pravahini

Monthly Compendium (IMPORTANT TOPICS)

of Current Affairs by SUCCESS MANTRA (GTB Nagar)
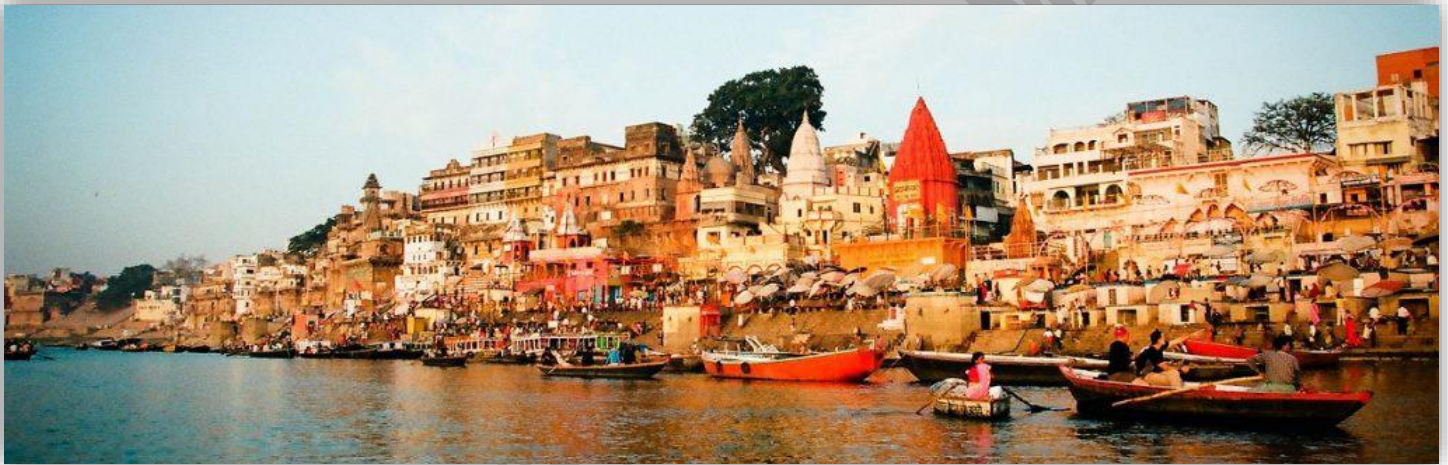
IMPORTANT

TOPICS

MAY 2022

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

#NATIONAL MISSION FOR CLEAN GANGA

- The **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** has organised the 6th Edition of the monthly 'Webinar with Universities' series on 'Igniting Young Minds, Rejuvenating Rivers'.
- The theme for the webinar was **'Waste Water Management.'**

What is NMCG?

- The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) is implemented by the **National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection and Management of River Ganga also known as the National Ganga Council.**
- This mission was established on 12th August 2011 under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860** as a registered society.

Objectives:

- The mission incorporates **rehabilitating and boosting the existing STPs (Sewage Treatment Plants) and instant short-term steps** to curb pollution at exit points on the riverfront in order to check the inflow of sewage.
- To maintain the continuity of the water flow without changing the natural season variations.
- To restore and maintain the surface flow and groundwater.
- To regenerate and maintain the natural vegetation of the area.
- To conserve and regenerate the aquatic biodiversity as well as the riparian biodiversity of the river Ganga basin.
- To allow participation of the public in the process of protection, rejuvenation and management of the river.

What is the Initiatives Related to Ganga?

- Namami Gange Programme: It is an Integrated Conservation Mission, approved as a 'Flagship Programme' by the Union Government in June 2014 to accomplish the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution and conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.

- **Ganga Action Plan:** It was the first River Action Plan that was taken up by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in 1985, to improve the water quality by the interception, diversion, and treatment of domestic sewage. The National River Conservation Plan is an extension to the Ganga Action

Plan. It aims at cleaning the Ganga river under Ganga Action Plan phase-2.

- **National River Ganga Basin Authority (NRGBA):** It was formed by the Government of India in the year 2009 under Section-3 of the Environment Protection Act, 1986. Ganga was declared as the 'National River' of India in 2008.

- **Clean Ganga Fund**: In 2014, it was formed for cleaning up of the Ganga, setting up of waste treatment plants, and conservation of biotic diversity of the river.

- **Ban on Waste Disposal**: In 2017, the **National Green Tribunal** banned the disposal of any waste in the Ganga.

#ATAL NEW INDIA CHALLENGE

Atal Innovation Mission launched the phase 1 of the 2nd edition of the **Atal New India Challenge (ANIC 2.0). ANIC 1.0** was launched in 2018 for the **clarion call to bring innovations and technologies relevant** to the people.

What is Atal New India Challenge?

- **About:** Atal New India Challenge is a flagship program of Atal Innovation Mission, **NITI Aayog.** The program aims **to seek, select, support and nurture technology-based innovations** that solve sectoral challenges of national importance and societal relevance.
- ANIC **solicits innovations in the prototype stage and supports the selected start-ups through to the commercialization stage** over a course of **12 – 18 months.**
- **Vision:**
- Help create **products from existing technologies that solve problems of national importance** and societal relevance (productization)
- Help **new solutions find markets and early customers** (commercialization) in the context of India.

Objectives:

- To incentivize innovations in areas critical to India's development and growth **–** Education, Health, **Water and Sanitation** Agriculture, **Food Processing**, Housing, **Energy**, **Mobility**, Space Application etc.
- To address the Commercialization Valley of Death (Gap between the research and commercialization) - supporting innovators scale over the risks associated with access to resources for testing, piloting and market creation.

ANIC 1.0:

- **ANIC 1.0** followed an open innovation challenge format where challenge statements were put out in the public domain and a call for application was made.
- The winning start-ups / individual innovators **are supported through a tranche-based grant-in-aid of up to Rs.1 crore and through AIM's innovation network.**

ANIC 2.0:

- The 1st phase of **ANIC 2.0 will see 18 challenges** being thrown open from 7 **sectors,** which are, **E-mobility**, **Road Transportation**, **Space Technology and Application,** Sanitation Technology, Medical Devices and Equipment, **Waste Management**, Agriculture.

What is Atal Innovation Mission?

- AIM is Government of India's **flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship** in the country. Its **objective is to develop new programmes and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy,** provide platform and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders, **create awareness and create an umbrella structure** to oversee the innovation ecosystem of the country.

Major Initiatives:

- **Atal Tinkering Labs:** These are creating problem solving mindset across schools in India.
- **Atal Incubation Centers:** Fostering world class startups and adding a new dimension to the incubator model.
- **Atal New India Challenges:** Fostering product innovations and aligning them to the needs of various sectors/ministries.
- **Mentor India Campaign:** A national mentor network in collaboration with the public sector, corporates and institutions, to support all the initiatives of the mission.
- **Atal Community Innovation Center**: To stimulate community centric innovation and ideas in the unserved/underserved regions of the country including Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.
- **Atal Research and Innovation for Small Enterprises (ARISE):** To stimulate innovation and research in the MSME industry.

#PRADHAN MANTRI GARIB KALYAN ANNA YOJANA

Recently, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution revised the **PMKGAY (Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana)** allocation of rice and wheat for all the 36 states/UTs for the remaining five months — from May to September 2022.

What is PMGKAY?

- PMGKAY is a part of **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP)** to help the poor fight the battle against **Covid-19**.
- Its nodal Ministry is the Ministry of Finance.
- It was initially announced **for a three-month period (April, May and June 2020),** covering 80 crore ration cardholders. Later it was extended till November 2020.

- **Phase-I and Phase-II** of this scheme were operational from April to June 2020 and July to November 2020 respectively.

- **Phase-III** of the scheme was operational from May to June 2021.

- **Phase-IV** of the scheme is currently operational for July-November 2021 months.
- The scheme aimed at providing each person who is covered under the **NFSA (National Food Security Act 2013)** with an additional 5 kg grains (wheat or rice) for free, in addition to the 5 kg of subsidized food grain already provided through the **Public Distribution System (PDS).**
- The new version of the PMGKAY lacks one of its important components which was there in 2020 PMGKAY i:e free-of-cost 1 kg pulses per month to each household covered under the NFSA.

- **Expenditure:** The government will be incurring an expenditure **of nearly Rs.2.60 lakh Crore** in PMGKAY Phase I- V. PMGKAY-V will entail an estimated additional food subsidy of **Rs. 53344.52 Crore**.

#INTER-STATE COUNCIL

Recently, the **Inter-State Council (ISC)** has been reconstituted with the Prime Minister as Chairman and Chief Ministers of all States and six Union Ministers as members.

Ten union ministers will be the permanent invitees to the Inter-State Council.

The government has also reconstituted the **standing committee of the Inter-State Council** with Union Home as Chairman.

The Chief Ministers of **Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh** are also members of the standing committee of the Inter-State Council.

What is the Inter-State Council?

Background: As part of the **process of reviewing the working of the existing arrangements** between the Union and the States, the Government constituted a commission in 1988 under the Chairmanship of Justice R.S. Sarkaria.

One of the **important recommendations of** Sarkaria Commission was for establishing a permanent **Inter-State Council** as an independent national forum for consultation with a mandate well defined in accordance with **Article 263 of the Constitution of India.**

About:

- The inter-state council is a **recommendatory body** that has been empowered to **investigate and discuss subjects of common interest** between the Union and state(s), or among states.
- It also **makes recommendations for better coordination of policy** and action on these subjects, and deliberations on matters of general interest to the states, which may be referred to it by its chairman.
- It also **deliberates on other matters of general interest** to the states as may be referred by the chairman to the council.
- The Council may **meet at least thrice in a year.**
- There is also a **Standing Committee of the Council.**

Composition:

- Prime Minister Chairman
- Chief Ministers of all States Members
- Chief Ministers of Union Territories having a Legislative Assembly and Administrators of UTs not having a Legislative Assembly and Governors of States under President's Rule (Governor's Rule in the case of J&K) Members.
- Six Ministers of Cabinet rank in the Union Council of Ministers to be nominated by the Prime Minister Members.
- **What are the Functions of the Inter-State Council?**
- To **create a strong institutional framework** to promote and support **cooperative federalism** in the country and activate the council and zonal councils by organising regular meetings.
- Facilitates consideration of all pending and emerging issues of Centre-state and inter-state relations by the zonal councils and inter-state council.
- **Develops a sound system to monitor the implementation of recommendations** put forward by them.

#WHAT IS E-SHRAM PORTAL?

- According to the latest data, as many as **27.69 crore informal sector workers are registered on the e-shram portal.**

What is an e-Shram Portal?

- Launched in 2021, e-Shram portal is aimed at building a comprehensive National Database of Unorganized Workers (NDUW) in the country.

Aim:

- To **register unorganised workers** such as construction labourers, migrant workforce, street vendors, and domestic workers, among others.
- The workers will be **issued an e-Shram card containing a 12-digit unique number.**
- If a worker is registered on the **eSHRAM portal** and meets with an accident, he will be eligible for Rs 2.0 Lakh on death or permanent disability and Rs 1.0 lakh on partial disability.
- The aim of the **portal is to boost the last-mile delivery of the welfare schemes** for over unorganised workers in the country.

Background:

- The formation of e-Shram portal came after the **Supreme Court directed the Government to complete the registration process of unorganized workers** so that they can avail the welfare benefits given under various government schemes.

- **Implementation:** Government in States/UTs will conduct registration of unorganised workers across the country.

What is the Scenario of Informal Sector Workers in India?

- **Social Category Analysis: Over 94% of 27.69 crore informal sector workers registered on the e-Shram portal** have a monthly income of Rs 10,000 or below and over 74% of the enrolled workforce belongs to **Scheduled Castes (SC)**, Scheduled Tribes (ST) and **Other Backward Classes (OBC).**
- The proportion of the General Category workers is 25.56%.
- The data showed that **94.11% of the registered informal workers have a monthly income of Rs 10,000 or below**, while 4.36% have a monthly income between Rs 10,001 and Rs 15,000.

- **Age-wise Analysis: 61.72% of the registered workers** on the portal are of the age from 18 years to 40 years, while 22.12% are of the age from 40 years to 50 years.
- The proportion of the **registered workers aged above 50 years is 13.23%** while 2.93% of workers are aged between 16 and 18 years.

- **Gender Wise Analysis:** 52.81% of registered workers are female and 47.19 % are male.

Top-5 States in Terms of Registration:

- **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar,** West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha.

- **Occupation Wise: Agriculture is at the top with 52.11% of enrolments** done by those related to the farm sector followed by domestic and household workers at 9.93% and construction workers at 9.13%.

What are the Related Initiatives?

- **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM)**
- **Labour Code**
- **Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY)**
- **PM SVANidhi: Micro Credit Scheme for Street Vendors**
- **Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**
- **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana National Urban Livelihoods Mission**
- **PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY)**
- **One Nation One Ration Card**
- **Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana**
- **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi**
- **World Bank Support to India's Informal Working Class**

#UNIFORM CIVIL CODE (UCC)

- Recently, **an expert committee** headed by a retired **Supreme Court (SC)** judge has been constituted by Uttarakhand to implement **Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and for checking all the relevant laws that control personal matters** for those living in Uttarakhand.
- A few months ago, the **Allahabad High Court also called upon the Central government to initiate the process for implementation of UCC.**

What is Uniform Civil Code (UCC)?

- UCC would provide **one law for the entire nation** (including all religious communities) **in their personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption etc.**
- **Article 44** of the Constitution lays down that the state shall endeavour to secure a UCC for the citizens throughout the Indian territory.
- **Article 44** is one of the **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP).**
- DPSP as defined in **Article 37**, are not justiciable (not enforceable by any court). However, the principles laid down therein are fundamental in governance.

Status of UCC in India:

- In most civil matters, India follows UCC such as **Indian Contract Act 1872**, Civil Procedure Code, Transfer of Property Act 1882, Partnership Act 1932, **Evidence Act, 1872** etc.
- In certain matters, however, there is diversity even under these civil laws as states have made hundreds of

amendments to these.

- Several states refused to be governed by the uniform **Motor Vehicles Act, 2019.**
- At present, **Goa is the only India state that has implemented UCC.**

Origin:

- UCC's origin dates back to **British India when a report was submitted in 1835.**
- This report stressed on the **need for uniformity in the codification of Indian law relating to crimes, evidence, and contracts, specifically recommending that personal laws of Hindus and Muslims be kept outside such codification.**
- **Legislation dealing with personal issues increased**. This forced the government to form the **B N Rau Committee to codify Hindu law in 1941.**

Hindu Succession Act, 1956: Based on B.N. Rau Committee's recommendations, **the Hindu Succession Act (1956)** was adopted **to amend and codify the law relating to intestate or unwilled succession, among Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs.** However, there were **separate personal laws for muslim, christian and Parsis.**

SC Judgements:

- In order to bring uniformity, the **courts have often said in their judgements that the government should move towards a UCC.**
- The judgement in the **Shah Bano case** (1985) is well known.
- Another case was the **Sarla Mudgal Case (1995), which dealt with issue of bigamy and conflict between the personal laws existing on matters of marriage.**
- The Supreme Court in **Shayara Bano case (2017)** had declared the practice of **Triple Talaq (talaq-e-biddat) as unconstitutional.**
- By arguing that practices such as **triple talaq** and polygamy adversely affect the right of a woman to a life of dignity, the **Centre has raised the question whether constitutional protection given to religious practices should extend even to those that are not in compliance with fundamental rights.**

#WOMEN IN INDIAN ARMED FORCES

- Recently, Captain Abhilasha Barak, created history by becoming the first woman officer to join the **Army Aviation Corps** as a Combat Aviator (pilot).
- At present women are only given the **responsibility of traffic control and ground duty in the Aviation Department** but now Abhilasha Barak will take **over the responsibility of the pilot.**
- Captain Barak has been assigned to the second flight of the 2072 Army Aviation Squadron that operates the **Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH).**
- While women officers in the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy have been flying helicopters for long, the Indian Army paved the way for women pilots in 2021 by starting the 'Army Aviation course'.

What is the Army Aviation Corps?

- Army Aviation Corps is the **component of the Indian Army which was established on 1st November, 1986.**
- The Army Aviation Corps is headed by a **director-general at the Army headquarters in New Delhi.**
- It was immediately **inducted into 'Operation Pawan'** which was a crucial test for the newly formed corps.
- The Army Aviation Corps of the Indian Army **primarily carries out the evacuation of the injured troops during operations or health emergencies** in the high-altitude areas.
- The choppers of the Aviation Corps are also **used for observation, reconnaissance, casualty evacuation, combat research and rescue,** and essential load drops.

What is the State of Women's Representation in the Military?

- **Background:** The Army, Air Force and Navy **began inducting women as short-service commission (SSC) officers in 1992.**
- This was the first time when women were allowed to join the military outside the medical stream.
- One of the turning points for women in the military came in 2015 when Indian Air Force (IAF) decided to induct them into the fighter stream. In 2020, the **Supreme Court (SC)** ordered the central government to grant **permanent commission (PC)** to women officers in the Army's non-combat support units on par with their male counterparts.
- The SC had rejected the government's stand of women officers' physiological limitations as **being based on "sex stereotypes" and "gender discrimination against women".**
- Women officers have been granted PC in the Indian Army in all the ten branches where women are inducted for SSC.
- Women are now eligible to occupy all the command appointments, at par with male officers, which would open avenues for further promotions to higher ranks for them.
- **In early 2021**, the **Indian Navy deployed four women officers on warships** after a gap of almost 25 years.
- India's only aircraft carrier **INS Vikramaditya and fleet tanker INS Shakti are the warships** that have been assigned their first women crews since the late 1990s.
- **In May 2021**, the Army inducted the **first batch of women into the Corps of Military Police,** the first time that women joined the military in the non-officer cadre.
- However, Women are still not allowed in combat arms like Infantry and Armored Corps.

