns were raised over the safety of the dam and a joint inspection was conducted by Kerala and Tamil Nadu governments in 1964. The dam is located on the upper reaches of the river Periyar, which originates from Tamil Nadu and flows into Kerala.

Tamil Nadu's Stand	Kerala's Stand
The Tamil Nadu government has steadily maintained that the Mullaperiyar is hydrologically, structurally, and seismically safe.	Kerala government has repeatedly raised concerns over the safety of the dam, calling it a threat to millions of people living in downstream of the Periyar River in Kerala.
The state government had proposed to raise the height of the dam, which was opposed by the Kerala Government. The centre had appointed an expert committee in 2000 to review the dam's safety and suggest ideal storage levels.	The state government had amended the Kerala Irrigation and <b>Water Conservation Act, 2003 in March 2006 to bring Mullaperiyar</b> into the schedule of "Endangered Dams" and restrict its storage capacity to 136 ft citing safety concerns. The state government also constituted a Dam Safety Authority.
The <b>Supreme Court of India allowed the Tamil Nadu government</b> to increase the water level in the dam to 142 feet in 2006. The court later stated that the water level could be increased to 152 feet following strengthening work that was recommended by the expert committee.	<b>As per the Kerala state government</b> , if the Mulleperiyar dam collapses at any point, it will wash away almost a 25 km stretch between Mullaperiyar and Idukki dams, <b>destroying human settlements of millions of people.</b>

### 2014 SC Judgment on Mullaperiyar Dam Dispute

- The Supreme Court of India in 2014 quashed the law passed by the Kerala assembly on the Mullaperiyar dam and ruled that the Tamil Nadu government can maintain water level in the dam at 142 feet and at 152 ft after completion of strengthening work. The court also appointed a three-member committee to supervise its safety aspects.
- This **verdict came following a suit filed by Tamil Nadu against the 2006** law enacted by Kerala to restrict the water level in the Mullaperiyar dam at 136 feet. The Tamil Nadu government had demanded to increase the water level of the dam to meet its agricultural needs.
- The Supreme Court had appointed an **empowered committee led by former Chief Justice of India AS Anand in 2010 to study the safety aspects of the dam.**
- The committee had suggested that the dam was safe structurally and hydrologically and had proposed allowing **Tamil Nadu to raise the water level of the dam from 136 feet to 142 feet after carrying out certain repairs.**

## Background

- **Kerala Government** had in an affidavit written the **Tamil Nadu government** to maintain the water levels in the dam at 137 feet in October 2021 when there were heavy rains in the state.

## #INDIAN ANTARCTIC BILL INTRODUCED IN LOK SABHA

- **Union Minister Jitendra Singh on April 1, 2022, introduced** 'The Indian Antarctic Bill' in Lok Sabha in order to provide a regulatory framework for India's research activities in the Antarctic.
- A **draft resolution was also approved by the Union Cabinet** to provide a regulatory framework for the research activities of India in Antarctica and also for protecting the continent's environment.



## Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022

- The **Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022, introduced in Lok Sabha** is pursuant to India's accession to Antarctic Treaty, 1959 as well as the Protocol on Environment Protection (Madrid Protocol) to the Antarctic Treaty.
- Indian Antarctic Bill will also be useful in building credibility and enhancing the status of the country globally.

## Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022: Objective

- The Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022 introduced in Lok Sabha aims at providing national measures to protect the Antarctic environment, and the dependent and associated ecosystems.
- **The Indian Antarctic Bill** also aims to give effect to the Antarctic treaty, 1959, the protocol on the **Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, 1998**, and the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, 1982
- The latest bill also aims at promoting Antarctica as a natural reserve that is devoted to science and peace and to ensure that the Antarctic does not become the scene of international discord.

## India's Antarctic Program: 5 facts about India's expedition to Antarctic

- **The Indian Antarctic Programme** is a multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary programme. It is under the control of the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India.
- The Indian Antarctic Programme was initiated in 1981 with the first Indian expedition to Antarctica.
- It further gained global acceptance with India's signing of the Antarctic Treaty as well as the construction of the Dakshin Gangotri Antarctic research base in 1983 which was superseded by the Maitri base from 1989. In 2012, the newest Bharati base was commissioned which was constructed out of 134 shipping containers.
- **Under India's Antarctic Programme**, biological, earth, atmospheric, medical sciences, and chemical are studied in India. The country has carried out **30 scientific expeditions to the Antarctic as of October 14, 2010.**



## #DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2022

- The Lok Sabha has passed the **Delhi Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill** so that three municipal corporations of Delhi (MCD) can be merged into a single entity.



### Overview:

- This bill has been passed by a voice vote and **various amendments that were moved by the Opposition members have been rejected.**
- The Union Cabinet had approved this bill's presentation. A **"Special officer"** will be appointed to discharge the elected wing of councilors' functions till the new corporation's first meeting is held.
- This amendment bill will be omitting the section **related to local bodies, and directors that govern the MCDs functioning.**

### Aim of this bill

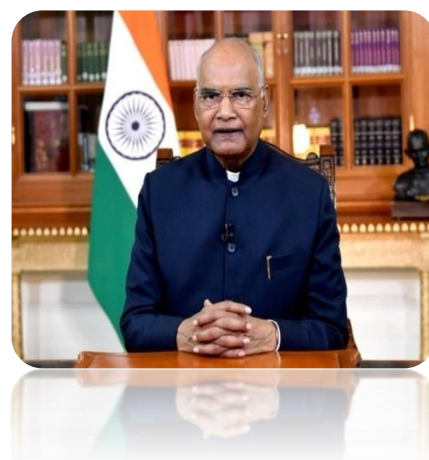
- The three municipal corporations will be merged into a single, well-equipped, and integrated entity so that a robust mechanism can be implemented for ensuring optimal **utilization of resources and strategic planning.**

### About Municipal Corporation of Delhi

- The **MCD was Delhi's former municipal corporation** and used to govern 8 of the 9 districts which have now increased to 11 districts of Delhi.
- In 2012, this corporation was later replaced by three new bodies, **the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC), the North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC), and the East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC).**

## #16<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION TO BE HELD

The tenure of the current President of India is set to end in July 2022, **which is also when the 16<sup>th</sup> Indian Presidential election will be held to elect his successor.**



### How is the President elected?

- The Indian President is elected through **an electoral college system**, wherein the votes are cast by **national and State-level lawmakers.**
- The elections are conducted and overseen by the **Election Commission (EC) of India.**
- The Electoral College is made up of all the elected members of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament (Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha MPs), and the elected Members of the Legislative Assemblies of States and Union Territories (MLAs).
- Related Constitutional Provisions:**
  - Article 54:** Election of President
  - Article 55:** Manner of election of President.

- **Article 56** :Term of office of President
- **Article 57**: Eligibility for re-election.
- **Article 58**: Qualifications for election as President

### Procedure:

- Before the voting, **comes the nomination stage**, where the candidate intending to stand in the election, files the nomination along with a signed list of 50 proposers and 50 seconders.
- These proposers and seconders can be **anyone from the total members of the electoral college from the State and national level.**
- The rule for securing 50 proposers and seconders was implemented when the EC noticed, in 1974, that several candidates, many without even a bleak chance of winning, would file their nominations to contest the polls.
- An elector **cannot propose or second the nomination of more than one candidate.**

### What is the value of each vote and how is it calculated?

- A vote cast by each MP or MLA is not calculated as one vote.
- The **fixed value of each vote by an MP of the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha is 708.**
- Meanwhile, the vote value of each MLA differs from State to State based on a calculation that factors in its population vis-a-vis the number of members in its legislative Assembly.
- As per the Constitution (Eighty-fourth Amendment) Act 2001, currently, the population of States is taken from the figures of the 1971 Census. This will change when the figures of the Census taken after the year 2026 are published.
- The **value of each MLA's vote is determined by dividing the population of the State by the number of MLAs** in its legislative Assembly, and the **quotient achieved is further divided by 1000.**
- Uttar Pradesh for instance, **has the highest vote value for each of its MLAs, at 208. The value of one MLA's vote in Maharashtra is 175**, while that in Arunachal Pradesh is just 8.

### What is required to secure a victory?

- A nominated candidate **does not secure victory based on a simple majority** but through a system of bagging a specific quota of votes. While counting, the EC totals up all the valid votes cast by the electoral college through paper ballots **and to win, the candidate must secure 50% of the total votes cast + 1.**
- Unlike general elections, where electors vote for a single party's candidate, **the voters of the electoral college write the names of candidates on the ballot paper in the order of preference.**
- The President's election **is held in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote** and the voting is **by secret ballot.**

### Can the President be impeached?

- According to **Article 61**, the President can be removed from his office before the expiry of his term only **on the grounds of violation of the constitution.**
- However, the Constitution does not define the meaning of the phrase 'violation of the constitution'.
- The impeachment process **can be started from any house of the parliament by levelling charges against him.**



- The notice bearing the charges against the president must be signed by at least a quarter of the members of the house.
- The resolution to impeach the president **must be passed by a special majority (two-thirds) in the originating house.**
- Next, it is sent to the other house for consideration. The other house acts as the investigating horse. **A select committee is formed** to investigate the charges labelled against the president.
- During the process, the President of India has the right to defend himself through authorised counsel. He can choose to defend himself or appoint any person/lawyer or **attorney general of India** to do so.

## #SC STRIKES DOWN VANNIYAKULA RESERVATION

Recently, the Supreme Court struck down the 10.5% internal reservation to Vanniyakula Kshatriya community in Tamil Nadu.

### What did the Supreme Court Held?



- The Supreme Court held that 10.5% internal reservation to Vanniyakula Kshatriya community **violates the fundamental rights of equality, non-discrimination and equal opportunity** of 115 other **Most Backward Communities (MBCs) and De-Notified Communities (DNCs) in Tamil Nadu.**
- The allotment of 10.5% reservation to a single community from within the **total Most Backward Classes (MBC) quota of 20% in the State**, leaving only 9.5% to 115 other communities in the MBC category, was **without "substantial basis".**
- Further, the court said there was **no assessment or analysis done prior to the 2021 Act** to back the claim that the Vanniyakula Kshatriyas were relatively more backward than the other MBCs and DNCs.
- The court underscored that while **caste can be the starting point for internal reservation, it is incumbent on the State government to justify the reasonableness of the decision.**
- Though the court held the 2021 Act and its **percentages of reservation unconstitutional**, it upheld the **legislative competence of the State** to enact a law sub-classifying and apportioning percentages within identified backward classes.

### What is Vanniyakula Kshatriya Reservation?

- Reservation in Tamil Nadu **comprises 69% under a 1994 Act** protected under the **Ninth Schedule of the Constitution.**
- Out of the 69%, backward classes, including Christians and Muslims, get 30%, MBCs get 20%, Scheduled Castes 18%, and Scheduled Tribes 1%
- The Vanniyakula Kshatriya reservation was provided under the State within the reservation for the **Most Backward Classes and Denotified Communities Act, 2021.**
- Vanniyakula Kshatriya (including Vanniar, Vanniya, VanniaGounder, Gounder or Kander, Padayachi, Palli and Agnikula Kshatriya) community.

- The **second Tamil Nadu Backward Commission in 1983**, held that the population of Vanniyakula Kshatriyas was found to be 13.01% of the State's total population.
- Therefore, provision of **10.5% reservation to a community with a population of 13.01% could not be called disproportionate.**

### What is the Ninth Schedule of the Indian Constitution?

- The Ninth Schedule was added by the **first amendment to the Indian Constitution.**
- It was introduced on **10<sup>th</sup> May 1951 by the Jawaharlal Nehru Government** to protect land reform laws from being challenged in the courts on the grounds of violation of fundamental rights.
- It was created by the **new Article 31B.**
- Article 31B also has a retrospective operation which means that if laws are inserted in the **Ninth Schedule** after they are **declared unconstitutional**, they are considered to have been in the Schedule since their commencement, and thus valid.
- While most of the laws protected under the **Schedule concern agriculture/land issues, the list includes other subjects.**
- Although **Article 31B excludes judicial review**, the apex court has said in the past that even laws under the Ninth Schedule would be open to scrutiny if they violated Fundamental Rights or the basic structure of the Constitution.

