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Monthly Compendium (UPDATED)

of Current Affairs by **SUCCESS MANTRA** (GTB Nagar)

MONTHLY COMPENDIUM

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

#EXTENSION OF NAGA CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT

Recently, the centre has **extended the ceasefire agreements** between the Central government and three Naga groups by a year which was signed on 19th April 2022.

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,

- **Karbi Anglong 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).

#CONTROVERSY ON SYL CANAL

Recently, the Haryana Vidhan Sabha has passed a resolution seeking completion of the **Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal**.

The canal, once completed, will **enable sharing of the waters of the rivers Ravi and Beas** between Haryana and Punjab.

The **Satluj Yamuna Link Canal** is a **proposed 214-kilometre-long canal** connecting Sutlej and Yamuna rivers.

Water resources are under the State List, while the **Parliament has the power to make laws regarding inter-state rivers under the Union List**.



What is the Background?

- **1960:** The dispute can be traced back to the **Indus Water Treaty** between India and Pakistan, allowing the former 'free and unrestricted use' of Ravi, Beas and Sutlej.
- **1966:** Creation of Haryana from the old (undivided) Punjab presented the problem of giving Haryana its share of river waters.
- **For Haryana to get its share of the waters of the Sutlej and its tributary Beas**, a canal linking the Sutlej with the Yamuna was planned (SYL Canal).
- **Punjab refused to share waters with Haryana stating it was against the riparian principle** which dictates that the water of a river belongs only to the State and country or States and countries through which the river in question flows.
- **1981:** Both states mutually **agreed for the re-allocation of water**.
- **1982:** Construction of **214-km SYL** was **launched in Kapoori village, Punjab**.
- Agitations, protests and assassinations were carried out in protest creating the environment of terrorism in the state and making the issue of national security.
- **1985:**
- Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and then Akali Dal chief Sant signed an accord agreeing for a new tribunal to assess the water.
- The **Eradi Tribunal** headed by Supreme Court Judge V Balakrishna Eradi was set up to reassess availability and sharing of water.
- In 1987, the tribunal recommended an increase in the shares of Punjab and Haryana to 5 MAF and 3.83 MAF, respectively.
- **1996:** Haryana moved the **Supreme Court (SC)** seeking directions to Punjab to complete the work on the SYL.
- **2002 and 2004:** SC directed Punjab to complete the work in its territory.
- **2004:** Punjab Assembly passed the **Punjab Termination of Agreements Act**, terminating its water-sharing agreements and thus jeopardising the construction of SYL in Punjab.
- **2016:** SC started hearings into a presidential reference (**Article 143**) to decide on the legality of the 2004 Act and **declared that Punjab backed out of its promise to share the waters of rivers**. Thus, the act was **termed constitutionally invalid**.
- **2020:** SC directed the **Chief Ministers of both states to negotiate and settle the SYL canal issue** at the highest political level to be mediated by the Centre.
- Punjab has asked for a tribunal for fresh time-bound assessment of the water availability.
- Punjab holds that there has been no adjudication or scientific assessment of river waters in the state till date.
- The **availability of Ravi-Beas water has also come down** from the estimated 17.17 MAF in 1981 to 13.38 MAF in 2013. A fresh tribunal would ascertain all this.

What are the Argument of Punjab and Haryana?

- **Punjab:** Many areas in Punjab may go dry after 2029 and the state has already over-exploited its

groundwater for irrigation purposes as it fills granaries of the Centre by growing wheat and paddy worth Rs 70,000 crore every year. **Water in about 79% of the state's area is over-exploited** and in such a situation, the government says **sharing water with any other state is impossible**.

- **Haryana:** It says that providing irrigation is tough for the state and there was a **problem of drinking water in southern parts of Haryana**, where groundwater has depleted up to 1,700 feet. Haryana has been **citing its contribution to the central food pool** and arguing that **it is being denied its rightful share in the water** as assessed by a tribunal.

#INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Recently, the Maharashtra government has developed a **Migration Tracking System (MTS) application** to map the movement of migrant workers to maintain the continuity of the **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)** like nutrition supply, immunisation and health check-up etc.



- MTS is a **website based Application** that tracks the movement of **Vulnerable Seasonal Migrant Workers**, through individual unique identity numbers.
- Migrant beneficiaries including children aged up to 18 years, lactating mothers and pregnant women registered with the anganwadi centres will be tracked for **ensuring the portability of the ICDS for their families in their destination districts within or outside the state until their return to their native places**.

What is ICDS?

- The Umbrella ICDS is a **centrally sponsored scheme** implemented by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**. It was launched in 1975.

What are the Schemes Under the ICDS?

- **Anganwadi Services Scheme:** It is a **unique programme for early childhood care and development**. The **beneficiaries** under the Scheme are children in the age group of **0-6 years, pregnant women and lactating mothers**. It provides a package of six services namely **supplementary nutrition, pre-school non-formal education, nutrition & health education, immunisation, health check-up and referral services**.
- Supplementary Nutrition includes Take Home Ration (THR), Hot Cooked Meal and morning snacks and holds importance for many vulnerable households as it impacts the nutritional outcome of the children.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana:** It provides **cash incentive amounting to Rs.5,000/- in three instalments** directly to the Bank/Post Office Account of **Pregnant Women and Lactating Mother (PW&LM)** in **DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) Mode** during pregnancy and lactation in response to individual fulfilling specific conditions.
- **National Creche Scheme:** It provides **day care facilities to children of age group of 6 months to 6 years of working women**. The facilities are provided for **seven and half hours a day for 26 days** in a month. Children are provided with supplementary nutrition, early childcare education, and health and sleeping facilities.
- **Scheme for Adolescent Girls:** It aims at out of **school girls in the age group 11-14**, to empower and improve their social status through nutrition, life skills and home skills. The scheme has **nutritional and non nutritional components** which include nutrition; iron and folic acid supplementation; health check

up and referral service; nutrition and health education; mainstreaming out of school girls to join formal schooling bridge course/ skill training; life skill education, home management etc.; counselling/ guidance on accessing public services.

- **POSHAN Abhiyaan:** It targets to **reduce the level of stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia and low birth weight babies** by reducing mal-nutrition/undernutrition, anaemia among young children as also, focus on adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

What are the Major Objectives of ICDS?

- To **improve the nutritional and health status of children** in the age-group 0-6 years.
- To lay the foundation for proper **psychological, physical and social development** of the child.
- To reduce the incidence of **mortality, morbidity, malnutrition** and school dropout.
- To achieve effective coordination of **policy and implementation amongst the various departments** to promote child development.
- To enhance the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child.
- To facilitate, **educate and empower Adolescent Girls (AGs)** so as to enable them to become self-reliant and aware citizens.

#MODERNISATION OF PRISONS PROJECT

Recently, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued guidelines to states and Union Territories asking them to Modernize Prisons under the **Modernisation of Prisons Project**.

What is the Need of Modernisation of Prisons Project?

They are Important Part of Justice System:

- Prisons are an **important and integral part of the Criminal Justice System of the country**.
- They not only play the **critical role in keeping the offenders in custodial** segregation but also help in the process of their **reformation and reintegration** with the society through various correctional programmes in the Jails.



Indian Prisons face three Long-Standing Structural Constraints:

- **Overcrowding,**
- Understaffing and underfunding and
- Violent clashes.

What is the Modernisation of Prisons Project?

- The Government of India has decided to provide financial assistance to States and UTs, through the Project for using **modern-day security equipment in Prisons for:**
- **Enhancing the security of jails.**
- To facilitate the task of **reformation and rehabilitation** of prisoners through correctional administration programmes.
- **Duration:** The duration of the project is for five years - **2021-26**.
- **Grant:** The Central Government will provide **Grant in aid to States** and UTs for implementation of the project.
- **Grants-in-aid** are payments in the nature of assistance, donations or contributions made by one government to another government, body, institution or individual.

- **Implementation Strategy:** MHA shall provide funds to States/UTs depending upon the number of prisons in a State/UT, number of prison inmates, jail staff, etc.
- The proposal of **funding will be decided by the Steering Committee** constituted for implementation of the modernization of prisons project.
- **Coverage:** The project will cover all States and Union Territories and shall broadly **cover the following prison types**- Central Jails, District Jails, Sub-Jails, Women Jails, Open Jails, Special Jails etc.

What are the Objectives of the Scheme?

- Filling the existing gaps in security **infrastructure of jails**.
- Providing **new security equipment to jails** in line with modern day technologies.
- Strengthening the **jail security system through security equipment** like Door Frame/ Metal Detectors/ Security Poles, Baggage Scanners/ Frisking/ Search/ Jamming Solutions etc.
- Focus on **correctional administration**, which includes bringing attitudinal change in the mindset of prison officials handling inmates through extensive training and by introducing appropriate programs for inmates for their skill development and rehabilitation, including engagement of trained correctional experts, behavioural experts, psychologists, etc.

What are other Related Initiatives of the Government?

- **Modernization of Prisons scheme:** The scheme for modernisation of prisons was launched in 2002-03 with the objective of improving the condition of prisons, prisoners and prison personnel.
- **E-Prisons Project:** The **E-Prisons project** aims to introduce efficiency in prison management through digitization.
- **Model Prison Manual 2016:** The **manual** provides detailed information about the legal services (including free services) available to prison inmates.
- **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA):** It was constituted under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987** which came into force on 9th November, 1995 to **establish a nationwide uniform network** for providing free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society.

#WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION BILL

Recently, the Government of India introduced in the Lok Sabha the **Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022**.

The bill envisages to **prohibit financing of any activity in relation to WMD** and to **empower to act against financiers of such activities**.

What are the highlights of the Bill?

- **Background:** The bill seeks to **modify the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005**.
- **Original Legislation:** The 2005 Act was enacted to prohibit unlawful activities in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.
- This Act **covers unlawful activities relating to biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and their delivery systems**.
- It also provides for **integrated legal measures** to exercise controls over the export of materials, equipment and technologies in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and for prevention of their transfers to non-State actors or terrorists.

What are Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)?

- These are weapons with the **capacity to inflict death and destruction** on such a massive scale and so indiscriminately that its very presence in the hands of a hostile power can be considered a grievous threat.

- Modern weapons of mass destruction are either **nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons**—frequently referred to collectively as **NBC weapons**.
- The term weapons of mass destruction have been in currency **since at least 1937**, when it was used to describe **massed formations of bomber aircraft**.
- For example, **Nuclear bombs used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki attack in Japan**.

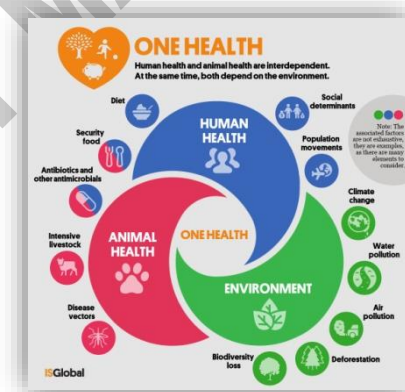
Efforts to control the spread of WMD are enshrined in international agreements such as:

- **Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty of 1968**
- **Biological Weapons Convention of 1972**
- **Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993**
- **India has not signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, but is signatory to both Biological Weapons Convention and Chemical Weapons Convention.**

#WHAT IS ONE HEALTH CONCEPT?

The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has launched a **pilot project in the state of Uttarakhand to implement the One Health Framework by One Health Support Unit**.

The key objective of the Unit is to **develop a national One Health roadmap based on the learnings of the pilot project implementation**. Some of the key activities to be undertaken as part of the pilot project include institutionalizing the mechanism for data collection on disease outbreaks, prevalence, management, and **development of targeted surveillance plan, integrating network of laboratories, developing and implementing communication strategy across sectors** and integration of the data with the digital architecture of the **National Digital Livestock Mission**.



What is the One Health Concept?

- One Health is an approach that recognizes that the health of people is closely connected to the health of animals and our shared environment.
- One Health' vision derives its blueprint from the agreement between the tripartite-plus alliance comprising the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), **the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)**.
- It's purpose is to encourage collaborations in research and sharing of knowledge at multiple levels across various disciplines like human health, animal health, plants, soil, environmental and ecosystem health in ways that improve, protect and defend the health of all species.

What is India's One Health Framework?

- In keeping with the long-term objectives, India established a National Standing Committee on Zoonoses as far back as the 1980s. Further, the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) has launched several schemes to mitigate the prevalence of animal diseases.
- In addition, DAHD will soon establish a 'One Health' unit within the Ministry. Additionally, the government is working to revamp programmes that focus on capacity building for veterinarians and upgrading the animal health diagnostic **system such as Assistance to States for Control of Animal Diseases (ASCAD)**.
- Recently, funds were sanctioned for setting up a 'Centre for One Health' at Nagpur.
- Also, the Department of Biotechnology has launched the country's first **One Health consortium**.

#WHAT IS PLI SCHEME?

Recently, the **NITI Aayog** has commenced work on evolving a set of objective criteria to track value addition by companies which avail financial rewards under **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes**. The empowered group of secretaries which was instituted in June 2020 was tasked with identifying the bottlenecks in PLI schemes, coordinating between states and companies for faster approvals, evaluating and ensuring quick investments in PLI schemes, and ensuring overall turnaround of projects.

The group is chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, and has the Chief Executive Officer of NITI Aayog, the secretaries of **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade**, Department of Commerce, Department of Revenue, Department of Economic Affairs, and the Secretary of the concerned ministry as its members.



What is the Plan?

- Taking the lead in **creating a centralised database to monitor progress in the PLI schemes across sectors**, the NITI Aayog plans to rope in an external agency – state-owned IFCI Ltd or SIDBI – to design and prepare the database.
- This **database will capture value addition, actual exports** against commitments made, and job creation.
- A **dashboard to flag hurdles** at the state level will also be created.

What is the PLI Scheme?

- The PLI scheme was **conceived to scale up domestic manufacturing capability**, accompanied by **higher import substitution and employment generation**.
- The government has set aside **Rs 1.97 lakh crore under the PLI schemes** for various sectors and an additional allocation of Rs 19,500 crore was made towards PLI for solar PV modules in **Budget 2022-23**.

Launched in **March 2020**, the scheme initially **targeted three industries**:

- **Mobile and allied Component Manufacturing**
- **Electrical Component Manufacturing and**
- **Medical Devices**

Incentives under the Scheme:

- The incentives, calculated on the **basis of incremental sales**, range from as low as **1% for the electronics and technology products** to as high as **20%** for the manufacturing of critical key starting drugs and certain drug intermediaries.
- In some sectors such as **advanced chemistry cell batteries, textile products and the drone industry**, the incentive to be given will be **calculated on the basis of sales, performance and local value addition done** over the period of five years.

#NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY STRATEGY

- In 2020, the **National Cyber Security Strategy** was conceptualised by the **Data Security Council of India (DSCI)** headed by **Lt General Rajesh Pant**. The report focused on 21 areas to ensure a safe, secure, trusted, resilient, and vibrant cyberspace for India.
- However, amid a surge in **cyberattacks on India's networks**, the Centre is yet to implement the **National Cyber Security Strategy**.

What is the Need for a National Cyber Security Strategy?

- **Increasing Number Of Cyber Attacks:** As per **American cybersecurity firm Palo Alto Networks' 2021 report**, **Maharashtra** was the **most targeted state in India** — facing 42% of all ransomware attacks.
- The report stated that India is among the more **economically profitable regions for hacker groups** and hence these hackers ask Indian firms to pay a ransom, usually using cryptocurrencies, in order to regain access to the data.
- **One in four Indian organisations suffered a ransomware attack in 2021** — higher than the global average of 21%.
- **For Government:** A local, state or central government maintains a huge amount of confidential data related to the **country (geographical, military-strategic assets etc.)** and citizens.
- **For Individuals:** Photos, videos and other personal information shared by an individual on social networking sites can be inappropriately used by others, leading to serious and even life-threatening incidents.
- **For Businesses:** Companies have a lot of data and information on their systems. A cyber attack may lead to loss of **competitive information** (such as patents or original work), and loss of employees/customers' private data resulting in complete loss of public trust in the integrity of the organisation.

What are the Main Components of the National Cyber Security Strategy?

- **Large Scale Digitisation of Public Services:** Focus on security in the early stages of design in all digitisation initiatives.
- **Developing institutional capability** for assessment, evaluation, certification, and rating of the core devices
- Timely reporting of vulnerabilities and incidents.
- **Supply Chain Security:** Monitoring and mapping of the supply chain of the **Integrated Circuits (ICT)** and electronics products.
- Leveraging the country's **semiconductor** design capabilities globally at strategic, tactical and technical levels.
- **Critical Information Infrastructure Protection:** Integrating **Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition (SCADA)** security
- Maintaining a repository of vulnerabilities.
- Preparing an aggregate level **security baseline of the sector** and tracking its controls.
- Devising **audit parameters for threat preparedness** and developing cyber-insurance products.