#COVID-19 RELATED ECONOMIC SHUTDOWN

- According to an **Asian Development Bank (ADB) paper**, the **Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of India** is likely to see the **highest decline in South Asia due to Covid-19 related school-shutdown.**
- **School closures** led to the **contraction in global GDP and employment.** This scenario is **expected to aggravate further with time.**
- India is among those countries that had the **longest school closures during the Covid-19 pandemic.**

What will be the key impact on Economy?

Global Scenario:

- **Impact on GDP:** GDP has been projected to **decline to 0.19% in 2024, 0.64% in 2028, and 1.11% in 2030** with a total estimate of $943 billion.

- **Impact on Skilled Labour:** School closures will **deny about 5.44 million people around the world employment in the skilled labor force** by 2030. Employment is **likely to decline to 0.05% in 2024, 0.25% in 2026, and 0.75% in 2030** with a total loss of wages amounting to $94.86 billion.

- **Impact on Unskilled Labour:** Employment is **estimated to decline to 0.22% in 2025, 0.51% in 2027, and 1.15% in 2030.** Nearly **35.69 million people would migrate towards the unskilled labour-force** amounting to $121.54 billion lost wages in 2030.

Indian Scenario:

- **Impact on GDP:** In percentage terms, its **GDP will decrease by 0.34% in 2023, 1.36% in 2026, and 3.19% in 2030.**

- **By 2030,** India will account for **10% of the global GDP decline of $943 billion.**

- **Impact on Labour:** At present, India's workforce comprises **408.4 million unskilled and 72.65 million skilled labour forces.** A **significant migration towards unskilled work force** is likely to happen with **1% and 2% decline in skilled and unskilled labour jobs**, respectively.

What is Gross Domestic Product?

- **GDP** is **a measure of economic activity** in a country. It is the **total value of a country's annual output of goods and services**. It gives the economic output from the consumers' side.
- GDP = Private consumption + Gross investment + Government investment + Government spending + (exports-imports)
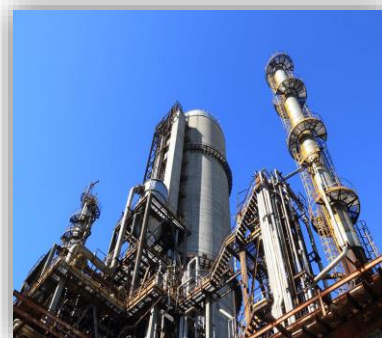
What is Asian Development Bank?

- **ADB** is a **regional development bank established in 1966.**
- It has **68 members**. **India is a founding member.** 49 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside.
- It **aims** to promote social and economic development in Asia and the Pacific.
- As of 31st December 2020, **ADB's five largest shareholders** are **Japan** and the **United States** (each with 15.6% of total shares), the People's Republic of China (6.4%), **India** (6.3%), and **Australia** (5.8%).
- It is **headquartered in Manila, Philippines.**

#WHAT IS COAL GASIFICATION?

The Ministry of Coal has prepared a **National Mission document to achieve 100 MT (Million Tonnes) Coal Gasification by 2030.**

What is Coal Gasification?

- **Process:** Coal gasification is a process in which **coal is partially oxidised with air, oxygen, steam or carbon dioxide to form a fuel gas.**
- This gas is then used instead of piped natural gas, methane and others for deriving energy.
- **In-situ gasification of coal – or Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) – is the technique of converting coal into gas** while it is still in the seam and then extracting it through wells.
- **Production of Syngas:** It produces Syngas which is a **mixture consisting primarily of methane (CH_4), carbon monoxide (CO), hydrogen (H_2), carbon dioxide (CO_2) and water vapour (H_2O).**
- Syngas can be used to **produce a wide range of fertilizers**, fuels, solvent and synthetic materials.

What is the Hydrogen Economy?

- It is an economy that relies on hydrogen as the commercial fuel that would deliver a substantial fraction of a nation's energy and services.
- Hydrogen is a zero-carbon fuel and is considered an alternative to fuel and a key source of clean energy.
- It can be produced from renewable sources of energy such as solar and wind.
- It is an envisioned future where hydrogen is used as fuel for vehicles, energy storage and long-distance transport of energy.
- The different **pathways to use hydrogen economy includes hydrogen production, storage, transport and utilization.**
- In **1970, the term 'Hydrogen Economy' was coined by John Bockris**.
- He mentioned that a hydrogen economy can replace the current hydrocarbon-based economy, leading to a

cleaner environment.

#START-UP ECOSYSTEM IN INDIA

- Recently, the number of **unicorns** in India reached the 100-mark.
- One unicorn means a startup of at least Rs 7,500 crore turnover. The total valuation of these unicorns is USD 330 billion, that is over Rs 25 lakh crore.
- The average annual growth rate of Indian unicorns is more than that of the U.S., the U.K. and many other countries.

What is a Unicorn?

- A unicorn is **any privately owned firm with a market capitalization of more than USD 1 billion.**
- It denotes **new entities dedicated to offering creative solutions** and new business models, among other things.
- There are several categories like **fintech**, **Edtechs**, B2B (Business-to-Business) companies, etc.

Features:

- **Disruptive innovation:** Mostly, all the unicorns have brought a disruption in the field they belong to, for example, Uber transformed commuting.
- **Technology-driven:** The business model is driven by the latest technological innovations and trends.
- **Consumer-focused:** Their goal is to simplify things for consumers and be a part of their day-to-day life.
- **Affordability**: Keeping things affordable is another key highlight of these startups.
- **Privately owned:** Most of the unicorns are privately owned which gets their valuation bigger when an established company invests in it.
- **Software-based:** A recent report suggests that 87% of the unicorns' products are software, 7% are hardware and the rest 6% are other products & services.

What is the State of Startups and Unicorns in India?

- **Status**: India has become the **3rd largest start-up ecosystem in the world** after the US and China. **44 Indian start-ups have achieved unicorn status in 2021** taking the overall tally of unicorns to 83, most of which are in the services sector. India has seen such rapid growth in unicorns due to several strategic as well as conditional reasons.

#PURI HERITAGE CORRIDOR PROJECT

The Odisha government's ambitious temple corridor project in Puri has become a subject of political controversy.

What is the Puri Heritage Corridor Project?

- It is **a redevelopment project of the Odisha government in Puri to create an international heritage site, including the Jagannath temple.** Though conceived in 2016, it was unveiled in December 2019.
- Under the umbrella project falls the **Shree Jagannatha Heritage Corridor (SJHC) or the Shree Mandira Parikrama Project,** for the revamp of the area around the temple.
- The project includes Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) building redevelopment, a 600-capacity Srimandir reception centre, Puri Lake, Musa River revival plan, etc.
- The Odisha government has listed **three objectives** for the revamp of the area around the temple- the security of the temple, the safety of devotees, and the creation of a religious atmosphere for devotees.
- The government allotted funds for the Project from its Augmentation of Basic Amenities and Development of Heritage and Architecture at Puri **(ABADHA) scheme.**

- The ABADHA scheme includes Land Acquisition Charges/Re-habitation& Resettlement/ Road Improvement for providing better facilities in & around Shree Jagannath Temple.

Why has the Project become a Subject of Controversy?

- **Experts and members of civil society objected to the use of heavy machinery** for digging, citing the **possibility of an adverse impact on the 12th Century temple.** Questions started being raised about whether the construction around the temple had the due permissions and clearances.
- The Jagannath temple has been designated a monument of national importance by the **Archaeological Survey of India** and is a centrally protected monument.
- Massive demolition and construction works are taking place within a 100 and 200-meter area of the temple which is **prohibited by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment and Validation) Act (AMSAR) 2010.**

What is the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment and Validation) Act (AMSAR) 2010?

- As per the AMSAR (Amendment and Validation) Act, **construction is prohibited within a 100-meter periphery of a protected area.**
- The area extending to 200 meters around the monument in all directions is called **a regulated area.**
- As per the provisions of the AMSAR Act, the **National Monuments Authority (NMA), set up in 2011 under the Ministry of Culture,** is charged with protecting and preserving ASI-protected sites by managing the prohibited and regulated area in the periphery of such a site.
- If construction has to be undertaken in a regulated or prohibited area, permission from the NMA is required.
- The term **"construction"** as defined in the AMSAR Act does not include the construction of public toilets, urinals, and "similar conveniences".
- It also does not include works for the supply of water, electricity or "provision of similar facilities for publicity".
- Besides, an impact assessment is also required to be done by the NMA before development around a monument if the built-up area of the monument is beyond 5,000 square meters.

What are the Features of Jagannath Temple?

- The temple is believed to be **constructed in the 12th century by King Anatavarman Chodaganga Deva of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty.**

- Jagannath Puri temple **is called 'Yamanika Tirtha'** where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the power of 'Yama', the god of death has been nullified in Puri due to the presence of Lord Jagannath.
- This temple was **called the "White Pagoda"** and is a **part of Char Dham pilgrimages** (Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri, Rameswaram).
- There are **four gates to the temple-** Eastern 'Singhdwara' which is the main gate with two crouching lions, Southern 'Ashwadwara', Western 'Vyaghra Dwara and Northern 'Hastidwara'. There is a carving of each form at each gate.
- In front of the entrance **stands the Aruna stambha or sun pillar**, which was originally at the Sun Temple in Konark.

#NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT SURVEY (NAS)

Recently, the **Ministry of Education** released the **National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021 report.**
The **Triennial Survey** was conducted in November 2021.
About 34 lakh students of 1.18 lakh schools in 720 districts from both rural and urban areas have participated in NAS 2021.

What is the National Achievement Survey (NAS)-2021?

- It is a **nationwide survey to assess the learning outcomes** and health of the education system.
- It is the **largest, nationwide, sample-based education survey** conducted across India.
- It is undertaken by the **Ministry of Education.**
- The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) conducted NAS 2021.
- The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) designed an assessment framework and tools for NAS-2021.
- It provides a **system-level reflection on the effectiveness of school education.**
- It **collects information on relevant background variables** such as school environment, teaching processes, and student home and background factors. It covers the whole spectrum of schools including Government schools (both State and Central government), Government-aided schools, and Private schools across India.

Medium and Grades:

- The **NAS 2021 was conducted in 22 mediums of instruction** that covered English, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Hindi, Malayalam, Marathi, Manipuri, Mizo, Punjabi, Odia, Telugu, Tamil, Bodo, Urdu, Garo, Konkani, Khasi, Bhutia, Nepali, and Lepcha.
- It was conducted in different subjects for different grades. The subject and grades wise break up is below:
- **Grade 3 and 5:** Language, EVS, and Mathematics
- **Grade 8:** Language, Science, Mathematics, and Social Science
- **Grade 10**: Language, Science, Mathematics, Social Science, and English

Objective: To **evaluate children's progress and learning competencies** as an indicator of the efficiency of the education system, so as to take appropriate steps for remedial actions at different levels.

#SWACHH SURVEKSHAN 2023

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched the eighth edition of **Swachh Survekshan (SS)** – SS 2023 **under** Swachh Bharat Mission Urban 2.0.
SS 2023 is curated towards achieving circularity in waste management. The survey would give priority to the principle of 3Rs – Reduce, Recycle and Reuse.

What is Swachh Survekshan 2023?

- Swachh Survekshan was **introduced by MoHUA in 2016 as a competitive framework to encourage cities to improve the status of urban sanitation** while encouraging large scale citizen participation.
- Over the years, Swachh Survekshan has **emerged as the largest Urban sanitation survey in the world.**
- In SS 2023, **additional weightage has been given** to source segregation of waste, enhancement of waste processing capacity of cities to match the waste generation and reduction of waste going to the dumpsites.
- Indicators have been introduced with **additional weightage on emphasizing the need for phased reduction of plastic**, plastic waste processing, **encourage waste to wonder parks** and zero waste events.
- **Ranking of Wards** within the cities is also being promoted through SS 2023.
- The cities would also be assessed on dedicated indicators on the issues of **'Open Urination' (Yellow Spots) and 'Open Spitting' (Red Spots),** being faced by the cities.
- MoHUA will be promoting **cleaning of back lanes** of the residential and commercial areas.

What is Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0?

- **About:** SBM-U 2.0 was announced in **Budget 2021-22**, as the continuation of SBM-U first phase.
- The government is trying to tap safe containment, transportation, disposal of fecal sludge, and septage from toilets.
- 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.
- It will be **implemented over five years from 2021 to 2026** with an outlay of Rs.1.41 lakh crore.
- The Mission is being implemented under the overarching principles of "waste to wealth", and **"Circular Economy".**

- **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.

#AYUSHMAN BHARAT PMJAY

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) approved the implementation of the Centre's flagship **Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)** for the residents in its area.
Ayushman Bharat, a flagship scheme of Government of India, was launched as recommended by the National Health Policy 2017, to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). It has two inter-related components - Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) and Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY).

What is Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY?

- **About:** PM-JAY is the world's largest health insurance/ assurance scheme fully financed by the government.
- **Launched in February 2018,** it offers a sum insured of **Rs.5 lakh per family for secondary care** (which doesn't involve a super specialist) as well as tertiary care (which involves a super specialist).
- Under PMJAY, cashless and paperless access to services is provided to the beneficiaries at the point of service, that is, hospital. Health Benefit Packages **covers** surgery, medical and day care treatments, cost of medicines and diagnostics.
- Packaged rates (Rates that include everything so that each product or service is not charged for separately).
- These are flexible but the hospitals can't charge the beneficiary more once fixed.

Beneficiaries:

- It is an entitlement-based scheme that targets the beneficiaries as identified by latest **Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data.**
- Once identified by the database, the beneficiary is considered insured and can walk into any empaneled hospital.

Funding: The funding for the scheme is shared – 60:40 for all states and UTs with their own legislature, 90:10 in Northeast states and Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal and Uttarakhand and 100% Central funding for UTs without legislature.

Nodal Agency: The **National Health Authority (NHA)** has been constituted as an autonomous entity under the Society Registration Act, 1860 for effective implementation of PM-JAY in alliance with state governments. The State Health Agency (SHA) is the apex body of the State Government responsible for the implementation of AB PM-JAY in the State.

#FOSTERING EFFECTIVE ENERGY TRANSITION 2022

- Recently, the **World Economic Forum (WEF)** has released a report named **Fostering Effective Energy Transition 2022**, which calls for **urgent action by both private and public sectors to ensure a resilient energy transition** to address the challenges to environmental sustainability, energy security and energy justice and affordability.

What are the Findings of the Report?

- The energy transition is **not keeping pace with the growing climate urgency**, and recent **compounded disruptions** from a post-pandemic surge in energy demand**,** fuel supply bottlenecks, inflationary pressures and reconfigured energy supply chains as a result of the **war in Ukraine have made the transition even more difficult**. High energy prices, risks of energy supply shortages, and soaring demand for **fossil fuels** are simultaneously challenging energy affordability, energy security and access, and sustainability.
- The lack of access to an affordable energy supply has **emerged as a key threat to a just transition.**
- Industrial activity generates more than 30% of anthropogenic emissions, yet many industries face considerable challenges to decarbonize.
- **Skewed Fuel Imports:** Of the 34 countries with advanced economies, 11 rely on only three trade partners for over 70 % of

What is World Economic Forum?

- **About:** The World Economic Forum (WEF) is **a Swiss nonprofit foundation established in 1971,** based in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Recognized by the Swiss authorities as the international institution for public-private cooperation.
- **Mission:**
- Committed **to improving the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic, and other leaders of society** to shape global, regional, and industry agendas.
- **Founder and Executive Chairman:** Klaus Schwab.

Some major reports published by WEF are:

- **Energy Transition Index.**
- **Global Competitiveness Report.**
- **Global IT Report**
- WEF along with INSEAD and Cornell University publishes this report.
- **Global Gender Gap Report.**
- Global Risk Report.

- Global Travel and Tourism Report.

#ROLE OF CDS IN INDIA

The Government is reassessing the concept of post of **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)** as well as the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) and is **looking to streamline the setup**.

The CDS is a **four-star General/Officer** who acts as the Principal Military Advisor to the Defence Minister on all tri-services (Army, Navy and Indian Air Force) matters.

What is the Role of the Chief of Defence Staff?

- CDS acts as **the permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee** which will also have three service chiefs as members.
- His core function will be to foster greater operational synergy between the three service branches of the Indian military and keep inter-service frictions to a minimum.

- He also **head the newly created Department of Military Affairs (DMA)** in the Ministry of Defence.
- The CDS will be the **single-point military adviser to the Defence Minister on matters involving all three services** and the service chiefs will be obliged to confine their counsel to issues pertaining to their respective services.
- As the head of DMA, CDS is vested with the authority in prioritising inter-service procurement decisions as Permanent Chairman-Chiefs of Staff Committee.
- The CDS is also **vested with the authority to provide directives to the three chiefs**.
- However, he does not enjoy any command authority over any of the forces.
- CDS is **first among equals, he enjoys the rank of Secretary within the DoD** (Department ff Defence)and his powers will be confined to only the revenue budget.
- He will also perform an advisory role in the **Nuclear Command Authority (NCA)**.

#WHAT IS COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM?

Recently, the Supreme Court in a judgment championing the importance of **"Cooperative Federalism"** for the well-being of democracy, held that **Union and State legislatures have "equal, simultaneous and unique powers" to make laws on Goods and Services Tax (GST)** and the **recommendations of the GST Council are not binding on them.**

The apex court's decision came while confirming a Gujarat High Court ruling that the Centre cannot levy Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) on ocean freight from Indian importers.

Cooperative Federalism in India

The Supreme Court has held that GST on ocean freight paid in case of import of goods is unconstitutional.