### #WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION BILL

- The Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill 2022 will be moved by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar for consideration.
- The bill seeks to amend the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their **Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act 2005** and ban financing weapons of mass destruction.
- The Bill proposes to amend 2005 act in accordance with the recommendations of **the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the UNSC's targeted financial sanctions.**



### What is Weapons of Mass Destruction Bill 2022?

- The Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill 2022 seeks to empower the central government to freeze and seize funds and other assets to prevent financing of weapons of mass destruction.
- The **Weapons of Mass Destruction Bill 2022** seeks to prohibit financing of any activity in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.
- The bill also aims to prohibit making available funds, financial assets or economic resources for any prohibited activity in connection with weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.
- The bill seeks to modify the **2005 law- Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005.**
- The 2005 Act prohibits unlawful activities including manufacturing, transport, or transfer and delivery of

weapons of mass destruction.

- The bill bars people from financing any prohibited activity related to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. To prevent such financing, the bill empowers the centre to freeze, seize or attach funds, financial assets, or economic resources held, owned or controlled directly or indirectly.
- The bill also prohibits people from making **finances or related services available for the benefit of other persons connected to any prohibited activity.**

#### • **What are Weapons of Mass Destruction?**

- The weapons of mass destruction are biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons.

### Background

- The **Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022** was introduced in Lok Sabha on April 5, 2022.
- It is in accordance with the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force that have mandated against financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems as well as the United Nations Security Council's targeted financial sanctions.
- The need of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Bill 2022 was felt to fulfil India's international obligations.

### #OLGA TELLIS CASE, 1950

Recently, the Constitution Bench judgment of the **Supreme Court in Olga Tellis vs Bombay Municipal Corporation, in 1985 case**, held that pavement dwellers are different from trespassers may become a game-changer in the **Jahangirpuri (Delhi) case**.



#### What was the Questions Discussed before the Supreme Court?

- **About the Issue:** The case started in 1981 when the State of Maharashtra and the Bombay Municipal Corporation decided that pavement and slum dwellers in Bombay city should be evicted **and** “deported to their respective places of origin or places outside the city of Bombay.”
- **Question on Right to Life of Pavement Dwellers:** One of the main questions was whether eviction of a pavement dweller would amount to depriving him/her of their livelihood guaranteed under **Article 21 of the Constitution**.
- Article 21 mandates that “no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law”.
- Approximately, there are **20 million pavement dwellers** in India.
- **Question of Prior Approval for Anti-Encroachment:** The Constitution Bench was also asked to determine if provisions in the **Bombay Municipal Corporation Act, 1888**, allowing the removal of encroachments without prior notice, were arbitrary and unreasonable.

- **Question on Trespassing:** The Supreme Court also decided to examine the question of whether it was **constitutionally impermissible** to characterize pavement dwellers as trespassers.

### What was the Supreme Court's Judgement in Olga Tellis vs Bombay Municipal Corporation, 1985 Case?

- The **Olga Tellis vs Bombay Municipal Corporation** judgment in 1985 ruled that eviction of pavement dwellers using unreasonable force, without giving them a chance to explain is unconstitutional.
- It is a **violation of their right to livelihood**.
- The court had emphatically objected to authorities treating pavement dwellers as mere trespassers.
- "They (pavement dwellers) manage to find a habitat in places which are mostly filthy or marshy, out of sheer helplessness.
- What was the State Government's Defense?
- **Question of Estoppel:** The State government and the corporation countered that pavement dwellers should be estopped.
- **Estoppel** is a judicial device whereby a court may prevent or "estop" a person from making assertions.
- Estoppel may prevent someone from bringing a particular claim contending that the shacks constructed by them on the pavements cannot be demolished because of their right to livelihood.
- **Public's Right of Way:** They cannot claim any **fundamental right** to encroach and put-up huts on pavements or public roads over which the **public has a 'right of way.'**

### What did the Supreme Court rule presently?

- **On Estoppel:** The court rejected the government's argument of Estoppel, saying "**there can be no Estoppel against the Constitution.**"
- The court held that the right to life of pavement dwellers was at stake here.
- **On Right to Livelihood:** The **right to livelihood was an "integral component" of the right to life.**
- If the right to livelihood is not treated as a part of the constitutional right to live, the easiest way of depriving a person of his right to life would be to deprive him of his means of livelihood to the point of abrogation.
- **On Prior Notice:** On the second question whether provisions in law allowing statutory authorities to remove encroachments **without prior notice was arbitrary.**
- Such powers are designed **to operate as an "exception" and not the "general rule."**
- The procedure of eviction should lean **in Favour of procedural safeguards which follow the natural principles of justice** like giving the other side an opportunity to be heard.
- The right to be heard gives affected persons an opportunity to participate in the **decision-making process** and also provides them with a **chance to express them with dignity.**
- **On Trespassing:** Finally, the court emphatically **objected to authorities treating pavement dwellers as mere trespassers.**
- The apex court ruled that pavement dwellers live on "**filthy footpaths out of sheer helplessness**" and not with the object of **offending, insulting, intimidating or annoying anyone.**
- They live and earn on footpaths because they have "small jobs to nurse in the city and there is nowhere else to live."

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### #CHINA'S EARTH OBSERVATION SATELLITE: GAOFEN-03

- **China has launched a new Earth observation satellite on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022.** This satellite will become a part of the country's land-sea radar satellite constellation. It will capture images to help China safeguard its maritime interests.
- The **satellite has been named Gaofen-3 03.**
- It was from the **Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre** with the use of a Long March-4C rocket.
- The satellite has been successfully inserted into the planned orbit.
- This newly launched satellite will be networked with the already orbiting Gaofen-3 and Gaofen-3 02 satellites.
- These 3 satellites will form a land-sea radar satellite constellation and will be **capturing stable, reliable, synthetic aperture radar (SAR) images.**



### About SAR Images

- A lot of SAR images are captured by **Earth Observation (EO) satellites** every day. SAR images have the capabilities to process images during all-weather operations.
- The images produced have a high spatial resolution. These images boast a 1-meter resolution thus, improving China's monitoring capabilities.

### Use of the Satellite

- The images that will be captured by the satellite will help in the mitigation and prevention of marine disasters, help in the monitoring of the dynamic marine environment, environmental protection, marine research, agriculture, water conservancy, and meteorology. **It will also help in safeguarding the maritime rights and interests of the country.**

### China's Shenzhou-12 Manned Mission

- The **Shenzhou-12 craft** connected with the **Tianhe space station module** about six hours after takeoff from the **Jiuquan launch center in Gobi Desert.**
- The **three-man crew** will spend **three months on the Tianhe module**, which is orbiting at some **340km to 380km** above the earth.
- China is the **third country after** the former **Soviet Union** and the **United States** to carry out a **manned mission** on its own.
- This is the **first of two manned space missions** planned for this year, part of an intense schedule of launches aimed at completing the **Chinese space station in 2022.**
- At least **five more missions** are planned for the year, with the **Shenzhou-13** manned mission, also carrying three astronauts, set for later this year.



- The three astronauts are the first to take up residency in the main living module and **will carry out** experiments, test equipment, conduct maintenance and prepare the station for receiving two laboratory modules next year.
- It was **China's seventh crewed mission to space** but marked a **number of firsts for the country** – the first manned one during the construction of China's space station, the first in nearly five years after the country's **last manned mission in 2016** and China's **longest crewed space mission** to date.

### China's Permanent Space Station

- Recently, China **launched an unmanned module of its permanent space station that it plans to complete by the end of 2022.**
- The module, named "**Tianhe**", or "**Harmony of the Heavens**", was launched on the **Long March 5B**, China's largest carrier rocket.
- **India** has also set its eye on building its own space station in low earth orbit to conduct microgravity experiments in space in 5 to 7 years.

### China's Space Station:

- The **new, 66-tonne, multi-module Tiangong station** is set to be **operational for at least 10 years.**
- **Tianhe is one of three main components of what would be China's first self-developed space station,** rivalling the only other station in service – the ISS.
- **It forms the main living quarters for three crew members** in the Chinese space station.
- The Tianhe launch is the **first of 11 missions** needed to complete the space station, which will **orbit Earth at an altitude of 340 to 450 km.** In the later missions, China will launch the two other core modules, four manned spacecraft **and** four cargo spacecraft.

### #INDIA SUCCESSFULLY FLIGHT TESTED 'SFDR MISSILE SYSTEM'

Recently, India successfully flight tested **Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR) Booster**, a missile system, at the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur off the Odisha coast.

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) began developing SFDR first in 2017 and had conducted successful tests in 2018 and 2019 as well.



### What is SFDR?

- It is a missile propulsion technology jointly developed by **India and Russia.**
- SFDR technology is a missile propulsion system based on the concept of **Ramjet Engine** principle.
- A ramjet is **a form of air-breathing jet engine that uses the vehicle's forward motion to compress incoming air** for combustion without a rotating compressor.
- In a ramjet, the **high pressure is produced by "ramming" external air into the combustor** using the forward speed of the vehicle. The external air that is brought into the propulsion system becomes the working fluid.

- The SFDR has been developed by **Defence Research and Development Laboratory, Hyderabad** in collaboration with other **DRDO laboratories** such as Research Centre Imarat, Hyderabad and **High Energy Materials Research Laboratory, Pune**

### What is the Defence Research and Development Organisation?

- DRDO works under the administrative control of the Ministry of Defence, Government of India.
- It is **working to establish a world class science and technology base for India** and provides Defence Services decisive edge by equipping them with internationally competitive systems and solutions.
- It was **established in 1958** after combining the Technical Development Establishment (TDEs) of the Indian Army and the Directorate of Technical Development & Production (DTDP) with the Defence Science Organisation (DSO).
- It is responsible for carrying out the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP).

### Some of the recent tests conducted by DRDO:

- **Helina and Dhruvastra: Anti-tank Guided Missile**
- **Smart Anti Airfield Weapon**
- **Army Variant of MRSAM**
- **Land-attack Version of BrahMos Missile**
- **Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile System**
- **Enhanced Version of Pinaka Mk-1 Missile**
- **NAG Missile: Anti Tank Guided Missile**

### #ENHANCED PINAKA MK-1 ROCKET SYSTEM

The **Enhanced Pinaka Mk-I Rocket System (EPRS)** was successfully test fired in the Pokhran range in Rajasthan.

- As part of the same set of trials, the **Area Denial Munition (ADM)** was also successfully tested.
- The tests also validated the performance of different variants of munitions and fuzes that can be used in the Pinaka rocket system.
- ADMs are a category of ammunition used to prohibit the adversary from occupying or passing through a particular area



### What is EPRS?

- The EPRS is the upgraded version of the **Pinaka variant** that has been in service with the Indian Army for the last decade.
- The design and development has been carried out by Pune-based DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) laboratories - Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) and **High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL)**.
- The upgrades include advanced technologies enhancing the range to meet the emerging requirements of the battlefield.
- The new incarnation of pinaka represents one of the few examples of an evolutionary process being followed with an indigenous Indian weapon system.

## What is Pinaka?

- The Pinaka rocket system is a **multi-barrel rocket system, which is** named after Lord Shiva's bow.
- It is developed by Pune-based Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) and High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL).
- The development of the Pinaka was started by the DRDO in the late 1980s as an alternative to the Multi Barrel Rocket Launcher systems of Russian make called the 'Grad', which are still in use by some regiments.
- After successful tests of Pinaka Mark-1 in late 1990, it was first used in the battlefield during the Kargil war of 1999, quite successfully. Subsequently, multiple regiments of the system came up in the 2000s.

## Multiple Variants:

- DRDO has also developed and **successfully tested the Mk-II and guided variants of the Pinaka, which has a range of around 60 km**, while the Guided Pinaka system has a range of 75 km and has integrated navigation, control and guidance system to improve the end accuracy and enhance the range.
- The navigation system of the Guided Pinaka missile is also aided by the **Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS)**.

## RELATED: ANTI-TANK GUIDED MISSILE: HELINA

- India has successfully flight-tested **Helina, an Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM)**, in Pokhran.
- According to the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**, it is **one of the most advanced Anti-Tank Weapons in the world**.
- The test was **part of user validation trials of the third generation 'fire and forget' class missiles** developed by the DRDO.