#UDAN (UDE DESH KA AAM NAGRIK)

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 **21st 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**.

#DRAFT ANTARCTIC BILL, 2022

Recently, the government has introduced the 'Antarctic Bill' in the Lok Sabha, which envisages regulating visits and activities to Antarctica as well potential disputes that may arise among those present on the continent.

The Bill is **applicable to Indian citizens as well as foreign citizens.**

In October 2021, **India extended its support for protecting the Antarctic environment** and for co-sponsoring the proposal of the **European Union** for designating East Antarctica and the Weddell Sea as **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)**. Earlier, a 100-km long body of ice in Antarctica, which has been experiencing rapid melting, was formally **named Glasgow** after the Glasgow climate summit.



What are the Provisions under the Bill?

- **Regulate Visiting:** The bill has listed **strict guidelines and a system of permits**, which will be issued by a government-appointed committee, without which any expedition or individual will not be allowed to enter Antarctica.
- **Protecting Mineral Resources:** The Bill further **prohibits drilling, dredging, excavation or collection of mineral resources** or even doing anything to identify where such mineral deposits occur. The only exception is for **scientific research with a permit**.
- **Protecting Native Plants:** There will be strict **prohibition on damaging native plants, flying or landing helicopters or operating vessels** that could disturb birds and seals, using firearms that could disturb the birds and animals, remove soil or any biological material native to Antarctica, engage in any activity that could adversely change the habitat of birds and animals, or harm them.

What is the Objective of the Bill?

- To **provide a harmonious policy framework for India's Antarctic activities** through a well-established legal mechanism, facilitate activities of the Indian Antarctic programme, including management of Antarctic tourism and sustainable development of fisheries.
- **What are the Key Highlights about Antarctica?**
- Antarctica is **uninhabited except for those manning the nearly 40 permanent stations** established by several countries, including India, for carrying out scientific research.
- India maintains **two research stations on the continent**: 'Maitri' (commissioned in 1989) at Schirmacher Hills and 'Bharati' (2012) at Larsemann Hills.
- It has also **launched 41 scientific expeditions every year** thus far. Together with 'Himadri' station in Svalbard, above the Arctic circle, India is among an **elite group of countries with multiple research** in the polar regions.
- Antarctica is **Earth's southernmost continent**. It contains the **geographic South Pole** and is situated in the **Antarctic region of the Southern Hemisphere**.
- At 14,000,000 square kilometers, it is the **fifth-largest continent**.
- The **Indian Antarctic Programme** is a multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional programme under the control of the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research, Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- India officially **acceded to the Antarctic Treaty System in August 1983**.

#GLOBAL CENTRE FOR TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

Recently, the groundbreaking ceremony was performed for the **first-of-its-kind World Health Organization (WHO) Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM)** in Jamnagar, Gujarat.

- Additionally, the **Global Ayush Investment and Innovation Summit** will be held later this month in Gandhinagar which is aimed at **increasing investments and showcase innovations** in the field of traditional medicine.
- It is a **unique attempt to foster long-lasting partnerships**, boost exports and nurture a sustainable ecosystem.

What is Traditional Medicine?

- According to the WHO, **traditional medicine is the total sum of the “knowledge, skills and practises indigenous and different cultures have used over time to maintain health and prevent, diagnose and treat physical and mental illness”.**
- Its **reach encompasses ancient practices** such as acupuncture, ayurvedic medicine and herbal mixtures as well as modern medicines.

Traditional Medicine in India:

- In India, it is often **defined as including practices and therapies** — such as **yoga, Ayurveda, Siddha**.
- These therapies and practices **have been part of Indian tradition historically as well as others** — such as homoeopathy — that became part of Indian tradition over the years.
- Ayurveda and yoga are practised widely across the country.
- The Siddha system is followed predominantly in Tamil Nadu and Kerala
- The Sowa-Rigpa system is practised mainly in Leh-Ladakh and Himalayan regions such as Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Darjeeling, Lahaul & Spiti.

#HINDI LANGUAGE & ITS IDENTITY

- Recently, the Government of India provided that **Hindi would be made compulsory up to Class 10 in the eight northeastern states**.
- Hindi is described as **“the language of India”.**
- However, the move has been met with **protests from various organisations in the Northeast**. Also, several south Indian states have criticised the central government decision.
- Instead, these groups are supportive of **three-language policy – English, Hindi and the local language**.

What is the Arguments Presented by Northeastern Organization?

- **Sixth Schedule:** The state is protected by the **Sixth Schedule of the Constitution** and the Centre would not be able to impose Hindi on the students.
- **Discrimination:** Centre’s move will provide Hindi-speakers the economic, academic and administrative edge and let them control non-Hindi speaking regions of the country in the long run.

What is the Issue with Hindi Language and Identity?

- **Linguistic Organization of States:** In India most of the states have been formed on linguistic basis.
- **Conflicts over identity**, especially over languages tend to be escalated due to limited resources in India.
- **Examples of Linguistic Division:** The status of language has been a critical issue that has caused division of states in the past.

- Such states as **Andhra Pradesh (1st state formed on linguistic basis)**, Punjab and Gujarat were created due to statehood demand on linguistic basis.
- **Instrument of Managing Conflict:** Language policy is one method by which governments attempt to manage ethnic conflict.
- Thus, to develop federal cooperation, autonomy of the states over language policy can be a more viable option than the imposition of a three language formula.

What is the Three-Language Formula & Its Need?

- **About:** Three-Language Formula was first proposed by **Kothari Commission 1968**. Under this scheme:
- **First language:** It will be the mother tongue or **regional language**.
- **Second language:** In Hindi speaking states, it will be other modern Indian languages or English. In non-Hindi speaking states, it will be **Hindi or English**.
- **Third Language:** In Hindi speaking states, it will be **English or a modern Indian language**. In the non-Hindi speaking state, it will be English or a modern Indian language.

What are Constitutional Provisions Related to Languages?

- **Article 29** of the Constitution of India **protects the interests of minorities**. The Article states that any section of the **citizens who have a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same**.
- **Article 343** is about the official language of the Union of India. According to this Article, it is to be **Hindi in Devnagri script, and numerals should follow the international form of Indian numerals**.
- This Article also states that **English will continue to be used as an official language for 15 years from the commencement of the Constitution**.
- **Article 346** is about the **official language for communication between the states and between a state and the Union**.
- The Article states that the “authorised” language will be used. However, **if two or more states agree that their communications shall be in Hindi, then Hindi may be used**.
- **Article 347** gives the **President the power to recognise a language as an official language of a given state**, provided that the President is satisfied that a substantial proportion of that state desires that the language be recognised.
- Such recognition can be for a part of the state or the whole state.
- **Article 350A** facilities for instruction in **mother-tongue at the primary stage**.
- **Article 350B** provides for the establishment of a **Special Officer for linguistic minorities**.
- The Officer shall be **appointed by the President** and shall investigate all matters relating to the safeguards for linguistic minorities, reporting directly to the President.
- The President may then place the reports before each house of the Parliament or send them to the governments of the states concerned.
- **Article 351** gives power to the union government to issue a directive for development of the Hindi language.
- **The Eighth Schedule** of the Constitution of India contains a list of **22 recognised schedule languages**.

#RASHTRIYA GRAM SWARAJ ABHIYAN

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved continuation of the revamped **Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)** for implementation during the period from **1st April 2022 to 31st March 2026**.

The scheme is now co-terminus with the **15th Finance Commission period**.

The scheme is aimed to **develop governance capabilities of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)**.



What is Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)?

- **Background:** The scheme was first approved by the **Cabinet in 2018** for implementation from 2018-19 to 2021-22.
- **Implementing Agency:** Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- **Components:** The main Central Components were **Incentivisation of Panchayats** and Mission Mode Project on e-Panchayat including other activities at Central level.
- The State component primarily includes **Capacity Building & Training (CB&T)** activities, institutional mechanisms for CB&T along with other activities at a limited scale.

Objectives: It envisaged developing governance capabilities of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) **to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

- The key principles of SDGs, i.e. leaving no one behind, reaching the farthest first and universal coverage, along with gender equality will be embedded in the design of all capacity building interventions including training, training modules and materials.
- Priority will be given to subjects of national importance principally under themes, namely:
 - Poverty free and enhanced livelihood in villages
 - Healthy Village
 - Child Friendly Village
 - Water Sufficient Village
 - Clean and Green Village
 - Self-Sufficient Infrastructure in Village
 - Socially Secured Village
 - Village with Good Governance
 - Engendered Development in Village.

#CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL

Recently, **Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT)** conducted a special drive across all the **19 Benches of the Tribunal** for disposal of cases of most **vulnerable section of applicants** like the senior citizens / pensioners.

What is Central Administrative Tribunal?

- **About:** It had been established under **Article 323 - A of the Constitution**.
- It **provides for adjudication of disputes and complaints with respect to recruitment and conditions of service** of persons appointed to public services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or other authorities under the control of the Government.

Legal Framework:

- In pursuance of Article 323-A, Parliament passed the **Administrative Tribunals Act in 1985**.
- The act authorizes the Central government to establish one CAT and the state administrative tribunals.
- This act opened a new chapter in the sphere of providing speedy and inexpensive justice to the aggrieved public servants.
- CAT was set up during the Prime Ministership of **Rajeev Gandhi**.
- **Benches:** There are **19 Benches in the CAT all over India**.

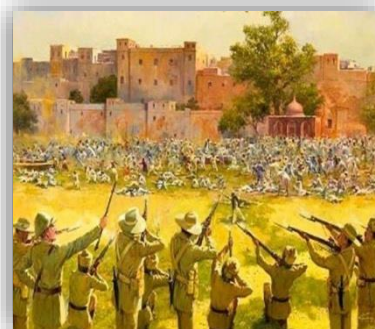
Objective and Composition:

- The CAT is a specialist body consisting of Administrative Members and Judicial Members who by virtue of their specialized knowledge are better equipped to dispense speedy and effective justice.
- A **Chairman** who has been a sitting or **retired Judge of a High Court** heads the CAT.
- **Operating Principles:** The Tribunal is guided by the principles of natural justice in deciding cases and is not bound by the procedure prescribed by the **Civil Procedure Code**.
- Under Section 17 of the **Administrative Tribunal Act, 1985**, the Tribunal has been conferred with the power to exercise the same jurisdiction and authority in respect of contempt of itself as a High Court.
- **Independence:** The conditions of service of the Chairman and Members are the same as applicable to a Judge of High Court as per the **Administrative Tribunals (Amendment) Act, 2006**.
- **Appeals against Orders:** The orders of the CAT are challenged by way of a **Writ Petition under Article 226/227 of the Constitution** before the respective High Court in whose territorial jurisdiction the Bench of the Tribunal is situated.

#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**. **13th 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?

- The Jallianwala Bagh massacre or the Amritsar massacre of **13th 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 **6th April 1919**.
- In Punjab, on **9th 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 **10th 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 13th 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.

#RESIGNATION OF IAS OFFICER

Recently, an **Indian Administrative Service (IAS)** officer who resigned from the service in protest against the "unabated" killings in Kashmir in 2019 has been reinstated.

What are the Rules regarding the Resignation of IAS officers?

- The resignation of an officer of any of the three **All-India Services** is governed by **Rules 5(1) and 5(1A)** of the All India Services (Death-cum-Retirement Benefits) Rules, 1958.
- **All-India Services includes:** IAS, the Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Forest Service (IFS).
- There are **similar rules for resignation of officers** belonging to the other central services as well.

What is the Meaning of Resignation by an Officer?

- A resignation is a **formal intimation in writing** by an officer of his/her intention or a proposal to leave the IAS, either immediately or at a specified date in the future.
- A resignation **has to be clear and unconditional**.
- Resignation from service is **entirely different from accepting the government's Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS)**.
- Those who take VRS are entitled to pension, whereas those who resign are not.
- **To whom it is Submitted:** In case of State Deputation: The chief secretary of the state.

What is the Process after the Resignation is submitted?

- **At State Level:** The state checks to see if **any dues are outstanding against the officer**, as well as the vigilance status of the officer or whether any cases of corruption etc. are pending against him/her. In case there is such a case, the resignation is normally rejected.
- **At Central Level:** The resignation of the officer is **considered by the competent authority**, i.e., the central government, only after the recommendation of the concerned cadre has been received.

The competent authorities are:

- Minister of State at the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT) in respect of the IAS
- The Minister for Home Affairs in respect of the IPS
- Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change in respect of the Forest Service.
- As Minister in Charge of the DoPT, the **Prime Minister makes decisions regarding the IAS.**

#WHAT IS HATTI COMMUNITY?

Centre is considering the Himachal Pradesh' government's request for **inclusion of the Hatti community in the list of Scheduled Tribes** in the state.

- The community has been making the **demand since 1967, when tribal status was accorded to people living in the Jaunsar Bawar area of Uttarakhand, which shares a border with Sirmaur district.**
- Their demand for tribal status gained strength because of **resolutions passed at various maha Khumblis over the years.**

Who are the Hattis?

- The Hattis are a close-knit community who got their name from their tradition of selling homegrown vegetables, crops, meat and wool etc. at small markets called 'haat' in towns.
- The Hatti community, whose men generally don a **distinctive white headgear during ceremonies, is cut off from Sirmaur by two rivers called Giri and Tons.**
- Tons divides it from the Jaunsar Bawar area of Uttarakhand.
- The Hattis who live in the trans-Giri area and Jaunsar Bawar in Uttarakhand **were once part of the royal estate of Sirmaur until Jaunsar Bawar's separation in 1815.**
- The two clans have **similar traditions, and inter-marriages are commonplace.**
- There is a rigid caste system among the Hattis — **the Bhat and Khash are the upper castes, while the Badhois are below them.**
- Inter-caste marriages have **traditionally remained a strict no-no.**
- Due to topographical disadvantages, **the Hattis living in the Kamrau, Sangrah, and Shilliai areas lag in education and employment.**
- The Hattis are governed by a traditional council called Khumbli, which like the khaps of Haryana, decide community matters.
- The Khumbli's power **has remained unchallenged** despite the establishment of the **Panchayati Raj System.**

What is a Scheduled Tribe?

- **Article 366 (25)** of the Constitution refers to **Scheduled Tribes** as those communities, who are scheduled in accordance with Article 342 of the Constitution.
- **Article 342** says that only those communities who have been declared as such by the President through an initial public notification or through a subsequent amending Act of Parliament will be Scheduled Tribes.
- The list of Scheduled Tribes is State/UT specific, and a **community declared as a Scheduled Tribe in one State need not be so in another State.**
- The **Constitution is silent about the criteria for specification of a community as a Scheduled Tribe.**
- Primitiveness, geographical isolation, shyness and social, educational & economic backwardness are the traits that distinguish Scheduled Tribe communities from other communities.
- There are certain Scheduled Tribes, 75 in number known as **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)**, who are characterized by:
 - Pre-agriculture level of technology.
 - Stagnant or declining population.
 - Extremely low literacy.

- Subsistence level of economy

Government Initiatives for STs:

- The **Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA)**.
- The **Provision of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996**.
- Minor Forest Produce Act 2005.
- **SC And ST (Prevention Of Atrocities) Act**.
- Tribal Sub-Plan Strategy are focused on the socio-economic empowerment of STs.

#NBC FRAMEWORK UNDER SBM 2.0

Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0), has launched the '**National Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) Framework for Garbage Free Cities**' to strengthen the ongoing jan andolan for 'Garbage Free Cities'.

What is the National Behaviour Change Communication Framework?

- The BCC Framework for Garbage Free Cities shall serve as a guiding document and blueprint for States and Cities to undertake large scale multimedia campaigns along with intensive and focused inter-personal communication campaigns.
- The framework focuses on intensifying messaging around the key focus areas of source segregation, collection, transportation, and processing of waste, plastic waste management, and remediation of legacy dumpsites to transform the urban landscape of India.



What is SBM-U 2.0?

SBM-U 2.0, announced in **Budget 2021-22**, is the continuation of SBM-U first phase.

It was **launched on 1st October 2021** to achieve the **vision of 'Garbage Free Cities'** over the next five years.

The government is also trying to tap safe containment, transportation, disposal of faecal sludge, and septage from toilets.

It will be implemented over five years from 2021 to 2026 with an outlay of Rs.1.41 lakh crore.

SBM-U first phase was launched on 2nd October 2014 aiming at making urban India **Open Defecation Free (ODF)** and achieving 100% scientific management of municipal solid waste. It lasted till October 2019.

Aim:

- It focuses on source segregation of garbage, reduction in **single-use plastic** and air pollution, by effectively managing waste from construction and demolition activities and **bioremediation of all legacy dump sites**.
- Under this mission, all wastewater will be treated properly before it is discharged into water bodies, and the government is trying to make maximum reuse a priority.

#WHAT IS SMART CITIES MISSION?

- Recently, the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** has announced that all 100 smart cities will have **Integrated Command and Control Centers (ICCCs)**, under **Smart Cities Mission (SCM)**.
- These ICCCs are spread across various states that have been developing Smart Cities, with states such as Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat leading in terms of the total number of ICCCs set up.

