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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

#INDIAN NAVY ENSIGN

The **Prime Minister** will unveil the new **Ensign (flag)** of the **Indian Navy** in Kochi to mark the launch of **India's first aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant.**

What is Ensign?

- **An Ensign** is a national flag which is displayed on ships and aircraft, often with the special insignia of a branch or unit of the armed forces.

- **Present Ensign of Indian Navy:** The present ensign carries the Saint George's Cross with the Tricolour in the canton (top left corner of flag).

How Many Times Has the Naval Ensign Changed?

- The change in naval ensign was made in 2001 when the **George's Cross was replaced with the naval crest in the middle of the white flag while the Tricolour retained its place on the top left corner.**
- Further, in 2004, **the ensign was again changed back to the Red George's Cross as there were complaints that the new flag was indistinguishable because the blue of the Navy crest merged with the skies and the sea.**
- A change was made in the flag and the red George's Cross now had the **state emblem derived from the Lion Capital of Ashoka in the middle.**
- In 2014, yet another change was made when the words **'Satyamev Jayate' were included on the flag below the Ashoka emblem in the Devanagri script.**

What is Saint George's cross?

- The red cross on a white background is known as the Saint George's Cross and is named after a **Christian Warrior Saint who is believed to have been a crusader during the third crusade.**
- This cross also serves as the flag of England which is a constituent of the United Kingdom. It was adopted by England and the city of London in 1190 to identify English ships entering the Mediterranean.
- Most Commonwealth **countries retained the Red George's Cross at time of their independence,** but several have done away with it on their respective naval ensigns over the years.
- Prominent among them are Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

#POLICING IN INDIA & ETHICS

Former President Ram Nath Kovind gave the message that an 'ideal police system' indicates that the job of a police officer is full of responsibility and accountability.

Why is Police Ethics Different?

- **Taking Moral Decisions: Life and liberty are fundamental moral values** and are held to be so in all human societies, and the police routinely have to decide whether to arrest, i.e., whether or not to take away someone's freedom, and at its extreme, sometimes they must decide whether or not to take away

someone's life. While making any moral decisions, the police have to consider a complex array of actions. They have to consider the goodness and badness of a person before they can consider whether their actions are wrong.

- **May be Required to Face Danger or Hostility:** The police may be **required to face danger or hostility in order to do their duty,** and, predictably, in the course of their work, police officers are likely to experience a range of emotions including fear, anger, suspicion, excitement, and boredom to a far greater extent than people in other occupations.

What are the Various Related Suggestions?

- **Recommendation of Shah Commission (1978):** The **Shah Commission of Inquiry in its report recommended** that the government **should seriously consider the viability and desirability of insulating the police from the politics of the country** and employing them scrupulously on police duties that alone by law are intended to stop political interference.

- **National Police Commission (1977):** To protect the police from outside influences and internal influence, the National Police Commission also offered a number of important suggestions. The commission recommended that judicial inquiry should be made mandatory in case of Custodial rape, Death due to police firing and excessive use of force.

- **Model Police Act: The Soli Sorabjee Committee** was established to frame a Model Police Act. The committee submitted its recommendations in 2006, **"to enable the police to operate as an efficient, effective, people-friendly, and responsive agency".** In general, the **committee adhered to the precedent** established by the **Supreme Court** in its **Prakash Singh decision**. In the Prakash Singh Case of 2006, the **Supreme Court gave 7 directives with a view to bring in police reforms**.

#KARNATAKA IRON ORE MINING BAN

Recently, the **Supreme Court** raised the **"ceiling limit"** of iron ore mining for Ballari, Chitradurga and Tumakuru districts in **Karnataka**, saying **conservation of the ecology and environment must go hand in hand with the spirit of economic development**.
Ten years after the Supreme Court clamped down on **production and sale of iron ore in Karnataka**, the Court has relaxed its own orders.

What do we need to know about the Karnataka Iron Ore Mining Ban?

- In 2010, the Supreme Court shut down the **Obulapuram Mining Company (OMC) in Ballari,** after a **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** probe was initiated in 2009 for **illegal mining**.
- **The illegal mining resulted in** plunder of public wealth, massive loss to exchequer, encroached forest land, ravaged environment and large scale health issue among local population.
- The two **Lokayukta** Reports of 2008 and 2011 exposed over 700 government officials, including three chief ministers in the illegal mining scandal.