## What is Helina?

- **About:** Helina has been **developed by the Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad** under the **Missiles and Strategic Systems (MSS)** cluster of the DRDO.
- Successful user trials of the missile have been conducted **since 2018**.
- **Features:** It has a **maximum range of seven kilometers** and has been **designed and developed for integration on the weaponized version of the ALH (Advanced Light Helicopter)**.
- The **Air Force version** of Helina is sometimes referred to as **Dhruvastra**.
- Helina can **engage targets both in direct hit mode as well as top attack mode**.

## Other Anti-tank Missiles:

- The DRDO has designed and developed a range of anti-tank missile technologies that include:
- The Nag: It is a **third-generation fire-and-forget missile** developed for mechanized formations to engage heavily fortified enemy tanks.
- **MPATGM:** It stands for **Man-Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile** which has a range of 2.5 kilometers, with fire-and-forget and top attack capabilities for infantry use.
- **SANT:** It is a Smart Stand-off Anti-Tank Missile being developed for launch from the Mi-35 Helicopter for the Air Force's anti-tank operations.

- ATGM for MBT Arjun: ATGM for MBT Arjun is a **laser-guided, precision-guided munition** that is launched from the 120mm rifled gun of the Arjun tank to engage and defeat Explosive Reactive Armour-protected armoured targets.

## #RUSSIA'S NUCLEAR CAPABLE BALLISTIC MISSILE

- Russia successfully tested Sarmat, a nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile that can reportedly strike any target in the world on April 20, 2022.
- Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated the army on the successful launch of the missile and warned that the weapon, which is capable of **carrying nuclear charges, will make Russia's enemies "think twice."**
- The missile delivered training warheads to the Kura test range of the Kamchatka peninsula, nearly 6,000 km (3,700 miles) away in Russia's Far East. The missile test comes as Russia has increased its military aggression in Ukraine.



## Sarmat Missile: World's Most Powerful Missile?

- **Russia's Defence Ministry called Sarmat as** the most powerful missile with the longest range of destruction of targets in the world, which will significantly increase the combat power of Russia's strategic nuclear forces.
- The intercontinental ballistic missile has been designed to elude **anti-missile defence systems with a short initial boost phase. It will give enemy surveillance systems only a small window to track it.**
- The missile is also super heavy, weighing more than 200 tonnes and it is capable of transporting multiple warheads.
- According to Russian President Vladimir Putin, the missile can hit any target on Earth. He also dubbed the missile as invincible, while the western analysts have called the missile as '**Satan**'.

## Will Russia use the missile in its military assault against Ukraine?

- The Sarmat Intercontinental Ballistic missile is among Russia's next-generation missiles, **which also include Kinzhal and Avangard hypersonic missiles.**
- Russia had used the Kinzhal missile for the **first time to strike a target in Ukraine last month.**
- The delivery of the missile is expected to start in autumn of this year after the completion of testing. The testing does not come as a surprise for the West, as the missile had been under development for years.
- This **will though raise fears of a nuclear attack on Ukraine**, as Russia is yet to capture any major cities since it launched its military invasion on February 24, 2022.

## Background

- **Russian President Vladimir Putin recently ordered Russia's nuclear forces** to be put on high alert. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also said last month, "The prospect of nuclear conflict, once unthinkable, is now back within the realm of possibility."
- The United States had recently cancelled its planned test-launch of its Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) over fears of escalating tensions with Russia amid the ongoing military conflict in Ukraine.

## #WHAT IS JUPITER'S MOON EUROPA

A team of researchers from Stanford University found the possibility of water on one of Jupiter's moons Europa, a prime candidate for life in the solar system.

- Earlier, NASA's Dawn spacecraft, dwarf planet Ceres reportedly found **salty water underground**.
- Earlier, Scientists also found signatures of water vapor in the atmosphere of K2-18b.



### What is Europa?

- Europa is **slightly smaller than Earth's moon** and its diameter is about one-quarter that of the Earth.
- Even though Europa has a **very thin oxygen atmosphere**, it is considered **one of the most promising places in the solar system** to find present-day environments that are suitable for life beyond the Earth.
- It is also believed that underneath **Europa's icy surface the amount of water is twice that on Earth**.
- Scientists believe Europa's ice shell is 15-25 km thick and is floating on an ocean, **which is estimated to be between 60-150 km deep**.
- Interestingly, while its diameter is less than the Earth's, **Europa probably contains twice the amount of the water in all of the Earth's oceans**.
- **NASA is expected to launch its Europa Clipper in 2024.**
- The module will **orbit Jupiter and conduct multiple close flybys to Europa to gather data on the moon's atmosphere**, surface and its interior.

### What are the Findings?

- Europa's surface is mostly solid water ice and **contains water beneath it**.
- The double ridges – the **formations which are most common on Europa's surface and are like those seen on Earth's Greenland ice sheet**.
- Double Ridges of the moon **are formed over shallow pockets of water**.

### What is Jupiter?

- Fifth in line from the Sun, Jupiter is, by far, the **largest planet in the solar system** – more than twice as massive as all the other planets combined.
- Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune are called **Jovian or Gas Giant Planets**. These have thick atmosphere, **mostly of helium and hydrogen**.
- Jupiter's iconic **Great Red Spot** is a giant storm bigger than Earth that has raged for hundreds of years.
- Jupiter **rotates once about every 10 hours** (a Jovian day), but takes about **12 Earth years** to complete **one orbit of the Sun** (a Jovian year).
- Jupiter has **more than 75 moons**.
- The planet Jupiter's **four largest moons are called the Galilean satellites** after Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei, who first observed them in 1610.
- These large moons, named **Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto**, are each distinctive world.
- In 1979, the **Voyager mission** discovered Jupiter's faint **ring system**.



- **Nine spacecraft** have visited Jupiter. Seven flew by and two have orbited the gas giant. **Juno**, the most recent, arrived at Jupiter in 2016.

## #WHAT IS GAGAN-SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY?

- India has achieved a major landmark after the **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** successfully conducted a trial by applying the latest indigenous satellite-based augmentation system (SBAS) technology named GAGAN (GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation).
- IndiGo became the first airline in Asia that used the indigenously developed satellite-based navigation system while **landing at the Kishangarh airport, Rajasthan**.
- India is the first country in the Asia Pacific region that has achieved this.



## Development of GAGAN

- GAGAN has been jointly developed by the **Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)** and the **Airports Authority of India (AAI)**.
- By using uplink and reference stations, this system provides corrections to the global positioning system (GPS) signal so as to improve the management of air traffic.

## About GAGAN

- It is a **Satellite-Based Augmentation System** that provides Satellite-based Navigation services with integrity and accuracy that is required for civil aviation applications.
- Through the usage of this system better Air Traffic Management can be provided over the Indian Airspace. This system is interoperable with the other international SBAS systems that are being used across the world and will be able to provide seamless navigation across the regional boundaries.
- The **GAGAN Signal-In-Space (SIS)** is available via the **GSAT-10 and GSAT-8**. Aircraft have to rely on radio navigation aids for the purpose of precision landing. However, the smaller airports have a shortage of modern navigation aids.
- Hence, the visibility requirements in such airports are much higher. Such as the visibility requirement for all regular passenger flights at Kishangarh airport is 5,000 metres, but using the GAGAN technology, an aircraft

can operate with a visibility of about 800 m.

- **Extremely accurate information** is provided by GAGAN regarding an aircraft's location, covering various parameters like longitude, latitude, and height.

## #RELATED: GSAT-7B SATELLITE DEDICATED TO INDIAN ARMY

Recently, the **Ministry of Defense** has given the Acceptance of Necessity for the GSAT-7B satellite. This satellite will be a **dedicated satellite for the Indian Army**.

- The satellite would help the **Indian Army enhance its surveillance in border areas**.
- Currently, India has only two dedicated military satellites — the **GSAT-7 (Rukmini)** and **GSAT-7A (Angry Bird)** — used by the **Indian Navy and Air Force respectively**.

## What will be the role of the GSAT 7B satellite?

- Till date, the Indian Army has been dependent on **GSAT-7A and other satellites**, but with this new state-of-the-art technology, the Army will have **new eyes in the sky**.
- The military-grade satellite will be a **force multiplier in providing fail-safe communication support**.
- The GSAT 7B will primarily fulfil the **communication needs of the Army**.
- While many features of this satellite are still a **closely guarded secret**, it is expected that the **state of the art, multi-band, military-grade satellite** shall be a shot in the arm for the communication and **surveillance needs of the Army**.
- Such a satellite would be of utmost importance for the Indian Army as it currently faces a double threat of China and Pakistan lurking at its borders.
- The use of such a satellite would also mean that the **Army's vast array of radio communication equipment** could come under a single platform.

## What is the role of GSAT 7 Satellite?

- GSAT 7 series satellites are advanced satellites developed by the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** to meet the communication needs of the defence services.
- The **GSAT 7 (Rukmini)** provides a gamut of services for military communication needs, which includes low bit voice rate to high bit rate data facilities, including multi-band communications.
- It is **India's first military satellite**.
- The GSAT 7 satellite was launched in August 2013 from an Ariane 5 ECA rocket from Kourou in French Guiana.
- It is a **2,650 kg satellite** which has a footprint of nearly 2,000 nautical miles in the Indian Ocean region.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### #WORLD HEALTH DAY: 7<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

Every year 7<sup>th</sup> April marks the celebration of **World Health Day**.

- **World Mental Health Day** is observed on **10<sup>th</sup> October** every year

#### What are the Key Highlights about World Health Day?

- Its idea was conceived at the **First Health Assembly in 1948** and it came into effect in **1950**.
- It is being celebrated today to mark the foundation of the **World Health Organization (WHO)** on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1948.
- Over the years, it has **brought to light important health issues** such as **mental health**, maternal and child care and **climate change**.
- **Theme for 2022:** Our Planet, Our Health



#### What are Related Initiatives for the Health Sector?

- **National Medical Commission (NMC) Act, 2019**
- **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana**
- **Pradhan Mantri - Jan Arogya Yojana.**
- **India's Health Index**
- **SAMRIDH Initiative**

#### World Health Organization (WHO)

- World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations' specialized agency for Health was founded in 1948.
- Its **headquarters** are situated in **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- There are 194 Member States, 150 country offices, six regional offices.
- It is an inter-governmental organization and works in collaboration with its member states usually through the Ministries of Health.
- The WHO provides leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends.
- It began functioning on **April 7, 1948** – a date now being celebrated every year as **World Health Day**.
- To act as the **directing and coordinating authority on international health work**.
- **To establish and maintain effective collaboration with the United Nations**, specialized agencies, governmental health administrations, professional groups and such other organizations as may be deemed appropriate.
- To **provide assistance** to the Governments, upon request, **in strengthening health services**.
- To **promote cooperation among scientific and professional groups** which contribute to the advancement of health.

## Related: The Health Budget 2021

- The Budget has committed to an outlay of ₹2,23,846 crore in health and well-being for 2021-22, a **137%** increase over previous year's Budget Estimate of ₹94,452 crores.
- This includes a ₹60,030 crore outlay on drinking water and sanitation, a ₹2,700 crore outlay on nutrition, nearly ₹49,000 crore as Finance Commission grants and ₹35,000 crore toward **vaccination**.
- Water and sanitation sector have received a 179% increase over the previous year's allocation from Rs 21,518 crore to Rs 60,030 crore.
- This is also in line with the **Economic Survey's** recommendation of increasing public health spending to about 2.5-3% of GDP.
- Another important public health-related announcement in Budget 2021 was the government's decision to expand the coverage of the pneumococcal vaccine across the country.
- The launch of **Pradhan Mantri AtmanirbharSwasth Bharat Yojana (PMANSBY)** was also announced under the budget.
- It laid emphasis on the expansion of health and wellness centres along with a ₹13,192 crore **Finance Commission grant** for strengthening the primary health system through local government bodies.
- Recently, the Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare informed the **Rajya Sabha** that **National Health Mission (NHM)** supported health system reforms have resulted in development of resilient health systems.

## About:

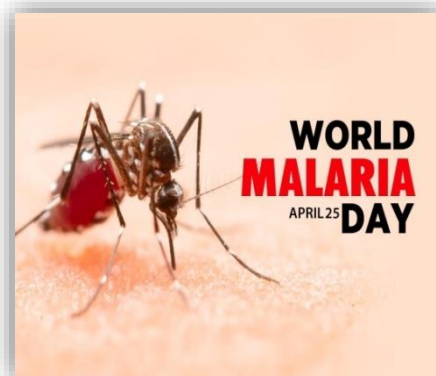
- NHM was launched by the government of India in 2013 subsuming the **National Rural Health Mission** (Launched in 2005) and the **National Urban Health Mission** (Launched in 2013).
- The NHM envisages achievement of **universal access to equitable, affordable & quality health care services** that are accountable and responsive to people's needs.