What is an Integrated Command and Control Centre?

- ICCC will act as the **“nerve center”** for operations management in the city with **day-to-day exception handling** and disaster management.
- ICCCs provide **smart solutions** to the city's **municipal corporation** and help manage safety and surveillance of the city.



- The centres comprise video walls for real-time monitoring, emergency response system, operations planning to include critical ones and 24x7 manual maintenance.
- The centres are being established to enable smart living, smart environment, smart economy, smart governance, smart population and smart mobility.
- The centre will also provide valuable insights by processing complex data sets at an aggregated level to derive intelligence for improved planning and policymaking.
- The ICCCs are now also **linked to the CCTNS** (Crime and Criminal Tracking Networks and Systems) network under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Aim:

- To aggregate information across multiple applications and sensors deployed across the city and provide actionable information with appropriate visualization for decision-makers.

What is the Smart Cities Mission?

- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme, launched in June 2015 to transform 100 cities** to provide the necessary core infrastructure and clean and sustainable environment to enable a decent quality of life to their citizens through the application of **"Smart Solutions"**.
- The mission aims to meet the aspirations of India's population living in cities through various urban development projects.

Features:

- Among its strategic components is **'area-based development'**, which includes city improvement (retrofitting), city renewal (redevelopment) and city extension (greenfield development), plus a pan-city initiative in which 'smart solutions' are applied covering larger parts of the city.
- Key focus areas of the scheme include **construction of walkways, pedestrian crossings, cycling tracks, efficient waste-management systems, integrated traffic management and assessment.**
- The scheme also assesses **various indices to track urban development such as the Ease of Living Index, Municipal Performance Index, City GDP framework, Climate Smart Cities assessment framework, etc.**

What are the other Initiatives Related to Urban Development?

- Atal Mission for Urban Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT).
- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U).
- Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework 2.0.
- TULIP-The Urban Learning Internship Program.

#SIXTH SCORPENE SUBMARINE

Recently, Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders launched the sixth **Scorpene Submarine** 'Vagsheer' of **Project-75**.

What is a Scorpene Class Submarine?

- The submarines in the Project-75 Scorpene Class are powered by diesel-electric propulsion systems.
- Scorpene is one of the most sophisticated submarines, capable of undertaking multifarious missions including anti-surface ship warfare, anti-submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, mine laying, and area surveillance.
- The Scorpene class is the Navy's first modern conventional submarine series in almost two decades since INS Sindhusashtra, procured from Russia in July 2000.



What is Submarine Vagsheer?

- Vagsheer is named after the sand fish, a **deep sea predator of the Indian Ocean.**
- The first submarine Vagsheer, from Russia, was commissioned into the **Indian Navy in December, 1974, and was decommissioned in April, 1997.**
- It is the last of the Scorpene class submarines made under the P75 project and can join the Navy fleet within 12-18 months after sea trials.

Features:

- Vagsheer is a **diesel attack submarine, designed to perform sea denial as well as access denial warfare** against the adversary.
- It is enabled with a **C303 anti-torpedo countermeasure system.**
- It can carry up to 18 torpedoes or Exocet anti-ship missiles, or 30 mines in place of torpedoes.
- Its superior stealth features include advanced acoustic absorption techniques, low radiated noise levels, hydro-dynamically optimized shape, and it can launch a crippling attack using precision guided weapons, underwater or on surface.

What is Project-75?

- P 75 is one of two lines of submarines, the other being **P75I**, as part of a plan approved in 1999 for indigenous submarine construction with technology taken from overseas firms.
- The contract for six submarines under P75 was given to Mazgaon dock in October 2005 and delivery was to start from 2012, but the project has faced delays.
- The programme has been undertaken with **transfer of technology from French company Naval Group** (formerly known as DCNS) at the Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL).
- Under P75, **INS Kalvari, INS Khanderi, INS Karanj and INS Vela have been commissioned.**
- Sea trials are on for **Vagir**.
- Vagsheer is the sixth; its production was delayed due to the pandemic.

#WILDLIFE PROTECTION AMENDMENT BILL, 2021

Recently, the **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change** submitted its report on the proposed the **Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021**. The standing committee has found that **some species were excluded from various schedules of wildlife and plants** that have been proposed by the **Environment Ministry** and has recommended a revised listing of schedules to include these species.



What is Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972?

- **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972** provides a legal framework for the protection of various species of wild animals and plants, the management of their habitats, and the regulation and control of trade in wild animals, plants and products made from them.
- The Act also lists **schedules of plants and animals** that are afforded various degrees of protection and monitoring by the government.
- The Act has been amended several times, with the **last amendment having been made in 2006**.

What are Key features of the Bill?

- **Implementing Provision of CITES:** The Bill seeks to **implement provisions of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**. The Bill provides for the central government to designate a:
- **Management Authority**, which grants export or import permits for trade of specimens.
- Every person engaging in trade of a scheduled specimen must report the details of the transaction to the Management Authority.

- As per CITES, the Management Authority may use an identification mark for a specimen.
- The Bill prohibits any person from modifying or removing the identification mark of the specimen.
- Additionally, every person possessing live specimens of scheduled animals must obtain a registration certificate from the Management Authority.
- **Scientific Authority**, which gives advice on aspects related to impact on the survival of the specimens being traded.
- **Rationalizing Schedules:** Currently, the Act has six schedules for specially protected plants (one), specially protected animals (four), and vermin species (one). The Bill **reduces the total number of schedules to four** by:
 - **Schedule I** for species that will enjoy the highest level of protection,
 - **Schedule II** for species that will be subject to a lesser degree of protection and
 - **Schedule III** that covers plants.
- It **removes the schedule for vermin species**. Vermin refers to small animals that carry diseases and destroy food.
- It **inserts a new schedule for specimens listed in the Appendices under CITES (scheduled specimens)**.

#WHAT IS VERTICAL FARMING?

India is evolving every day with something new. Also, industrialization is increasing dramatically due to which many arable lands are at greater risk. **Vertical farming** in India is the answer to all these problems.

What is Vertical Farming?

- In 1915, **Gilbert Ellis Bailey** coined the term **vertical farming** and he went on to write a namesake book.
- The modern concept was first proposed in 1999 by Professor Dickson Despommier. His concept centered on the idea that urban areas should grow their own food which can save time and **resources** required for transportation.
- Instead of horizontally on the ground like traditional farming, **vertical farming grows crops in vertical, stacked layers without putting too much impact on land and water resources** which are scarce.
- It includes **soilless farming techniques**, among others.
- Vertical farming systems like **aeroponics and hydroponics** come under the broad umbrella ambit of '**protected cultivation**', where **one can control and regulate multiple variables like water, soil, temperature, humidity, and so on**.
- Protected cultivation, when **practised at scale, offers a massive potential to shorten and optimise our farm-to-plate supply chains by making food available closer to the consumer** and thereby can go a long way to improve our nation's **GDP (Gross Domestic Product)** and reduce imports dependency.

Types:

- **Hydroponics:** Hydroponics is a method of growing plants **in a water-based, nutrient-rich solution**. In this method, **the root system is supported using an inert medium** such as perlite, clay pellets, peat moss or vermiculite. The main purpose is to provide access to oxygen which is essential for proper growth.
- **Aeroponics:** Aeroponics is an environment-friendly way of farming in which the **roots are suspended in the air and plants grow in a humid environment without soil**. It is a **variation of hydroponics** where both growing medium and flowing water are absent.
- **Aquaponics:** Aquaponics is a system that **combines hydroponics and aquaculture** within a closed system. There are three biological components in the aquaponics process: fishes, plants, and bacteria.

#91ST AMENDMENT ACT

- Recently, the **High Court of Bombay** noted that **arguable issues have been raised** in a **Public Interest Litigation (PIL)** challenging the “lifetime status of the rank of **Cabinet minister**” according to **Pratap Singh Rane, a six-time Chief Minister of Goa and a legislator for a full 50 years.**
- The PIL has contended that Goa has a **12-member Cabinet**, and the conferment of Cabinet status on Rane results in the number of **Cabinet ranks rising to 13**, which exceeds the **ceiling mandated by the Constitution.**
- This limit was set by **91st Amendment) Act, 2003** to the Indian Constitution.



What is the 91st Amendment Act?

- The Constitution (**91st Amendment) Act, 2003** inserted **clause 1A in Article 164**, which says “the **total number of Ministers, including the Chief Minister, in the Council of Ministers in a State** shall not exceed **15% of the total number of members of the Legislative Assembly of that State.**”
- It also provided that the number of Ministers, including the Chief Minister in a State shall **not be less than twelve**”.
- Similar amendments were also **made under Article 75.**
- According to it, the PM shall be appointed by the **President and the other Ministers shall be appointed by the President on the advice of the PM.**
- The total number of ministers, including the Prime Minister, in the COM shall not exceed **15% of the total strength of the Lok Sabha.**
- The purpose of the 91st Amendment was to prevent jumbo Cabinets and the resultant drain on the public exchequer.

What is the Council of Ministers?

- **Article 74 of the Constitution** deals with the status of the **council of ministers** while Article 75 deals with the appointment, tenure, responsibility, qualification, oath and salaries and allowances of the ministers.
- The **COM consists of three categories of ministers, namely, cabinet ministers, ministers of state, and deputy ministers.** At the top of all these ministers stands the Prime Minister.
- **Cabinet Ministers:** These head the important ministries of the Central government like home, defense, finance, external affairs and so forth.

- The Cabinet is the chief policy formulating body of the Central government.
- **Ministers of State:** These can either be given independent charge of ministries/ departments or can be attached to cabinet ministers.
- **Deputy Ministers:** They are attached to the cabinet ministers or ministers of state and assist them in their administrative, political, and parliamentary duties.
- **What is Public Interest Litigation?**
- Public interest Litigation (PIL) means **litigation filed in a court of law**, for the protection of “**Public Interest**”, such as **Pollution, Terrorism, Road safety, Constructional hazards etc.**
- Any matter where the interest of the public at large is affected can be redressed by filing a Public Interest Litigation in a court of law.
- Public interest litigation is **not defined in any statute or in any act**. It has been interpreted by judges to consider the intent of the public at large.
- Public interest litigation is the **power given to the public by courts through judicial activism**.
- However, the person filing the **petition must prove to the satisfaction of the court that the petition is being filed for a public interest** and not just as frivolous litigation by a busy body.
- The court can itself take **cognizance of the matter and proceed suo motu** or cases can commence on the petition of any public spirited individual.
- **Some of the matters which are entertained under PIL are:**
 - **Bonded Labour** matters
 - Neglected Children
 - Non-payment of minimum wages to workers and exploitation of casual workers
 - Atrocities on women
 - Environmental pollution and disturbance of ecological balance
 - Food adulteration
 - Maintenance of heritage and culture

The era of the PIL movement was heralded by **Justice P.N. Bhagwati** in the case of **S.P. Gupta vs. Union of India 1981**.

- In this case it was held that “any member of the public or social action group acting Bonafide” can invoke the **Writ Jurisdiction of the High Courts (under article 226) or the Supreme Court (under Article 32)**.
- Through PIL any person can seek redressal against violation of legal or constitutional rights of persons who due to social or economic or any other disability cannot approach the Court.

#ROLE OF GOVERNOR IN UNIVERSITIES

- Recently, the **Tamil Nadu Assembly** passed two Bills that seek to **transfer the Governor’s power in appointing Vice-Chancellors (VC)** of 13 state universities to the state government.
- Earlier, the Maharashtra and West Bengal Governments have made similar provisions vis-a-vis **the governor appointing Vice-Chancellor of the Universities**.
- In Karnataka, Jharkhand and Rajasthan, state laws underline the need for concurrence between the state and the Governor.
- The terms “**concurrence**” or “**consultation**” are absent from state legislation in most cases.

What are the Highlights of the two Bills?

- The Bills passed in Tamil Nadu stress that “**every appointment of the Vice-Chancellor shall be made by the Government from out of a panel of three names**” recommended by a **search-cum-selection committee**.
- Currently, the Governor, in his **capacity as the Chancellor of state universities**, has the power to pick a VC from the shortlisted names.
- The Bills also seek to empower the **state government to have the final word on the removal of VCs, if needed**.

- Removal will be carried out **based on inquiries by a retired High Court judge** or a bureaucrat who has served at least as a Chief Secretary.

What is the UGC's role in this?

- Education comes under the **Concurrent List**, but **entry 66 of the Union List** — “coordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions” — gives the **Centre substantial authority over higher education**.
- The **University Grants Commission** plays that standard-setting role, even in the case of appointments in universities and colleges.
- Recently, the **University Grants Commission** has released Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Education Institutions to offer Joint Degree, Dual Degree, and Twinning Programmes Regulations, 2022.
- Under these **regulations collaborating institutes** will be allowed to offer three kinds of programmes — twinning, joint degrees and dual degrees.
- According to the **UGC (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers and other Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and other Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulations, 2018**, the “Visitor/Chancellor” — mostly the Governor in states — shall appoint the VC out of the panel of names recommended by search-cum-selection committees.
- Higher educational institutions, particularly those that get **UGC funds**, **are mandated to follow its regulations**.
- These are usually followed without friction in the case of central universities but are sometimes resisted by the states in the case of state universities.

What is the view of Judiciary in this matter?

- The **Supreme Court** in various judgment held that any appointment as a Vice Chancellor contrary to the provisions of the UGC Regulations can be said to be in violation of the statutory **provisions**, warranting a **writ of quo warranto**”.
- In case of any conflict between state legislation and central legislation, central legislation shall prevail, as the education’ is in the **Concurrent List of the Seventh Schedule** of the Constitution.
- **What is the Role of Governors in State Universities?**
- In most cases, the Governor of the state is the **ex-officio chancellor of the universities in that state**.
- While as **Governor he functions with the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers**, as **Chancellor he acts independently** of the Council of Ministers and takes his own decisions on all University matters.

Case of Central Universities:

- Under the **Central Universities Act, 2009**, and other statutes, the **President** of India shall be the Visitor of a central university.
- With their role limited to **presiding over convocations**, **Chancellors in central universities are titular heads**, who are appointed by the President in his capacity as Visitor.
- The Vice Chancellor too is appointed by the **Visitor from panels of names picked by search and selection committees** formed by the Union government.
- The Act adds that the **President, as Visitor**, shall have the right to authorize inspections of academic and non-academic aspects of the universities and to institute inquiries.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

#TOP MILITARY SPENDERS IN THE WORLD

According to the latest data published by **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**, world military spending continued to grow in 2021, **reaching an all-time high of USD 2.1 trillion** despite the economic fallout of the **pandemic**.

As a result of a sharp economic recovery in 2021, the global military burden—world military expenditure as a share of world **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**—fell by 0.1 percentage points, from 2.3% in 2020 to 2.2% in 2021.

What is SIPRI?

- The SIPRI is an **independent international institute** dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.
- It was **established in 1966 in Stockholm (Sweden)**

What is the Scenario of the World?

- **Top Spenders:** The **five largest spenders in 2021** were the US, China, India, the UK and Russia. They accounted together for **62% of expenditure** and the **US and China alone accounted for 52%**.
- **Asia and Oceania:** The military spending in **Asia and Oceania totaled USD586 billion in 2021**. Spending in the region was **3.5% higher than in 2020**, continuing an uninterrupted upward trend **dating back to at least 1989**. The increase in 2021 was **due primarily to growth in Chinese and Indian military spending**. Together, **the two countries accounted for 63% of total military expenditure** in the region in 2021.
- **Increased Spending in Russia:** Russia increased its **military expenditure by 2.9% in 2021**, to USD65.9 billion, at a time when it was building up its forces along the Ukrainian border.
- **NATO Members Spending:**
- Eight European **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** members reached the Alliance's target of spending 2% or more of GDP on their armed forces in 2021. This is **one fewer than in 2020** but up from two in 2014.

What are the Highlights about India?

- India's military spending of **USD76.6 billion ranked third highest in the world**.
- This was up by **0.9% from 2020 and by 33% from 2012**.
- Amid **ongoing tensions and border disputes with China and Pakistan** that occasionally spill over into armed clashes, India has **prioritized the modernization of its armed forces and self-reliance** in arms production.
- In a drive to strengthen the indigenous arms industry, **64% of capital outlays in the 2021 Indian military budget were earmarked** for acquisitions of domestically produced arms.

#NEPAL PM VISIT TO 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 International Solar Alliance** (becoming the 105th 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.
- **Joint Vision Statement on Power Sector Cooperation:**
- India called for taking **full advantage of opportunities in the power sector, including through joint development of power generation projects in Nepal** and development of cross-border transmission infrastructure.
- India plays an important role in **developing Nepal's power sector, through capacity building and direct support** to infrastructure projects related to generation and transmission.
- Nepal also **appreciated India's recent cross-border electricity trade regulations** that have enabled it to access India's market and trade power with India. Nepal exports its surplus power to India.
- The two sides **agreed to expedite work on the delayed Pancheshwar multipurpose dam project (on Mahakali river)** that is considered to be a gamechanger for the development of the region.