What is the SC Ruling?

- Center and the States are "autonomous, independent and even competing units" while making GST laws. Cooperative federalism is treated like marble cake federalism due to the integrated approach of the federal units.
- The recommendations of the GST Council are **the product of a collaborative dialogue involving the Union and the states.** They are recommendatory in nature.
- The recommendations **only have a persuasive value.** To regard them as **binding would disrupt fiscal federalism when both the Union and the states are conferred equal power to legislate on GST.**
- Emphasized that **Article 246A (which gives the States power to make laws with respect to GST) of the Constitution treats the Union and the States as "equal units".**
- It confers **simultaneous power (on Union and States) for enacting laws on GST.**
- Article 279A, in constituting the GST Council, **envisions that neither the Centre nor the states are actually dependent on the other.**
- There are **no provisions in the Goods and Service Tax Act, 2017 (GST Act) that deal with situations where there is repugnancy between the laws drawn up by the Centre and states,** and it is for the GST Council to advise them suitably whenever such occasions arise.

What is Cooperative and Competitive Federalism?

- **Cooperative Federalism:** The Centre and states share a horizontal relationship, where they "cooperate" in the larger public interest. It is an important tool **to enable states' participation in the formulation and implementation** of national policies.
- Union and the states are **constitutionally obliged to cooperate with each other** on the matters specified in **Schedule VII** of the constitution.

Competitive Federalism:

- The relationship between the Central and state governments is vertical and between state governments is horizontal.
- This idea of Competitive federalism gained significance in India post 1990s economic reforms.
- In a free-market economy, the **endowments of states, available resource base and their comparative advantages all foster a spirit of competition.** Increasing globalisation, however, increased the existing inequalities and imbalances between states. In Competitive federalism **States need to compete among themselves** and also with the Centre for benefits.
- States compete with each other to attract funds and investment, which facilitates efficiency in administration and enhances developmental activities.
- Competitive federalism is not part of the **basic structure of Indian constitution**. It is the decision of the executives.

#COMPETITION COMMISSION IN INDIA

Recently, Finance Minister participated in the 13th Annual Day commemoration of the Competition Commission of India (CCI).
Finance Minister also inaugurated the regional office at Kolkata and launched an upgraded website of CCI.

What is Competition Commission of India (CCI)?

- Competition Commission of India (CCI) is a **statutory body** of the **Government of India** responsible for enforcing **the Competition Act, 2002**, it was duly constituted in March 2009.
- The **Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1969 (MRTP Act)** was repealed and replaced by the **Competition Act, 2002**, on the recommendations of the **Raghavan committee.**

Composition:

- The Commission consists of **one Chairperson and six Members** who shall be appointed by the Central Government.
- The commission is a **quasi-judicial body** which gives opinions to statutory authorities and also deals with other cases. The Chairperson and other Members shall be whole-time Members.

- **Eligibility criteria of members of CCI:** The Chairperson and every other Member shall be a person of ability, integrity and standing and who, has been, or is qualified to be a judge of a High Court, or, has special knowledge of, and professional experience of not less than fifteen years in international trade, economics, business, commerce, law, finance, accountancy, management, industry, public affairs, administration or in any other matter which, in the opinion of the Central Government, may be useful to the Commission.
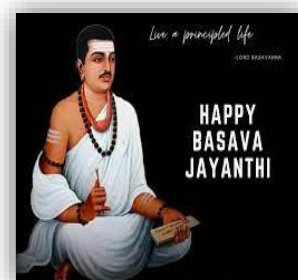
What is the Competition Act, 2002?

- The Competition Act was passed in 2002 and has been amended by the **Competition (Amendment) Act, 2007.** It follows the philosophy of modern competition laws.
- The Act **prohibits anti-competitive agreements**, abuse of dominant position by enterprises and regulates combinations, which causes an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India.
- In accordance with the provisions of the Amendment Act, **the Competition Commission of India** and the **Competition Appellate Tribunal** has been established.
- The government replaced the Competition Appellate Tribunal (COMPAT) with the **National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)** in 2017.

#ABOUT BASAVA JAYANTI

The Prime Minister paid **tributes to Jagadguru Basaveshwara (Basavanna)** on the sacred occasion of **Basava Jayanti.**

As per the Hindu calendar, the birth of Basavanna falls on the 3rd day of Vaisahaka month in the Shukla paksha. This usually falls either in April of May of the English calendar.

Who is Basavana?

- **About:** Basaveshwara was **born in Bagevadi (of undivided Bijapur district in Karnataka)** in 1131 AD.
- A 12th-century poet and philosopher, who is celebrated and held in high regard, especially by the **Lingayat community**, as he was the **founder of Lingayatism.**
- The term Lingayat denotes a **person who wears a personal linga**, an iconic **form of God Shiva**, on the body which is received during the initiation ceremony.
- In Kalyana, the **Kalachurya king Bijjala (1157-1167, AD)** appointed Basaveshwara as a **karanika (Accountant)** in the initial stage, in his court and **later as the Prime minister.**
- **Main Teachings:** His spiritual discipline was based on the principles of **Arivu (true knowledge), Achara (right conduct), and Anubhava (divine experience)** and it brought a social, religious and economic revolution in the **12th century.**
- This path advocates a **holistic approach to Lingangayoga** (union with the divine).
- This comprehensive discipline encompasse**s bhakti (devotion), jnana (knowledge), and kriya (action)** in a well-balanced manner.
- **Social Reforms:** Basaveshwara is known to have brought about several social reforms.
- He believed in a society free of the caste system, with **equal opportunity for all and preached about manual hard work.**
- He also founded the **Anubhava Mantapa**, loosely translated as the forum of experiences, an academy which included Lingayat mystics, saints, and philosophers.

#NEW DELHI LG CONTROVERSY

- Due to the absence of statehood for Delhi, there has been a prolonged confrontation on the relative powers between the elected government of **New Delhi and Lieutenant Governor (L-G)** (appointed by the Union Government) for the territorial administration of New Delhi.
- The dispute between the two occurred on many occasions including control over agencies, namely the Anti-Corruption Bureau, the Civil Services and the Electricity Board, etc.
- Further, the 2021 amendment to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act,1991, points out that the possibility of conflict is not over.
- What is the Governance Model of New Delhi?
- The status of Delhi being a Union Territory under Schedule 1 of the Constitution but christened the **'National Capital Territory' under Article 239AA**, engrafted by the Constitution (69th Amendment) Act. The 69th amendment to the Constitution of India **inserted Article 239AA**, which declared the **Union Territory of Delhi to be administered by a L-G who works on aid and advice of the elected legislative assembly.**
- However, the 'aid and advice' clause pertains only to matters on which the elected Assembly has powers under the **State and Concurrent Lists** With the **exception of public order, police, and land.**
- Further, the Article 239AA also notes that L-G has to **either act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers,** or **he is bound to implement the decision taken by the President** on a reference being made by him.
- Also, Article 239AA, empowers the L-G to refer a **difference of opinion on 'any matter' with the Council of Ministers to the President.**
- Thus, this dual control between L-G and the elected government leads to **a power tussle.**

What is the Judiciary's Opinion on this matter?

- The **Delhi High Court decided in favour of the Central Government** relying on the status of Delhi as a Union Territory.
- However, the Supreme Court **referred the matter to a Constitution Bench** to decide on the substantial questions of law pertaining to the powers of the elected **government of Delhi vis-a-vis the Lieutenant Governor (L-G).**
- The case referred to the Constitutional bench is known as **NCT vs UOI case, 2018.** The five-judge Bench opened a new jurisprudential chapter in the Administration of NCT.
- **Purposive Construction:** The court invoked the **rule of purposive construction to say that the objectives behind the Constitution** (69th Amendment) Act shall guide the interpretation of Article 239AA.
- This means the **principles of federalism and democracy into Article 239AA**, thereby finding a parliamentary intent to accord a sui generis (of its own kind) status in distinction from other Union Territories.
- **L-G to Act on Aid and Advice:** The Court declared that the L-G is bound by the **"aid and advice" of the Council of Ministers**, noting that the Delhi Assembly also has the power to make laws over all subjects that figure in the Concurrent List, and all, **except three excluded subjects, in the State List.**
- The L-G ought to act on the "aid and advice" of the Council of Ministers, except when he refers a matter to the President for a final decision.
- **Any Matter is Not Every Matter:** Regarding the L-G's power to refer to the President any matter on which there is a difference of opinion between L-G and the Council of Ministers, the Supreme Court ruled that **"any matter" cannot be construed to mean "every matter",** and such a reference shall arise only in exceptional circumstances.
- **L-G as facilitator:** L-G shall act as a **facilitator rather than anointing himself as an adversary** to the elected Council of Ministers.
- **New Delhi Cannot be Given Statehood:** At the same time, the Court ruled that the National Capital

Territory of Delhi **cannot be granted the status of a State under the constitutional scheme.**

#WHAT IS PMFME SCHEME?

Recently, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries and **NAFED (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited)** today launched six, **One District One Product (ODOP) brands** under the **Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme.** The Ministry has signed an agreement with NAFED for developing **10 brands of selected ODOPs under the branding and marketing component of the PMFME scheme.** Out of these, six brands are Amrit Phal, Cori Gold, Kashmiri Mantra, Madhu Mantra, Somdana, and Whole Wheat Cookies of Dilli Bakes.

About:

- Launched under **Atma Nirbhar Abhiyan**, it **aims to enhance the competitiveness of existing individual micro-enterprises in the unorganised segment** of the **food processing industry** and to promote formalisation of the sector and provide support to **Farmer Producer Organisations**, **Self Help Groups**, **and Producers Cooperatives** along their entire value chain.
- The scheme adopts the **One District One Product (ODOP) approach to reap the benefit of scale in terms of procurement of inputs, availing common services and marketing of products.**
- It will be implemented over **a period of five years** from 2020-21 to 2024-25.

#WHAT IS DELIMITATION COMMISSION?

Recently, a commission set up by the Centre Government **submitted its final report for the delimitation of Assembly and parliamentary constituencies** in Jammu and Kashmir.

Why was the Commission set up?

- Delimitation became necessary when the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019** increased the number of seats in the Assembly.
- The erstwhile **J&K state had 111 seats — 46 in Kashmir, 37 in Jammu, and 4 in Ladakh — plus 24 seats reserved for Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).**
- In the erstwhile state, delimitation of parliamentary constituencies was governed by the Constitution of India and that of Assembly seats was carried out by the then state government under the **Jammu and Kashmir Representation of the People Act, 1957.**
- After abrogation of J&K's special status in 2019, the delimitation of both Assembly and parliamentary seats is governed by the Constitution.
- The Delimitation **Commission was set up on 6th March 2020.**
- It was headed by retired **Supreme Court Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai**, it has the **Chief Election Commissioner and J&K's Chief Electoral Officer** as members, and **J&K's five MPs as associate members.**

What Changes Have Been Made?

- **Legislative Assembly:** The Commission has increased **seven Assembly seats — six in Jammu (now 43 seats) and one in Kashmir (now 47).**
- It has also made massive changes in the structure of the existing Assembly seats.
- **Lok Sabha:** There are **five Parliamentary Constituencies** in the region. The Delimitation Commission has seen the Jammu & Kashmir region as one single Union Territory.
- The Commission has **redrawn the boundaries of Anantnag and Jammu seats.**
- **Jammu's Pir Panjal region, comprising Poonch and Rajouri districts** and formerly part of Jammu parliamentary seat, has now been added to Anantnag seat in Kashmir.

- Also, a Shia-dominated region of Srinagar parliamentary constituency has been transferred to Baramulla constituency.
- **Kashmiri Pandits:** The Commission has recommended **provision of at least two members from the community of Kashmiri Migrants (Kashmiri Hindus)** in the Legislative Assembly.
- It has also recommended that Centre should consider giving representation in the J&K Legislative Assembly to the displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, who migrated to Jammu after Partition.
- **Scheduled Tribes:** Total nine seats reserved for **Scheduled Tribes** for the first time.

What is Delimitation?

Delimitation is the act of fixing or redrawing the limits or boundaries of territorial constituencies (Assembly or Lok Sabha seat) in a country or a province having a legislative body, as per the **Election Commission.** The delimitation exercise is **carried out by an independent high-powered panel known as the Delimitation Commission** whose orders have the force of law and cannot be questioned by any court. The exercise has been carried out over the years to redefine the area of a constituency-based on its population size (based on the last **Census**). Aside from changing the limits of a constituency, **the process may result in a change in the number of seats in a state.** This exercise also involves reservation of Assembly seats for **SC & ST** in accordance with the Constitution. The **key aim is to have equal representation to equal segments of the population** in order to ensure a fair division of geographical areas so that all political parties or candidates contesting elections have a level playing field in terms of a number of voters.

What is the Constitutional Basis for Delimitation?

- Under **Article 82**, the Parliament enacts a Delimitation Act after every Census.
- Under **Article 170**, States also get divided into territorial constituencies as per Delimitation Act after every Census.
- Once the Act is in force, the Union government sets up a Delimitation Commission.
- The delimitation commission is an **independent body constituted under Article 82** after the Parliament enacted a Delimitation Act after every census.
- However, the first delimitation exercise was carried out by the President (with the help of the Election Commission) in 1950-51.
- The Delimitation Commission Act was enacted in 1952.
- Delimitation Commissions **had been set up four times** — 1952, 1963, 1973 and 2002 under the Acts of 1952, 1962, 1972 and 2002.
- There was **no delimitation after the 1981 and 1991 Censuses.**
- Who is Included in a Delimitation Commission?
- The Delimitation Commission is **appointed by the President of India** and works in collaboration with the Election Commission of India.

Composition:

- Retired **Supreme Court** judge
- Chief Election Commissioner
- Respective State Election Commissioners.

#BHARAT TAP INITIATIVE

Recently, the Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs launched the **BHARAT TAP initiative** at the **'Plumbex India'** exhibition. This exhibition is aimed at products and services **related to the plumbing, water, and sanitation industry.**

At the exhibition, NAREDCO (National Real Estate Development Council) MAHI's 'Nirmal Jal Prayas' initiative was also launched.

What is BHARAT TAP Initiative?

- It is a concept to use low flow tap and fixtures.
- It will provide low-flow, sanitary-ware at scale, and thereby **reduce water consumption** at the source considerably.
- It is estimated to save approximately 40% of water. This will in turn result in water saving and energy saving due to less water and energy will be required for pumping, transporting, and purification.
- This initiative will also be accepted quickly in the country and will lead to a **renewed focus on water conservation efforts.**

What is NAREDCO MAHI?

- It seeks to help solve the global water crisis, removing the financial barriers that stand between people in need and **access to safe water and sanitation at home.**
- Nirmal Jal Prayas' initiative will look into **mapping ground water** as it is very important to save underground water and will work to save 500 crore litres of water per year.
- The women wing of NAREDCO, was set up in 2021 with an aim to empower women entrepreneurs and encourage the **participation of women in the real estate sector** and allied fields.
- It strives to create an environment where women in the real estate sector can come together to share experiences, harnesses their skills, draw on their resources, influence, grow and bring about lasting change.
- Such an initiative in water conservation will be of immense importance to save water.

#NEP 2020 & SPORTS

Recently, the **Supreme Court** has asked the **Centre and States** to respond to a report **recommending sports to be expressly made a fundamental right** under **Article 21 of the Constitution**.

Further, the report submitted by the **court's amicus curiae** (friend of the court) suggested that the **"narrow" phrase 'sport' be replaced by 'physical literacy',** which is a term "firmly established as a right in the **leading sporting nations of the world".**

What is the Premise of the Supreme Court's Ruling?

- The report was filed in a **Public Interest Litigation (PIL)** to amend the Constitution to make sports a **fundamental right** and amend the **Directive Principles of State Policy** to include an obligation to **"strive for promotion of sports education".**
- It had urged that sports should be transferred to the **Concurrent List** to facilitate cooperative work between the Centre and states (at present, sports is a state subject).

NEP 2020 and Sports

- Sports have been given a place of pride in the recent **National Education Policy (NEP 2020)**.

- Sports, which was considered extra-curricular activity earlier is now being treated as part of the curriculum and grading in sports will be counted in the education of the children.
- Institutes of higher education and sports university are being established. There is a need to take sports sciences and sports management to the school level as that will improve the career prospects of the youth and will enhance India's presence in the sports economy.

Schemes to Promote Sports

- Sports Authority of India (Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports)
- **Khelo India Scheme**
- Assistance to National Sports Federations;
- Special Awards to Winners in International sports events and their Coaches;
- National Sports Awards, Pension to Meritorious Sports Persons;
- Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Sports Welfare Fund;
- National Sports Development Fund; and
- Running Sports Training Centres through Sports Authority of India.

#WHAT IS MPLAD SCHEME?

Recently, the Ministry of Finance has revised the **Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)** rules, where the interest that the fund accrues will be deposited in the Consolidated Fund of India. So far, the interest accrued on the fund used to be added to the MPLADS account and could be used for the development projects.

What is Consolidated Fund of India?

- All revenues received by the Government by way of taxes like Income Tax, Central Excise, Customs and other receipts flowing to the Government in connection with the conduct of Government business i.e. Non-Tax Revenues are credited into the Consolidated Fund constituted under **Article 266 (1) of the Constitution of India.**
- Similarly, all loans raised by the Government by issue of Public notifications, treasury bills (internal debt) and loans obtained from foreign governments and international institutions (external debt) are credited into this fund.
- All expenditure of the government is incurred from this fund and no amount can be withdrawn from the Fund without authorization from the Parliament.

What is MPLAD Scheme?

- It is a Central Sector Scheme which was announced in December 1993.