## Major Initiatives Supported Under NHM:

- **Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK).**
- **Rashtriya Bal SwasthyaKaryakram (RBSK).**
- Implementation of **Free Drugs and Free Diagnostics Service Initiatives.**
- **PM National Dialysis Programme.**
- Implementation of **National Quality Assurance Framework** in all public health facilities.
- **Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) & Tele-consultation services** are also being implemented to improve access to healthcare particularly in rural areas.
- **Ayushman Bharat.**
- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).**

## #WORLD MALARIA DAY OBSERVED ON 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

- Annually on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April World Malaria Day is observed across the world to highlight the need for sustained political commitment and continued investment so as to prevent and control malaria across the world.
- The World Health Organization has continuously highlighted the need for and also called for innovations and investments to bring in new vector control approaches, antimalarial medicines, diagnostics, **and other tools that will help in fighting against malaria.**



### The theme of World Malaria Day 2022

- The theme for this year's world malaria day is **"Harness innovation to reduce the malaria disease burden and save lives."**

### Significance of this day

- The day is significant as despite being a treatable disease, **Malaria continues to impact the livelihoods of people all over the world.**
- According to the WHO, in the year 2020 around 241 million new cases of malaria and 6,27,000 fatalities due to malaria in 85 nations were witnessed. In the African region, more than two-thirds of the reported fatalities were among children who were below the age of 5.
- This data shows that in spite of achieving steady advances against malaria from 2000 to 2015, there has been a slowdown in recent years, especially in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa.

### History of this day

- In 2007, WHO got the idea of observing this **day came from Africa Malaria Day, which is observed by the African government since 2001.**
- At the **WHO-sponsored World Health Assembly's 60<sup>th</sup> session** it was proposed to change the Africa Malaria day to World Malaria Day. This was done with the aim of generating greater awareness regarding the fight against malaria.

### What is the status report of Malaria in India?

- In India Malaria has been a major public health problem as about 95% of the population resides in malaria-endemic areas while 80% of malaria reported is confined to areas consisting of 20% of the population living in hilly, tribal, inaccessible, and difficult areas.
- According to the National Health Mission, the trend of Malaria cases in India has shown a declining trend in 2002. It was 2 million cases annually in the late nineties but in 2020, **the malaria cases in India came down to 0.12 million annually.**

### World Malaria Day 2022: 5 schemes by Indian states to eradicate malaria

- DaMan by Odisha Government**
- A programme called DaMan- DuragamaAnchala Re Malaria Nirakaran was launched by the Government of



Odisha in 2017. Under DaMan, mass screenings have been organized twice a year at malaria camps in April-June and September-October in remote locations of the State.

- Under DaMan, the indoor residual spray method is used and the entire population undergoes a malaria test. The malaria intervention programme in Odisha has helped in bringing down a significant number of cases in the state.
- ***Dastak Abhiyan by Uttar Pradesh Government***
- Dastak Abhiyan under which the UP Government aims to become malaria-free by 2030 has been introduced in one of the largest states of the country.
- Dastak Abhiyan has been launched to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, including malaria, and ASHA and Anganwadi workers have been given the responsibility to inform people about the scheme.
- ***Initiatives taken by Telangana to fight Malaria***
- Telangana has received national appreciation and recognition for its work towards eliminating malaria in the past 6 years between 2016 and 2021, as part of the National Framework for Malaria Elimination in India.
- An inter-sectorial collaboration involving municipalities, public health care facilities, and panchayat departments has been taken up across the state which has led to the decline of malaria cases in Telangana.
- ***Malaria MuktbastarAbhiyaan by Chhattisgarh***
- To tackle the problem of Malaria, Chhattisgarh launched 'Malaria MuktbastarAbhiyaan' in January 2020 to combat the issue.
- After the success of the campaign in Bastar, the state government further extended the programme to the rest of the state.
- In 2022, Chhattisgarh has also been selected for a national award to be conferred by the Health Ministry to mark World Malaria Day for excelling in battling malaria.
- ***Friday-Dryday initiative by Andhra Pradesh government***
- To implement programs like 'Friday-Dryday', the state health department collaborated with Panchayat Raj, Municipal Administration, and Rural Water Supply at the village and ward secretariat level. They also helped in bringing down the number of malaria cases in the State.
- Andhra Pradesh government has also instructed **everyone to clean their surroundings and control the mosquitoes breeding by following every Friday as a dry day.**

## #WORLD FOOD PRICE INDEX BY FAO

According to the **UN Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO)**, the **World food price index** averaged 159.3 points in March, breaking an earlier record of 137.6 points scaled **11 years ago in February 2011**.

### What is FAOs Food Price Index?

- It was **introduced in 1996** as a public good to help in monitoring developments in the global agricultural commodity markets.
- The **FAO Food Price Index (FFPI)** is a **measure of the monthly change** in international prices of a basket of food commodities.



- It measures changes for a basket of cereals, oilseeds, dairy products, meat and sugar.
- **Base Period:** 2014-16.

### What is the Food and Agriculture Organization?

- FAO is a specialised agency of the **United Nations** that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
- **World Food Day** is celebrated every year around the world on 16th October. The day is celebrated to mark the anniversary of the founding of the FAO in 1945.
- It is one of the UN food aid organisations based in Rome (Italy). Its sister bodies are the **World Food Programme** and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

### Initiatives Taken:

- **Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS).**
- Monitors the **Desert Locust** situation throughout the world.
- The **Codex Alimentarius Commission or CAC** is the body responsible for all matters regarding the implementation of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.
- The **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture** was adopted by the Thirty-First Session of the Conference of the FAO in 2001.

### Flagship Publications:

- The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA).
- The State of the World's Forests (SOFO).
- **The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI).**
- The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA).
- The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets (SOCO)

### WORLD FOOD DAY: 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER

- **World Food Day** is celebrated to commemorate the establishment of the United Nation's **Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)** on **16<sup>th</sup> October 1945**.
- FAO is a **specialised agency of the United Nations** that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.

### About World Food Day:

- It is observed **annually on 16<sup>th</sup> October** to address the problem of global hunger.
- It emphasises on the **Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2)** i.e. **Zero Hunger**.
- There has been a renewed focus on food, **nutrition**, health, immunity and sustainability due to the unprecedented challenges posed by the **Covid-19** pandemic.

### 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of FAO:

- Over the years, FAO has **helped to increase agricultural production and eradicate hunger all over the world**, including India and has played an important role in increasing nutrition.
- **2020's Nobel Peace Prize to the World Food Programme** is also a major achievement for the FAO as the programme was started by FAO.
- Highlighted Indian Initiatives
- **Eat Right India** and **Fit India Movement** along with **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**, **Jal Jeevan Mission** and other efforts will improve the health of Indians and heal the environment.
- **Introduction of 17 new biofortified varieties of crops** to overcome the shortcomings of the common variety of crops which lacks important micronutrients.
- Example: **MACS 4028 Wheat**, **MadhubanGajar**, etc.

## #GUJARAT TOPS IN NITI AAYOG'S STATE ENERGY & CLIMATE INDEX

- Gujarat has acquired a top position in the NITI Aayog's State Energy and Climate Index-Round 1 among the larger states with a score of 50.1 points. Gujarat is followed by Kerala and Punjab in second and third place under the same category.
- State Energy and Climate Index aim at ranking the states and the Union Territories on six parameters including energy efficiency, discom's performance, and environmental sustainability.
- Among the smaller states in NITI Aayog's State Energy and Climate Index, Goa is at the top position followed by Tripura and Manipur. On the other hand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand were placed at the bottom among the larger states.



### State Energy and Climate Index: NITI Aayog Ranking of states

Rank	States	Score
1.	Gujarat	50.1
2.	Kerala	49.1
3.	Punjab	48.6
4.	Haryana	47.9
5.	Uttarakhand	46.5
6.	Maharashtra	46.0
7.	Himachal Pradesh	45.4
8.	Karnataka	43.8
9.	Tamil Nadu	43.4
10.	Assam	42.6

### Smaller States

Rank	States	Score
1.	Goa	51.4
2.	Tripura	45.0
3.	Manipur	36.0

4.	Mizoram	35.9
5.	Sikkim	33.3
6.	Meghalaya	29.4
7.	Nagaland	27.9
8.	Arunachal Pradesh	27.0

**Union Territories**

Rank	Union Territories	Score
1.	Chandigarh	55.7
2.	Delhi	55.6
3.	D&D and D&N	53.2
4.	Puducherry	48.5
5.	Andaman & Nicobar	29.4
6.	Jammu & Kashmir	29.3
7.	Lakshadweep	26.9

**State Energy and Climate Index: Six parameters to measure state's rank**

NITI Aayog's State Energy and Climate Index Round-I has ranked the **states and the Union Territories on six parameters. These parameters also include a total of 27 indicators.**

1. Discom's performance
2. Access Affordability and Reliability of Energy
3. Clean Energy Initiatives
4. Energy Efficiency
5. Environmental Sustainability
6. New Initiatives

**State Energy and Climate Index: Background**

- NITI Aayog's State Energy and Climate Index Round I was released in the presence of secretaries of various government departments as well as the stakeholders from the energy sectors that were invited.
- **India is part to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) where more than 190**



nations have negotiated cuts to restrict the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to the pre-industrial era. India also has a National Mission on Climate Change.

## #INDIA-FRANCE BILATERAL EXERCISE 'VARUNA-2022'

The 20<sup>th</sup> edition of the Indian and French Navy bilateral exercise 'VARUNA-2022' is being conducted in the Arabian Sea.

- It has become a vital part of the India-France strategic bilateral relationship.



### What are the Key Points?

- The Indian and French Navies **have been conducting bilateral maritime exercises since 1993**. Since 2001, these exercises have been called 'VARUNA'. This is an annual event.
- These interactions further underscore the shared values as partner navies, in ensuring freedom of seas and commitment to an open, inclusive **Indo-Pacific** and a rules-based international order.

### India-France Strategic Relations:

- Background:** France was one of the first countries with which India signed a "strategic partnership" after the end of the Cold War, in January 1998.
- France was one of the very few countries to support India's decision to test nuclear weapons in 1998.
- Defence Cooperation:** Both countries have a defence dialogue at the Ministerial level.
- The three services have regular defence exercises; viz
- Exercise Shakti (Army)**
- Exercise Varuna (Navy)**
- Exercise Garuda (Air Force)**
- Recently, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has inducted **French Rafale multi-role combat aircraft**.
- India entered into a contract with a **French firm to build six Scorpene submarines** in India's Malegaon dockyards through a technology-transfer arrangement in 2005.
- The two countries also signed the **Agreement regarding the Provision of Reciprocal Logistics Support**.
- This agreement will help to facilitate the replenishment of fuel, rations, spares, and berthing and maintenance for the other nations' warships, military aircraft and troops during routine port calls, as well as during **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)**.

### Indian Ocean, the Common Shared Interest:

- France needs to protect its colonial territorial possessions like reunion island and Indian ocean being the zone of influence for India.
- Recently, **France became the 23<sup>rd</sup> member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)**.
- It is the first time that a country whose mainland is not on the Indian Ocean has been brought into the fold of the IORA.

- **Counter Terrorism:** France backed the India's proposal for a global conference on terrorism. Both the countries also support organising a new "**No Money for Terror**" - an International Conference on Fighting Terrorist Financing.
- **France Backing India:** France also continues to steadfastly back India on Kashmir while its relations with Pakistan have plummeted in the recent past and China has become an object of suspicion.
- **Space:** Both have decided to deepen space cooperation to meet new challenges together, whether it concerns planetary exploration or human spaceflight.
- France has agreed to be part of India's Venus mission, scheduled for 2025.
- ISRO's Venus instrument, **VIRAL (Venus Infrared Atmospheric Gases Linker)** has been co-developed by Russian and French agencies.
- **Multilateral Platform:** France has been **extremely supportive of India at the UN Security Council** on Kashmir and Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, among other issues.
- The Prime Minister of India was a special invitee at the 45<sup>th</sup> G-7 Summit in Biarritz, France where India was one of the "**Goodwill**" partners.
- **Climate:** The two countries have a close cooperation on climate change, and have formed the **International Solar Alliance**.