Border Issue:

- Nepalese Prime Minister urged his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi to take steps to resolve a boundary dispute.
- The Indian side made it clear **both countries need to address the boundary issue through dialogue and to avoid the politicisation of such issues**.
- India had **earlier rejected Nepal's unilateral move in 2020 to amend its constitution to show the Kalapani region as part of Nepal** for the first time.

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**.

#EU DIGITAL SERVICES ACT (DSA), 2022

- Recently, the **European Parliament and European Union (EU) Member States** announced that they had reached a political agreement on the Digital Services Act (DSA), 2022. It is a landmark legislation to **force big Internet companies** to act against disinformation and illegal and harmful content, and to **"provide better protection for Internet users and their fundamental rights"**.
- The proposed Act seeks to end the **era of self-regulation by tech companies** and give 'practical effect to the principle that **what is illegal offline, should be illegal online**'.
- In India, a bill (**Data Protection Bill 2019**) on similar issue is pending in **Parliament**.



What is the DSA, and to whom will it apply?

- As defined by the EU Commission, the DSA is "a set of common rules on intermediaries' obligations and accountability across the single market", and ensures **higher protection to all EU users**, irrespective of their country.
- **Objective:** The DSA will tightly regulate the way intermediaries, especially large platforms such as **Google, Facebook, and YouTube**, function when it comes to moderating user content.
- **Self Regulation Era is Over:** Instead of letting platforms decide **how to deal with abusive or illegal content**, the DSA will lay down specific rules and obligations for these companies to follow.
- **Applicability:** According to the EU, DSA will apply to a **"large category of online services, from simple websites to Internet infrastructure services and online platforms."**

- The obligations for each of these **will differ according to their size and role**.
- The legislation brings in its ambit platforms that provide Internet access, domain name registrars, hosting services such as cloud computing and web-hosting services.
- However, more importantly, **Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) and Very Large Online Search Engines (VLOSEs)** will face “more stringent requirements.”
- For example, any service with more than **45 million monthly active users in the EU will fall into this category**. Those with fewer than 45 million monthly active users in the EU will be exempt from certain new obligations.
- **Implementation:** Once the DSA becomes law, each EU Member State will have the primary role in enforcing these, along with a new “**European Board for Digital Services**.”
- The EU Commission will carry out “**enhanced supervision and enforcement**” for the VLOPs and VLOSEs.
- Penalties for breaching these rules could be huge — as **high as 6% of the company’s global annual turnover**.

What do the new Rules State?

- **New Procedures for Faster Removal:** Online platforms and intermediaries such as Facebook, Google, YouTube, etc. will have to add “**new procedures for faster removal**” of content deemed illegal or harmful.
- **Impose a Duty of Care:** Marketplaces such as Amazon will have to “**impose a duty of care**” on sellers who are using their platform to sell products online.
- They will have to **collect and display information** on the products and services sold in order to ensure that consumers are properly informed.
- **Auditing Mechanism:** The DSA adds “**an obligation for very large digital platforms and services to analyze systemic risks they create and to carry out risk reduction analysis**”.
- This audit for platforms like Google and Facebook will need to take place every year.
- **Independent Researchers:** The Act proposes allowing **independent vetted researchers** to have access to public data from these platforms to carry out studies to understand these risks better.
- **Ban Misleading Interfaces:** The DSA proposes to ban ‘**Dark Patterns**’ or “**misleading interfaces**” that are designed to trick users into doing something that they would not agree to otherwise.
- **Crisis Mechanism:** The DSA incorporates a new crisis mechanism clause — it refers to the **Russia-Ukraine conflict** — which will be “activated by the Commission on the recommendation of the board of **national Digital Services Coordinators**”.
- However, these special measures will only be in place for three months.
- **Transparency Measures:** It also proposes “transparency measures for online platforms on a variety of issues, including on the algorithms used for recommending content or products to users”.

#INDONESIA BANNING EXPORT OF PALM OIL

Recently, **Indonesia**, the world’s biggest producer, exporter, and consumer of palm oil, has announced that it would be **banning all exports of the commodity** and its raw materials to reduce domestic shortages of cooking oil and bring down its rising prices.

India meets half of its annual need for **8.3 million tons of palm oil** from Indonesia. Thus, an export ban will affect India’s interests.

What is Palm Oil & Its Use?

- Palm oil is an edible vegetable oil derived from the **mesocarp (reddish pulp) of the fruit of the oil palms**. It is used as cooking oil, and in everything from **cosmetics, processed foods, cakes, chocolates, spreads, soaps, shampoo**, and cleaning products to biofuel.
- The use of crude palm oil in making **biodiesel** is being branded as ‘**green diesel**’.
- Indonesia and Malaysia together account for almost **90% of the global palm oil production**, with Indonesia producing the largest quantity at over **45 million tonnes in 2021**.

- The oil palm industry has come under criticism for what are reportedly unsustainable production practices leading to **deforestation, and exploitative labor practices** carried forward from the colonial era.
- However, **palm oil** is preferred by many as it is **inexpensive**, oil palms produce more oil per hectare than some other vegetable oil plants **like soybean**.

How important is Palm Oil for Global Supply Chains?

- Palm oil is the world's most widely used vegetable oil with its global production in the year 2020 being over **73 Million Tons (MT)**, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- It is estimated to be **77 MT for the current year FY 2022-23**.
- According to Reuters, palm oil makes up **40% of the global supply of the four most widely used edible oils**: palm, soybean, rapeseed (canola), and sunflower oil.
- **Indonesia is responsible for 60% of the global supply of palm oil**.

Why are the Prices of Edible Oils Rising?

- India is the **biggest importer of palm oil**. The prices of palm oil rose this year as demand **increased because of the short supply of alternative vegetable oils**.
- The production of soybean oil, the **second most-produced oil**, is expected to take a hit this year due to a **poor soybean season in major producer Argentina**.
- The production of canola oil was hit in Canada last year due to drought, and supplies of sunflower oil, **80-90% of which is produced by Russia and Ukraine**, has been badly hit by the ongoing conflict.
- Due to **pandemic-induced labor shortage, and the global food inflation** linked to the **pandemic** and the **Ukraine crisis**, the global prices of edible oil have risen significantly since the end of last year.
- **How Will It Impact India?**
- India is the biggest importer of palm oil, which makes up **40% of its vegetable oil consumption**.
- India meets **half of its annual need for 8.3 MT of palm oil from Indonesia**.
- This would lead to a rise in those already grappling with **record-high wholesale inflation**.
- It is important that, last year, the Centre also unveiled **National Mission on Edible Oil-Oil Palm** to boost India's domestic palm oil production.

#BLACK SEA & RUSSIA

Recently, the sinking of the **warship Moskva, flagship of the Russian Black Sea Fleet** — whether due to a **Ukrainian missile strike** or, as **Russia claims, a fire on board** — is a serious setback for **Russia in the War against Ukraine**.

What is the Black Sea's Geography?

- **Littoral Geography**: The Black Sea is bordered by **Ukraine** to the north and northwest, **Russia and Georgia** to the east, **Turkey** to the south, and **Bulgaria and Romania** to the west.
- **Maritime Geography**: It links to the **Sea of Marmara** through the **Bosphorus Strait** and then to the **Aegean Sea** through the **Dardanelles strait**.
- **What is the Importance of Black Sea to Russia?**
- **Strategic Importance**: Domination of the **Black Sea region is a geostrategic imperative for Russia**, both to project Russian power in the Mediterranean and to secure the economic gateway to key markets in southern Europe.
- **Gateway to Mediterranean Sea**: It has traditionally been Russia's warm water gateway to Europe.
- **Strategic Buffer**: It is a strategic buffer between the **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)** and itself.



- **Black Sea Fleet:** In this context, Russia has been making efforts to gain complete control over the Black Sea since the **Crimean crisis of 2014**.
- Thus, Russia has stationed its **Black Sea naval fleet in the Black Sea**.
- **Black Sea Fleet:** The Black Sea Fleet has a long history and is considered to have been **founded back in 1783**.
- It comprises warships of the Russian Navy in the **Black Sea, Sea of Azov, and the eastern Mediterranean**, and is headquartered at **Sevastopol**, the major port on the **Crimean peninsula**.

What is Russia doing in the Black Sea?

- During the ongoing invasion, the domination of the Black Sea has been a major Russian objective, along with the land bridge to connect Russia and Crimea.
- **Capturing Mariupol:** There have been intense efforts to capture Mariupol, the Sea of Azov port in the breakaway eastern **Ukrainian oblast of Donetsk**.
- **Capturing Odessa:** Russia was also expected to focus its military efforts on Odessa, to the west of Crimea. If the Odessa region were to fall as well, **Ukraine would lose access to its entire Black Sea coastline** and would in effect be reduced to a **landlocked country**.
- It is also the largest region in Ukraine which serves as an **important energy and transport corridor with abundant natural resources**. The **Rhine-Main-Danube canal** connects the **Black Sea to the Atlantic Ocean** and the port of **Odessa** serves as a vital link between Ukraine and the outside world.

#CENTRAL TIBETAN RELIEF COMMITTEE

- The Union government has extended the **scheme to provide Rs.40 crore grants-in-aid to the Dalai Lama's Central Tibetan Relief Committee (CTRC)** for another five years, up to fiscal year 2025-26.
- The scheme provides for an annual grant of Rs.8 crore to CTRC to meet the administrative expenses of **Settlement Offices and social welfare expenses** for Tibetan refugees staying in Tibetan settlements spread across 12 States/UTs in the country.

What is the Central Tibetan Relief Committee?

- It was launched in 2015. The main objective of the committee is to **coordinate Individual, Voluntary Agencies and Indian Government's efforts** to rehabilitate and **settle Tibetan Refugees**.
- **Includes** members from each of the **53 Tibetan settlements in India, Nepal and Bhutan**.
- **Is dedicated to** preserving the **cultural and religious heritage of Tibet** and building and maintaining sustainable, democratic communities in exile.
- **Is dependent on** generous international assistance from governments, **especially India, Nepal and Bhutan**, philanthropic organisations and individuals.
- All the CTRC activities are carried out with consent and support from the Board of Directors and approval from **TPiE (Tibetan Parliament in Exile)**.
- The **TPiE** has its **headquarters in Dharamsala**, in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh according to which over 1 lakh Tibetans are settled across India.

What led to the Exodus of Tibetan Refugees?

- **From 1912** until the founding of the **People's Republic of China in 1949**, no Chinese government exercised control over what is today **China's Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR)**.
- Many Tibetans insist they were **essentially independent** for most of that time and have protested what they regard as China's rule imposed after the **People's Liberation Army occupied TAR in 1950**.
- The Dalai Lama's government alone ruled the land until 1951. Tibet was not "Chinese" until **Mao Zedong's People's Liberation Army (PLA)** marched in and made it so.

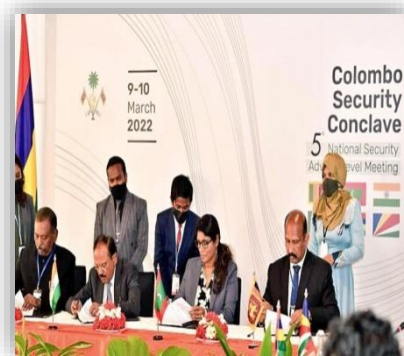
- This has often been described by the Tibetan people and third party commentators as “a cultural genocide”.
- The **unsuccessful Tibetan Uprising of 1959**, in which Tibetans rebelled in an attempt to overthrow the Chinese government, led to the fleeing of the **14th Dalai Lama to India**.
- On 29 April 1959, Dalai Lama established the Tibetan exile administration in the north **Indian hill station of Mussoorie**.
- It is named the **Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)** of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, this is the continuation of the government of independent Tibet.
- In May 1960, the **CTA was moved to Dharamsala**.

What is India's Tibet Policy?

- For centuries, **Tibet was India's actual neighbour**, as most of India's boundaries and the **3500km LAC is with the Tibetan Autonomous Region, and not the rest of China**.
- **In 1914**, it was Tibetan representatives, along with the Chinese that signed the **Simla convention with British India that delineated boundaries**.
- However, after **China's full accession of Tibet in 1950**, that China repudiated the convention and the McMahon line that divided the two countries.
- Further, in 1954, India signed an agreement with China, agreeing to recognize Tibet as “**Tibet region of China**”.
- In 1959, following the **Tibetan uprising**, the **Dalai Lama (spiritual leader of Tibetan people)** and many of his followers fled to India.
- Former Prime Minister **Jawahar Lal Nehru** gave him and Tibetan refugees shelter, and helped in setting up the Tibetan government in exile.
- The official Indian policy is that the **Dalai Lama is a spiritual leader, and the Tibetan community in India**, with more than a lakh exiles, is not allowed to undertake any political activity.
- In the event of **increasing tensions between India and China**, there has been a shift in **India's Tibet Policy**.
- This shift in the policy, earmarks the Indian government actively managing with the Dalai Lama in public forums.

#WHAT IS COLOMBO SECURITY CONCLAVE?

- Recently, the **Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) Virtual Conference** was organized by the **National Investigation Agency of India**.
- The participants discussed various challenges **related to terrorism** in their respective countries and shared experiences in the **prosecution of terrorism cases**, strategies to deal with foreign fighters and **countering the misuse of the internet and social media**.



What is Colombo Security Conclave?

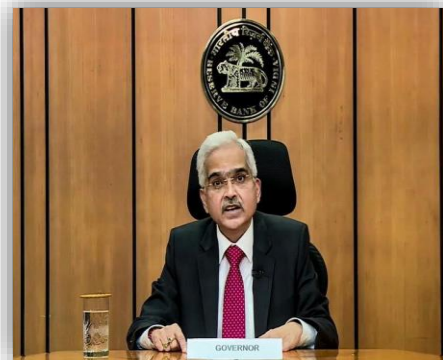
- **About:** The CSC was formed in 2011 as a trilateral maritime security grouping of **India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives**.
- It welcomed **Mauritius as a fourth member** at the fifth meeting of national security advisers.
- **Bangladesh and Seychelles** attended as **observers** and have been invited to join the group.
- **Envisaged Goal:** The fifth meeting of national security advisers of the CSC identified **key areas of cooperation to enhance and strengthen regional security** in the following **five pillars**:
 - Maritime Safety and Security
 - Countering Terrorism and Radicalization

- Combating Trafficking and Transnational Organized Crime
 - Cyber Security, Protection of Critical Infrastructure and Technology
 - Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
-
- **Countering China:** The CSC hopes to restrict China's influence in an area of strategic importance and to reduce the Chinese footprint in the member countries.
 - **Maritime Security:** India has a large coastline of nearly 7500 Km along with islands of strategic chokepoints. This makes maritime security a priority for the country, in which CSC plays a vital role.
 - **Synergy With SAGAR Vision:** The grouping is also in line with India's vision of "SAGAR: Security and Growth for all in the Region" and India being a member of **QUAD** grouping.
 - **Emerging Sub-regionalism:** The coming together of the 6 Indian Ocean region countries indicate the development of sub-regionalism on a common maritime and security platform and is significant in a wider global context as well.
 - **Associated Challenge:** Even though the strategic interests of the six countries are aligned in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**, an attempt to mold the CSC into an institution to counter China's influence would meet the fate of the **South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC)**, widely regarded as a failure.

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

#RBI MONETARY POLICY REVIEW

- Recently, for the eleventh time in a row, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** in its latest **Monetary Policy** review has decided to keep the main policy rate – **Repo rate** – **unchanged at 4%**.
- It has also retained its **accommodative stance**, but indicated it will engage in a gradual and calibrated withdrawal of surplus liquidity to rein in inflation.



What is the Significance of this Monetary Policy Review?

- Acknowledging the Impact of Russia-Ukraine War:** In the wake of the **rise in crude oil and commodity prices** and the impact of the **Russian invasion of Ukraine**, RBI has **slashed the growth forecast to 7.2%** for fiscal 2022-23 from 7.8% projected earlier.
- The Russia-Ukraine war could potentially **impede the economic recovery** through elevated commodity prices and global spill-over channels.
- Standing Deposit Facility:** The RBI also introduced a new measure, the **Standing Deposit Facility** — an additional tool for absorbing liquidity — to suck out surplus liquidity of **Rs 8.5 lakh crore from the financial system which is fuelling inflation**.
- Signalling Shift in Policy Stance:** This **Monetary Policy Review** signals that the RBI has finally shifted its priorities to tackle **inflation**.
- Thus, there is a possibility of a hike in its key **policy rate (Repo Rate)** in the coming months.
- Further, RBI has hiked its inflation forecast from **4.5% projected earlier to 5.7%** still below the **upper band of 6% of the RBI's target** – in 2022-23.
- Resorting to Pre-pandemic Levels:** RBI policy panel took a concrete step by restoring the policy rate corridor under **Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF)** to pre-pandemic width of 50 basis points.
- This is aimed at bringing down the inflationary pressures.
- LAF** is a tool used in the monetary policy that allows banks to borrow money from the RBI through repurchase agreements (Repo) or to lend funds to the RBI through reverse repo agreement.