- **Objective:** To enable MPs to recommend works of developmental nature with emphasis on the creation of durable community assets in the areas of drinking water, primary education, public health, sanitation and roads, etc. primarily in their Constituencies. Since June 2016, the MPLAD funds can also be used for implementation of the schemes such as **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**, **Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan)**, conservation of water through rain water harvesting and **Sansad Aadarsh Gram Yojana**, **etc.**

- **Implementation:** The process under MPLADS starts with the Members of Parliament recommending works to the Nodal District Authority.
- The Nodal District concerned is responsible for implementing the eligible works recommended by the Members of Parliament and maintaining the details of individual works executed and amount spent under the Scheme.

Functioning:

- Each year, **MPs receive Rs. 5 crore in two instalments of Rs. 2.5 crore each.** Funds under MPLADS are non-lapsable.
- Lok Sabha MPs have to recommend the district authorities projects in their Lok Sabha constituencies, while Rajya Sabha MPs have to spend it in the state that has elected them to the House.
- Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country.

#INDIA FACING CHALLENGE OF FERTILISER CHALLENGE

India is facing the challenge of meeting its requirement of fertilizer supply which has been disrupted ahead of kharif sowing in the wake of **Russia's invasion of Ukraine.**

How much fertilizer does India consume?

- India consumed about 500 LMT of fertilizer per year in the last 10 years.
- The **Centre's fertiliser subsidy bill is set to soar by 62% over the budgeted amount** to Rs 1.3 lakh crore in FY21.
- Since **non-urea (MoP, DAP, complex) varieties cost higher,** many farmers prefer to use more urea than actually needed.
- The government has **taken a number of measures to reduce urea consumption**. It introduced neem-coated urea to reduce illegal diversion of urea for non-agricultural uses. It also stepped up the promotion of organic and **zero-budget farming**. Between 2018-19 and 2020-21, India's fertiliser imports **increased almost 8% to 20.33 million tonnes** from 18.84 million tonnes.
- In FY21, **more than a fourth of the urea requirement was imported.**
- India, the **top importer of urea, is a major buyer of Diammonium Phosphate (DAP)** needed to feed its huge agriculture sector which employs about 60% of the country's workforce and accounts for 15% of USD2.7 trillion economy.

Need of Large Quantities of Fertilisers:

- The **agricultural output of India has increased every year,** and the country's need for fertilisers has also increased.
- Despite imports, gaps remain between requirements and availability after indigenous production targets hasn't been met.

What is Fertilizer Subsidy?

- The government **pays a subsidy to fertiliser producers** to make this critical ingredient in agriculture affordable to farmers. This allows **farmers to buy fertilisers at below-market rates**.
- The difference between the cost of production/import of a fertiliser and the actual amount paid by farmers is the subsidy portion borne by the government.

- **Subsidy on Urea:** The Centre **pays subsidy** on urea to fertiliser manufacturers on the basis of cost of production at each plant and the units are required to sell the fertiliser at the government-set Maximum Retail Price (MRP).

- **Subsidy on Non-Urea Fertilisers:** The MRPs of non-urea fertilisers are decontrolled or fixed by the companies. The Centre, however, pays a flat per-tonne subsidy on these nutrients to ensure they are priced at "reasonable levels".
- **Examples of non-urea fertilisers:** Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP), Muriate of Potash (MOP). All Non-Urea based fertilisers are regulated under Nutrient Based Subsidy Scheme.

What are the Related Government Initiatives and Schemes?

- **Neem Coating of Urea:** The Department of Fertilizers (DoF) has **made it mandatory for all the domestic producers** to produce 100% urea as **Neem Coated Urea (NCU).**

The benefits of use of NCU are as under:-
- Improvement in soil health.
- Reduction in usage of plant protection chemicals.
- Reduction in pest and disease attack.
- An increase in yield of paddy, sugarcane, maize, soybean, Tur/Red Gram.
- Negligible diversion towards non-agricultural purposes.
- Due to slow release of Nitrogen, Nitrogen Use Efficiency (NUE) of Neem Coated Urea increases resulting in reduced consumption of NCU as compared to normal urea.

New Urea Policy (NUP) 2015:

- Objectives of the policy are-
- To maximize indigenous urea production.
- To promote energy efficiency in the urea units.
- To rationalize the subsidy burden on the Government of India.

New Investment Policy- 2012:

- The Government announced New Investment Policy (NIP)-2012 in January, 2013 and made amendments in 2014 to facilitate fresh investment in the urea sector and to make India self-sufficient in the urea sector.
- **Policy on Promotion of City Compost:**
- Approved a policy on promotion of City Compost, notified by the DoF in 2016 granting Market Development Assistance of Rs. 1500/- for scaling up production and consumption of city compost.
- **To increase sales volumes, compost manufacturers** willing to market city compost were allowed to sell city compost in bulk directly to farmers.
- Fertilizer companies marketing city compost are covered under the **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** for Fertilizers.

Use of Space Technology in Fertilizer Sector:

- DoF commissioned a **three year Pilot Study on** "Resource Mapping of Rock Phosphate using Reflectance Spectroscopy and Earth Observations Data" by National Remote Sensing Centre under **ISRO**, in collaboration with Geological Survey of India (GSI) and the Atomic Mineral Directorate (AMD).

#GAS-POWERED PLANT IN ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has approved an **exemption to the laws governing the regulation of coastal zones** and has paved the way for **gas-powered plants to be set up at Andaman and Nicobar islands.**

What are the Key Points?

- The Island Coastal Zone Regulation (ICRZ), 2019, limits infrastructure development on vulnerable coastal stretches.
- The National Coastal Zone Management Authority (NCZMA) has recommended that gas-based power plants be permitted within the Island Coastal Regulation Zone area only on islands with

geographical areas greater than 100 sq. km.

- A dual-fuel power plant that runs on both diesel and LNG is expected to be commissioned.
- There has been an increased interest in the development of the Andaman region following a policy push by the NITI Aayog. A proposed project plans to develop the Greater Andaman region or the southernmost stretch of the island group.
- Proposals include a 22-sq.km airport complex, a TransShipment Port (TSP) at South Bay at an estimated cost of Rs 12,000 crore, a parallel-to-the-coast mass rapid transport system and a free trade zone and warehousing complex on the southwestern coast.

What is ICRZ 2019?

- The Central Government declared certain coastal stretches as Coastal Regulation Zone and restrictions were imposed on the setting up and expansion of industries, operations and processes in the said zone.
- The Central Government has received **representations from Andaman and Nicobar Administration regarding re-categorisation of Great Nicobar Island from Group –I to Group –II islands** under the provisions of the Island Coastal Regulation Zone (ICRZ) notification.
- Group-I: Islands with geographical areas >1000 sq.km such as South Andaman, Middle Andaman, North Andaman and Great Nicobar.
- Group-II: Islands with geographical areas >100 sq.km but < 1000 sq.km such as Baratang, Little Andaman, Havelock and Car Nicobar.
- The land area from High Tide Line to 200 meters on the landward side along the sea front for Group-I Islands and 100 meters on the landward side along the sea front for Group-II Islands.
- What is Coastal Regulation Zone?
- The coastal areas of seas, bays, creeks, rivers, and backwaters which get influenced by tides up to 500 m from the high tide line (HTL) and the land between the low tide line (LTL) and the high tide line **have been declared as coastal regulation zone (CRZ) in 1991.**
- HTL means the **line on the land up to which the highest water line reaches** during the spring tide.
- Low Tide Line means the **line on the land up to which the lowest water line reaches** during the spring tide.
- The coastal regulation zones have been declared by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change under the Environment Protection Act 1986.
- While the CRZ Rules are made by the Union environment ministry, implementation is to be ensured by state governments through their Coastal Zone Management Authorities.

Andaman & Nicobar Islands

- The Andaman & Nicobar Islands is a union territory of India. This territory is known as A & N Islands, or ANI.
- It is located in the Indian Ocean, in the southern reaches of the Bay of Bengal, nearer to Indonesia and Thailand. This comprises of two island groups - the Andaman Islands and the Nicobar Islands - which separates the Andaman Sea to the east from the Indian Ocean.
- These two groups are separated by the 10° N parallel, the Andamans lying to the north of this latitude, and the Nicobars to the south. The capital of this territory is the Andamanese town of Port Blair.
- Hindi and English are the official languages of the islands. Bengali is the dominant and most spoken language, with 26% of the population speaking Bengali.
- **Particularly vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs)** who have been identified in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. They are:-
- Great Andamanese of Strait Island
- Onges of Little Andaman
- Jarawas of South and Middle Andaman
- Sentinelese of Sentinel Islands
- Shompens of Great Nicobar

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

#ASSOCIATION OF ASIAN ELECTION AUTHORITIES

- Recently, India has been **unanimously elected as the new Chair of the Association of Asian Election Authorities (AAEA)** for 2022-2024 at the recently held meeting of the Executive board and General Assembly at Manila, Philippines.
- The newly added members to the Executive board include **Russia, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Taiwan and Philippines.**

What is AAEA?

- It was established in 1998 in **pursuance of the resolution passed by participants** of the Symposium on Asian Elections in the 21st century held from January 26-29, 1997 in Manila, Philippines.
- Currently 20 Asian Election Monitoring Bodies are members of AAEA.
- **Election Commission of India** is a **founder member EMB of the AAEA** and also served on the Executive Board of the AAEA as the Vice Chair during 2011-13 and Chair during 2014-16.
- AAEA is also an Associate Member of the 118 member **Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB).**
- What is the objective of AAEA?
- To **provide a non-partisan forum** in the Asian region for sharing experiences and best practices among election authorities. To discuss and act upon ways to promote open and transparent elections with the objective of supporting **good governance** and democracy.

What is Election Commission of India?

- The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** is a constitutional body envisaged to uphold the values of equality, equity, impartiality, independence enshrined in the Indian Constitution and the rule of law in superintendence, direction, and control over the electoral governance.
- Part XV of the Indian constitution deals with elections, and provides for the establishment of the ECI.
- Article 324 **to 329** of the constitution deals with powers, function, tenure, eligibility, etc of the commission and the members. The members of the ECI are **appointed by the President of India** based on the recommendations made by the Prime Minister.
- However, **Article 324(2)** provides that the Parliament is entitled to enact legislation regarding the appointment of Election Commissioners (ECs).

#NAGORNO KARABAKH REGION

Recently, protests against **possible concessions by Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh which** is disputed with neighboring Azerbaijan, **have increased.**
In September 2020, clashes broke out that rapidly escalated to become the deadliest since the 1990s.

What is Nagorno-Karabakh Region?

- Nagorno-Karabakh is a **mountainous and heavily forested region** that under international law is recognised as part of Azerbaijan.
- However, **ethnic Armenians who constitute the vast majority** of the population there reject Azeri rule (the legal system of Azerbaijan).
- After **Azerbaijan's troops were pushed out of the region** following a war in the 1990s, these ethnic Armenians have been in administrative control of Nagorno-Karabakh, with support from Armenia.

What is the Genesis of the Conflict?

- **Background of the Conflict:** The conflict can be traced back to the pre-Soviet era when the region was at the meeting point of Ottoman, Russian and the Persian empires.
- Once Azerbaijan and Armenia became Soviet Republics in 1921, Russia (erstwhile Sovient Union) gave Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan but offered autonomy to the contested region.
- In the 1980s, when the Soviet power was receding, separatist currents picked up in Nagorno-Karabakh. In 1988, the national assembly voted to dissolve the region's autonomous status and join Armenia.
- However, Azerbaijan suppressed such calls, which led to a military conflict.

- **Flash Point of Conflict:** The self-declaration of independence by Nagorno-Karabakh in September 1991 in the backdrop of an imminent collapse of the USSR resulted in a war between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh — supported by Armenia.

- **Ceasefire:** This clash lasted till a ceasefire agreement was reached in 1994, mediated largely by Russia. Since then, the **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group** co-chaired by the USA, Russia and France have engaged Azerbaijan and Armenia extensively to resolve the conflict.
- By that time, Armenia had taken control of Nagorno-Karabakh and handed it to Armenian rebels.

What is the Role of India?

- With Armenia, India has a friendship and cooperation treaty (signed in 1995), which, incidentally, would prohibit India from providing military or any other assistance to Azerbaijan.
- In the case of Azerbaijan, ONGC/OVL has made investments in an oilfield project in Azerbaijan and GAIL is exploring the possibilities of cooperation in LNG.
- Azerbaijan also falls on the **International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) route,** connecting India with Russia through Central Asia.
- It can also connect India with Turkey and beyond through the **Baku-Tbilisi-Kars passenger and freight rail link.**
- Armenia extends its unequivocal support to India on Kashmir issue whereas Azerbaijan not only oppoesss but also promotes Pakistan's narrative on this issue.
- India does not have a publicly articulated policy for the South Caucasus — **unlike "Neighbourhood First", "Act East" or "Central Asia Connect".**
- The region has remained on the periphery of its foreign policy radar.

#PANGONG TSO LAKE

Recently, the Ministry of External Affairs has confirmed that China is building a second bridge on the **Pangong Tso lake**.
The site of the bridge is **around 20 km east of Finger 8 on the lake's north bank** – where the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** passes.
However, the actual distance by road is more than 35 km between the bridge site and Finger 8.

What are the Key Points?

- The construction site is just **east of Khurnak Fort,** where **China has major frontier defence bases.**
- China calls it **Rutong Country.**
- It has a frontier defence company at the Khurnak Fort, and further east, a water squadron deployed at Banmozhang.
- Although it is being built in territory that is under China's control since 1958, the exact point is just west of India's claim line.
- The Ministry of External Affairs considers the area as illegally occupied by China.

How will these Constructions Help China?

- The bridges are at one of the narrowest points on the lake, close to the LAC.
- These constructions will connect both sides of the lake, which would significantly cut down time for the **People's Liberation Army (PLA)** to move troops and armored vehicles.
- The induction of troops from the **G219 highway (Chinese national highway)** would come down by 130 km due to this bridge.

Pangong Tso

- Pangong Tso is a 135-km long landlocked lake located at an altitude of over 14,000 feet i.e., 4350 m above sea level.
- Indian and China have around one-third and two-thirds of Pangong Tso Lake respectively.
- India has around 45 km of Pangong Tso under its control while approximately 60% of the lake, in terms of length, lies in China,
- The eastern end of Pangong Tso lies in Tibet.
- The lake, a glacial melt, has mountain spurs of the Chang Chenmo range jetting down, referred to as **fingers.**
- It is **one of the highest altitude lakes** in the world that is filled with **saline water.**
- However, even though it is a saline water lake, Pangong Tso freezes completely.
- The brackish water of this region has very low micro-vegetation.
- No aquatic life or fish, except crustaceans during winters are found.
- It is a kind of **endorheic basin**, which implies that **it retains its water and does not allow outflow of its water to other external water bodies,** such as oceans and rivers.
- Pangong Tso is **popular for its changing colour** ability.
- Its colour changes from shades of **blue to green to red.**

#STATE OF CLIMATE REPORT IN INDIA

- Recently, The UN's weather agency **World Meteorological Organization** reported that greenhouse **gas concentrations**, **ocean heat**, **sea-level rise**, and **ocean acidification** all set new records last year.
- According to the **World Meteorological Organization** Extreme weather has resulted in fatalities, sickness, migration, and economic losses.
- The number of **extreme weather occurrences** has been **doubled by 2020**, according to the United Nations.

- The UN's chief launched a **five-point plan to jump-start broader use of renewable energies** in the hopes of reigniting global attention on **climate change**.

What did the United Nations Secretary General Urge?

- The **United Nations General Secretary** supported **technology transfer** along with lifting the protection on **intellectual property rights** regarding r**enewable technologies.**
- Supply chains for **renewable energy technology should be broadened** which are now concentrated in the hands of the few developed nations in the wake of high rise in the level of pollution and its consequences.
- The **United Nations Secretary-General** urges states to **restructure its energy demand and supply** in ways that favor renewable energy, such as speeding up **solar and wind projects.**
- **Subsidies to fossil fuels** should be removed by the states.
- **Investment** in the field of **renewable energy production** should be prompted to grow at least $4 trillion dollars a year.

What is the State of the Climate Report 2021?

The State of the Climate Report for 2021 is published by the **World Meteorological Organisation.**

- **Key Features:** The global mean temperature in 2021 was around 1.11 ± 0.13 °C above the 1850–1900 pre-industrial average.
- The most recent seven years, 2015 to 2021, were the seven warmest years on record.
- Global mean sea level reached a new record high in 2021, rising an average of 4.5 mm per year over the period 2013–2021.
- The compounded effects of conflict, extreme weather events and economic shocks, further exacerbated by the **Covid-19 pandemic**, undermined decades of progress towards improving food security globally.
- **Carbon dioxide concentration is increasing** in the atmosphere due to continuous growth in fossil fuel combustion.

#WHAT IS TAIWAN ISSUE?

Ahead of **Quad summit** in Japan, the **US President** made a controversial statement giving **affirmative reply** in response to a question with regards to providing **military aid to Taiwan in case of China's invasion.**
This has raised questions about **whether the US is shifting from its long-standing policy of strategic ambiguity over Taiwan to that of strategic clarity.**
Quad grouping includes **India, the US, Australia and Japan.**

What is the Taiwan Issue?

- **China-Taiwan Relations:** Taiwan is an **island territory across the Taiwan Strait**, located off the coast of mainland China.
- The ruling **Kuomintang (Nationalist) government of China fled to Taiwan after being defeated by the communist forces in the Chinese civil war of 1945-1949.**
- Following the **split of China and Taiwan** in the civil war, the **Republic of China (ROC) government was relocated to Taiwan.** On the other hand, The **Communist Party of China (CPC) established the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the mainland.**
- Since then, the **PRC observes Taiwan as a traitor province and awaits reintegration with Taiwan**, if possible, by peaceful means.
- Simultaneously, the **United Nations membership was continued by the ROC maintaining its permanent seat at the UN Security Council (UNSC).**

- **PRC** allied itself with the **Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and ROC with the US** in the cold war further **straining the China-Taiwan relations**.
- Consequently, **two Taiwan Strait crises** of the 1950s happened.