## #AUSTRALIA TO HOST 2026 COMMONWEALTH GAMES

- The **Victoria state of Australia** will be hosting the 2026 Commonwealth Games. During the games focus will also be given to boosting the economy of the region.
- An exclusive negotiating period was granted to the capital of **Victoria, Melbourne, to secure the hosting rights for the Commonwealth Games.**
- The Commonwealth Games, are losing relevance, **with four of the last five editions being held in Britain or Australia.**
- To host the 2026 editions of the Games, no other nation expressed interest except Australia.
- The 2026 Games will be spread across the cities of Bendigo, Geelong, Gippsland, and Ballarat thus a new multi-city model will be implemented.



## Earlier editions of the Commonwealth Games in Australia

- In 2018, Australia hosted the **Games on the Gold Coast** and the **2006 edition of the games was hosted in Melbourne.**
- **2022 Edition of the Commonwealth Games**
- **Birmingham, England will be hosting the 2022** edition of the games from 28<sup>th</sup> July to 8<sup>th</sup> Aug. Earlier, South Africa was supposed to host this year's edition but was stripped of hosting rights due to a lack of progress in their preparations.
- **About Commonwealth Games**
- The Commonwealth Games are also referred to as the Friendly Games. It is an international multi-sport

event that is held every four years and involves athletes participating from the Commonwealth of Nations. **The first such games were held in 1930.**

## #RELATED: US GOVERNMENT BOYCOTTED BEIJING OLYMPICS 2022

- The **US Government recently announced the boycott of Olympics 2022**. The Olympics 2022 is to be held in Beijing. The US cited that “China’s human rights **ATTROCITIES**” is the main reason for its boycott. The US has named the boycott as “Diplomatic Boycott”.
- **What is Diplomatic Boycott?**
- It means that the US is not sending any official or diplomatic representation to the participate in the Olympics. However, US is allowing the American athletes to participate in the Olympics.



## Why is US boycotting Olympics 2022?

- The US is boycotting for the following human rights atrocities of China:
- Situations in **Taiwan and Tibet**
- The crackdown in Hong Kong
- Abuse of minority **Muslim Uyghurs in Xinjiang**

## US Previously boycotted in 1980

- Previously, the **US boycotted the Olympics completely in 1980**. Then the boycott was to protest against the Soviet Union military presence in Afghanistan.
- In December 1979, the Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan supporting the Afghan communist government. The soviet then remained in Afghanistan till 1989. In 1980, around 60 countries refused to compete in Olympics along with the US. This included China, Japan, Canada, Israel and West Germany.

## China’s Boycott

- The Chinese Government boycotted the Olympics in 1972. According to China, in 1972, the International Olympics Committee failed to recognize its team.
- China is hosting both summer and Winter Olympics. This is the first time in the Olympics history that a country is **hosting both summer and Winter Olympics**.
- The **Summer and Winter Olympics** are held once in four years. The Summer Olympics is generally referred to as Olympics with more number of countries participating.
- On the other hand, the Winter Olympics is relatively smaller event. The **summer Olympics** are held once in four years, mainly during the leap years. The winter Olympics are held two years after the leap year. The Summer Olympics were held in 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, etc.
- **And the Winter Olympics were held in 2002, 2006, 2010, etc.** China hosted the Summer Olympics in 2008 and is now to host the Winter Olympics in 2022.

## How is China hosting both Summer and Winter Olympics?

- Around six potential cities of Europe dropped out of the bidding due to doping scandal. Also, the price tag

of 51 billion USD also drove away bidders. This led to getting down to two candidates. One was China and the other was Kazakhstan.

### How is Olympic host city chosen?

- The major cities from the world make competitive bids every two years to the **International Olympics Committee**. This is done seven years before the games.
- The IOC then makes rigorous audits to check if the city bided are capable to host the games. This is because, the city has to accommodate large number of sports person, government delegates, should provide security, etc.
- Based on these factors and the bidding, the members cast their votes. **The winning city hosts the games.**

### #PM MODI AWARDED LATA DEENANATH MANGESHKAR AWARD

Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the first **Lata DeenanathMangeshkar Award**.

- He got the award for his selfless service to the country and society at the 80<sup>th</sup> annual Master DeenanathMangeshkar Awards ceremony held in Mumbai.

### What is the Lata DeenanathMangeshkar Award?

- The Lata DeenanathMangeshkar Award was instituted in the memory and honor of legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar, who had passed away at the age of 92 in February 2022.
- The award will be given **every** year to only one individual who has made path-breaking, spectacular and exemplary contributions to the nation, its people, and the society, as per the statement by the **Master DeenanathMangeshkarSmrutiPratishthan Charitable Trust**.



### Who was Lata Mangeshkar?

- Lata Mangeshkar, also known as the '**Nightingale of India**', was one of the most versatile singers of India.
- She lent her voice to over **5,000 songs in over a thousand Hindi and 36 regional films**.



- In 1974, she became the **first Indian to perform at the Royal Albert Hall (U.K)**. She is the recipient of **three National Film Awards**, 15 Bengal Film Journalists' Association Awards, four Filmfare Best Female Playback Awards, two Filmfare Special Awards, Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award and many more.
- Lata Mangeshkar was bestowed with the **DadasahebPhalke Award in 1989**. In 2001, she was awarded the **Bharat Ratna**, India's highest civilian honour.
- The government of **France conferred on her its highest civilian award (Officer of the Legion of Honour) in 2007**.
- Along with these, Lata Mangeshkar held the distinction of being the **most recorded artist in the history of Indian music in the Guinness Record in 1974**.
- The Indian government honored her with the **Daughter of the Nation award on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in September 2019**.

### What are the Other Awards Won by the PM?

- **Bhutan's Highest Civilian Award (2021):** He was conferred by Bhutan's highest civilian award, '**Order of the DrukGyalpo**' also known as "**NgadagPelgiKhorlo**".
- **Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award (2021):** Awarded by the Cambridge Energy Research Associates CERA for commitment of leadership towards the future of global energy and the environment.
- **Legion of Merit by the US Government (2020):** The United States Armed Forces award given for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements.
- First Philip Kotler Presidential award (2019): Offered to the leader of a nation.
- Global Goalkeeper Award: Honour by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (2019)
- **Order of Zayed Award (2019):** The highest civilian honour of the United Arab Emirates.
- **Order of St. Andrew award (2019):** The highest civilian honour of Russia
- **Order of the Distinguished Rule of Nishan Izzuddin (2019)** The highest honour of the Maldives awarded to foreign dignitaries.
- **King Hamad Order of the Renaissance - First Class (2019):** Bahrain's top honour.
- **Grand Collar of the State of Palestine Award (2018):** The highest honour of Palestine awarded to foreign dignitaries.
- **Seoul Peace Prize (2018):** Seoul Peace Prize Cultural Foundation's biennial award (South Korea) to those individuals who have made their mark through contributions to the harmony of mankind, reconciliation between nations and world peace.
- **Champions of the Earth Award (2018):** The **United Nation's** highest environmental honour.
- **Order of Abdulaziz Al Saud (2016):** The highest honour of Saudi Arabia awarded to non-muslim dignitaries.
- **State Order of Ghazi Amir Amanullah Khan (2016):** The highest civilian honour of Afghanistan.



## #VINAY MOHAN KWATRA AS NEW FOREIGN SECY.

- The **Indian government** has named **Vinay Mohan Kwatra** who is the country's ambassador to Nepal, as India's next Foreign Secretary. He will be taking charge **after incumbent Harsh Vardhan Shringla retires on 30<sup>th</sup> April**.
- Vinay Mohan Kwatra is an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer and has **32 years of experience working in a range of assignments**.
- From 2015 to 2017, he has worked in the Prime Minister's office and then went to France as the ambassador of India.



### Working in the permanent mission of India

- In 1988, after joining the IFS he served as the Permanent Mission of **India's third secretary** and later he became the second secretary which he served till 1993.
- He used to handle work related to the Human Rights Commission, and UN specialized agencies. He also obtained a diploma in **International Relations from the Graduate School of International Studies located in Geneva**.
- Between the years from 1993 to 2003, he served as a desk officer dealing with the United Nations and also worked in diplomatic missions in Uzbekistan and South Africa. Between the year's 2003 to 2006, he served as the **counsellor and was later promoted as the deputy chief of mission in India's Beijing embassy**.
- He has also represented the country at **the SAARC Secretariat in Nepal as the head of the Trade, Finance Bureau, and Economy**.
- He has also served as the minister (Commerce) in the embassy located in Washington. He also headed the Ministry of External Affairs' Policy Planning & Research Division. He has also served in the foreign ministry's Americas Division and dealt with the country's relations with Canada and the United States.
- **From 2015 to 2017, Kwatra** has served as the joint secretary of the Prime Minister of India's office. From 2017 to 2020, he served as the Indian Ambassador to France. **Since 2020, he has been serving as the Indian ambassador to Nepal**.

## #HARSH VARDHAN SHRINGLA AS CHIEF CO-ORDINATOR OF G20

- **For the G20 summit**, which will be hosted in 2023 by India, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla has been appointed as its chief coordinator.

### Overview:

- Shringla will be retiring on **30<sup>th</sup> April 2022** and will take charge of this new role from 1<sup>st</sup> May. This role has been newly created by the government to organize the summit.
- The G20 sherpa will remain to be **Piyush Goyal, the Indian Commerce Minister**.

### About the 2023 G20 Summit

- The **G20 summit** that will be held in India in 2023 will be the country's biggest-ever multilateral event that

has been hosted in recent years.

- This summit provides a tremendous opportunity for the country to showcase the **nation's rich culture, infrastructure, hospitality, and diversity on the global platform.**

### About Harsh V. Shringla

- Harsh Vardhan Shringla is an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer who has served as India's 33rd Foreign Secretary.
- He has also previously served as the Ambassador of India to Thailand, to the United States of America, and as the High Commissioner to Bangladesh.
- He has also published papers related to economic diplomacy, conflict prevention, India-Bangladesh relations, and the Indian diaspora. He joined the Foreign Service in 1984 and has a career that spans over 35 years.

### #WHO IS JYOTIRAO PHULE?

- **Jyotirao Phule was born on Born on 11th April 1827.**
- He was an anti-caste reformer and social activist who along with Savitribai Phule, his wife, worked for the upliftment of children and women of the marginalized communities, and encouraged women's education.
- He belonged to Maharashtra and worked hard to **eradicate caste oppression and untouchability.** Jyotirao Phule started his first girl's school at Bhide Wada, Pune in 1848.
- The **SatyashodhakSamaj (Society of Truth Seekers)** was also formed by him along with his followers with the aim of fighting for basic rights for all those who belonged to the lower castes.
- In his association there were people from various castes and religions.
- After getting recognition for his work he was acclaimed throughout the state of Maharashtra.
- The title of 'Mahatma' ('great soul') was given to him in 1888 by another **social activist VithalraoKrishnajiVandekar.**
- In the social reform movement in Maharashtra, he is considered to be an important figure.
- Early life: He was born **in Pune, British India** into a family **belonging to the Mali caste**, growing vegetables, and fruits for a living. The Mali caste was at the bottom of the caste hierarchy.



### Working towards the education of women

- At the young age of 13, he was married off. In 1848 he was rebuked for attending the wedding of a Brahmin friend as he was from a lower caste.
- Soon he realized that women are not treated properly in society and challenged this by first educating his wife Savitribai. Then, in Pune, he started a school for girls.
- The upper-caste society who was very conservative did not approve of the education of girls and the Phule couple were routinely attacked for their stance on female empowerment and education.

### Caste-related horrors witnessed by the Phule

- The Phules witnessed **caste-related horrors wherein** the untouchables were asked to wear a broom on

their back while they swept the road so as to clean their own tracks.

- The widows of the society were forced to shave their heads, and the women who were untouchables were paraded naked on the street. Witnessing all this, **their will was boosted to educate the women, teach them about their rights, and uproot caste-based evils.**
- They also campaigned to promote widow remarriage and stop infanticide.