What is standing Deposit Facility & Its Role?

- About:** The RBI has introduced the **Standing Deposit Facility (SDF)**, an additional tool for absorbing liquidity, at an interest rate of 3.75%.
- It is an additional tool for **absorbing liquidity without any collateral**.
- Background:** In 2018, the amended **Section 17 of the RBI Act** empowered the RBI to introduce the SDF.
- Modus Operandi:** By removing the **binding collateral constraint on the RBI**, the SDF strengthens the **operating framework of monetary policy**.
- The SDF is also a financial stability tool in addition to its role in liquidity management.
- The SDF rate will be **25 bps below the policy rate (Repo rate)**, and it will be applicable to **overnight deposits at this stage**.
- It would, however, retain the flexibility to absorb liquidity of longer tenors as and when the need arises, with appropriate pricing.
- Need:** The **"extraordinary" liquidity measures** undertaken in the wake of the pandemic, combined with the liquidity injected through various other operations of the RBI, have left a liquidity overhang of the order of **Rs 8.5 lakh crore in the system**.
- The main purpose of SDF is to **reduce the excess liquidity in the system, and control inflation**.
- Implementation:** The RBI will engage in a gradual and calibrated withdrawal of this liquidity over a **multi-year time frame** in a non-disruptive manner beginning this year.

#STRENGTHENING MSME SECTOR

Recently, the **Parliamentary standing committee** on finance has **suggested several measures** for strengthening credit flow to the **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** sector.

Why is there a Need for Improving Credit Flow to MSME Sector?



- **Lack of Formalization:** The need for formalising the credit ecosystem for MSMEs has assumed significance as less than **40% of 6.34 crore MSMEs**, as per government data, borrow from the formal financial system.
- The overall credit gap in the MSME sector is estimated to be **Rs. 20-25 lakh crore**.
- **Lack of Integrated Data:** The last MSME survey was conducted by **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation** six years ago while the government had **revised the MSME definition in 2020**.
- The committee noted that whatever data is there with regard to the MSME sector, they **exist in a fragmented manner** and there is **no real integration across multiple datasets**.
- This is the reason why **banks were reluctant** in lending to the MSME sector.

What does the Panel Suggest?

- **One-Stop Central Data Repository:** Developing the **Udyam portal into a one-stop central data repository** for the MSME sector by linking it with other databases such as CIBIL data, utility bills data etc. Further, **Budget 2022** announced linking the Udyam portal with **e-Shram, National Career Service (NCS)** and **Atmanirbhar Skilled Employee-Employer Mapping (ASEEM)** in the budget to enhance skilling and recruitment for MSMEs.
- **Innovative Lending System:** Creating a '**Unified Payments Interface (UPI) for MSME Lending**' for all MSMEs in the formal sector to access small-ticket working capital loans in a **mobile-based, contactless, paperless, and low-cost way**.
- **Vyapar' Credit Card:** the panel also recommended a 'Vyapar' credit card scheme for MSMEs under SIDBI akin to the **Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme** of the **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** to bring crores of MSMEs into the formal financial system including street vendors and kirana stores.
- The credit card can provide short-term working capital loans at low-interest rates and can be further extended to **provide collateral-free loans like the Rs 1 lakh collateral-free facility** available to KCC holders.
- **MSME Census:** survey/census of MSMEs in line with the changed definition, be conducted at the earliest so as to estimate the actual number of MSMEs in the country along with realistic assessments of their credit requirements.

What are 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**.
- **CHAMPIONS 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.

#WORLD BANK REPORT ON POVERTY

- Recently, the **World Bank** published the paper titled '**Poverty has declined over the Last Decade But Not As Much As Previously Thought**'.
- The paper came close on the heels of a working paper published by the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** saying India has almost eradicated extreme **poverty** and brought down consumption inequality to **its lowest levels in 40 years** through **state-funded food handouts (Public Distribution System)**.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Decline in Extreme Poverty:** Extreme poverty in India was **12.3% points lower in 2019 compared with 2011**, as poverty headcount rate declined from 22.5% in 2011 to 10.2% in 2019, with a comparatively sharper decline in rural areas.
- Slight moderation in consumption inequality since 2011, but by a **margin smaller than what is reported in the unreleased National Sample Survey -2017**.
- The **extent of poverty reduction during 2015-2019** is estimated to be notably lower than earlier projections based on growth in private final consumption expenditure reported in national account statistics.
- The World Bank defines "extreme poverty" as living on less than **USD 1.90 per person per day**.
- **Rural vs Urban Poverty:** Poverty reduction was **higher in rural areas compared with urban India** as rural poverty declined from 26.3% in 2011 to 11.6% in 2019, while in urban areas the decline was from 14.2% to 6.3% in the corresponding period.
- Rural and urban poverty dropped by **14.7 and 7.9% points during 2011-2019**.
- Urban poverty in India rose by 2% in 2016, coinciding with the **demonetisation**, and rural poverty rose by 10% in 2019.
- **Small Farmers:** Smallholder farmers have **experienced higher income growth**. Real incomes for farmers with the smallest landholdings have grown by 10% in annualized terms between the two survey rounds (2013 and 2019) compared to a 2% growth for farmers with the largest landholding.
- The growth in incomes of smallest landholders in rural areas provides more evidence of moderation in income disparity in rural areas.

- **Smallest landholders comprise a larger share of the poor population.** This income includes wages, net receipt from crop production, net receipt from farming of animal farming and net receipt from non-farm business. Income from leasing out land has been exempted.

What are the Major Poverty Alleviation Programs of India?

- Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
- Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana
- National Old Age Pension Scheme
- Annapurna Scheme
- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005
- Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM)
- National Urban Livelihood Mission
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana

What is the World Bank?

- **About:** It was created in 1944, as the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** along with the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**. The IBRD later became the World Bank. The **World Bank Group is a unique global partnership of five institutions** working for sustainable solutions that reduce poverty and build shared prosperity in developing countries.
- **Members:** It has 189 member countries. India is also a member country.

Major reports:

- Ease of Doing Business (Stopped publishing recently).
- Human Capital Index.
- World Development Report.

Its five development institutions:

- International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
- International Development Association (IDA)
- International Finance Corporation (IFC).
- Multilateral Guarantee Agency (MIGA)
- International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)
- **India is not a member of this.**

#WHAT IS FINCLUVATION?

Recently, the **India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)** launched the **Fincluvation Platform** to **promote innovative solutions** in collaboration with **fintech startups to accelerate financial inclusion** among the underserved and unserved population.

The term **Fintech (Financial Technology)** refers to software and other modern technologies used by businesses that provide automated and improved financial services.

What is Fincluvation?

- Fincluvation will be a **permanent platform of IPPB to co-create inclusive financial solutions with participating start-ups.**
- IPPB and Department of Post (DoP) collectively serve close to 430 million customers through post offices and at their doorsteps via more than 4,00,000 Post Office employees and Gramin Dak Sevaks - making it

one of the **largest and most trusted postal networks in the world.**

- It is an **Industry first initiative** to create a powerful platform to **mobilize the start-up community towards building meaningful financial products** aimed at financial inclusion.
- Startups are encouraged to develop solutions aligned with any of the following tracks:
- **Creditization** - Develop Innovative & Inclusive credit products aligned with the use cases of target customers and take them to their doorsteps through Postal network.
- **Digitization** - Bring convenience through convergence of traditional services with Digital Payment Technologies such as making the traditional Money Order service as Interoperable Banking service.
- **Market Led Solution** - Any Market-led solutions that can help solve any other problem relevant to IPPB and/or DoP in serving the target customers.
- Fincluvation mentors will work closely with the startups to tweak products to the customer needs and align the go-to-market strategies with operating models of IPPB and DoP.

What is the Need of Fincluvation in India?

- **To Grab New Opportunities:** Intersection of technology with financial services coupled with traditional distribution networks is opening up a **new set of business opportunities.**
- **To Increase User Experience:** Conventional model of technology procurement led product creation by banks often **lacks value in user experience** leaving a huge gap between customer expectations and service delivery.
- **Failure of Traditional Technologies:** Traditional technology firms **fail to meet the service expectations of customers with a deficit of ownership** in product creation. Indian citizens have varied and complex needs that need careful thought, empathetic product design, and rapid prototyping among users.

What is India Post Payments Bank?

- IPPB was **launched by the Prime Minister in 2018** with 100% equity owned by the Government of India.
- It is a payments bank of the Indian postal department which works through a network of post offices and nearly 4 lakh postmen. It is governed by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI).**
- The bank has been set up with the vision to build the most **accessible, affordable and trusted bank for the common man in India.** The fundamental mandate of IPPB is to remove barriers for the unbanked and under-banked and reach the last mile.
- IPPB is committed to providing a fillip to a **less cash economy and contribute to the vision of Digital India.**

What is Financial Inclusion?

- Financial inclusion is the **process of ensuring access to appropriate financial products** and services needed by individuals and businesses including vulnerable groups such as **weaker sections and low-income groups** at an affordable cost in a fair and transparent manner by mainstream institutional players.

What are some other Initiatives for Financial Inclusion?

- Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana,
- Stand-Up India Scheme
- Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana
- Atal Pension Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana

#RISE IN DIESEL & PETROL PRICES

Recently, the Prime Minister urged several **Opposition-ruled states to cut taxes on petrol and diesel** in order to **reduce the economic burden on citizens** and work as a team in this time of global crisis following the spirit of **cooperative federalism**". Maharashtra, West Bengal, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Jharkhand have not reduced **Value-added tax (VAT)** on Petrol and Diesel. VAT is consumption tax which is added to a product at every point of the supply chain where value is added to it.



What are the Components of Retail Prices of Fuel?

- Retail prices of petrol and diesel are made up of mainly 3 components:
- Base price (reflecting cost of international oil)
- Central Excise Duty
- State Tax (VAT)
- Central and state taxes form a major chunk** of the price of petrol and diesel in India.
- Excise duty is constant for all over India**, state taxes (sales tax and value added tax) vary depending upon the rates levied by different state governments.
- These taxes **make fuel even more costly for consumers**.
- In November 2021, the **Centre had reduced excise duties** on both petrol and diesel to bring some relief to end-use customers.
- Exercise duty was **reduced by Rs 5 per liter on petrol and Rs 10 per liter on diesel**.
- Fuel prices **remained constant after the Centre's exercise duty reduction**.
- However, a **recent surge in global crude oil prices** owing to the **war between Russia and Ukraine** led to corresponding hikes in the price of petrol and diesel in India too.
- The **price reduction varied across states** due to differences in VAT rates.
- States with higher VAT witnessed slightly higher reduction in pump prices.
- Retail rates of petrol and diesel are governed** by international prices as **India depends on imports for meeting 85% of its oil needs**.

What are the Government Earnings from Fuel Prices?

- Exercise duty and VAT on fuel constitute** an important source of revenue for both the Centre and the states. As per the **Budgets 2020-21**, Excise duty on fuel makes up about 18.4% of the Centre's gross tax revenues.
- Petroleum and alcohol, on average, **account for 25-35% of states' own tax revenue**.
- Of the revenue receipts of states**, central tax transfers comprise 25-29%, and own tax revenues 45-50%.
- During April-December 2021**, taxes on crude oil and petroleum products had **yielded Rs 3.10 lakh crore to the central exchequer**, including Rs 2.63 lakh crore as excise duty, and Rs 11,661 crore as cess on crude oil.
- For the same period, Rs 2.07 lakh crore accrued to the state's exchequer, of which Rs 1.89 lakh crore was through VAT.

LEGAL AFFAIRS

#CJI ON CBI

Recently, **Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana** said that the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** has come under deep public scrutiny. Its actions and inactions have raised questions regarding its credibility. In pursuit of **reforming law enforcement agencies**, the CJI has proposed an **umbrella, independent and autonomous investigative agency**.



What is the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)?

- The CBI was set up in **1963 by a resolution of the Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- Now, the CBI comes under the administrative control of the **Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions**.
- CBI derives power to investigate from the **Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946**.
- The establishment of the CBI was recommended by the **Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption (1962–1964)**.
- The CBI is the main investigating agency of the Central Government.
- It also provides assistance to the **Central Vigilance Commission** and **Lokpal**.
- It is also the nodal police agency in India which coordinates investigations on behalf of **Interpol Member countries**.

#CHILD ADOPTION IN INDIA

- Recently, the **Supreme Court** agreed to hear a plea seeking to simplify the legal process for child adoption in India.
- In 2021, **Adoption (First Amendment) Regulations, 2021** was notified which allowed Indian diplomatic missions abroad to be in charge of safeguarding adopted children whose parents move overseas with the child within two years of adoption.

What are the Issues Related to Child Adoption in India?

- **Declining Statistics and Institutional Apathy:** There is a **wide gap between adoptable children and prospective parents**, which may increase the length of the adoption process. Data shows that while more

than **29,000 prospective parents are willing to adopt**, just 2,317 children are available for adoption.

- Between 2017-19, the **Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)** faced an unusual upsurge in adoptive parents returning children after adopting. **Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)** is a statutory body of the Ministry of Women & Child Development. It functions as the nodal body for adoption of Indian children and is mandated to monitor and regulate in-country and inter-country adoptions.
- **Disability and Adoption: Only 40 children with disabilities were adopted between 2018 and 2019**, accounting for approximately 1% of the total number of children adopted in the year.
- Annual trends reveal that domestic adoptions of children with special needs are dwindling with each passing year.
- **Manufactured Orphans and Child Trafficking:** In 2018, Ranchi's Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity came under fire for its "baby-selling racket" after a nun from the shelter confessed to selling four children. Similar instances are becoming increasingly common as the pool of children available for adoption shrinks and waitlisted parents grow restless.
- **LGBTQ+ Parenthood and Reproductive Autonomy:** Despite the constant evolution of the definition of a family, the 'ideal' Indian family nucleus still constitutes a husband, a wife and daughter(s) and son(s). In February 2021, while addressing petitions seeking the legal recognition of LGBTQI+ marriages, the government opined that LGBTQI+ relationships **could not be compared to the "Indian family unit concept"** of a husband, wife and children.

What are the Laws to Adopt a Child in India?

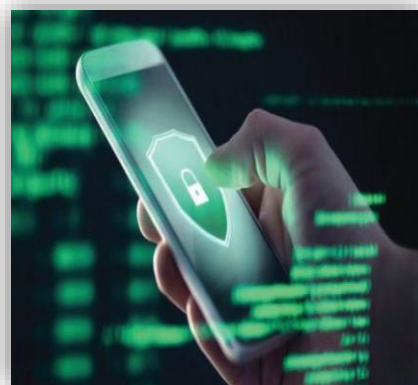
- The adoption in India takes place under **Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956 (HAMA)** and the **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (JJ Act)**.
- HAMA, 1956 falls in the domain of Ministry of Law and Justice and JJ Act, 2015 pertains to the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- As per the government rules, **Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs** are legalized to adopt kids.
- Until the JJ Act, the Guardians and Ward Act (GWA), 1980 was the only means for non-Hindu individuals to become guardians of children from their community.
- However, since the GWA appoints individuals as legal guardians and not natural parents, guardianship is terminated once the ward turns 21 and the ward assumes individual identity.

#PHONE TAPPING LAWS IN INDIA

- Recently, a political leader claimed that the Centre is protecting an **Indian Police Service** officer who is facing a **First Information Report (FIR)** in Mumbai and is being probed for allegedly tapping the phones.

What is Phone Tapping and how is Phones Tapped in India?

- Phone tapping or cell phone tracking/tracing is an activity where a user's phone calls, and other activities are tracked using different software.
- This procedure is majorly carried out without the targeted person being notified of any such activity.
- It can be done by authorities making a **request to the service provider**, which is bound by law, to record the conversations on the given number and provide these in real time through a connected computer.
- **However, Article 21 of the Indian Constitution** says that **"No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law."**



- The expression 'personal liberty' includes 'right to privacy'. A citizen has a right to safeguard his personal privacy and his family, education, marriage, motherhood, childbearing, and procreation, among other matters.

Who can Tap Phones?

- **State Level:** In the states, police have the power to tap phones.
- **Central Level:** Intelligence Bureau, CBI, **Enforcement Directorate, Narcotics Control Bureau, Central Board of Direct Taxes, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, National Investigation Agency, Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), Directorate of Signal Intelligence, Delhi Police Commissioner.**

What are the Laws that govern Phone Tapping in India?