Reconciliation of the US with China and the Subsequent Events:

- **The US and China reconciled in the 1970s due to the Cold War's shifting geopolitics**, so that the growing influence of the USSR could be countered.
- This was followed by the **visit of the then US President to the PRC in 1972.**
- Subsequently, **ROC was displaced by the PRC as the official representative at the UN.**
- Then, **"One-China Principle"** came into picture.
- **One-China Principle and its impact:**
- This means that the **nations who want to have diplomatic relations with the PRC** have to **recognize the PRC but not the ROC as China**, breaking the relations with ROC.
- Simultaneously, China evolved as a multi-party democracy alongside the **reformation of its economic system.**
- Since then, the **two countries became economically entangled and continuously competing.**

#INDIA-NEPAL RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Recently, the Indian Prime Minister has visited Lumbini, Nepal, the birthplace of Buddha, where he laid a foundation stone along with Nepalese Prime Minister for a **Buddhist Vihara, being built with Indian assistance**.

The PM celebrated the **2566th Buddha Jayanti celebrations** and addressed a gathering of people, including Buddhist scholars and monks, from Nepal and India.

The PM praised Nepal for **preserving its ancient culture and civilisation**. India-Nepal **relation is as strong and as ancient as the Himalayas**.

What are the Highlights of the Visit?

- **International Centre for Buddhist Culture and Heritage:** He performed the 'shilanyas' ceremony to launch the **construction of the India International Centre for Buddhist Culture and Heritage in the**

Lumbini Monastic Zone.
- The centre will be **a world-class facility welcoming pilgrims and tourists from all over the world** to enjoy the essence of spiritual aspects of Buddhism.
- The facility is **aimed at catering to scholars and Buddhist pilgrims from all over the world** who visit Lumbini.

Hydropower Projects:

- The two leaders signed five agreements, including one between the **Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) Ltd** and the **Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) for development and implementation of 490.2 megawatts Arun-4 hydropower project**. Nepal also invited **Indian companies to invest in the West Seti hydropower project in Nepal**.

- **Setting up a Satellite Campus:** India has **offered to set up a satellite campus of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Rupandehi** and has sent some draft memoranda of understanding for signing between Indian and Nepali universities.

- **Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project:** Nepal discussed some pending projects like the **Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project**, an important arm of the **Mahakali Treaty** signed between Nepal and India in 1996, and West Seti Hydropower Project, a reservoir-type project with a projected capacity of 1,200 megawatts.

How have been India's Ties with Nepal?

- The India-Nepal **Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950** forms the bedrock of the special relations that exist between India and Nepal.
- 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.
- In recent years, **India's relations with Nepal have witnessed some 'lows'**. The relationship between the two took a nosedive in 2015, with India first getting blamed for interfering in the Constitution drafting process and then for an "unofficial blockade" that generated widespread resentment against India.
- In 2017, Nepal signed up to **China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**, which sought to create highways, airports and other infrastructure in the country. **BRI was rejected by India** and this move of Nepal was seen as an inclination towards China.
- **In 2019, Nepal released a new political map** claiming Kalapani, Limpiyadhura and Lipulekh of Uttarakhand and the area of Susta (West Champaran district, Bihar) as part of Nepal's territory.

#COALITON FOR DISATER RESILIENCE INFRASTRUCTURE

Recently, the Prime Minister addressed the inaugural session of the **fourth edition of the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure** via video message.
ICDRI is the annual international conference of the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)** in partnership with member countries, organizations and institutions to strengthen the global discourse on disaster and climate resilient infrastructure.

What is CDRI?

- The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) is a **multi-stakeholder global partnership** of national governments, **UN (United Nations)** agencies and programmes, multilateral development banks and financing mechanisms, the private sector, and knowledge institutions.
- The **Prime Minister of India launched** CDRI during his speech at the **UN Climate Action Summit** on 23rd September 2019.

- It aims **to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems** to climate and disaster risks in support of sustainable development.
- **Members:** 30 countries and 8 organizations.
- **Thematic Areas:** Governance and Policy, Risk Identification and Estimation, Standards and Certification, Capacity building, Innovation & Emerging Technology, Recovery and Reconstruction, Finance and Community based approaches.
- The CDRI Secretariat is based in **New Delhi, India.**
- How is Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (DRI) different from Climate Resilient Infrastructure (CRI)?
- DRI also includes addressing disaster risk due to geophysical and geomorphological hazards **such as earthquakes, landslides,** tsunami and volcanic activity. Since infrastructure systems are built for long life cycles, **it is imperative that DRI addresses risks emanating from such low-frequency high impact events**.
- DRI must deal with technological hazards like nuclear radiation, dam failures, chemical spills, explosions which are **not directly linked to climate.**
- More than 90% of disasters are a **manifestation of weather and climate-related extreme events**. So, making infrastructure climate-resilient also **contributes to making it disaster resilient.**
- Some **CRI efforts may focus on reducing carbon footprint of Infrastructure.** While this may be a byproduct of DRI, DRI does not explicitly address these aspects.

#TRANSNISTRIA IN RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

As the **Russia-Ukraine War** completes over two months, **Transnistria**, the tiny breakaway region of **Moldova, risks being dragged into the conflict.**
Transnistria is a de facto state lying between **Moldova to its west and Ukraine towards its east.**

What is Transnistria's History?

- Transnistria is described as a **"remnant of the Soviet Union",** Transnistria declared independence like Moldova did soon after the break-up of the Soviet Union.
- When Moldovan troops attempted to take over the territory in **1990-1992,** Transnistria was able to **resist them because of Russian soldiers based in Transnistria.**
- Since then, it has **remained free of Moldovan control.**
- However, most countries continue to see Transnistria as part of Moldova. It is **not recognized as independent even by Russia.**
- Most Transnistrians have **dual citizenship** of Russia and Transnistria or **triple citizenship** of Moldova, Transnistria, and Russia.
- Its economy is dependent on **Russia for subsidies and free gas.**
- It has its **own government (which is pro-Russian), Parliament, armed force, constitution, flag, anthem, etc.**
- In a referendum held in 2006, over **97% of Transnistrians voted for future integration with Russia** and after the **annexation of Crimea**, the government asked if it could be absorbed into Russia.

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

#STATUS OF CRYPTOCURRENCY

Recently, the Central African Republic (CAR) became the second country after El Salvador to adopt **Bitcoin** as legal tender.

The **Union Budget 2022-2023** of India has also proposed to introduce a digital currency in the coming financial year.

It was also announced that "any income from transfer of any virtual digital asset shall be taxed at the rate of 30%."

What is Cryptocurrency?

- **Cryptocurrency,** sometimes called crypto-currency or crypto, is any form of currency that **exists digitally or virtually** and uses cryptography to secure transactions.
- Cryptocurrencies don't have a central issuing or regulating authority, instead use a decentralized system to record transactions and issue new units.
- It is supported by a decentralized peer-to-peer network called the **blockchain**.

Why are Countries like CAR Adopting Cryptocurrencies as a Legal Tender?

- **Strong and Inclusive Growth:** The measure would enable "strong and inclusive growth" and place the African country on the "map of the most courageous and visionary countries in the world".
- Having a population of 5 million, CAR is **among the poorest and most economically fragile countries globally.**
- As per the World Bank estimates provided in July 2021, 71% of its population was living below the international poverty line of USD 1.90/day.
- **Positive Growth**: There is potentially a direct relationship between inflation and countries permitting the use of cryptocurrencies.
- Cryptocurrencies bear the potential to **convert inflation-related decline from legal currencies into positive growth.**
- This potentially direct relationship would be relevant for CRA. As per the IMF, inflation in the country is **expected to accelerate to 4% in 2022** because of rising food and fuel prices.

#WHAT IS OUTWARD REMITTANCES?

Total **outward Remittances**, under the **RBI's Liberalised Remittance Scheme**, shot up to an all-time high of USD 19.61 billion in the year ended March 2022 as against USD 12.684 billion in March 2021.

Foreign exchange, including the US dollar and euro, taken out of the country by resident Indians **has shot up by 54.60%** during the fiscal year ending March 2022.

What are Remittances?

- Remittances are usually understood **as** financial or in-kind transfers made by migrants to friends and relatives back in their communities of origin.
- These are basically **sum of two main components - Personal Transfers in cash** or in kind between resident and non-resident households and **Compensation of Employees**, which refers to the income of workers who work in another country for a limited period of time.

- Remittances **help in stimulating economic development in recipient countries,** but this can also make such countries over-reliant on them.
- What is Outward Remittance?
- Outward remittance is **a transfer of funds in the form of foreign exchange by a person from India, to a beneficiary outside India** (except for Nepal and Bhutan) for any bonafide purposes as permissible under **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999.**

What is the Outward Remittance Trend?

Total Outward Remittances: The total outward remittances **were at an all-time high in FY22 as it made a strong comeback from the previous year's tepid show** because of the Disruptions led by Covid-19. The comeback has been supported by **Indian's spending more on international travel** and **overseas education.**

Segments of Outward Remittances:

- **International Travel**: In FY22, **international travel picked up**, resulting in India's spending USD 6.91 billion on travel, which is more than double that was spent on travel in FY21. In FY20, however, spends on travel by Indians was also almost $6.95 billion.

- **Overseas education:** Overseas education is important segment that has seen healthy growth in FY22 as Indians remitted over USD 5.17 billion in the year. This showed an increase of 35% from FY21, where Indians had remitted USD 3.83 billion. In FY20, remittances for overseas education were nearly USD 5 billion.

- **Investments in overseas Equity and Debt:** Investments in overseas equity and debt by Indians also shot up to USD 746.5 million in FY22 as against USD 471.80 million in the previous year.

What is the Liberalised Remittance Scheme?

- This is the scheme of the **Reserve Bank of India**, introduced in the year 2004.
- Under the scheme, all resident individuals, including minors, are allowed to freely remit up to USD 2,50,000 per financial year (April – March) for any permissible current or capital account transaction or a combination of both.
- The Scheme is **not available to corporations, partnership firms, Hindu Undivided Family (HUF), Trusts** etc.
- Though there are **no restrictions on the frequency of remittances under LRS, once a remittance is made** for an amount up to USD 2,50,000 during the financial year, a resident individual would not be eligible to make any further remittances under this scheme.

#PRIVATISATION OF BANKS

The government is in the **process of taking 'advanced action' to expedite the privatisation of public sector banks.**
The government is **geared up to take further steps** to rein in **inflation** as well as maintain economic stability and growth.

What is Privatisation?

- The **transfer of ownership, property or business from the government to the private sector** is termed privatisation. The government ceases to be the owner of the entity or business.
- Privatisation is **considered to bring more efficiency and objectivity** to the company, something that a government company is not concerned about.

- India went for privatisation in the historic reforms budget of 1991, also known as **'New Economic Policy or LPG policy'.**

What is the Background?

- The government decided to **nationalise the 14 largest private banks in 1969**. The idea was to align the banking sector with the socialistic approach of the then government.
- **State Bank of India (SBI)** had been nationalised in 1955 itself, and the insurance sector in 1956.
- Various governments in the last 20 years were for and against privatisation of **Public Sector Undertaking (PSU)** banks. In 2015, the government had suggested privatisation but the then **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** Governor did not favour the idea.
- The current steps of privatisation, along with setting up an **Asset Reconstruction Company (Bad Bank)** entirely owned by banks, underline an approach of finding market-led solutions to challenges in the financial sector.
- The Centre had **announced the privatisation of two public sector banks in the Budget for 2021-22** but is yet to amend the relevant banking laws to enable the sale of its majority stake in them.

#WHAT IS PMFME SCHEME?

- The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has approved the extension of the **Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)** for five years till FY26.
- The PMEGP has now been approved for continuation over the **15th Finance Commission** Cycle for five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26 with an outlay of Rs 13,554.42 crore.

What is the PMEGP Scheme?

- The Government of India approved the **introduction of a credit linked subsidy programme** called Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) **in 2008** for generation of employment opportunities **through establishment of micro enterprises in rural as well as urban areas.** It allows entrepreneurs **to set up factories or units.**

- **Administration:** It is a **central sector scheme** being **administered by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME).**

- **Implementing Agency at the National Level: Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** - a statutory organization under the administrative control of the Ministry of MSME.

#INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN NORTH-EAST

Recently, India's Finance Minister announced the execution of **several rail, road and air connectivity projects worth Rs. 1,34,200 crore in the northeast.**
These projects will help in **bringing the rest of India closer to the North-East** and vice-versa.
Connectivity with Southeast Asian countries will also remain an area of focus.

What are the major Infrastructure Projects in the Northeast?

- **Rail, Road and Air Connectivity: 4,000 km of roads, 20 railway projects** for 2,011 km and **15 air connectivity projects are being developed.**

- **Waterways Connectivity:** National waterways on the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Barak rivers (National

Waterways (NW)-1 on the Ganges, NW-2 on Brahmaputra and NW-16 on Barak) are under development to provide better connectivity.

- As the cost of travel through water is the least when compared to air, road and rail networks, **the riverine systems of India and Bangladesh can be leveraged for all types of transportation.**
- The number of **'Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Routes'** was increased from 8 to 10.
- Along the Brahmaputra River, the **development of the entire area between Sadiya and Dhubri in Assam is ongoing** for improved connectivity.
- **Multimodal hub that includes a ship repairing port at Pandu, four tourist jetties, and 11 floating terminals on the Brahmaputra** in Guwahati is under construction.

- **Eastern Waterways Connectivity Transport Grid:** It will connect the northeast with the rest of India by providing 5,000 km of navigable waterways.

- **North Eastern Region Power System Improvement Project (NERPSIP): (NERPSIP)** is a major step towards **economic development of the North Eastern Region** through strengthening of Intra - State Transmission and Distribution systems. Government is also emphasizing on projects related to **power transmission and distribution, mobile networks, 4G, and broadband connectivity.**

- **Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East (PM-DevINE):** It was announced in **Union Budget 2022-23.** This will fund infrastructure in the spirit of **PM Gati Shakti**, and social development projects based on felt needs of the North-East.

#PURCHASING MANAGER'S INDEX

According to the S&P Global India Manufacturing **Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)**, **India's manufacturing sector recorded a slight acceleration in new orders** and output which rose to 54.7 in April 2022 from 54 in March 2022.

What are the Key Highlights of the Index?

- April data showed a rebound in new export orders, following the first contraction for nine months in March.
- **Contraction,** in economics, refers to a **phase of the business cycle in which the economy is in decline**.
- A contraction generally occurs after the business cycle peaks, but before it becomes a trough.
- **Inflationary pressures meanwhile intensified**, owing to rising commodity prices, the **Russia-Ukraine war** and greater transportation costs.
- **Input prices increased at the fastest pace in five months**, while output charge **inflation** hit a 12-month high.
- A major insight from the latest results was an **intensification of inflationary pressures**, as energy price volatility, global shortages of inputs and the war in Ukraine pushed up purchasing costs.
- On the job front, there was **only a mild increase in employment during April 2022.**
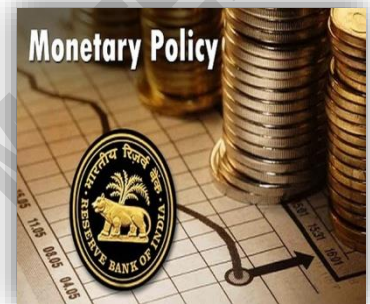
What is the PMI?

- It is a **survey-based measure that asks the respondents about changes in their perception of key business variables** as compared with the previous month. It is an **index of the prevailing direction of economic trends in the manufacturing and service sectors.**
- The purpose of the PMI is to **provide information about current and future business conditions** to company decision makers, analysts, and investors.
- It is **calculated separately for the manufacturing and services sectors** and then a composite index is also constructed.
- The PMI is **a number from 0 to 100**.

- **A print above 50 means expansion**, while a score below that denotes contraction.
- A reading at 50 indicates no change.
- If the **PMI of the previous month is higher than the PMI of the current month**, it represents that the economy is contracting.
- It is **usually released at the start of every month**. It is, therefore, considered a good leading indicator of economic activity.
- PMI is compiled by IHS Markit for more than 40 economies worldwide.
- IHS Markit is a global leader in information, analytics and solutions for the major industries and markets that drive economies worldwide.
- IHS Markit is **part of S&P Global.**

#RBI MONETARY POLICY REVIEW

The **Reserve Bank of India's** Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has increased the policy **Repo Rate by 40 basis points to 4.40%**, with immediate effect and **Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)** of banks by 50 basis points to 4.5% of **Net Demand and Time Liabilities (NDTL).**
This is the first increase in the policy repo rate by RBI since May 2020.

What is the Monetary Policy Committee?

- It is a **statutory and institutionalized framework** under the **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934**, for maintaining price stability, while keeping in mind the objective of growth.
- The **Governor of RBI is ex-officio Chairman** of the committee.
- The MPC determines the policy interest rate (repo rate) required to achieve the inflation target (4%).
- An RBI-appointed committee led by the then deputy governor Urjit Patel in 2014 recommended the establishment of the Monetary Policy Committee.
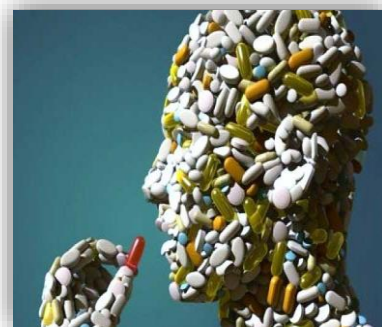
What are the Rates Now?