### Abolition of Untouchability:

- **Article 17** abolishes 'untouchability' and forbids its practice in any form. The enforcement of any disability arising out of untouchability shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.
- A person convicted of the offence of 'untouchability' is disqualified for election to the Parliament or state legislature. **The acts of offences include:**
- Preaching untouchability directly or indirectly.
- Preventing any person from entering any shop, hotel, public place of worship and place of public entertainment.
- Refusing to admit persons in hospitals, educational institutions or hostels established for public benefit.
- Justifying untouchability on traditional, religious, philosophical or other grounds.
- Insulting a person belonging to scheduled caste on the ground of untouchability.

### #'MUMBAI & HYDERABAD' AS 2021 TREE CITY OF THE WORLD

- The **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (UN-FAO)** along with Arbor Day Foundation has recognized Hyderabad and Mumbai jointly as the '2021 Tree City of the World.'
- The recognition has been won by the two Indian cities due to their commitment to maintaining and growing greenery and urban trees so as to build resilient, healthy, and happy cities.
- This is the **first time Mumbai has made it to the list.**
- Hyderabad has been featured on this list for the second consecutive year.



### 'Tree Cities of the World' tag

- The programme was started by the **UN-FAO and Arbor Day Foundation**, an American non-profit organisation.
- The **aim of starting this programme was to recognise towns and cities** across the world that are committed to ensuring that their trees and urban forests are sustainably managed, properly maintained, and duly celebrated.
- Under this programme assistance, direction, and worldwide recognition is provided to those communities that are showing dedication to their urban forest.
- The programme also provides a framework for a **sustainable and healthy urban forestry programme in a city or a town.**

### How is a city recognized as a Tree City?

- To be **recognized as a 'Tree City,'** a city needs to meet five core standards that show its commitment to caring for its forests and trees.
- For a **city to be recognized as a Tree City,** it must delegate responsibility for the caring of trees within the municipal boundary to a city department, a staff member, or a group of citizens known as a Tree Board. **Also, a law or an official policy must be in place in the city to govern the management of trees and forests.**
- The city must also have an updated assessment or inventory of the local tree resources **so that it can establish an effective long-term plan for caring for, planting, and removing city trees.**
- The city must also have a dedicated annual budget for implementing a tree management plan.
- Also, the city must organise an annual celebration of trees with the aim of raising awareness **among the people and must also acknowledge the citizens who have carried out the tree programme in the city.**

### Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

- The Food and Agriculture Organization is an **agency of the United Nations** that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
- FAO is also a source of knowledge and information and helps developing countries and countries in transition modernize and improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices, ensuring good nutrition and food security for all.
- **Formation: 16 October 1945, in Quebec City, Canada**
- **Headquarters: Rome, Italy**
- Every year, **World Food Day (Theme for 2018- Zero Hunger) is celebrated on October 16** to commemorate the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of United Nations in the year 1945.
- The **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG-2)** also aims to “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” by 2030.

### #38<sup>TH</sup> SIACHEN DAY OBSERVED ON APRIL 13<sup>TH</sup>

- Indian Army observed 38th Siachen Day on April 13, 2022. The day is observed every year to commemorate the courage displayed by the Indian Army troops in securing the highest battlefield in the world '**Siachen Glacier**' under Operation Meghdoot.
- The Indian Army had launched '**Operation Meghdoot**' to gain control of Bilafond La and other passes on the Salto Ridge from Pakistani aggression on April 13, 1984.
- Siachen Day is celebrated largely by the Siachen Warriors Brigade of Fire & Fury Corps.



- Siachen Day not only commemorates the courage and valour of the Indian Army but also honours the brave Siachen Warriors who laid down their lives to capture the icy Siachen glacier and serve their motherland successfully.



- This year completes **38 years since the Indian Army successfully captured Siachen Glacier.**
- Siachen is called the highest and coldest battlefield in the world.

### When was Siachen captured?

- The Indian Army gained control of Siachen on April 13, 1984 after it launched a military operation called 'Operation Meghdoot'.

### What is Operation Meghdoot?

- **Operation Meghdoot** was a code name for the Indian Army's operation to secure control **over the Siachen glacier in Kashmir.**
- The operation, which was the first military operation of its kind, was carried out on the morning of April 13, 1984. Indian Army is the first and only army in the world to have taken tanks and other heavy military ordnance to such an altitude.
- Late President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam became the first Indian President and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces to visit the **troops deployed in 'Operation Meghdoot' in 2003.**

### Operation Meghdoot: Know what happened on April 13, 1984

- The Indian Army decided to take undertake the operation on April 13, 1984 after an intelligence report surfaced claiming that Pakistan was **planning a similar operation under the name 'Operation Ababeel' to occupy the glacier by April 17.**
- Lieutenant General Prem Nath Hoon had led Operation Meghdoot's first phase in March 1984 when Indian troops marched with full battle packs through icy Zoji La pass for days to avoid detection by Pakistani radars.
- Almost 300 Indian troops were deployed on critical peaks and passes of Siachen by April 13, gaining control of the crucial glacier.
- India subsequently gained control over the 70-km-long Siachen Glacier and its tributary glaciers and all the main passes and heights of the **Saltoro Ridge** immediately west of the glacier, including Sia La and Bilafond La. Pakistan could also manage to take control over **Saltoro Ridge's western slopes and foothills.**
- A ceasefire was announced in 2003 but both India and Pakistan maintain a permanent heavy military presence in the area.
- The conflict has resulted in thousands of deaths, mostly due to extreme weather and natural hazards.

### Why is Siachen so important?

- The Siachen Glacier is the highest battleground on earth. The Saltoro Ridge **overlooks the area of Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK)** and guards the routes leading to Leh, the principal town and capital of Ladakh. It is a point of conflict between India and Pakistan since April 13, 1984.

### Siachen Conflict: History and Origin

- The origin of the Siachen dispute lies in the fact that both Karachi Agreement of 1949 and the Shimla Agreement of 1972 did not clearly mention who controlled the glacier.
- The conflict stems from the incompletely demarcated territory on the map beyond the map coordinate known as NJ9842. While Shimla Agreement does not mention the point at all, **the Karachi agreement**



mentions a ceasefire line that terminates at the point called Pt NJ 9842.

- Indian interpretation was that Pakistan's territory extended only till the Saltoro Ridge based on the Simla agreement, while Pakistan assumed that their territory continued northeast **from the point till Karakoram Pass. As a result, both nations claim to have rights over the icy Siachen Glacier.**

## #BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF BR AMBEDKAR

The nation celebrated 131<sup>st</sup> birth anniversary of B R Ambedkar on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

- Dr. Ambedkar was a **social reformer, jurist, economist, author, polyglot** (knowing several languages) **orator, a scholar, and thinker of comparative religions.**
- He is known as the Father of the Indian Constitution and was **India's first Law Minister.**
- He was the Chairman of the Drafting Committee for the new Constitution.
- He was a **well-known statesman who fought for the rights of the Dalits** and other socially backward classes.

### Contributions:

- He led the **Mahad Satyagraha in March 1927** against **Hindus** who were opposing the decision of the Municipal Board.
- In 1926, the Municipal Board of Mahad** (Maharashtra) passed an order to throw open the tank to all communities. Earlier, the untouchables were not allowed to use water from the Mahad tank.
- He participated in **all three Round Table Conferences.**
- In 1932, Dr. Ambedkar signed the Poona pact with Mahatma Gandhi**, which abandoned the idea of separate electorates **for the depressed classes** (Communal Award).
- However, the seats reserved for the depressed classes were increased from **71 to 147 in provincial legislatures** and to **18% of the total in the Central Legislature.**
- His ideas before the **Hilton Young Commission** served as the foundation of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI).**

### Election and Designation:

- In 1936**, he was elected to the **Bombay Legislative Assembly** as a legislator (MLA).
- He **was appointed** to the **Executive Council of Viceroy** as a Labour member **in 1942.**
- In 1947**, Dr. Ambedkar accepted **PM Nehru's invitation to become Minister of Law** in the first Cabinet of independent India.

### Important Works:

- Journals:**
  - Mooknayak (1920)
  - Bahishkrit Bharat (1927)
  - Samatha (1929)
  - Janata (1930)
- Books:**
  - Annihilation of Caste
  - Buddha or Karl Marx
  - The Untouchable: Who are They and Why They Have Become Untouchables

- Buddha and His Dhamma
- The Rise and Fall of Hindu Women
- **Organisations:**
- BahishkritHitkarini Sabha (1923)
- Independent Labor Party (1936)
- Scheduled Castes Federation (1942)

### Relevance of Ambedkar in Present Times:

- Caste-based inequality in India still persists.
- While Dalits have acquired a political identity through **reservation** and forming their own political parties, they lack behind in social dimensions (health and education) and economic dimension.
- There has been a rise of communal polarization and communalization of politics. It is necessary that Ambedkar's vision of constitutional morality must supersede religious morality to avoid permanent damage to the Indian Constitution.

### What were Round Table Conferences?

- **First Round Table Conference:** It was held in London on 12<sup>th</sup> November, 1930 but the Congress did not participate in it.
- In March 1931, Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin (Viceroy of India 1926-31) entered into a Pact, called Gandhi-Irwin Pact, by which the Congress called off the Civil Disobedience Movement and agreed to participate in the Round Table Conference.
- **Second Round Table Conference:** It was held in London on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September, 1931.
- **Third Round Table Conference:** It was held in London on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November, 1932 to consider the reports of various sub-committees appointed from time to time. It ultimately led to the passage of the Govt. of India Act, 1935.

### #NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICES DAY: 21<sup>ST</sup> APRIL

- Prime Minister Modi conferred Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration on National Civil Services Day 2022 which is observed on April 21.
- The 2-Day Civil Services Day function has been organized by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions to celebrate the work of the Civil Servants.**
- PM Modi confers the Awards for Excellence in Public Administration 2021 for effective implementation of **identified priority programmes to mark the 15th Civil Services Day.**

### National Civil Services Day 2022

- Every Year the Government of India observes National Civil Services Day on April 21 as an occasion for the Civil Servants to rededicate themselves to the cause of citizens and to renew their commitments to public service and excellence in work.

### Why Awards for Excellence in Public Administration Significant?

- **Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration** were instituted with a view to recognize the extraordinary and innovative work that has been done by the Districts/implementing units

and Central/State organizations for the welfare of common citizens.

- The prestigious awards are also **conferred for an effective implementation of identified priority programmes and innovation.**

### Awards to be conferred in 5 identified priority programmes

S. No.	Priority Programmes
1.	Promoting Jan Bhagidari or People's Participation in PoshanAbhiyaan
2.	Promoting Excellence in Sports and Wellness through Khelo India Scheme
3.	Digital Payments and Good Governance in PM SVANidhi Yojana
4.	Holistic Development through One District One Product Scheme
5.	Seamless, End to End Delivery of Services without Human Intervention

### #PM AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC ADMN.

Recently, the **UDAN (UdeDeshkaAamNagrik)** Scheme has been selected for **Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration 2020** under the category "**Innovation (General) – Central**".

- The Ministry of Civil Aviation will receive the award on **21<sup>st</sup> April, i.e. Civil Service Day**. The government of India celebrates Civil Services Day, every year as an **occasion for the civil servants to rededicate themselves** to the cause of serving citizens and renew their commitments to public service and excellence in work.
- The Ministry of Civil Aviation plans and commits to construct **100 new airports by 2024 in India with 1,000 new routes under UDAN Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) scheme by the year 2026.**

### What is the PMs Award for Excellence in Public Administration?

- It was constituted in 2006 by the Government of India **to acknowledge, recognize and reward the extraordinary and innovative work done** by districts and organisations of the Central and State Governments.
- The award consists of **a trophy, scroll and an incentive of Rs. 10 lakh to the awarded district or organisation** to be utilised for implementation of project/ programme or bridging resource gaps in any area of public welfare.
- **Restructuring:** The Scheme was restructured in **2014** for recognizing the **performance of District Collectors in Priority Programs, Innovations and Aspirational Districts.**
- The Scheme was restructured again in **2020, to recognize the performance of District Collectors towards economic development of the District.**
- The Scheme has been **revamped** with a new approach in **2021** with the **objective to encourage Constructive Competition, Innovation, Replication and Institutionalisation of Best Practices.**
- Under this approach emphasis would be on **good governance, qualitative achievement and last mile connectivity**, rather than only on achievement of quantitative targets.