The Indian Telegraph Act, 1885:

- According to **Section 5(2) of the Act** on the occurrence of any public emergency, or in the interest of public safety, phone tapping can be done by the Centre or states.
- The order can be issued **if they are satisfied it is necessary in the interest of public safety, "sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of an offence".**

Exception for Press:

- **Press messages intended to be published in India of correspondents accredited to the Central Government or a State Government** shall not be intercepted or detained, unless their transmission has been prohibited under this sub-section.
- The competent authority **must record reasons for tapping in writing.**

Who Authorizes Phone Tapping?

- Phone tapping is authorized by **Rule 419A of the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Rules, 2007.**
- **In the case of the Central Government:** The order can be issued by an order made by the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- **In the case of a State Government:** By the Secretary to the State Government in-charge of the Home Department.

In Emergency Situation:

- In such a situation, an **order may be issued by an officer, not below the rank of a Joint Secretary of India, who has been authorized by the Union Home Secretary, or the State Home Secretary.**
- **In remote areas or for operational reasons, if it is not feasible to get prior directions,** a call can be intercepted with the prior approval of the head or the second senior-most officer of the authorized law enforcement agency at the central level, and by authorized officers, not below the rank of Inspector General of Police, at the state level.
- **The order must be communicated within three days to the competent authority, who must approve or disapprove it within seven working days.**
- If the confirmation from the competent authority is not received within the stipulated seven days, such interception shall cease.
- It can be noted here that in 2021, the Central Government notified the **Indian Telegraph Right of Way (Amendment) Rules, 2021.**

#WHAT IS DEATH PENALTY?

Recently, a Bench of **Supreme Court (SC)** has agreed to **comprehensively examine procedures in death penalty cases** to ensure that judges who have to choose between life imprisonment and the death sentence have comprehensive sentencing information.

Earlier, the SC had **raised concerns in the process of assessments of mitigating information** in death penalty cases.

The court is undertaking an exercise to reform the procedures by which information necessary in a death penalty case is brought before courts. In doing so, the **Supreme Court is acknowledging concerns with the manner in which death penalty sentencing is being carried out.**

While the death penalty has been held to be constitutional, **the manner in which it has been administered has triggered accusations of unfairness and arbitrariness.**

What is a Death Penalty?

- **Capital punishment**, also called the death penalty, is **the execution of an offender sentenced to death after conviction by a court of law of a criminal offence.**
- It is the highest penalty awardable to an accused. Generally, it is awarded in extremely severe cases of murder, rapes, treason etc.
- The death penalty is seen as the most suitable punishment and effective deterrent for the worst crimes.
- Those who oppose it, however, see it as inhumane. Thus, the morality of the death penalty is debatable and many criminologists and socialists all across the globe, have been long demanding abolition of the death penalty.

How are judges supposed to choose between life and death sentences?

- In **May 1980**, when the Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the death penalty in Bachan Singh's case, a framework was developed for future judges to follow when they had to choose between life imprisonment and the death penalty.
- At the heart of that framework was the recognition that the legislature in the Criminal Procedure Code had made it clear that **life imprisonment would be the default punishment and judges would need to give "special reasons" if they wanted to impose the death sentence.**
- Through the 1980 framework — popularly but inaccurately known as the **"rarest of rare" framework** — the Supreme Court said that judges must consider both aggravating and mitigating factors concerning the crime and the accused when deciding if the death penalty is to be imposed.
- The judgment also made it clear that **life imprisonment as a sentence would have to be "unquestionably foreclosed" before judges imposed the death sentence.**
- There was an indicative list of factors that the judgment identified as being relevant, but it was clear that it was not meant to be an exhaustive list.
- The Supreme Court has **repeatedly lamented the inconsistency in application of the Bachan Singh framework.** Similar concerns have been **expressed by the Law Commission of India (262nd Report).**
- What is Mitigation in Capital Cases?
- A criminal trial has two stages — **the guilt stage and the sentencing stage.**
- Sentencing happens after the accused has been found guilty of the crime; this is the stage where punishment is determined. Therefore, anything presented or said during sentencing cannot be used to reverse or change the finding of guilt.
- It is a **fundamental tenet of criminal law that sentencing must be individualized**, i.e, in the process of determining punishment, the **judge must take into account individual circumstances of the accused.**
- Mitigation, also referred to as "mitigating factors" or "mitigating evidence," is evidence (information) the defense can present in the sentencing phase of a capital trial to provide reasons why the defendant should not receive a death sentence.
- The task of collecting such is not something lawyers are trained to do — that is the reason the American Bar Association's 2003 Guidelines for the Appointment and Performance of Defence Counsel in Death

Penalty recognises the role of a mitigation specialist with a clearly defined role that goes beyond what lawyers can do.

- The SC judgments in Santa Singh (1976) and Mohd Mannan (2019) have recognised the interdisciplinary nature of such an exercise, and that **it requires professionals other than lawyers to collect such information.**

What is the Status of Death Penalty in the Indian Context?

- Prior to the **Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Act (Cr PC) of 1955**, the death penalty was the rule and life imprisonment an exception in India.
- Further, the courts were bound to give an explanation for awarding a lighter penalty than death for capital offences.
- After the **amendment of 1955 courts were at liberty to grant either death or life imprisonment.**
- As per Section 354 (3) of the Cr PC, 1973 the courts are required to state reasons in writing for awarding the maximum penalty.
- The situation has been reversed and a life sentence is the rule and death penalty an exception in capital offences.
- Moreover, despite a global moratorium against the death penalty by the United Nation, India retains the death penalty.
- India is of view that allowing criminals guilty of having committed intentional, cold-blooded, deliberate and brutal murders to escape with a lesser punishment will deprive the law of its effectiveness and result in travesty of justice.
- In concurrence of this, a **proposal for the scrapping of the death penalty was rejected by the Law Commission in its 35th report 1967.**
- In India as per official statistics, 720 executions have taken place in India after it became independent in the year 1947, which is a minuscule fraction of the people who were awarded death penalty by the trial courts.
- In the majority of the cases, death was commuted to life imprisonment and some were acquitted by the higher courts.

#CJI LAUNCHED DIGITAL PLATFORM “FASTER”

- Recently, **Chief Justice of India (CJI)** launched the digital platform **FASTER (Fast and Secured Transmission of Electronic Records).**
- The Supreme Court has also launched other programmes involving technology **like** Artificial Intelligence (AI) based portal ‘SUPACE’ in the judicial system aimed at assisting judges with legal research.
- **eCourts Mission Mode Project** is a pan-India Project, monitored and funded by the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice, for the District Courts across the country.
- The objective of the project is to provide designated services to litigants, lawyers and the judiciary through ICT enablement of courts.

What is a FASTER Digital Platform?

- **About:** It is a **digital platform to communicate interim orders, stay orders, bail orders etc., of the Supreme Court** to authorities concerned through a secured electronic communication channel.
- **Prevent Unnecessary Arrests:** It will help in **preventing unnecessary arrests and custody of people** even after the court had already granted them its protection.
- **Ensure Fundamental Rights of Prisoners:** Ensure **fundamental rights** of personal liberty, life and dignity of the prisoners which is given under **Article 21 of Constitution of India.**

#VALIDITY OF FCRA AMENDMENT ACT

- Recently, the **Supreme Court (SC)** upheld the constitutional validity of the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Act (FCRA), 2020**. It held that receiving foreign donations cannot be an absolute right **and can be regulated by the Parliament**.
- In 2020, the Indian government had proposed amendments to the FCRA, which imposed new restrictions on how **Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)**, individuals, and other organisations could receive or use funds contributed from abroad.



What are the Highlights of the Judgements?

- Medicine vs Intoxicant Metaphor:** Foreign Contributions serves as a medicine so long as it is consumed (utilised) moderately and discreetly.
- However, **free and uncontrolled flow of foreign contribution can act as an intoxicant** that has the potential of **impacting the sovereignty and integrity of the nation**.
- Imposing Political Ideology:** The SC underlined that foreign contributions **may tend to influence or impose political ideology**.
- Thus, FCRA amendments are **essentially conceived in the interest of public order** as the intent is to prevent misuse of donations coming from foreign sources.
- Global Precedents:** Receiving foreign donations **cannot be an absolute or even a vested right**.
- This is because the theory of **possibility of national polity being influenced by foreign contribution** is globally recognised.
- Upholding Legislation:** In this scenario, it had become necessary for Parliament to step in and provide a **stringent regime for effectively regulating the inflow and utilisation of foreign contribution**.

What is Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010?

- Foreign funding of persons in India is regulated under FCRA act and is implemented by the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- Individuals are permitted to accept foreign contributions without permission of MHA.
- However, the **monetary limit** for acceptance of such foreign contributions shall be less than **Rs. 25,000**.
- The Act ensures that the **recipients of foreign contributions adhere to the stated purpose** for which such contribution has been obtained.
- Under the Act, organisations are **required to register themselves every five years**.

What were the Amendments done in the Act?

- **Prohibition to accept foreign contribution:** It bars public servants from receiving foreign contributions.
- **Transfer of foreign contribution:** It prohibits the transfer of foreign contribution to any other person.
- **Aadhaar for registration:** Aadhaar number is mandatory for all office bearers, directors or key functionaries of a person receiving foreign contribution, as an identification document.
- **FCRA account:** The foreign contribution must be received **only in an account designated by the bank as FCRA account** in such branches of the State Bank of India, New Delhi.
- No funds other than the foreign contribution should be received or deposited in this account.
- **Restriction in utilisation of foreign contribution:** It allowed the government to restrict usage of unutilised foreign contribution.
- This may be done if, based on an inquiry the **government believes that such person has contravened provisions of the FCRA.**
- **Administrative Capping:** While NGOs earlier could use up to 50% funds for administrative use, the new amendment restricted this use to 20%.

#ANTI-DEFECTION LAW

Recently, the **Vice-President** has said that the time has come to **amend the anti-defection legislation** in the country to plug existing loopholes.

What is Anti Defection Law?

- The anti-defection law **punishes individual Members of Parliament (MPs)/MLAs for leaving one party for another.**
- Parliament added it to the Constitution as the **Tenth Schedule in 1985.** Its purpose was to bring stability to governments by **discouraging legislators from changing parties.**
- **The Tenth Schedule** - popularly known as the Anti-Defection Act - was included in the Constitution via the **52nd Amendment Act, 1985.**
- It sets the provisions for disqualification of elected members on the grounds of defection to another political party.
- It was a **response to the toppling of multiple state governments** by party-hopping MLAs **after the general elections of 1967.**
- However, it **allows a group of MP/MLAs to join (i.e., merge with) another political party** without inviting the penalty for defection. And it does not penalize political parties for encouraging or accepting defecting legislators.
- As per the **1985 Act**, a 'defection' by **one-third of the elected members** of a political party was considered a 'merger'.
- But the **91st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003**, changed this and now at **least two-thirds of the members of a party must be in Favour of a "merger"** for it to have validity in the eyes of the law.
- The **members disqualified under the law can stand for elections** from any political party for a seat in the same House.
- The **decision on questions as to disqualification on ground of defection** are referred to the Chairman or the Speaker of such House, which is subject to '**Judicial review**'.
- However, the **law does not provide a timeframe** within which the presiding officer has to decide a defection case.

What are the Grounds of Disqualification?

- If an **elected member voluntarily gives up** his membership of a political party.
- If he **votes or abstains from voting in such House contrary** to any direction issued by his political party or anyone authorized to do so, without obtaining prior permission.
- As a **pre-condition for his disqualification**, his abstention from voting should not be condoned by his

- party or the **authorized person within 15 days of such incident.**
- If any **independently elected member joins any political party.**
- If any **nominated member joins any political party** after the expiry of six months.

#SECTION 144 OF CRPC

Recently, the administration of Uttarakhand's Haridwar district imposed prohibitory orders under **Section 144 of the Code Of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973** near the town of Roorkee.

What is Section 144 CrPC?

- This law **empowers the magistrate of any state or union territory in India** to pass an order prohibiting the gathering of four or more people in a specified area.
- It is **imposed in urgent cases of nuisance or apprehended danger** of some event that has the potential to cause trouble or damage to human life or property.
- This order can be **passed against a particular individual or general public.**



Features of Section 144:

- It **places restrictions on handling or transporting** any kind of weapon in the given jurisdiction.
- The **maximum punishment for such an act is three years.**
- According to the order under this section, **there shall be no movement of public** and all educational institutions shall also remain closed.
- Further, **there will be a complete bar on holding any kind of public meeting** or rallies during the period of operation of this order.
- It is **deemed a punishable offence to obstruct law enforcement agencies** from disbanding an unlawful assembly.
- It also **empowers the authorities to block internet access** in the region.
- The ultimate purpose of Section 144 is to **maintain peace and order in the areas** where trouble could erupt to disrupt the regular life.

Duration of Section 144 Order:

- **No order** under this section **can remain in force for a period of more than 2 months.**
- Under the state government's discretion, it can choose to extend the validity for two more months **with the maximum validity extendable to six months.**
- Once the situation becomes normal, **Section 144 levied can be withdrawn.**

What is the Difference between Section 144 and Curfew?

- Section 144 prohibits the gathering of four or more people in the concerned area, while during **curfew people are instructed to stay indoors** for a particular period. The government puts a complete restriction on traffic as well.
- **Markets, schools, colleges and offices remain closed under the curfew** and only essential services are allowed to run on prior notice.

#NEED FOR NEW IT LAWS

Recently, the **Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology (IT)** spoke on the need for legislative overhaul of the **22-year-old Information Technology Act, 2000**. The government enacted the **original IT legislation in 2000**. The **IT (Amendment) Act** came into force in **2009** and was aimed at facilitating **e-governance**, **preventing cybercrime** and **fostering security practices** within the country.

Recently, the government has notified **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021**.



Why is there a need for New IT Law (External Issues)?

- **India Entering into Digital Age:** India is going to have a **trillion-dollar digital economy** in a few years, and a large number of businesses will be on the Indian Internet.
- Therefore, an **open & secure Internet** becomes an important economic component of our country.
- **Rise of Splinternet:** The global internet as we know it is on the verge of **splintering into smaller bubbles of national networks** due to aggressive national policies, trade disputes, censorship, and dissatisfaction with **big tech companies**.
- This will have far-reaching consequences that impact international unions, data enterprises and individual consumers alike.
- Perhaps the most sophisticated instance of a splintered internet today would be **China's Great Firewall**.
- What are seen as essential services, like **Google Search and Maps, Western social media**, and so on – are **entirely banned and replaced by Chinese alternatives like Weibo** in the name of Cyber Sovereignty.

Why is there a need for New IT Law (Internal Issues)?

- **Majority of Cybercrimes in India are Bailable Offense:** A historical mistake was made when the **IT (Amendment) Act, 2008**, made almost all cybercrimes, barring a couple, bailable offences. The focus was more on enhancing the **quantum of civil liability** and reducing the quantum of punishment, which explains the reason why the number of cybercrime convictions in the country is in single digits.
- **Restricted Cyber Security Remedy:** IT Act is effective in metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Bhopal, Bangalore, etc., but it is **feeble in tier-two level cities** as **awareness of the law** by enforcement agencies remains a big challenge.
- The IT Act **does not cover most crimes committed through mobiles**. This needs to be rectified.

What are Present Government Initiatives for Cyber Security?

- **Cyber Surakshit Bharat Initiative.**
- **Cyber Swachhta Kendra.**
- **Online cybercrime reporting portal.**
- **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C).**
- **National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC).**
- **Information Technology Act, 2000.**

#CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN INDIA

- Recently, the **Supreme Court** gave two months to **high courts and states** to implement a set of guidelines meant to **streamline inadequacies and deficiencies in criminal trials**.
- These guidelines are referred to as **Draft Rules of Criminal Practice, 2020**.
- The Draft Rules **recommends reforms in investigation and trial, including proposals to employ separate teams of lawyers** to help the police during the probe and for the trial; details to be covered while drafting **spot panchnamas** and even **corrections in body sketches**.

What is Criminal Justice System in India?

- **Criminal Justice System** refers to the **agencies of government charged with enforcing law, adjudicating crime, and correcting criminal conduct**.

Objective:

- To prevent the occurrence of crime.
- To punish the transgressors and the criminals.
- To rehabilitate the transgressors and the criminals.
- To compensate the victims as far as possible.
- To maintain law and order in society.
- To deter offenders from committing any criminal act in the future

What are related initiatives Taken by Government?

- **National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms**
- **AI Portal SUPACE**
- **Modernisation of Police Scheme**

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

#WHAT IS GENOME EDITING?

Recently, the Government has allowed genome-edited plants without the cumbersome GMO (Genetically Modified Organisms) regulation at the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC).

The government has exempted Site Directed Nuclease (SDN) 1 and 2 genomes from Rules 7-11 of the Environment Protection Act, thus allowing it to avoid a long process for approval of GM crops through the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC).

The Institutional BioSafety Committee (IBSC) under the Environment Protection Act would now be entrusted to certify that the genome edited crop is devoid of any foreign DNA.



What is the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee?