- **Policy Repo Rate: 4.40%** Repo rate is the rate at which the central bank of a country (Reserve Bank of India in case of India) lends money to commercial banks in the event of any shortfall of funds. Here, the central bank purchases the security.

- **Standing Deposit Facility (SDF): 4.15%** The SDF is a liquidity window through which the RBI will give banks an option to park excess liquidity with it. It is different from the reverse repo facility in that it does not require banks to provide collateral while parking funds.

- **Marginal Standing Facility Rate: 4.65%** MSF is a window for scheduled banks to borrow overnight from the RBI in an emergency situation when interbank liquidity dries up completely. Under interbank lending, banks lend funds to one another for a specified term.

- **Bank Rate: 4.65%** It is the rate charged by the RBI for lending funds to commercial banks.

- **CRR: 4.50% (Effective from 21st May, 2022)** Under CRR, the commercial banks have to hold a certain minimum amount of deposit (NDTL) as reserves with the central bank.

- **SLR: 18.00%** Statutory Liquidity Ratio or SLR is **the minimum percentage of deposits that a commercial bank has to maintain** in the form of **liquid cash, gold or other securities**.

#INDIAN PHARMA SECTOR

Recently, the **Ministry of Chemical & fertilizers released guidelines on pharmaceutical innovation and entrepreneurship** for academic institutions to Catalyze **Indian Pharma Sector.**

The Department of Pharmaceuticals has established NIPERs (National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education and Research) as institutes of national importance for providing quality education and conducting high-end research.

The Department is also soon coming up with a 'Policy to catalyze Research & Development and Innovation in the Pharma- MedTech Sector in India'.

What Do the Policy Guidelines Seek?

- These policy guidelines aim to transform academic research into innovative and commercially applicable technologies.
- It seeks to **build a strong ecosystem for entrepreneurial activities** and contribute to a **Self-Reliant India Mission.**
- The policy guidelines will **encourage faculty, staff and students to pursue entrepreneurship**.
- The **availability of resources needs** to be ensured for pre-incubation and providing common facilities for prospective inventors and entrepreneurs.
- Budgetary provisions should be available in terms of allocation of a fixed percentage (such as not less than 1%) of institute's annual budget for funding, promoting and supporting innovation and startup-related activities.
- In return for the services and facilities provided, an institute may take a fixed percentage of (2 - 9.5%) equity in the startup/spin-off company, based on employee contribution, support provided and use of the institute's Intellectual Property. The entrepreneurial initiatives shall be evaluated on a regular basis using well-defined impact assessment parameters such as **IP (Intellectual Property)** filed, products developed and commercialized and number of employments generated, and startups created.
- To encourage students, **relaxation in attendance should be provided** to enable them to dedicate time for entrepreneurial activities, and they should be allowed to sit for the examination, even if their attendance is less than 75 %, adding institutes should provide relaxation to the PhD students in terms of a semester/year break or more, if needed, to devote time on startup ventures.

What is the Status of the Indian Pharma Sector?

- India is the **largest provider of generic drugs globally**. It supplies over 50% of global demand for various vaccines, 40% of generic demand in the US and 25% of all medicine in the UK.
- The **Indian pharmaceutical market is estimated at USD 40 billion** and pharma companies export another USD 20 billion.
- However, this is a miniscule portion of the USD 1.27-trillion global pharmaceutical market.
- Globally, **India ranks 3rd in terms of pharmaceutical production by volume and 14th by value.**
- India has more than 30% share in the global generic market but less than 1% share in the new molecular entity space.
- **New Molecular Entity:** A novel compound that has not previously been approved for use in humans.
- According to the **Economic Survey 2021,** the domestic market is expected to grow three times in the next decade.

#FPI & FOREX EXCHANGE RESERVE

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) added another 16.58 tonnes of gold to the country's **foreign exchange reserves** in the last six months, bringing the country's gold holdings to more than 700 tonnes (around 760.42). Gold was acquired by the RBI at a time when **Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs)** left India, and forex

reserves **dropped by USD44.73 billion** from USD 642.45 billion in September 2021 to USD 597.72 billion on April 29, 2022.

Now, India is the **ninth-largest holder of gold reserves.**

What are Foreign Portfolio Investors?

- Foreign portfolio investment (FPI) consists of securities and other financial assets passively held by foreign investors. It does not provide the investor with direct ownership of financial assets and is relatively liquid depending on the volatility of the market.
- Examples of FPIs include stocks, **bonds**, **mutual funds**, **exchange traded funds,** American Depositary Receipts (ADRs), and Global Depositary Receipts (GDRs).
- FPI is part of a **country's capital account** and is shown on its **Balance of Payments (BOP).**
- The BOP measures the amount of money flowing from one country to other countries over one monetary year.
- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** brought **new FPI Regulations, 2019**, replacing the erstwhile FPI Regulations of 2014.
- FPI is often **referred to as "hot money"** because of its tendency to flee at the first signs of trouble in an economy. FPI is **more liquid, volatile and therefore riskier** than FDI.

#INDIA'S SEMICONDUCTOR MISSION

Recently, **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology** has inaugurated the first ever **Semicon India 2022 Conference** under **India Semiconductor Mission** in Bengaluru. Semicon India – 2022 has been organized to take forward the vision of the Prime Minister to make India **a leader in the electronics manufacturing, semiconductor design, manufacturing & innovation.**

Theme of the Conference: Catalyzing India's Semiconductor Ecosystem.

What are Semiconductors?

- Any of a class of crystalline solids intermediate in electrical conductivity between a conductor and an insulator.
- Semiconductors are employed in the manufacture of various kinds of electronic devices, including diodes, transistors, and integrated circuits. Such devices have found wide application because of their compactness, reliability, power efficiency, and low cost.
- As discrete components, they have found use in power devices, optical sensors, and light emitters, including solid-state lasers.

What is the India Semiconductor Mission?

- The ISM was launched in 2021 with a total financial outlay of Rs76,000 crore under the aegis of the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY). It is part of the **comprehensive program for the development of sustainable semiconductor and display ecosystem** in the country. The programme **aims to provide financial support to companies investing in semiconductors, display manufacturing and design ecosystem.** Envisioned to be led by **global experts in the Semiconductor and Display industry, ISM will serve as the nodal agency** for efficient, coherent and smooth implementation of the schemes.

LEGAL AFFAIRS

#SEX WORK RECOGNIZED AS PROFESSION

- Recently, in a significant order, **Supreme Court** has recognised sex work as a "profession" and observed that its practitioners are entitled to dignity and equal protection under law.
- The court invoked its special powers under **Article 142 of the Constitution.** Article 142 provides discretionary power to the Supreme Court as it states that the Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it.
- In 2020, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) recognised sex workers as informal workers.

What are the Highlights of the Supreme Court Judgment?

- **Criminal Law:** Sex workers are **entitled to equal protection of the law and criminal law must apply equally in all cases,** on the basis of 'age' and 'consent'.
- When it is clear that the **sex worker is an adult and is participating with consent**, the **police must refrain from interfering or taking any criminal action.**
- **Article 21** declares that **no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty** except according to procedure established by law. This right is available to both citizens and non-citizens.
- **Sex workers should not be "arrested or penalised or harassed or victimised"** whenever there is a raid on any brothel, "since voluntary sex work is not illegal and only running the brothel is unlawful".

Right of Child of a Sex Worker:

- A child of a sex worker **should not be separated from the mother merely on the ground that she is in the sex trade.**
- Basic protection of human decency and dignity extends to sex workers and their children.
- Further, **if a minor is found living in a brothel or with sex workers,** it should not be presumed that the child was trafficked.
- In case the **sex worker claims that he/she is her son/daughter,** tests can be done to determine if the claim is correct and if so, the minor should not be forcibly separated.
-
- **Medical Care**: Sex workers who are victims of sexual assault **should be provided every facility including immediate medico-legal care.**

- **Role of Media: Media should take "utmost care not to reveal the identities of sex workers**, during arrest, raid and rescue operations, whether as victims or accused and not to publish or telecast any photos that would result in disclosure of such identities.

What are the Related Provisions/Supreme Court Views in India?

- **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act:** The legislation governing sex work in India is the **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act.** The Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Children Act was enacted in 1956. Subsequent amendments were made to the law and the name of the Act was changed to **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act.** The **legislation penalises acts** such as keeping a brothel, soliciting in a public place, living off the earnings of sex work and living with or habitually being in the company of a sex worker.

- **Justice Verma Commission (2012-13):** The Justice Verma Commission had also **acknowledged that**

there is a distinction between women who are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation and adult, consenting women who are in sex work of their own volition.

- **Budhadev Karmaskar Vs State of West Bengal (2011) Case:** The Supreme Court, in Budhadev Karmaskar v. State of West Bengal (2011), opined that sex workers have a right to dignity.

#RIGHT OF LGBTQI+

- Recently, **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** released a document on "Inclusion of LGBTIQ+ persons in the world of work". It provides certain **recommendations to ensure equal opportunities and treatment** for LGBTIQ+ persons at work.
- LGBTIQ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Inter-sex and Queer.
- The plus sign **represents people with diverse SOGIESC** who identify using other terms. In some contexts, LGB, LGBT or LGBTI are used to refer to particular populations.
- SOGIESC stands for sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.

What is the International Labour Organization?

- It is the only tripartite **United Nation (UN) agency. It brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 member States** (India is a member), to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.
- Received the **Nobel Peace Prize** in 1969.
- Established in 1919 by the **Treaty of Versailles** as an affiliated agency of the **League of Nations.**
- Became the first affiliated specialized agency of the UN in 1946.
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland

What is the Status of LGBTIQ+ Community in India?

- **National Legal Services Authority Vs. Union of India (2014):** The SC observed that "recognition of transgenders as a third gender is not a social or medical issue, but a human rights issue".
- **Navtej Singh Johar vs. Union of India (2018):** The SC **decriminalised homosexuality** by striking off parts of Section 377 of the **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** which were held violative of **Fundamental Rights** of LGBTQ Community.
- The SC held that **Article 14 of the Constitution guarantees equality before law** and this applies to all classes of citizens therby restoring 'inclusiveness' of LGBTQ Community.
- It also upheld the pre-eminence of **Constitutional morality** in India by observing that equality before law cannot be denied by giving precedence to public or religious morality.
- The SC stated that the **'Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Law in Relation to Issues of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity'** should be applied as a part of Indian law.
- **Yogyakarta Principles recognise freedom of sexual orientation** and gender identity as part of Human Rights.
- They were outlined in 2006 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia by a distinguished group of International Human Right experts.
- **Tussle Over Same Sex Marraiges:** In **Shafin Jahan v. Asokan K.M. and others (2018)** case, the SC observed that choice of a partner is a person's fundamental right, and it can be a same-sex partner.
- However, in February, 2021, the Central Government opposed same-sex marriage in Delhi High Court stating that a marriage in India can be recognised only if it is between a "biological man" and a "biological woman" capable of producing children.
- **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019:** The Parliament has passed the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019** which has been criticised for its poor understanding of

gender and sexual identity.

#AMENDMENTS TO COMPANIES ACT

- The Ministry of Corporate Affairs is set to introduce **amendments to the Companies Act** in the winter session of Parliament.
- The ministry has received feedback from experts and professionals on these recommendations made by the **Company Law Committee** that gave its **Report in April 2022** to the finance and corporate affairs minister.

What are the Key Proposals?

- It is expected to raise the bar on corporate governance, especially in hiring for board positions and handling resignations of auditors and top executives.
- The key proposals seek to ensure that independent directors are truly independent, and companies are more open about instances of statutory auditors making adverse remarks or qualifications on the financial statements or even quitting their audit assignment.
- It seeks to **protect the independence of the statutory auditors** by making several changes to the law, including mandatory joint audits for certain types of companies.
- The idea of the proposed changes to the Companies Act is **to strengthen the gatekeepers of good governance(Corporate governance)**—independent directors and auditors—**infuse more transparency into company affairs** and allow companies to issue fractional shares and discounted shares as part of efforts to improve **ease of doing business.**
- The issue of fractional shares, **a practice currently prohibited under the Companies Act,** will help retail investors access high-value shares, while discounted shares will allow a company in distress to convert debt to equity.
- Some of the past bankruptcies in the corporate sector, particularly those **involving large non-bank financial companies facing serious financial difficulties, have prompted the government to consider** some of these changes.

What is the Indian Companies Act?

- Indian Companies Act is an **Act of the Parliament which was enacted in 1956**. It enables the **companies to be formed by registration, sets out the responsibilities of companies, their executive director and secretaries.**
- **In 2013**, the Government amended the **Indian Companies Act 1956 and added a new Act called as Indian Companies Act 2013.**
- The Companies Act, 1956 was replaced partially by the Indian Companies Act 2013.
- It became an act and finally it came into force in September 2013.
- **In 2020,** the Parliament of India passed the **Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2020** to further **amend the Companies Act and decriminalise various compoundable offences as well as promote ease of doing business** in the country.
- Reduction in penalties for certain offences as well as in timeline for rights issues, relaxation in **corporate social responsibility (CSR)** compliance requirements and creation of separate benches at the **National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)** are among the proposed changes too.

What is the Features of the Companies Act of 2013?

- It regulates incorporation of a company, responsibilities of a company, directors, and dissolution of a company. It is divided **into 29 chapters which containing 470 sections as against 658 Sections** in the former Companies Act, 1956 and has 7 schedules. It provides a maximum of 200 members, earlier the private companies the maximum number of members were 50. A new term of 'one-person company' is

included in this act.

#ARTICLE 142 OF INDIAN CONSTITUTION

- Recently, the Supreme Court has invoked its **extraordinary powers to do complete justice under Article 142 of the Constitution** and ordered the release of A.G. Perarivalan in former **Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.**
- The court protected federalism by holding that States had the power to aid and advice the Governor in case of pleas of pardon under **Article 161** made by convicts in murder cases.
- **Article 161 provides** that the **Governor of a State shall have the power to grant pardons**, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence against any law relating to a matter to which the executive power of the State extends.

What is the Supreme Court's Ruling?

- Tamil Nadu Council of Ministers' advice in 2018 to pardon Perarivalan was **binding on the Governor under Article 161** (Governor's power of clemency) of the Constitution.
- The Governor's reluctance to **take a call on the pardon plea has compelled the court to employ its constitutional powers under Article 142** to do justice to Perarivalan.
- The Supreme Court used Article 142 of the Constitution that grants it extraordinary powers to do complete justice, to release Perarivalan.
- The court dismissed **the Centre's argument** that the President exclusively, and not the Governor, had the power to grant pardon in a case under **Section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code**, **saying** this contention would render Article 161 a "dead-letter" and create an extraordinary situation whereby pardons granted by Governors in murder cases for the past 70 years would be rendered invalid.

What is Article 142?

- **Definition:** Article 142 provides **discretionary power to the Supreme Court** as it states that the Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it.
- **Constructive Application:** In the early years of the evolution of Article 142, the general public and the lawyers both lauded the Supreme Court for its efforts to bring complete justice to various deprived

sections of society or to protect the environment.
- The **Cleansing of Taj Mahal and justice too many undertrials** is a result of the invocation of this article only.
- **In the Union Carbide case**, relating to the victims of the **Bhopal gas tragedy**, the Supreme Court placed itself above the laws made by the Parliament or the legislatures of the States by saying that, to do complete justice, it could even override the laws made by Parliament.
- However, in the **Supreme Court Bar Association v. Union of India**, the Supreme Court stated that Article 142 could not be used to supplant the existing law, but only to supplement the law.
- **Cases of Judicial Overreach**: In recent years, there have been several judgments of the Supreme Court wherein it has been foraying into areas which had long been forbidden to the judiciary by reason of the **doctrine of 'separation of powers',** which is part of the **basic structure of the Constitution.** One such example is:
- **The ban on the sale of alcohol along national and state highways:** While the notification by the central government prohibited liquor stores along National Highways only, the Supreme Court put in place a ban on a distance of 500 metres by invoking Article 142.
- Additionally, and in the absence of any similar notification by any of the State governments, the court extended the ban to State highways as well.
- Such judgments have created uncertainty about the discretion vested in the court to invoke Article 142 where even fundamental rights of individuals are being ignored.

#RESERVATIONS FOR OBS IN LOCAL BODY ELECTIONS

Recently, the **Supreme Court (SC)** permitted Madhya Pradesh to **provide reservation to Other Backward Classes (OBC) in Local Body Elections,** modifying an **earlier order that suspended the quotas** due to a lack of data.

Currently, local bodies in Madhya Pradesh have quotas only for **Scheduled Castes**, **Scheduled Tribes** and women.

This is the **first time that a state government has managed to clear the triple test formula mandated by the apex court** in the context of providing reservation for OBCs in local body polls.

Earlier, the SC while hearing a plea by the Maharashtra government **decided to recall its December 2021 order**, which stayed 27% reservation for **Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** in local body elections.

What is the Background?

- In 2021, the SC **scrapped OBC quotas in local body polls in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh,** and the Odisha high court cancelled a similar move in the state because the exercise didn't pass the triple test.
- The **Triple-Test Formula, laid down by the Supreme Court in 2010** and later reiterated in March 2021, required the **states to appoint a commission, collect quantifiable data of the community, and allocate reservation to them in local bodies** in such a manner that the total reservation in each seat does not exceed 50%.

What is the Ruling?

- The SC directed the **state to notify the OBC seats, accepting a report of the three-member OBC commission formed by Madhya Pradesh in 2021.**
- This commission **quantified the population of OBCs in the state at 48% and permitted reservation** of varying quantum across each municipal seat, extending to a maximum of 35%.
- SC permitted the Madhya Pradesh State Election Commission **to notify the election programme for the respective local bodies** keeping in mind the **delimitation notifications** already issued by the state government.