### What is the UDAN Scheme?

- **Launch:** It was launched as a RCS under the Ministry of Civil Aviation in **2016**.
- **Objectives:** To develop the **regional aviation market**.
- To provide affordable, economically viable and profitable air travel on **regional routes to the common man even in small towns**.
- **Features:** The scheme **envisages providing connectivity to un-served and underserved airports of the country through the revival of existing air-strips and airports**. The scheme is operational for a period of 10 years.
- Under-served airports are those which do not have more than one flight a day, while **unserved airports are those where there are no operations**.
- **Financial incentives from the Centre, state governments and airport operators are extended** to selected airlines to encourage operations from unserved and under-served airports, and keep airfares affordable.

### #WORLD HERITAGE DAY: 18<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

Every year, 18<sup>th</sup> April is celebrated as **International Day for Monuments and Sites**, also known as 'World Heritage Day'.

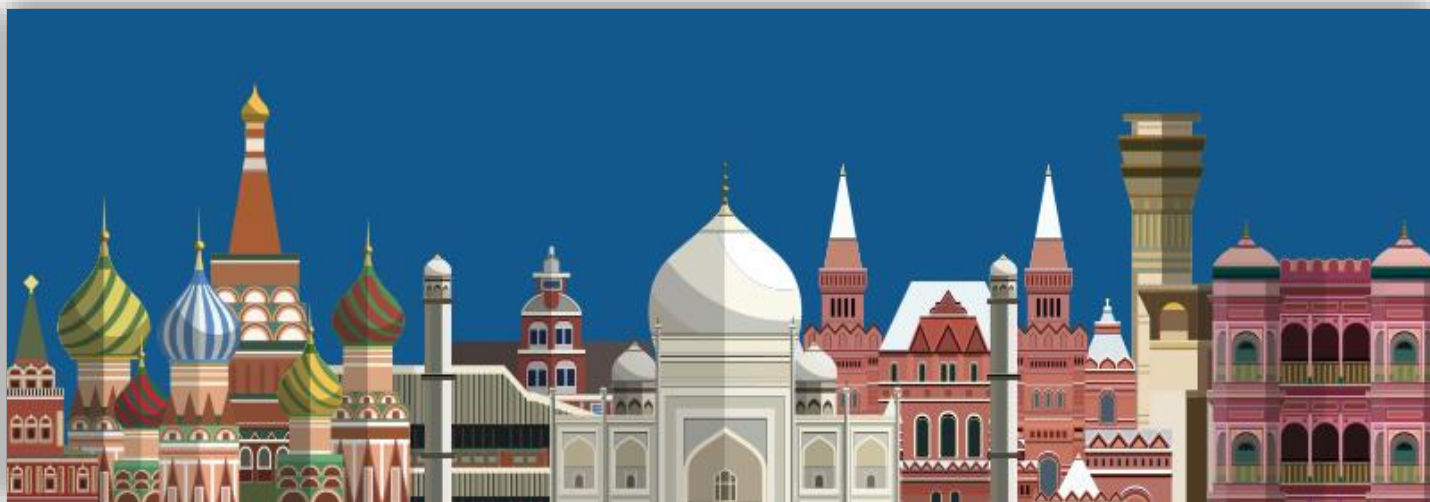
- The theme for World Heritage Day 2022 is "**Heritage and Climate**".

### What is World Heritage Day?

- The **International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)** established the day in 1982 and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) approved it in 1983.
- The aim of the day is to **create awareness about Heritage among communities**.

### What are UNESCO's World Heritage Sites?

- A **World Heritage Site** is a place that is listed by UNESCO for its special cultural or physical significance. The World Heritage Sites is maintained by the international 'World Heritage Programme', administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.



- This is embodied in an international treaty called the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, **adopted by UNESCO in 1972.**

### What are the World Heritage Sites in India?

- India is home to a total of **3691 monuments and sites**. Of these **40 are designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites**.
- Including places like the Taj Mahal, **Ajanta Caves and Ellora Caves**. World Heritage Sites also include natural sites like the **Kaziranga National Park in Assam**.
- Harappan city of **Dholavira** in Gujarat as India's **40<sup>th</sup> world heritage site**.
- **Ramappa Temple (Telangana)** was India's 39th World Heritage Site.
- **Khangchendzonga National Park**, Sikkim has been inscribed as India's first and the only "Mixed World Heritage Site".
- In 2022, the Union Ministry of Culture **nominated Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas temples** for consideration as a **World Heritage site** for the year **2022-2023**
- What is UNESCO?
- It was founded in 1945 to develop the "intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind" as a means of building lasting peace. It is located in **Paris, France**.
- **Major Initiatives of UNESCO:**
  - **Man and Biosphere Programme**
  - **World Heritage Programme**
  - **Global Geopark Network**
  - **Network of Creative Cities**
  - **Atlas of World Languages in Danger**

### What is ICOMOS?

- It is a **global non-governmental organization** associated with UNESCO. It is located in Paris, France.
- Its mission is to promote the conservation, protection, use and enhancement of monuments, building complexes and sites.
- It is an Advisory Body of the World Heritage Committee for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention of UNESCO.
- As such, it reviews the nominations of cultural world heritage and ensures the conservation status of properties.
- Its **creation in 1965** is the logical outcome of initial conversations between architects, historians and international experts that began in the early twentieth century and that materialized in the adoption of the Venice Charter in 1964.

### Natural Sites in India

- **Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (2014)**
- Located in western part of Himalayan mountains in the state of Himachal Pradesh, this Park is well known for its high alpine peaks, alpine meadows and riverine forests.
- It also encloses glacial and snow meltwater sources of several rivers as well as the catchment area.
- It is a biodiversity hotspot with 25 types of forests inhabited by myriads of faunal species, several of which are threatened.



- **Kaziranga National Park (1985)**
- **Keoladeo National Park (1985)**
- This wetland is located in the state of Rajasthan and served as a duck shooting reserve till the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, soon enough the hunting ceased and the area was declared a national park in 1982.
- This National Park is home to 375 bird species and various other life forms. It also serves as a wintering ground to Palaearctic migratory waterfowl, critically endangered Siberian Crane as well as to globally threatened- Greater Spotted Eagle and Imperial Eagle.
- It is acclaimed for its resident population of non-migratory breeding birds.
- **Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (1985)**
- Manas Wildlife Sanctuary is a biodiversity hotspot located in Assam. It is a part of Manas Tiger Reserve and sprawls alongside Manas river.
- A range of forested hills, alluvial grasslands and tropical evergreen forests are responsible for the breathtaking beauty and serene environment of the site.
- It also provides a habitable environment to a range of endangered species such as- tiger, greater one-horned rhino, swamp deer, pygmy hog and Bengal florican.
- **Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks (1988, 2005)**
- Both of these National Parks are exceptionally beautiful high-altitude West Himalayan landscapes and fall within the boundaries of the state of Uttarakhand.
- Nanda Devi National Park boasts rugged and high-mountain wilderness and is dominated by India's second-highest mountain-the peak of Nanda Devi. The Valley of Flowers, in contrast, flaunts aesthetically pleasing meadows of alpine flowers.
- Numerous kinds of floral and faunal species reside in these parks, along with a significant population of globally threatened species including- Snow leopard, Himalayan Musk Deer etc.
- **Sundarban National Park (1987)**
- **Western Ghats (2012)**
- Western Ghats consist of a chain of mountains running parallel to India's Western Coast and passing from the states of Kerala, Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.
- They cover an immense area in a 1600 km long stretch and are interrupted only once by a 30km Palghat gap at around 11 degrees north.
- They also influence the Indian monsoon weather patterns that mediate the warm tropical climate of the region and act as a barrier to rain-laden monsoon winds that sweep in from the south-west.
- Western Ghats are also home to tropical evergreen forests, as well as to 325 globally threatened species.

## What is (UNESCO)?

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the **United Nations (UN)**. It seeks to build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture.
- It is also a member of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)**, a coalition of UN agencies and organizations aimed at fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- UNESCO's **Headquarters** are located in **Paris** and the Organization has more than 50 field offices around the world.

- It has **193 Members and 11 Associate Members** (As of April 2020) and is governed by the General Conference and the Executive Board.
- Three UNESCO member states are not UN members: **Cook Islands, Niue, and Palestine**.
- While three UN member states (**Israel, Liechtenstein, United States**) are not UNESCO members.

## Objectives

- Attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning
- Mobilizing science knowledge and policy for sustainable development
- Addressing emerging social and ethical challenges
- Fostering cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace
- Building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication
- Focuses on global priority areas - **"Africa" and "Gender Equality"**.

## History

- In 1942, during the Second World War, the governments of the European countries, which were confronting Germany and its allies, met in the United Kingdom for the **Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME)**.
- Upon the proposal of CAME, a United Nations Conference for the establishment of an educational and cultural organization was convened in London in November 1945.
- At the end of the conference, UNESCO was founded on 16 November 1945.
- The **first session** of the General Conference of UNESCO was held in **Paris** during November-December of 1946.

## #EARTH DAY OBSERVED ON 22<sup>ND</sup> APRIL

On 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2022, the **52<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of Earth Day** was celebrated. Earth Day is an international event celebrated around the **world to pledge support for environmental protection**.

- The **theme for Earth Day 2022** is **"Invest In our Planet"**.

## What is Earth Day?

- **Background:** Earth Day was first observed in 1970 when 20 million took to the streets to protest environmental degradation on the call of US Senator Gaylord Nelson.
- The event was triggered by the **1969 Santa Barbara oil spill**, as well as other issues such as smog and polluted rivers.
- In 2009, the United Nations designated 22<sup>nd</sup> April as **'International Mother Earth Day**.
- **About:** Earth Day is now globally coordinated by **EARTHDAY.ORG**, which is a non-profit organization. It was formerly known as **Earth Day Network**.
- It aims to "build the world's largest environmental movement to drive transformative change for people and the planet".
- It recognizes a collective responsibility, as called for in the **1992 Rio Declaration (Earth Summit)**, to promote harmony with nature and the Earth to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations of humanity.



- The landmark **Paris Agreement**, which brings almost 200 countries together in setting a common target to reduce global greenhouse emissions, was also signed on Earth Day 2016.

### What are some Other Important Days?

- 22<sup>nd</sup> March: **World Water Day**
- 22<sup>nd</sup> April: Earth Day
- 22<sup>nd</sup> May: **World Biodiversity Day**
- 5<sup>th</sup> June: **World Environment Day**
- **Earth Overshoot Day**

### What is Earth Hour?

- **Earth Hour** is the **World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF)**'s annual initiative that began in 2007. It is held every year on the last Saturday of March.
- It encourages people from more than 180 countries to switch off the lights from 8.30 pm to 9.30 pm as per their local time.
- It seeks to raise awareness about **climate change** and the need to save the environment.

### RELATED: WORLD WATER DAY

**World Water Day** is celebrated on **22<sup>nd</sup> March Every Year** to highlight the importance of water.

- On the Occasion of the **World Water Day UN (United Nations)** University's Canadian-based Institute for Water Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) has published an assessment report, showing the **levels of water security in Africa overall are unacceptably low**.
- The World Water Day 2022 theme sets the focus for the **annual World Water Development Report**.
- What is World Water Day?
- **Aim:** The Day aims to **support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030**.
- **Theme:** Groundwater: making the invisible visible.
- The theme was decided by UN-water at its 30th meeting in Rome. It was proposed by the **International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC)**.
- **History:**
- The idea for this international day goes back to 1992, the year in which the **UN Conference on Environment and Development** in Rio de Janeiro took place.
- That same year, the **United Nations General Assembly** adopted a **resolution** by which 22<sup>nd</sup> March of each year was declared World Day for Water, to be observed **starting in 1993**.
- Later on, other celebrations and events were added. For instance, the **International Year of Cooperation in the Water Sphere 2013**, and the current **International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028**.
- Global Initiatives on Sustainable Development
- **The Stockholm Conference, 1972:** It was the **first step** towards putting environmental concerns on the global agenda. It resulted in the **Stockholm Declaration** which contained **principles** and an **Action Plan** containing recommendations for environmental policy.