- It functions under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).
- It is responsible for the appraisal of activities involving large-scale use of hazardous microorganisms and recombinants in research and industrial production from the environmental angle.
- The committee is also responsible for the appraisal of proposals relating to the release of genetically engineered organisms and products into the environment including experimental field trials.
- GEAC is chaired by the Special Secretary/Additional Secretary of MoEF&CC and co-chaired by a representative from the Department of Biotechnology (DBT).

What is Genome Editing?

- Genome editing (also called **gene editing**) is a group of technologies that give scientists the ability to change an organism's **Deoxy-Ribonucleic Acid (DNA)**.
- These technologies allow genetic material to be added, removed, or altered at particular locations in the genome.
- Advanced research has allowed scientists to develop the highly effective **Clustered Regularly Interspaced Palindromic Repeat (CRISPR)**-associated proteins based systems. This system allows for **targeted intervention at the genome sequence**.
- This tool has opened up various possibilities in plant breeding. Using this tool, agricultural scientists can now edit the genome to insert specific traits in the gene sequence.
- Depending on the nature of the edit that is carried out, the **process is divided into three categories** —

SDN 1, SDN 2 and SDN 3.

- **Site Directed Nuclease (SDN) 1** introduces changes in the host genome's DNA through small insertions/deletions without introduction of foreign genetic material. **In SDN 2**, the edit involves using a small DNA template to generate specific changes. Both these processes **do not involve alien genetic material** and the end result is indistinguishable from conventionally bred crop varieties. **The SDN3 process involves larger DNA elements or full length genes of foreign origin** which makes it similar to genetically modified organisms (GMO) development.

#ANTI-SHIP VERSION OF BRAHMOS

Recently, an **anti-ship version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile** was successfully test-fired jointly by the **Indian Navy and the Andaman and Nicobar Command**.

The Andaman and Nicobar Command is the **only tri-services command of the Indian armed forces**.

What is BrahMos?

- BrahMos is a joint venture between the **Defence Research and Development Organisation of India (DRDO)** and the NPOM of Russia.
- BrahMos is named on the **rivers Brahmaputra and Moskva**.
- It is a **two-stage (solid propellant engine in the first stage and liquid ramjet in second) missile**.
- It is a **multiplatform missile** i.e it can be launched from **land, air, and sea and multi capability missile** with pinpoint accuracy that works in both day and night irrespective of the weather conditions.
- It operates on the **"Fire and Forgets" principle** i.e., it does not require further guidance after launch.
- Brahmos is one of the fastest cruise missiles currently operationally **deployed with speed of Mach 2.8**, which is nearly 3 times more than the speed of sound.
- Earlier, the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** successfully test-fired the BrahMos missile from a **Sukhoi fighter jet**. Recently, the Indian Navy also successfully test-fired an **advanced version of the Brahmos missile** from a stealth destroyer in the Indian Ocean.
- Following **India's entry into the MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime) club in June 2016**, the range is planned to be extended to 450 km and to 600km at a later stage.
- The BrahMos missile was **initially developed with a range capped at 290 km**.

What Defense Equipment does India procure From Russia?

- **Submarines:** Six **Air Independent Propulsion (AIP-powered) conventional submarines** under the **P75-I project**.
- Negotiations for leasing two nuclear-ballistic submarines.
- **Frigates & Guided-missile Destroyers:** Four of the Navy's 10 guided-missile destroyers are Russian Kashin class, and 6 of its 17 frigates are **Russian Talwar class**.
- **Aircraft Carrier:** The only aircraft carrier in service with India, **INS Vikramaditya** is a Soviet-made Kiev-class vessel that came into service for the **Indian Navy** in 2013.
- **Fighter Aircraft:** Russia has also been one of main exporters of fighter aircraft to India, including hundreds of **Sukhoi and MiG jets**.
- All six of the service's air tankers are Russian-made Il-78s.
- **Tanks:** Indian **Army's main battle tank force** is composed predominantly of Russian T-72M1 (66%) and T-90S (30%).
- **Missile Defense System:** **S-400 anti-missile system**.

#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.
- While the **Mark-1 has a range of 38 km, the enhanced version of Mark-1 tested in the last fortnight has a range of 45 km** with some key additional features.
- 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.**
- **Features:**
- It can fire a salvo of **12 rockets over a period of 44 seconds.** One **battery of the Pinaka system consists of six launch vehicles**, accompanied by loader systems, **radar** and links with network-based systems and a command post.
- **One battery can neutralise an area of 1 km by 1 km.**
- As a key tactic of **long-range artillery battle**, the launchers have to 'shoot and scoot' to **ensure they themselves do not become the targets, especially being detectable due to its back blast.**

NEAR FIELD COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- Google Pay has recently launched a new feature in India, 'Tap to pay for UPI', in collaboration with Pine Labs. The feature makes use of **Near Field Communication (NFC) technology**.
- The functionality will allow users with NFC-enabled Android smartphones and **UPI (Unified Payments Interface)** accounts linked to Google Pay to carry out transactions just by tapping their phones on any Pine Labs Android point-of-sale (POS) terminal across the country.
- The process is **much faster compared to scanning a QR code or entering the UPI-linked mobile number** which has been the conventional way till now.
- In February 2022, **Apple introduced Tap to Pay** on the iPhone.

What is NFC and how does it work?

- NFC is a short-range wireless connectivity technology that allows NFC-enabled devices to communicate with each other and transfer information quickly and easily with a single touch - whether to pay bills, exchange business cards, download coupons, or share a document.
- NFC transmits data **through electromagnetic radio fields**, to enable communication between two devices. Both devices must contain NFC chips, as transactions take place **within a very short distance**.
- NFC-enabled devices must be either physically touching or within a few centimetres from each other for data transfer to occur.
- In 2004, consumer electronics companies, Nokia, Philips and Sony together formed the NFC Forum, which outlined the architecture for NFC technology to create powerful new consumer-driven products.
- Nokia released the first NFC-enabled phone in 2007.

What are the other applications of NFC technology?

- It is used in **contactless banking cards to perform money transactions** or to generate contact-less tickets for public transport.
- Contactless cards and readers use NFC in several applications from securing networks and buildings to monitoring inventory and sales, preventing auto theft, and running unmanned toll booths.
- It is **present in speakers, household appliances, and other electronic devices** that are controlled through smartphones.
- It **also has an application in healthcare**, to monitor patient stats through NFC-enabled wristbands. NFC is **used in wireless charging** too.

#WHAT IS GSLV SATELLITE?

In 2021, a high-level panel was established to examine the **failed Geosynchronous Satellite GSLV-F10/Earth Observation Satellites (EOS)-03 mission** and recommended measures for making the **Cryogenic Upper Stage (CUS)** more robust.

The **Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV)** with improvements added to its CUS is expected to be ready in the second half of this year.

What is a Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV)?

- GSLV is a **space launch vehicle designed, developed, and operated by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** to launch satellites and other space objects into **Geosynchronous Transfer Orbits**.
- GSLV has been designed for **launching communication satellites**.
- Geosynchronous satellites are launched into orbit in the **same direction the Earth is spinning and can have any inclination**.
- The satellites in the geosynchronous orbits appear to **remain permanently fixed in the same position in the sky**.
- GSLV has the capability to put a heavier payload in orbit than the **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)**.
- It is a **three-stage launcher with strap-on motors**.

#NEPTUNE: ANTI-CRUISE MISSILE

Recently, Ukraine claimed that it has damaged the **Russian Black Sea Fleet Flagship 'Moskva'** by **Neptune Anti-Ship Cruise Missiles**.

What is Neptune?

- The Neptune is a coastal **anti-ship cruise missile** that is capable of the **destruction of naval vessels in a range of 300 km**.
- The Missile system was inducted into the **Ukrainian Defence Forces in March 2021** after being in development for six years.
- The cruise missile was developed in haste by the military as the Russian threat to the coastal areas of Ukraine was growing rapidly since the **occupation of Crimea in 2014**.
- The design of this missile is based on a **Russian Kh-35** cruise missile which goes by the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) name of AS-20 Kayak**.
- The cruise missile attack was **carried out using TB-2 drones** as decoys along with other measures toward saturation of the cruiser's **Air Defence systems**.

What is Moskva?

- Moskva is a **guided missile cruiser** of the Russian Navy named after the city of Moscow.
- A cruiser is a **large surface warship** built for high speed and great cruising radius, capable of not only defending its own fleet and coastlines but also threatening those of the enemy.
- The Moskva was originally commissioned as the Slava in **1983**.
- It was **recommissioned in 2000** as the Moskva with refurbished weapon systems and electronics.
- It has a displacement of **12,490 tons**.
- It is the **flagship of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Navy** and carries a crew of around 500 personnel.

#EARTH OBSERVATION SATELLITE (EOS-02)

- The Union Minister of Science & Technology said that **EOS (Earth Observation Satellite)-02** satellite will be launched in the second quarter of 2022.
- The launch was delayed due to **pandemic** and consequent **lockdown**.
- Earlier, the **Indian Space Research Organisation's** earth observation satellite **EOS-04** and **two small satellites (INSPIRESat-1 and INS-2TD)** were successfully placed into the intended orbit by the **PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle)-C52** rocket.
- What is the EOS-02 Satellite?
- EOS-02 is **Technology demonstration satellite for various new technologies** with applications that include **agriculture, forestry, geology, hydrology, miniaturised power electronics, reaction wheels** etc. and forming the payload for **SSLV (Small Satellite Launch Vehicle)-1**.
- **SSLV** is the smallest vehicle weighing only 110-tonne. **It will take only 72 hours to integrate, unlike the 70 days taken now for a launch vehicle.**
- It aims to **cater to the market for the launch of small satellites into Earth's low orbits** that has emerged in recent years to cater to the needs of developing countries, universities for small satellites, and private corporations.



What are the Other Satellites in the EOS Series?

- **EOS-01:** Earth Observation satellite meant for Agriculture, Forestry & **disaster management** support.

- **EOS-03:** First Agile Earth Observation satellite in **Geostationary orbit** and applications which include near real time imaging, quick monitoring of natural disasters, spectral signatures for agriculture, forestry etc.
- **EOS-04: Radar** Imaging satellite meant to provide high quality images under all weather conditions for applications such as Agriculture, Forestry & Plantations, Soil Moisture & Hydrology and **Flood Mapping**.
- **EOS-05:** Earth Observation Satellite in the Geostationary Orbit.
- **EOS-06:** Earth Observation satellite meant for applications, which include ocean related services and advisories towards potential fishing zone forecast, ocean state forecast.

What are Earth Observation Satellites?

- Earth observation satellites are **the satellites equipped with remote sensing technology**. Earth observation is the gathering of information about Earth's physical, chemical and biological systems.
- Many earth observation satellites have been employed **on sun-synchronous orbit**.
- Other earth observation satellites launched by ISRO include RESOURCESAT- 2, 2A, CARTOSAT-1, 2, 2A, 2B, RISAT-1 and 2, OCEANSAT-2, Megha-Tropiques, SARAL and SCATSAT-1, INSAT-3DR, 3D, etc.

#NASA'S HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE

- Recently, the **National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Hubble Space Telescope** has confirmed that the **huge Bernardinelli-Bernstein comet** is indeed the **largest icy comet nucleus** ever seen by astronomers. The nucleus is called the **C/2014 UN271** which has an estimated **diameter of almost 129 kilometres**.
- The nucleus is **around 50 times larger** than that of most known comets, and its mass is estimated to be around 500 trillion tonnes.



What is the Hubble Space Telescope?

- It was launched by **NASA in 1990** and is named in honour of Edwin Hubble, a revered American astronomer of the early 20th century. The telescope is a **space-based observatory** and has **made significant observations** related to interstellar objects, including **moons around Pluto and a comet crashing into Jupiter**.
- The telescope has now been in operation for over thirty years.
- In December 2021, NASA's **James Webb Space Telescope**, a revolutionary instrument built to peer the farthest yet into the cosmos, was launched. It is also considered a **successor of the Hubble Telescope** and will extend and complement its discoveries.

What is the Bernardinelli-Berstein Comet?

- The **comet** was **discovered by astronomers Pedro Bernardinelli and Gary Bernstein** in archival images from the Dark Energy Survey at an astronomical observatory in Chile.
- It was **discovered in November 2010** and has been intensively studied since.
- The comet **has been travelling towards the sun for over a million years** and it is believed to have originated in the **Oort Cloud**.
- Oort Cloud is a **distant region of the solar system** that is predicted to be the source of most comets.
- The Oort Cloud is **still only a theoretical concept** as the comets that constitute it are too faint and distant to be directly observed. It was **first hypothesised** by Dutch astronomer Jan Oort in **1950**.
- The Bernardinelli-Berstein comet **follows a 3-million-year-long elliptical orbit** and has an **estimated**

temperature of minus 348 degrees Fahrenheit.

- It is warm enough to sublimate carbon monoxide (CO) from the surface to produce the dusty coma.

What are the Key Highlights about CO?

- **Carbon monoxide (CO)** is a colourless, odourless, tasteless and highly toxic gas that is slightly less dense than air.
- It is **short-lived** (stay only a few months) in the atmosphere.
- It is **produced from the exhaust of internal combustion engines** and incomplete combustion of various other fuels.

MISCELLANEOUS

#DOLPHIN POPULATION IN CHILIKA LAKE

The dolphin population along **Odisha's coast and in its water bodies** has increased but the number of Irrawaddy dolphins in Chilika lake has fallen. A total of **six species of dolphins** — **Irrawaddy, bottlenose, humpback, striped, finless and spinner dolphins** — have been recorded.

What are Different Species of Dolphins?

About Irrawaddy Dolphins:

- **Habitat:** Irrawaddy dolphins are **found in coastal areas in South and Southeast Asia**, and in **three rivers**: the Ayeyarwady (Myanmar), the Mahakam (Indonesian Borneo) and the Mekong.
- The Mekong River Irrawaddy dolphins inhabit a 118-mile stretch of the river between Cambodia and Lao PDR.



About Striped Dolphins:

- **Habitat:** The striped dolphin inhabits temperate or tropical, off-shore waters.
- It is found in abundance in the North and South Atlantic Oceans, including the Mediterranean and Gulf of Mexico, the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean.

About Finless Dolphins:

- **Habitat:** The finless porpoise originally inhabited salt water niches along the coast of the Indo-Pacific Ocean.

About Spinner Dolphin:

- **Habitat:** The spinner dolphin is a small dolphin found in off-shore tropical waters around the world.
- It is famous for its acrobatic displays in which it rotates around its longitudinal axis as it leaps through the air.

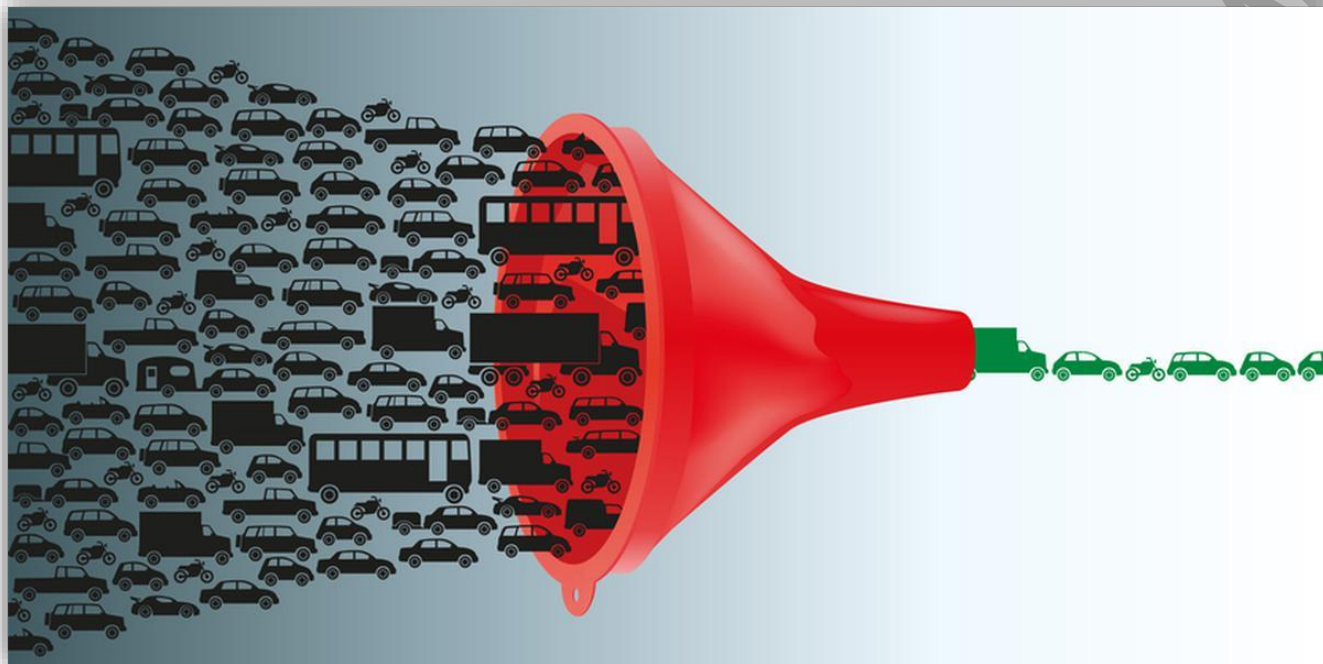
Chilika Lake

- Chilika is **Asia's largest and world's second largest lagoon**.
- It **lies on the east coast of India in the state of Odisha**, separated from the mighty Bay of Bengal by a small strip of sand.
- It spreads over Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts of Odisha on the east coast of India, at the mouth of the Daya River, flowing into the Bay of Bengal, covering an area of over 1,100 square kilometers.
- It is the **largest wintering ground for migratory birds** on the Indian sub-continent and is home to a number of threatened species of plants and animals.
- In 1981, Chilika Lake was designated the **first Indian wetland of international importance** under the **Ramsar Convention**.
- Major attraction at Chilika is **Irrawaddy dolphins** which are often spotted off Satapada Island.
- The **large Nalabana Island (Forest of Reeds)** covering about 16 sq km in the lagoon area was declared a **bird sanctuary** in 1987.
- **Kalijai Temple** - Located on an island in the Chilika Lake.