- The order was passed on a petition filed by an individual who challenged in April 2022 the amendments to the Madhya Pradesh Municipal Act, 1956, Madhya Pradesh Panchayat Raj Avam Gram Swaraj Adhiniyam, 1993, and Madhya Pradesh Municipalities Act, 1961.
- By these amendments, **the state government authorized itself to determine the number and extent of wards in the local bodies concerned.**

What is the 2010 Supreme Court Judgement?

- The five-judge Constitution Bench decision in K. Krishnamurthy (Dr.) v. Union of India (2010) wherein the Supreme Court had **interpreted Article 243D(6) and Article 243T(6)**, which permit reservation by enactment of law for backward classes in panchayat and municipal bodies respectively, to hold that barriers to political participation are not the same as that of the barriers that limit access to education and employment.
- However, for creating a level playing field, reservation may be desirable as mandated by the aforementioned Articles which provide a separate constitutional basis for reservation, as distinct from what are conceived under **Article 15 (4) and Article 16 (4) which form the basis for reservation in education and employment.**
- Though reservation to local bodies is permissible, the top court declared that the same is subject to empirical finding of backwardness in relation to local bodies as fulfilled through the triple tests.

#CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS RELATED TO DISABILITY

Recently, the **Central Public Works Department (CPWD)** has started the process to identify 4% of posts of junior engineer (civil and electrical) to be reserved for **persons with disabilities (PwD)** as mandated by the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016(RPwD Act).**

What are the Key points?

- The Central construction agency wrote to its regional offices to identify 4% of the posts and places where persons with benchmark disabilities can be posted.
- The CPWD asked the regional centers to also make **"appropriate reasonable accommodation"** for PwD, as the RPwD Act says.
- Earlier, the expert Committee (under CPWD) was of the view that the PwD need to have requisite technical qualification or the post in the first place and subsequently he or she has to compete in the selection process to be considered for the post,
- Later, the committee advised CPWD to follow the DEPWD's notification for recruitment to JE (civil and electrical).

What are Constitutional Provisions related to Disability?

- **Article 41 of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)** states that State shall make effective provision for securing right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, within the limits of its economic capacity and development.
- The subject of 'relief of the disabled and unemployable' is specified in the **state list of the Seventh schedule of the constitution.**

What are the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016?

- **Definition:** Disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept.
- **Benchmark disability** refers to having at least **40% disability** of any type recognized under the Act.

Types:

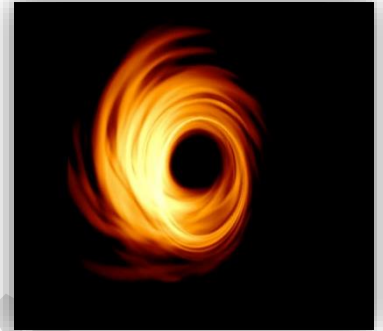- The types of disabilities have been **increased from 7 to 21.**

- The Act added mental illness, autism, spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, chronic neurological conditions, speech and language disability, **thalassemia**, **hemophilia**, **sickle cell disease**, multiple disabilities including deaf blindness, acid attack victims and **Parkinson's disease**.
- In addition, the Government has been authorized to notify any other category of specified disability.
- **Reservation:**
- It **increased the reservation** for people suffering from disabilities **from 3% to 4% in government jobs and from 3% to 5% in higher education institutes.**

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

#FIRST IMAGE OF BLACK HOLE

- Recently, Scientists from the **Event Horizon Telescope (EHT)** facility, revealed the first image of the black hole named Sagittarius A* at the centre of our galaxy - the Milky Way.
- Nearly all galaxies have these giant black holes at their centre, where light and matter cannot escape, making it extremely hard to get images of them.
- Researchers called the black hole "**the gentle giant in the centre of our galaxy**".

What does Black Hole Image Unveil?

- This image of the black hole referred to as **Sagittarius A* (Sagittarius A(asterisk))** gave further support to the idea that the compact object at the centre of our galaxy is indeed a black hole.
- It is near the border of Sagittarius and Scorpius constellations. **It is 4 million times more massive than our sun.**
- It strengthens Einstein's general theory of relativity that a point in space where matter **is so compressed as to create a gravity field from which even light cannot escape.**
- The researchers said that imaging Sagittarius A*, the black hole at the centre of the Milky Way, was much more difficult than imaging M87.
- In 2019, the Event Horizon Telescope made history by releasing the first ever image of a black hole **Messier 87 (M87)** – the black hole at the centre of a galaxy M87, which is a supergiant elliptic galaxy.

What is Black Hole?

- The concept was theorized by Albert Einstein in 1915 and the term 'black hole' was coined in the mid-1960s by American physicist John Archibald Wheeler.
- Usually, the black holes belong to two categories:
- One category ranges between a few solar masses and tens of solar masses. These are thought to form when massive stars die.
- The other category is of supermassive black holes. These range from hundreds of thousands to billions of times that of the sun from the Solar system to which Earth belong.
- In April 2019, the scientists at the Event Horizon Telescope Project released the **first-ever image of a Black Hole** (more precisely, of its shadow).
- **Gravitational waves** are created when two black holes orbit each other and merge.
- Galaxy
- A galaxy is a huge collection of gas, dust, and billions of stars and their solar systems, all held together by gravity.
- Earth is the part of the **Milky Way Galaxy,** which also has a super Massive Blackhole in the middle.
- Event Horizon
- There is a region of space beyond the black hole called the event horizon. This is a "point of no return", beyond which it is impossible to escape the gravitational effects of the black hole.
- Event Horizon Telescope Project
- EHT is a group of 8 radio telescopes (used to detect radio waves from space) located in different parts of the world.
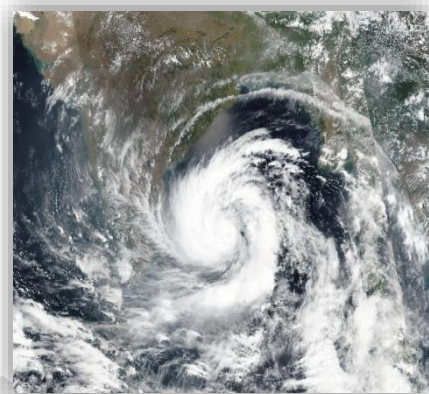
MISCELLANEOUS

#OCCURRENCE OF CYCLONES IN INDIA

The **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** has predicted the **Cyclone Asani** to intensify into a **'severe cyclone'** over Southeast regions of Bay of Bengal.

The name **Cyclone Asani has been given by Sri Lanka**. It means 'wrath' in Sinhalese.

Cyclones that Hit India in 2020-21: **Tauktae**, **Yaas**, **Nisarga**, **Amphan**.

What is the Occurrence of Cyclones in India?

India has a **bi-annual cyclone season that occurs between March to May and October to December.** But on rare occasions, cyclones do occur in June and September months.

- Cyclone Gulab became the third cyclone of the 21st century to make landfall over the east coast in September, after tropical cyclone Daye in 2018 and Pyarr in 2005.
- Typically, **tropical cyclones in the North Indian Ocean region** (Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea) develop during the **pre-monsoon** (April to June) and post-monsoon (October to December) periods.
- May-June and October-November are known to produce cyclones of severe intensity that affect the Indian coasts.

What is Classification?

- The IMD classifies cyclones **on the basis of the Maximum Sustained Surface Wind Speed (MSW)** they generate.
- The cyclones are classified as severe (MSW of 48-63 knots), very severe (MSW of 64-89 knots), extremely severe (MSW of 90-119 knots) and super cyclonic storm (MSW of 120 knots or more). One knot is equal to 1.8 kmph (kilometers per hour).

What are the Tropical Cyclones?

- A **tropical cyclone** is an intense circular storm that originates over warm tropical oceans and is characterized by low atmospheric pressure, high winds, and heavy rain.
- A characteristic feature of tropical cyclones is the eye, a central region of clear skies, warm temperatures, and low atmospheric pressure.
- Storms of this type are called **hurricanes in the North Atlantic and eastern Pacific** and **typhoons in SouthEast Asia and China**. They are called **tropical cyclones in the southwest Pacific and Indian Ocean region** and **Willy-willies in north-western Australia.**
- Storms **rotate counterclockwise in the northern hemisphere** and clockwise in the southern hemisphere.
- The **conditions favourable** for the formation and intensification of tropical storms are:
- Large sea surface with temperature higher than 27° C.
- Presence of the **Coriolis force**.
- Small variations in the vertical wind speed.
- A pre-existing weak low- pressure area or low-level-cyclonic circulation.
- Upper divergence above the sea level system.

#STATE OF WORLD'S BIRD REPORT

According to the **new review 'State of the World's Birds', approximately 48% of existing bird species worldwide** are known or suspected to be undergoing population declines.
State of the World's Birds is an **annual review of environmental resources.**
Since birds are highly visible and are sensitive indicators of environmental health, **their loss signals a much wider loss of biodiversity** and threat to human health and well-being.

What are the Key Highlights of the Review?

- **Overall:** The threat has been **attributed to almost half of the 10,994 recognised extant species of birds to the expanding human footprint** on the natural world and **climate change. While 4,295 or 39% of the species** had stable trends, about 7% or 778 species had increasing population trends. The trend of 37 species was unknown.

- The study **reviewed changes in avian biodiversity** using data from the **International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List** to reveal the changes in fortunes of all the global bird species.

- **India:** The trend towards **declining bird diversity is just as alarming in India**, where recent annual trends have been calculated for 146 species. Of these, **nearly 80% are declining in numbers, and almost 50% plummeting strongly.** Just over **6% of the species studied show stable populations** and 14% show increasing population trends. **Among the most threatened species** were endemic species, birds of prey, and those living in forests and grasslands.

#WHAT IS W BOSON?

- Recently, researchers from Collider Detector at Fermilab (CDF) Collaboration, in the US, announced that they **have made a precise measurement of the mass of the W boson.**
- It has been stated that this **precisely determined value did not match with the estimates** from the standard model of particle physics.

What is W Boson?

- The W boson was **first seen in 1983 at CERN,** located on the Franco-Swiss border.
- In contrast to the **photon, which is massless,** the **W bosons are quite massive**, so the weak force they mediate is very short ranged.
- **European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN)** is the world's largest nuclear and particle physics laboratory and best known as operator of the Large Hadron Collider, which found the elusive Higgs boson in 2012.
- Unlike the photon, which **is electrically neutral,** the **W-plus and W-minus are both massive and charged.**
- By exchanging such W bosons, a neutron can change into a proton, for example:
- **This is what happens in beta decay,** a radioactive interaction that takes place in the sun.
- Thus, the **W boson facilitates the interactions that make the sun burn** and produce energy.

What is the Standard Model of Elementary Particle Physics?

- The standard model of elementary particles is a theoretical construct in physics that describes particles of matter and their interaction.
- It describes the **elementary particles of the world as being connected by mathematical symmetry,** just as two objects are connected by bilateral (left-right) symmetry.
- These are **mathematical groups** generated by continuous transformations from, say, one particle to another.

- According to this model there are a **finite number of fundamental particles** which are represented by the characteristic "eigen" states of these groups.
- The particles predicted by the model, such as the **Z boson, have been seen in experiments.**
- The last to be discovered, in 2012, was the **Higgs boson** which gives mass to the heavy particles.

#WHAT IS O-RAN?

The Ministry of Communications has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with M/s VVDN Technologies Private Limited to facilitate registered startups, innovators and MSMEs working in the field of **Open RAN (Radio Access Network) to get their product tested at the existing lab of M/s VVDN.** Such testing certification shall **accelerate the research innovation in domestic design and manufacturing.** It is aimed that India shall be emerging as a design leader in **5G**/O-RAN. This test certification eco system will make India as design testing and certification hub of Asia.

What is O-RAN?

- Open-RAN is not a technology, **but rather an ongoing shift in mobile network architecture** that allows networks to be built **using subcomponents from a variety of vendors.**
- O-RAN has **an open, multi-vendor architecture** for deploying mobile networks, as opposed to the single-vendor proprietary architecture.
- O-RAN **uses software to make hardware manufactured by different companies** work together.
- The key concept of Open RAN is **"opening" the protocols and interfaces between the various subcomponents (radios, hardware and software) in the RAN.**

Radio Access Network (RAN):

- It is the part of a telecommunications system that connects individual devices to other parts of a network through radio connections.
- A RAN resides between user equipment, such as a mobile phone, a computer or any remotely controlled machine, and provides the connection with its core network.
- As a technical matter this is what the industry refers to as a disaggregated RAN.

Elements of RAN:

- The Radio Unit (RU) is where the radio frequency signals are transmitted, received, amplified and

digitized. The RU is located near, or integrated into,the antenna.
- The Distributed Unit (DU) is where the real-time, baseband processing functions reside. The DU can be centralized or located near the cell site.
- The Centralized Unit (CU) is where the less time-sensitive packet processing functions typically residing.

#MRNA VACCINE TECHNOLOGY

Council of Scientific & Industrial Research- Centre for Cellular & Molecular Biology (CSIR-CCMB) has announced the success of **'proof of principle'** of the first indigenous Messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine technology. This is different from the mRNA vaccine being developed by Gennova Bio based on self-replicating RNA. According to the researcher, the technology is ready to be transferred to any interested company to take it to the next step of performing human trials and bringing the vaccine to market with regulatory approval.

- Proof of Principle**:** Proof of Principle, also called Proof of concept, is a realization of a certain method or idea in order to demonstrate its feasibility, or a demonstration in principle with the aim of verifying that some concept or theory has practical potential.

What is mRNA Vaccine Technology?

- mRNA vaccines use mRNA to teach our cells how to make a protein or a protein that triggers an immune response inside our bodies. That immune response, which produces antibodies, is what protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies.
- The researchers developed indigenous potential mRNA vaccine candidate against **SARS-CoV-2.**
- It is based on the **Moderna model**, but has been built with the information available in the open and indigenous technology and materials.

#GLOBAL FOOD POLICY REPORT: IFPRI

Recently, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has released **Global Food Policy Report: Climate Change & Food Systems**, showing India's risk for hunger could increase 23% by 2030 due to Climate Change.

What are the Findings?

- **India:** India's food production could drop 16% and the number of those at risk for hunger could increase 23% by 2030 due to climate change.
- Projections are part of a model that was used to evaluate the impact of climate change on aggregate food production, food consumption (kcal per person per day), net trade of major food commodity groups, and the population at risk of going hungry.
- The number of Indians **at risk from hunger in 2030 is expected to be 73.9 million in 2030** and, if the effects of climate change were to be **factored in, it would increase to 90.6 million.**
- The aggregate food production index would, under similar conditions, drop from 1.6 to 1.5.
- Food production index covers food crops that are considered edible and that contain nutrients. Coffee and tea are excluded because, although edible, they have no nutritive value.
- On a positive note, **climate change will not impact the average calorie consumption of Indians** and this is projected to remain roughly the same at 2,600 kcal per capita per day by 2030 even in a climate change scenario.
- The average temperature across India is projected to rise by between 2.4°C and 4.4°C by 2100. Similarly, summer heat waves are projected to triple by 2100 in India.

Global:

- Baseline projections indicate that **global food production will grow by about 60% over 2010 levels by 2050** in the context of climate change.
- Production and demand are projected to grow more rapidly in developing countries, particularly in Africa, than in developed countries, due to projected growth in population and incomes.
- Diets are also shifting toward higher-value foods, including more fruits and vegetables, processed foods, and animal-source foods, outside of high-income countries.
- Meat production is projected to double in South Asia and West and Central Africa by 2030 and triple by 2050.
- Despite this growth, **per capita consumption levels in developing countries will remain less than half of those in developed countries**.
- The **demand for processed foods also shows up in the growing production of oil crops:** by 2050 production is expected to more than double in Southeast Asia and West and Central Africa.
- How food production impacts climate change?
- Food system activities, including producing food, transporting it, and storing wasted food in landfills, produce **Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions** that contribute to climate change.
- Of these sources, **Livestock production is the largest, accounting for an estimated 14.5 % of global GHG emissions** from human activities.
- Meat from ruminant animals, such as cattle and goats, **are particularly emissions-intensive.**
- If global trends **in meat and dairy intake continue, our chances of staying below the 2° Celsius threshold will still be extremely slim.**
- This is why **urgent and dramatic reductions in meat and dairy consumption, alongside reductions in GHG emissions from energy use, transportation, and other sources, are crucial to avoiding catastrophic climate change.**
- The responsibility for eating lower on the food chain falls most heavily on countries like the U.S. with the highest per capita consumption of meat and dairy. Changing diets on an international scale will require more than just educating consumers – national policies will need to shift in ways that support more plant-centric diets.

#HEATWAVES & WET BULB TEMPERATURE

The recently published **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report AR6** (Sixth Assessment Report) has emphasised that **humidity is very important factor** while estimating the physiological stress that extreme heat puts on the human body.

Instead of the **"dry bulb" temperature** which is usually measured using a regular thermometer, an alternative metric known as the **"wet bulb temperature"** has been used to measure exposure to extreme heat.

Since March 2022, the consecutive **heatwaves** over South Asia **have continued the disturbing tradition of breaking historical temperature records.**

What are Heatwaves?

- A heatwave is a period of **abnormally high temperatures**, more than the normal maximum temperature that occurs during the summer season in the North-Western and South Central parts of India.
- Heatwaves typically occur between March and June, and in some rare cases even **extend till July.**
- **India Meteorological Department** (IMD) classifies heatwaves according to regions and their temperature ranges.

What are the Criteria for Heatwaves?