- **UNEP** was set up in 1972 to serve as a catalyst in developing and coordinating an environmental focus in the programmes of other organisations.
- **The Earth Summit, 1992:** This was a direct consequence of the **Brundtland Commission's Report**. It was held in Rio de Janeiro. The results of the Conference were the following documents:
  - The Framework Convention on Climate Change (**UNFCCC**)
  - The Convention on Biological Diversity
  - The Statement on Forest Principles
  - The Rio Declaration
  - Agenda 21
- **Kyoto Protocol, 1997**
- **Rio +10, 2002:** A 10-year assessment of the Rio outcomes (Rio +10) took the shape of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in **Johannesburg**.
- **Ramsar Convention, 1971**

## #NATIONAL PANCHAYATI RAJ DAY: 24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

India commemorates the 12<sup>th</sup> National Panchayati Raj day on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

- The Prime Minister has launched the distribution of e-property cards under the **SWAMITVA** (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas) scheme on the Day.

### What is National Panchayati Raj Day?

- The first National Panchayati Raj Day was celebrated in 2010. Since then, the National Panchayati Raj Day is celebrated on 24<sup>th</sup> April every year in India.
- The day **marks the enactment of the 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment of the constitution in 1992.**



### Awards Presented on the Day:

- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been awarding the best performing Panchayats/States/UTs across the country in recognition of their good work.
- Awards are given under various categories namely,
- DeenDayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar,
- Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar,
- Child-friendly Gram Panchayat Award,
- Gram Panchayat Development Plan Award and
- e-Panchayat Puraskar (given to States/UTs only)

### What is Panchayati Raj?

- After the Constitution came into force, **Article 40** made a mention of panchayats and **Article 246** empowered the state to legislate with respect to any subject relating to local self-government.
- **Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI)** was constitutionalized through the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 to build democracy at the grass roots level and was entrusted with the task of rural development in the country.

- PRI is a system of rural local self-government in India.
- Local Self Government is the management of local affairs by such local bodies who have been elected by the local people.
- To strengthen e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across the country, **the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)** has launched eGramSwaraj, a user-friendly web-based portal.
- It unifies the planning, accounting and monitoring functions of Gram Panchayats. Its combination with the Area Profiler application, Local Government Directory (LGD) and the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) renders easier reporting and tracking of Gram Panchayat's activities.

### What are the Salient Features of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment?

- The 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment added Part IX titled "The Panchayats" to the Constitution.
- Basic unit of democratic system-**Gram Sabhas** (villages) comprising all the adult members registered as voters.
- **Three-tier system** of panchayats at village, intermediate block/taluk/mandal and district levels except in States with population is below 20 lakhs (Article 243B).
- Seats at all levels to be filled by **direct elections** (Article 243C (2)).

### Reservation of Seats:

- Seats reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) and the chairpersons of the Panchayats at all levels also shall be reserved for SCs and STs in proportion to their population.
- One-third of the total number of seats to be reserved for women.
- One-third offices of chairpersons at all levels reserved for women (Article 243D).
- **Independent Election Commission in each State** for superintendence, direction and control of the electoral rolls (Article 243K).
- **Power of Panchayats:** Panchayats have been authorised to prepare plans for economic development and social justice in respect of subjects illustrated in Eleventh Schedule (Article 243G).
- **Source of Revenue (Article 243H):** State legislature may authorise the Panchayats with
  - Budgetary allocation from State Revenue.
  - Share of revenue of certain taxes.
  - Collection and retention of the revenue it raises.
- **Establish a Finance Commission in each State** to determine the principles on the basis of which adequate financial resources would be ensured for panchayats and municipalities (Article 243I).

### Exemptions:

- The Act does not apply to the states of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram and certain other areas because of socio-cultural and administrative considerations. These areas include:
- The Scheduled areas and the tribal areas (**under Schedule VI of the Constitution**) in the states.
- the hill areas of Manipur for which district councils exist,
- Darjeeling district of West Bengal for which Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council exists.
- However, the Parliament has extended the provisions of Part IX to **Vth schedule** areas through an Act called the Provisions of Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996.
- At present, 10 States namely Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and Telangana have Fifth Schedule Area.



## RELATED: SVAMITVA SCHEME

- **SVAMITVA** (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas) scheme is a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, State Panchayati Raj Departments, State Revenue Departments and Survey of India.
- **Aim:** To provide an integrated property validation solution for rural India.
- It is a scheme for mapping the land parcels in rural areas using drone technology and **Continuously Operating Reference Station (CORS)**.
- The mapping will be done across the country in a **phase-wise** manner over a period of four years - from 2020 to 2024.

### Benefits:

- The scheme will **help in streamlining planning and revenue collection** in rural areas and ensuring clarity on property rights.
- The scheme will enable creation of better-quality Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs), using the maps created under this programme.
- The Gram Panchayats are **constitutionally mandated** for preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP) for economic development and social justice.
- The GPDP is based on a **participatory process** in convergence with schemes of all related Central Ministries/Line Departments related to 29 subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution.
- The program is currently being implemented in **six states - Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand**.

## #WORLD IMMUNIZATION WEEK: 24<sup>TH</sup> – 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

Recently, World Immunization Week 2022 was celebrated from **24<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022**.

- The theme of 2022 is **Long Life for All** and it aims to **unify people around the idea that vaccines make it possible** for us to follow our dreams, protect our loved ones and live a long, healthy life.



### What is World Immunization Week?

- World Immunization Week is a health campaign coordinated by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** and celebrated in the **last week of April, every year**.
- It aims to promote the use of vaccines to protect people of all ages against disease.
- Immunization saves millions of **lives and is widely recognized as one of the world's most successful and cost-effective health interventions**.
- Yet, there are still nearly **20 million unvaccinated** and under-vaccinated children in the world today.

### Why Does Immunization Matter Now More Than Ever?

- For over 200 years, vaccines have protected **us against diseases that threaten lives and prohibit our development**.

- For more than two centuries, vaccines have helped keep people healthy—from the very **first vaccine developed to protect against smallpox** to the newest **vaccines used to prevent severe cases of Covid-19**.
- With their help, we can progress without the burden of diseases like smallpox and **polio**, which cost humanity hundreds of millions of lives.
- Vaccines themselves continue to advance, bringing us closer to a world free from the likes of **tuberculosis and cervical cancer**, and ending suffering from childhood diseases like tetanus and measles.

### What are recent Immunization Initiatives in India?

- **Universal Immunization Programme**
- **Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 3.0 scheme**
- **Pulse polio programme**

### #NATIONAL VACCINATION DAY OBSERVED ON MARCH 16<sup>TH</sup>

- **National Vaccination Day** is observed every year on March 16 to convey the significance of vaccination as well as its role in public health. National Vaccination Day 2022 creates awareness and sends the message that **how vaccination or immunization is the most effective way of preventing highly infectious diseases**.
- National Vaccination Day 2022 is also of certain significance amid the COVID-19 pandemic against which vaccine has come out to be the only solution of preventing the deadly disease.
- **National Vaccination Day 2022 or National Immunization Day** also marks India's victory against Polio disease. Notably, the impact of vaccination is not only limited to improving health or life expectancy, it also has a social or economic impact at the community and the National level.

### National Vaccination Day 2022 Theme

- The theme of National Vaccination Day 2022 is '**Vaccines Work for all**'. National Vaccination Day 2022 theme highlights how vaccines work for all and save lives all around the world.

### National Vaccination Day 2022: History

- National Vaccination Day is observed every year on March 16 as it was the first time on this day that the first dose of Oral Polio vaccine was given in India back in 1995.
- **National Vaccination Day or National Immunization Day** celebrates the Government of India's Pulse Polio Program which was a remarkable initiative to eradicate polio from India.
- According to the program, two drops of Polio vaccine were provided to the children from the age of 0 to 5. The Pulse Polio Program in India became a huge success as in 2014, the World Health Organisation announced India to be a 'Polio Free Country'.
- Reportedly, the last case of polio in India was reported in 2011 in West Bengal. Following the success of the Polio Program, India began its work on vaccination against severe diseases such as TB, mumps, tetanus, and much more.

## National Vaccination Day 2022: Why Vaccination Day is celebrated in India?

- Vaccines, over the last few decades, have become an important tool to fight life-threatening diseases all over the world. **National Vaccination Day 2022 acknowledges and highlights the role of vaccines** and how in today's world, the role played by them cannot be overlooked.
- According to the **report by the World Health Organisation**, vaccines save almost 2 to 3 million people every year and since the COVID-19 pandemic has been prevailing all over the world, the Government of India is taking every necessary step to vaccinate every citizen of India against the disease.
- **National Vaccination Day 2022** initiates a talk regarding the significance of vaccines and why people must get themselves, their family members and children vaccinated for the protection against certain diseases.

## National Vaccination Day 2022: Facts about Vaccination Day in India

- In 2014, Mission Indradhanush was launched under the **Universal Immunization Program to better the health of mothers and children who are deprived of vaccination.**
- Mission Indradhanush by the **Government of India aims at achieving the Sustainable Development Goal of ending preventable child deaths by 2030.**
- **The world's largest COVID-19 vaccination program** has been launched in India with an aim of vaccinating the entire population against the COVID-19 pandemic.

## #US, CHINA & INDIA LARGEST MILITARY SPENDERS IN THE WORLD

- The world military expenditure touched all-time high of USD 2.1 trillion in 2021, as per a statement by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on April 25, 2022.
- The institute added saying that the United States, China and India were the largest military spenders in the world in 2021.
- The top 5 largest military spenders in 2021 were the **United States, China, India, the United Kingdom and Russia**, which together accounted for almost 62 percent of the world military expenditure, said the Stockholm institute.
- The total world military expenditure increased by **0.7 percent in real terms in 2021 to touch record high of USD 2113 billion.**
- The world military spending touched record levels even amid the economic crisis faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, noted Dr. Diego Lopes da Silva, Senior Researcher with SIPRI's Military Expenditure and Arms Production Programme.



## World Military Expenditure

- The world military expenditure increased by 0.7 percent in real terms in 2021, while in nominal terms, it grew by 6.1 percent. **There was a slowdown in the rate of real-term growth of military expenditure due to high inflation.**
- The defence spending amounted to 2.2 percent of global GDP amid economic recovery from COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. In 2020, the military spending had reached 2.3 percent of global GDP.

## Top 5 Largest Military Spenders in 2021

- **United States:** The US military spending reached USD 801 billion in 2021, which shows a drop of 1.4 per cent in comparison to 2020.
- The United States has increased funding for military research and development by 24 percent and reduced spending on purchase of arms by 6.4 percent between 2012 and 2021.
- **China:** China spent USD 293 billion on military expenditure in 2021, **which shows an increase of 4.7 percent in comparison to 2020.**
- **India:** India's military spending was recorded to be at USD 76.6 billion in 2021, which shows an increase of 0.9 percent in comparison to 2020 and an increase of 33 percent in comparison to 2012. **India's military spending in 2021 has been ranked the third-largest in the world.'**
- Amid the nation's push to strengthen the indigenous arms industry, the government earmarked 64 per cent of capital outlays in the military budget of 2021 for acquisitions of domestically produced arms.
- **United Kingdom:** The United Kingdom's military spending was recorded at **USD 68.4 billion in 2021, which shows an increase of 3 percent since 2020.**
- **Russia:** Russia's military spending was recorded to be USD 65.9 billion in 2021, which shows an increase of 2.9 percent since 2020. This comes at a time when Russia was increasing its troop strength along the Ukrainian border, preparing itself for its military assault. Russia's military expenditure registered a growth for the third consecutive year and reached 4.1 percent of GDP in 2021.

## #Reports of Global Arms Trade: SIPRI

According to a report by **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**, which tracks global arms trade, three Indian companies are among the **world's top 100 for combined arms sales in 2020.**

- The three Indian companies are **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**, **Indian Ordnance Factories**, and **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**.
- The **three were ranked among the top 100 in arms sales in 2019 as well.**

## The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

- The SIPRI is an **independent international institute** dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.
- **Established in 1966 at Stockholm**, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.
- **Top Countries:**
- **The USA has the highest number** of companies in the top 100 worldwide.. Together, their arms sales amounted to USD 285 billion, an increase of 1.9 % compared with 2019.
- **China was second** at 13 %, **followed by the UK** at 7.1 %.
- **Russia and France were fourth and fifth** with 5 % and 4.7 % respectively of the combined arms sales for the top 100 companies.





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