#UNEP REPORT ON NOISE POLLUTION

Recently released **United Nations Environment Programme** report titled **Annual Frontiers Report 2022** became **controversial on account of the mention of a single city, Moradabad of Uttar Pradesh.**

The **Frontiers** report identifies and offers solutions to three environmental issues: urban noise pollution, **wildfires** and phenological shifts that merit attention and action from governments and the public at large to address the triple planetary crisis of **climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.**



What was the Controversy?

- The report **compiles studies about noise levels** in several cities around the world and illustrates a subset of 61 cities and the range of dB (decibel) levels that have been measured.
- **Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata, Asansol and Moradabad** are the five Indian cities mentioned in this list.
- **Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh** was shown as having a dB range from 29 to 114.
- At a maximum value of 114, it was the **second-noisiest city in the list.**
- While **road traffic, industry and high population density** are well-known factors associated with high dB levels, the inclusion of Moradabad appeared strange because similar studies in the past had never suggested it to be an unusually noisy city.
- The **first was Dhaka, Bangladesh** at a maximum value of 119 dB.
- What is India Doing about Noise Pollution?
- The **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** is mandated to track noise levels, set standards as well as ensure, via their State units, that sources of excessive noise are controlled.
- The **agency has a manual monitoring system** where sensors are installed in major cities and few cities have the facility to track noise levels in real time.

What are the Laws related to Noise Pollution in India?

- Noise pollution is regulated separately under the Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000.
- Earlier, **noise pollution and its sources** were addressed under the **Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.**
- Additionally, **noise standards for motor vehicles, air-conditioners, refrigerators, diesel generators** and certain types of construction equipment are prescribed under the **Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986.**

- **Noise emanating from industry** is regulated by **State Pollution Control Boards / Pollution Control Committees (SPCBs / PCCs)** for states / Union territories under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

#GLOBAL WIND REPORT 2022

- Recently, the **Global Wind Report for 2022** was published by the **Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC)**.
- GWEC was established in 2005 to **provide a credible and representative forum** for the entire wind energy sector at an international level.



What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Wind Energy Installations Must Quadruple Every Year:**
- Wind energy installations **every year across the world must quadruple from the 94 GW (Gigawatt) installed in 2021** within this decade to meet the global climate targets.
- Without the necessary amplification, restricting global warming over pre-industrial levels to 1.5 degrees Celsius — a target set by the **Paris Agreement** — and achieving **Net Zero emissions** by 2050 may become difficult.

Capacity Installed in 2021:

- New installations of 93.6 GW in 2021 brought global cumulative wind energy capacity to 837 GW, a Year-on-Year (YoY) growth of 12%.
- The **onshore wind market** added 72.5 GW worldwide. That is 18% lower than the previous year **due to a slowdown in China and the US, the world's two largest wind markets**.
- The **offshore wind market** enjoyed its best ever year in 2021, with 21.1GW commissioned.

What are the Related Initiatives?

- **National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy:** The main objective of the National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy, 2018 is to provide a framework for promotion of large grid connected wind-solar PV hybrid systems for optimal and efficient utilization of wind and solar resources, transmission infrastructure and land.
- **National Offshore Wind Energy Policy:** The National Offshore wind energy policy was notified in October 2015 with an objective to develop the offshore wind energy in the Indian **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** along the Indian coastline of 7600 km.

#INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

- Recently, the **United Nations'** climate science body, the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** published the third part of its **Sixth Assessment Report (AR6)**.
- This **second part** of the report was published in March 2022 which was **about climate change impacts, risks and vulnerabilities, and adaptation options**.
- The first part of this report, on the physical science of climate change was published in 2021. It had **warned that 1.5 degree Celsius warming was likely to be achieved** before 2040 itself.



What are the Key Findings of the Report?

- **GreenHouse Gas Emissions:** In 2019, global net anthropogenic **Greenhouse gas (GHG)** emissions were at **59 Gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (GtCO₂e)**, 54% higher than in 1990.
- **Net emissions** refer to emissions accounted for after deducting emissions soaked up by the world's forests and oceans.
- **Anthropogenic emissions** refer to emissions that originate from human-driven activities like the burning of coal for energy or cutting of forests.
- This emissions growth has been driven mainly by CO₂ emissions from the burning of fossil fuels and the industrial sector, as well as methane emissions.
- But the average annual rate of **growth slowed to 1.3% per year in the period 2010-19, compared to 2.1% per year in the period 2000-09.**
- At least 18 countries have reduced GHG emissions for longer than 10 years on a continuous basis due to decarbonisation of their energy system, energy efficiency measures and reduced energy demand.

Emission by the Least Developed Countries:

- Carbon inequality remains pervasive as ever with **Least Developed Countries (LDCs)** emitting only **3.3% of global emissions in 2019.**
- Their average per capita emissions in the period 1990-2019 were only 1.7 tonnes **CO₂e**, compared to the global average of 6.9 **tCO₂e.**
- LDCs contributed less than 0.4% of total historical CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels and industry in the period 1850-2019.
- Globally, **41% of the world's population lived in countries emitting less than 3 tCO₂e per capita in 2019.**

Pledges to the Paris Agreement:

- Upon adding up the NDCs announced by countries till October 2021, the IPCC finds that it is likely that warming will exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius (°C) in this century, thereby failing the **Paris Agreement's mandate.**
- Current pledges made by countries who have signed the **Paris Agreement** are known as **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).**
- The CO₂ emissions from existing and planned fossil fuel infrastructure — coal, oil, and gas — contribute greatly to this projected failure.
- In its **best-case scenario**, known as the **C1 pathway**, the IPCC outlines what the world needs to do to limit temperatures to 1.5°C, with limited or no 'overshoot'.
- **Overshoot** refers to global temperatures crossing the 1.5°C threshold temporarily, but then being brought back down using technologies that suck CO₂ out of the atmosphere.
- To achieve the C1 pathway, global **GHG emissions must fall by 43% by 2030.**

Low Emissions Technologies:

- Widespread 'system transformations' are required across the energy, buildings, transport, land and other sectors, to achieve the 1.5°C target and this will **involve adopting low-emission or zero carbon pathways** of development in each sector. And solutions are available at affordable costs.
- The **costs of low emissions technologies have fallen continuously since 2010.** On a unit costs basis, **solar energy** has dropped 85%, **wind** by 55 %, and **lithium-ion batteries** by 85%.
- Their **deployment, or usage, has increased multiple fold since 2010** — 10 times for solar and 100 times for electric vehicles.
- Reducing fossil fuel use in the energy sector, demand management and energy efficiency in the industrial sector and adopting the principles of 'sufficiency' and efficiency in the construction of buildings are among the plethora of solutions.

Impact on GDP:

- The IPCC states that **low-cost climate mitigation options** could **halve global GHG emissions by 2030**. In fact, the **long-term benefits of limiting warming far outweigh the costs**.
- Investing in decarbonisation would have a minimal impact

What is the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change?

- It is the **international body for assessing the science related to climate change**. It was set up in 1988 by the **World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)** and **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** to provide policymakers with regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation.
- IPCC assessments **provide a scientific basis for governments at all levels to develop climate related policies**, and they underlie negotiations at the UN Climate Conference – the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**.

What is the Assessment Report of IPCC?

- The Assessment Reports, the **first of which had come out in 1990**, are the most **comprehensive evaluations of the state of the earth's climate**.
- Every few years (about 7 years), the IPCC produces assessment reports.
- **Hundreds of experts** go through every available piece of relevant, published scientific information to prepare a common understanding of the changing climate.
- The four subsequent assessment reports, each thousands of pages long, came out in **1995, 2001, 2007 and 2015**.
- These have formed the basis of the **global response to climate change**.
- Over the years, each assessment report has built on the work of the previous ones, **adding more evidence, information and data**.
- So that most of the conclusions about climate change and its impacts have far greater clarity, certainty and wealth of new evidence now, than earlier.
- It is these negotiations that have produced the **Paris Agreement**, and previously the **Kyoto Protocol**.
- The Paris Agreement, negotiated on the basis of the **Fifth Assessment Report**.
- The Assessment Reports - by three working groups of scientists.
 - **Working Group-I** - Deals with the scientific basis for climate change.
 - **Working Group-II** - Looks at the likely impacts, vulnerabilities and adaptation issues.
 - **Working Group-III** - Deals with actions that can be taken to combat climate change.

#KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF NIPAH VIRUS

- Recently, Scientists detected the **presence of IgG antibodies against Nipah virus infection (NiV)** in 51 bats that were captured from Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

What is Antibody?

- Antibody, also called immunoglobulin, is a **protective protein produced by the immune system** in response to the presence of a foreign substance, called an antigen.
- A wide range of substances are **regarded by the body as antigens**, including disease-causing organisms and toxic materials.
- Antibodies recognize and attack onto antigens in order to remove them from the body.

What are the Different Types of Antibodies?

- **IgG:** It is the **main antibody in blood and it has a powerful ability to bind to bacteria** and toxins, and thus it takes on an important role in the biological defense system. It is the **only isotype that can pass through the placenta**, and IgG transferred from the mother's body protects a newborn.
- **IgM:** It is **constructed of five units of basic Y-shaped structures** and is mainly distributed to the blood. Produced first upon pathogen invasion by B cells, IgM has a key role in the initial immune system defense for protecting the body. The B-cell, also called B-lymphocyte, is a type of white blood cell that plays a significant role in protecting your body from infection.
- **IgA:** While in blood, **IgA is mainly present as monomers** (the shape of a single Y), but it forms dimers (a combination of 2 Ys) in secretions such as bowel fluid, nasal discharge, and saliva, to prevent bacterial invasion from a mucous membrane. It is also present in breast milk and protects the gastrointestinal tract of newborns from bacterial and viral infection.
- **IgD:** It is **present on the surface of B cells** and it is reported to play a role in the induction of antibody production and the prevention of respiratory tract infections.
- **IgE:** It is believed that **IgE was originally related to immunity reactions to parasites**. By binding to mast cells, **IgE is believed to be involved in allergies such as pollinosis**.

What are the Key Highlights about the Nipah virus?

- It is a **zoonotic virus** (it is transmitted from animals to humans).
- The organism which causes Nipah Virus encephalitis is an RNA or **Ribonucleic acid virus** of the family Paramyxoviridae, genus Henipavirus, and is closely related to Hendra virus.
- **Hendra virus (HeV) infection** is a rare emerging zoonosis that causes severe and often fatal disease in both infected horses and humans.
- It **first broke out in Malaysia and Singapore** in 1998 and 1999.
- It **first appeared in domestic pigs** and has been found among several species of domestic animals including dogs, cats, goats, horses and sheep.

Transmission:

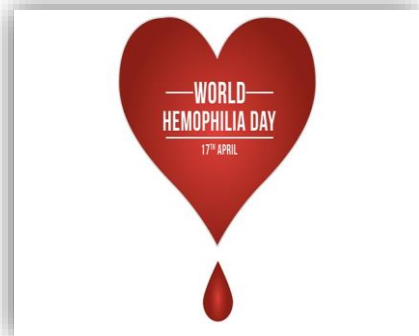
- The disease spreads through **fruit bats** or 'flying foxes,' of the genus Pteropus, who are natural reservoir hosts of the Nipah and Hendra viruses.
- The **virus is present in bat urine** and potentially, bat faeces, saliva, and birthing fluids.

#WORLD HAEMOPHILIA DAY

World Haemophilia day is celebrated on **17th April every year**, aiming to increase awareness about haemophilia and other inherited bleeding disorders. The day is **celebrated in the honour of Frank Schnabel**, founder of the World Federation of Haemophilia (WHF). **This year's (2022) theme** is "Access for All: Partnership. Policy. Progress. Engaging your government, integrating inherited bleeding disorders into national policy".

What is Haemophilia?

- Haemophilia is a medical condition, **mostly inherited, in which the ability of blood to clot is severely reduced**, so that even a **minor injury can cause severe bleeding**.
- Haemophilia is caused by a mutation or change, in one of the genes, that provides instructions for making the clotting factor proteins needed to form a blood clot.
- This change or mutation can prevent the clotting protein from



working properly or to be missing altogether. These genes are **located on the X chromosome**.

- Because of the genetics involved in the way the sex of a child is determined, **men are more vulnerable** to haemophilia than women.
- It is quite a rare disease; about 1 in 10,000 people are born with it.

Types:

- The most common type of Haemophilia is called **Haemophilia A**. This means the person does not have enough **clotting factor VIII (factor eight)**.
- **Haemophilia B is less common**. A person with Haemophilia B does not have enough **factors IX (factor nine)**.
- Haemophilia A, occurs in about 1 in 5,000 births, while Haemophilia B is even rarer at about 1 in about 20,000 births.

What is the Indian Scenario of Haemophilia?

- According to the World Federation of Haemophilia's Annual Global Survey 2017, there were over **1.96 lakh persons living with haemophilia across the world in 2017**.
- In the country-wise data, **India emerges with the highest count at nearly 19,000**.
- It is estimated that 80% cases go unregistered, so that the actual count is close to 2 lakh.
- What is the World Federation of Haemophilia (WFH)?
- It is an international not-for-profit organization that was established in 1963.
- It is a global network of patient organizations in 140 countries and has official recognition from the World Health Organization.
- Its mission is to improve and sustain care for people with inherited bleeding disorders around the world.

#WHAT IS NATPOLREX-VIII?

- Recently, the **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** has conducted the 8th edition of two-day **National Level Pollution Response Exercise, 'NATPOLREX-VIII'**, off Mormugao harbour, Goa.
- Besides NATPOLREX, ICG is concurrently conducting a capacity building professional training course in Marine Oil Response and Preparedness for 45 international participants from 18 countries including member states from **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)** at Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

What is NATPOLREX-VIII?

- The exercise consisted of a two-day programme featuring table-top exercise, pollution response workshop on **marine Oil** and HNS (Hazardous and Noxious Substances) spill followed by exercise at sea.
- During the exercise, various components of NOSDCP (National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan) were invoked to validate and improve the contingency plans and evaluate the preparedness of the resource agencies as well as stakeholders to meet any marine spill disaster at sea.
- The exercise is being attended by more than 85 participants from 50 agencies, including 29 observers from 22 friendly foreign countries & International Organisations and two Coast Guard ships from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Objectives:

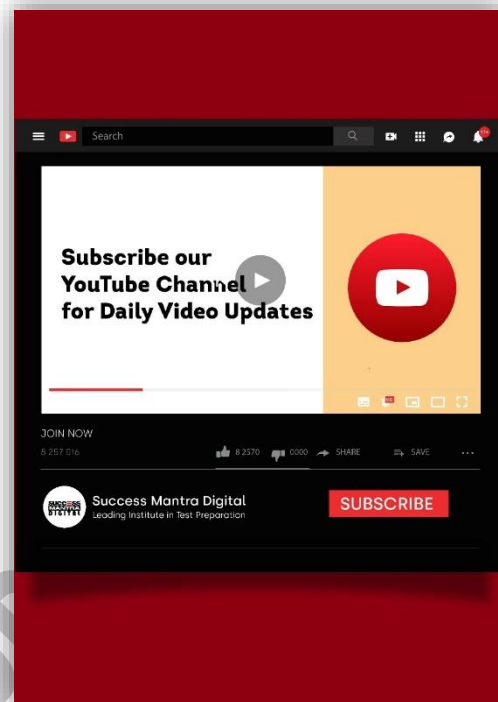
- To enhance the preparedness and response capability of all the stakeholders in combating marine spills.
- It aims at validating the procedures and guidelines as contained in the NOSDCP at the national and regional levels under the aegis of **SACEP (South Asian Cooperative for Environment Protection)**, to which India is a member state.

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