- The heatwave is considered when the maximum temperature of a station reaches **at least 40°C for Plains and at least 30°C for Hilly regions.**
- If the normal maximum temperature of a station is less than or equal to 40°C, then an increase of 5°C to 6°C from the **normal temperature is considered to be heat wave condition.**

- Further, an increase of 7°C or more from the normal temperature is considered a **severe heat wave condition.**
- If the normal maximum temperature of a station is more than 40°C, then an increase of **4°C to 5°C from the normal temperature** is considered to be heat wave condition. Further, an increase of 6°C or more is considered a severe heat wave condition.
- Additionally, if the **actual maximum temperature remains 45°C or more** irrespective of normal maximum temperature, a heat wave is declared.

What is the Wet Bulb Temperature?

- Wet bulb temperature is the **lowest temperature to which air can be cooled** by the evaporation of water into the air at a constant pressure. WBT is a limit that **considers heat and humidity beyond which humans can not tolerate** high temperatures.
- The Wet Bulb temperature is the **temperature of adiabatic saturation**. This is the temperature indicated by a moistened thermometer bulb exposed to the air flow.
- An adiabatic process is one in which **no heat is gained or lost by the system.**
- Wet Bulb temperature can be **measured by using a thermometer with the bulb wrapped in wet muslin.**

#SLOTH BEAR

- Recently, **two sloth bears** were rescued by forest officials from a village in Jharkhand by the **People for Animals group.**
- The **People for Animals (PFA)** is an animal welfare organization founded by Maneka Gandhi.
- The PFA was informed by **Madaris.** Madaris is a **nomadic community that earns a living by performing street acts with animals.**

What is a Sloth bear?

- **About**: Sloth bears are found in **Sri Lanka, India, Bhutan and Nepal,** predominantly in lowland areas.
- Sloth bears primarily **eat termites and ants**, and unlike other bear species, they routinely carry their cubs on their backs.
- They are also very fond of honey, hence their alternative name of **"honey bear".**
- Sloth bears **do not hibernate.**
- **Scientific Name: Melursus ursinus**
- **Habitat:** It is a forest-dwelling member of the family Ursidae (comprises 8 species of bears) that inhabits tropical or subtropical regions of India and Sri Lanka.

Protection Status:

- **IUCN Red List: Vulnerable'**
- **CITES listing: Appendix I**
- **Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I**
- **Threats: Habitat loss, poaching** for body parts and are sometimes captured for use in performances or hunted because of their **aggressive behavior and destruction of crops.**

#GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE

- The Prime Minister of India paid tribute to Gopal Krishna Gokhale on his Jayanti. Gopal Krishna Gokhale was a **great social reformer and educationist** who provided exemplary leadership to India's freedom movement.

What do we know about Gopal Krishna Gokhale?

- **Birth:** 9th May 1866 in Kotluk village in present-day Maharashtra (then part of the Bombay Presidency).

- **Ideology:** Gokhale worked towards social empowerment, expansion of education, struggle for freedom in India for three decades and rejected the use of reactionary or revolutionary ways.

- **Role in Colonial Legislatures: Between 1899 and 1902**, he was a member of the **Bombay Legislative Council** followed by work at the **Imperial Legislative Council from 1902 till his death (1915).**
- At the Imperial legislature, Gokhale played a key role in framing the **Morley-Minto reforms of 1909.**

Role in INC:

- He was **associated with the Moderate Group of Indian National Congress (joined in 1889).**
- He became **president of INC in 1905 in Banaras session.**
- This was the time when bitter differences had arisen between his group of '**Moderates' and the 'Extremists**' led by **Lala Lajpat Rai** and **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** among others. The two factions **split at the Surat session of 1907.**
- Despite the ideological difference, **in 1907**, he intensely **campaigned for the release of Lala Lajpat Rai**, who was imprisoned that year by the British at Mandalay in present-day Myanmar.

Related Societies and Other Works:

- He **established the Servants of India Society in 1905** for the expansion of Indian education.
- He was **also associated with the Sarvajanik sabha journal** started by Govind Ranade.
- In 1908, Gokhale **founded the Ranade Institute of Economics.**
- He started English weekly newspaper, **The Hitavada** (The people's paper).
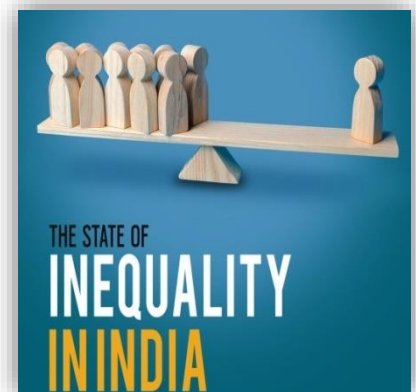
Mentor to Gandhi:

- As a liberal nationalist, he is **regarded by Mahatma Gandhi as his political guru.**
- Gandhi wrote a book in Gujarati dedicated to the leader titled **'Dharmatma Gokhale'.**
- What is Morley-Minto Reforms 1909?
- The reforms included the **admission of Indians to the Secretary of State's council**, to the viceroy's executive council, and to the executive councils of Bombay and Madras, and the **introduction of an elected element into legislative councils with provision for separate electorates for Muslims.**
- The reforms were regarded by Indian nationalists as too cautious, and the provision of separate electorates for Muslims was resented by Hindu.
- The **legislative councils** at the **Centre and the provinces** were increased in size.
- The Act increased the maximum **additional membership of the Imperial Legislative Council from 16 to 60.**
- The legislative councils at the Centre and the provinces were to have **four categories of members as follows**:
- **Ex officio members:** Governor-General and members of the executive council.
- **Nominated official members:** Government officials who were nominated by the Governor-General.
- **Nominated non-official members:** Nominated by the Governor-General but were not government officials.
- **Elected members:** Elected by different categories of Indians.
- The elected members were elected indirectly.
- **Indians were given membership** to the Imperial Legislative Council for the **first time**.
- It introduced **separate electorates for the Muslims**.
- Some constituencies were earmarked for Muslims and only Muslims could vote for their representatives.
- **Satyendra P Sinha** was appointed the first Indian member of the **Viceroy's Executive Council**.

#STATE OF INEQUALITY IN INDIA

Recently, the **'State of Inequality in India' Report** was released by the **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)**.

What is the Report All About?

- The report **compiles information on inequities across sectors** of health, education, household characteristics and the labour market. Inequities in these sectors make the population more vulnerable and trigger a descent into **multidimensional poverty**.
- The report **stretches the narrative on inequality** by presenting a comprehensive analysis that shapes the ecosystem of various deprivation in the country, which directly impacts the well-being of the population and overall growth.

Parts of the Report:

- The report consists of two parts – **Economic Facets and Socio-Economic Manifestations** which looks at five key areas that influence the nature and experience of inequality.
- **Five Key Areas:** These are **income distribution, labour market dynamics, health, education and household characteristics**.

Report is Based on:

- The report is based on the data derived from various rounds of the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)**, **National Family and Health Survey (NFHS)** and **United Information System for Education**

Plus.

- Each chapter is **dedicated to explaining the current state of affairs,** areas of concern, successes and failures in terms of infrastructural capacity and finally, the effect on inequality.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Wealth Concentration: Urban areas have a 44.4% wealth concentration in the highest** quintile (20%) compared to a meager 7.1% concentration in rural areas.

- **Unemployment Rate:** India's unemployment rate is **4.8% (2019-20), and the worker population ratio is 46.8%**. In 2019-20, among different employment categories, **the highest percentage was self-employed workers (45.78%)**, followed by regular salaried workers (33.5%) and casual workers (20.71%). The share of self-employed workers also **happens to be the highest in the lowest income categories**.

- **Health Infrastructure:** In the area of health infrastructure, there has been a **considerable improvement in increasing the infrastructural capacity** with a targeted focus on rural areas. From 1,72,608 total health centres in India in 2005, **total health centres in 2020 stand at 1,85,505**. **States and Union Territories like** Rajasthan, Gujrat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Chandigarh have significantly increased health centres (comprising Sub-Centres, Primary Health Centres, and Community Health Centres) between 2005 and 2020.

#WORLD BEE DAY

World Bee Day is celebrated annually on 20th May. Earlier, the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** had launched the **country's first Mobile Honey Processing Van** at Village in Uttar Pradesh.

What do we Know about World Bee Day?

- The day marks the **birth anniversary of Anton Janša**, a pioneer of modern apiculture.
- Anton Janša hailed from a **family of beekeepers in Slovenia**, where beekeeping is an important agricultural activity with a long-standing tradition.
- Anton enrolled in the **first bee-keeping school in Europe** and worked full-time as a beekeeper.
- His book 'Discussion on Bee-keeping' was also published in German.

Theme for 2022:

- Bee Engaged: Celebrating the diversity of bees and beekeeping systems.
- **What is the Status of the Apiculture in India?**
- The globally apiculture market is **estimated to register a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 4.3% during the period 2020–25**, with Asia–Pacific as the dominant producer.
- The Indian apiculture market size is expected to reach a value of Rs 33,128 million by 2024, expanding at a CAGR of nearly 12% by 2024.
- India is the sixth major natural honey exporting country.
- During 2019–20, the recorded export of natural honey was 59,536.75 MT for Rs 633.82 crore. The major export destinations were the **USA, Saudi Arab, Canada, and Qatar.**
- The demand for organic honey in the international market could be leveraged for promoting organic beekeeping guidelines.
- For propagating the sector, **the landscape for beekeeping and the species** could be expanded on a commercial scale.

What are Related Initiatives?

- **'Sweet Revolution':** It is an ambitious initiative of the Government of India for **promoting apiculture, popularly known as 'beekeeping'.** To provide a booster shot to Sweet Revolution, the government launched the **National Beekeeping and Honey Mission in 2020** (under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare).

- **National Beekeeping and Honey Mission** aims to **establish 5 big regional and 100 small honey** and other Bee Products testing laboratories.
- Out of the total target, **3 world class state-of-the-art laboratories have been setup,** whereas 25 small laboratories are in the process of being set up.

- **Assistance for Setting up of Processing Units:** India is also **providing assistance to the beekeepers for setting up of Processing Units. More than 1.25 lakh metric tonnes of honey** is being produced in the country, out of which more than 60 thousand metric tonnes of natural honey is exported.

#BAN ON EXPORT OF SUGAR

- Recently, the government announced **curbs on exports of sugar.**
- Also, to **provide required relief to consumers**, customs duty and **Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess (AIDC)** on 20 Lakh metric tonnes yearly import of crude soyabean and sunflower oil was exempted for two financial years (2022-23 and 2023-24).
- The exemption of import duties will **help cool domestic prices and control inflation.**

What is the Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess?

- Cess is a kind of **special-purpose tax** which is levied over and above basic tax rates.
- The purpose of the new AIDC is to **raise funds to finance spending on developing agriculture infrastructure.**
- The AIDC is **proposed to be used to improve agricultural infrastructure** aimed at not only boosting production but also in helping conserve and process farm output efficiently.

#EXERCISE BONGOSAGAR B/W INDIA & BANGLADESH

Recently, the third edition of **Exercise Bongosagar,** bilateral naval exercise between India and Bangladesh, commenced at Port Mongla, Bangladesh.

What are the Key Highlights of the Exercise?

- It is an **annual exercise. Second edition** of the exercise, held **in Northern Bay of Bengal in 2020.**
- The exercise is aimed at **developing a high degree of interoperability and joint operational skills** through the conduct of a wide spectrum of maritime exercises and operations between the two navies.

Participants in the Third Edition:

- Participating in the exercise are **Indian Naval Ships Kora**, a guided missile corvette, and **Sumedha,** an offshore patrol vessel.
- Bangladesh Navy is being represented by BNS Abu Ubaidah and Ali Haider, both Guided Missile Frigates.

What are the other Related Exercises between two Countries?

Bilateral:

- **SAMPRITI:** Military Exercise

Multinational:

- **Bangladesh's Military exercise 'Shantir Ogroshena',**
- TABLE TOP (Air),
- IN-BN CORPAT (Navy),
- SAMVEDNA (Multinational Air Exercise with Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and UAE).

#WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

- 31st May is observed as **'World No Tobacco Day'** every year to spread awareness around the deadly effects of tobacco consumption.
- The Member States of the **World Health Organization** created World No Tobacco Day in 1987 to draw global attention to the tobacco epidemic and the preventable death and disease it causes.
- In 1988, Resolution WHA 42.19 was passed, calling for the celebration of World No Tobacco Day, every year on 31 May.

What are the Key Highlights?

- The theme of World No Tobacco Day 2022 is **"Protect The Environment".**
- As per WHO, "The harmful impact of the tobacco industry on the environment is vast and growing, adding unnecessary pressure to our planet's already scarce resources and fragile ecosystems."
- Every year, the WHO honours governments, organisations and individuals for their efforts and contributions to curbing tobacco use.
- This year, the WHO has selected **Jharkhand for the World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) Award-2022.**

What are the Environment Effects of Tobacco?

- **Emission of Greenhouse Gas:** More than 84 megatons of GreenHouse gas emissions occur in a year.
- **Contamination of soil and water**: Tobacco contaminates soil and water due to toxins and contamination of soil by the micro plastics in the cigarette butts and single use non-biodegradable pouches and e-cigarettes.
- **Tonnes of water** are used to make cigarettes.
- **Deforestation:** More than 60 million trees are chopped down to make cigarettes.

#HISTORIC ANANG TAL LAKE

Recently, the Ministry of Culture has ordered the restoration of Historic Anang Tal Lake in South Delhi.
National Monuments Authority (NMA) and **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** have asked officials to expedite conservation work so the site could be declared a **National Monument.**

What are the Key Points?

- The lake is situated in Mehrauli, Delhi and is claimed to be created by **Tomar King**, **Anangpal II**, in 1,060 AD.
- He is known to have established and populated Delhi in the 11th century.

- The millennium old Anang Tal signifies the beginning of Delhi.
- Anang Tal **has a strong Rajasthan connection** as **Maharaja Anangpal is known as nana (maternal grandfather) of Prithviraj Chauhan** whose fort Rai Pithora is on the list of the ASI.

Who was Anangpal II?

- Anangpal II, popularly known as **Anangpal Tomar, belonged to the Tomar dynasty.**
- He was the founder of Dhillika Puri, which eventually became Delhi.
- Evidence about the early history of Delhi is inscribed on the iron pillar of Masjid Quwaatul Islam, adjacent to Qutub Minar.
- Multiple inscriptions and coins suggest **Anangpal Tomar was the ruler of present-day Delhi and Haryana** in between the **8th-12th centuries.**
- He had built the city from ruins and under his supervision, Anang Tal Baoli and Lal Kot were constructed.
- Anangpal Tomar II was **succeeded by his grandson Prithviraj Chauhan.**
- Delhi Sultanate was established in 1192 after Prithviraj Chauhan's defeat in the Battle of Tarain (present-day Haryana) by the Ghurid forces.

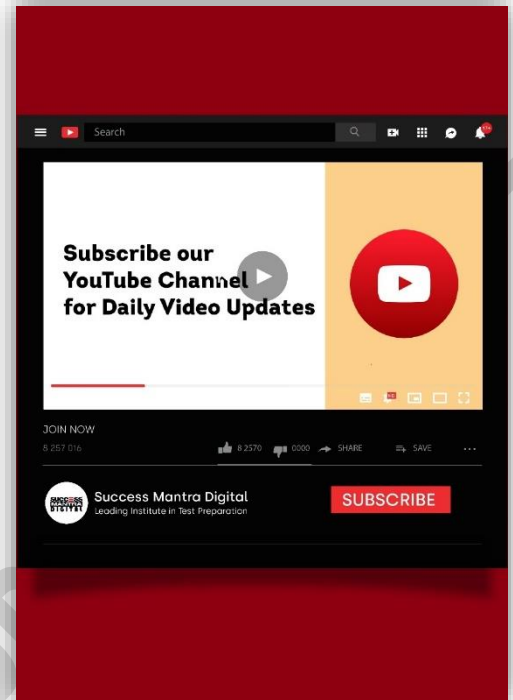## *What are the Key Points About the Tomar Dynasty?*

- Tomara dynasty is **one of the minor early medieval ruling houses** of northern India.
- Puranic evidence (writings of the Puranas) gives its early location in the Himalayan region. According to bardic tradition, **the dynasty was one of the 36 Rajput tribes.**
- The history of the family spans the **period between the reign of Anangpal, who founded the city of Delhi in the 11th century CE,** and the incorporation of Delhi within the Chauhan (Chahamana) kingdom in 1164.
- Although Delhi subsequently became decisively a part of the Chauhan kingdom, numismatic and comparatively late literary evidence indicates that **Tomara kings such as Anangapal and Madanapal continued to rule as feudatories,** presumably until the final conquest of Delhi by the Muslims in 1192–93.

SUCCESS MANTRA DIGITAL YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Welcome to Success Mantra (Head Office- GTB Nagar), India's leading Test Prep Institute for Entrance Exam training. Established in 2010, Success Mantra is today acknowledged as a multi-program training specialist, running on corporate lines, offering a broad range of National and State-Level Entrance Test Programs like Coaching of LAW (CLAT | DU-LL.B.), Hotel Management (NCHM JEE), BBA | BMS (DU JAT | IPM).

While Success Mantra (GTB Nagar) is the epitome to the classroom coaching program, EASE VIDYA Mobile Application (available on Android) is an online podium, available on the web and mobile application both. It is familiarized to ease up the high growing pressure of competition.

When it comes to results, Success Mantra has always been heading and shoulders above the rest. We have the best success rate in the industry. Our Result ratio is as good as 1:3. If you want to prepare for your targeted exam, Come out of your cocoon & Contact us today!

SUCCESS MANTRA DIGITAL YOUTUBE CHANNEL