Supreme Court's Orders:

- After the Supreme Court-appointed **Central Empowered Committee (CEC)** report brought attention to rampant violations in mining, the SC passed an order in **2011 to stop mining operations in Ballari.**
- Additionally, SC **banned export of iron ore pellets from Karnataka** with an aim to prevent **environmental degradation** and to preserve **for future generations** as part of the concept of intergenerational equity.
- SC also fixed the **maximum permissible annual production limit** at 35 MMT for A and B category mines.
- It directed the **Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE)** to draw up reclamation **and rehabilitation (R&R)** plan to reverse the **environmental damage caused by illegal mining.**
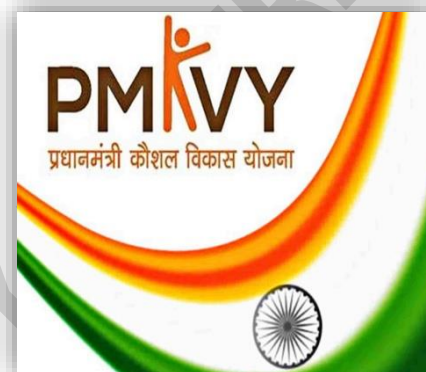
- In 2012, the SC allowed 18 **"category A"** mines to resume operations.
- Mines were categorized depending on the extent of illegalities committed by them:
- **A Category Mines**: These are "leases wherein no illegality/marginal illegality have been found"
- Mines with more serious infractions fall into **B and C categories,** based on their respective offences.
- Once the mines were allowed to restart, the ore was sold through e-auctions.

#PRADHAN MANTRI KAUSHAL VIKAS YOJANA

Recently, the Ministry of Education informed Lok Sabha that, during 2021-22, more than 3 Lakh women were trained under **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) scheme**.

What is PMKVY?

- Skill India Mission was launched by the government in 2015 under which the flagship scheme **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) is run**.
- It aims to train **over 40 crore people in India in different skills by 2022**. It aims at **vocational training and certification of Indian youth** for a better livelihood and respect in the society.
- PMKVY is implemented by the **National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC)** under the guidance of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

PMKVY 1.0:

- **Launch:** India's largest Skill Certification Scheme - **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)** - was launched on 15th July, 2015 **(World Youth Skills Day)**.
- **Aim:** To encourage and promote **skill development in the country by providing free short duration skill training** and incentivizing this by providing monetary rewards to youth for skill certification.
- **Key Components:** Short Term Training, Special Projects, **Recognition of Prior Learning**, Kaushal & Rozgar Mela, etc.
- **Outcome:** In 2015-16, 19.85 lakh candidates were trained.

PMKVY 2.0:

- **Coverage:** PMKVY 2016-20 (PMKVY 2.0) was launched by scaling up both in terms of Sector and Geography and by greater alignment with other missions of the Government of India like **Make in India, Digital India, Swachh Bharat**, etc.
- **Budget:** Rs. 12,000 Crore.

- **Implementation Through Two Components: Centrally Sponsored Centrally Managed (CSCM):** This component was implemented by National Skill Development Corporation. 75% of the PMKVY 2016-20 funds and corresponding physical targets have been allocated under CSCM.
- **Centrally Sponsored State Managed (CSSM):** This component was implemented by State Governments through State Skill Development Missions (SSDMs). 25% of the PMKVY 2016-20 funds and corresponding physical targets have been allocated under CSSM.
- **Outcome:** More than 1.2 Crore youth have been trained/oriented through an improved standardized skilling ecosystem in the country under PMKVY 1.0 and PMKVY 2.0.

PMKVY 3.0:

- **Coverage:** Launched in 717 districts, 28 States/eight UTs, PMKVY 3.0 is a step towards **'Atmnanirbhar Bharat'**.
- **Implementation:** It will be implemented in a more decentralized structure with greater responsibilities

- and support from States/UTs and Districts.
- District Skill Committees (DSCs), under the guidance of State Skill Development Missions (SSDM), shall play a key role in addressing the skill gap and assessing demand at the district level.

#CRIME MULTI AGENCY CENTRE

- A **few states and one Union Territory** have not uploaded a single alert on **Cri-MAC (Crime Multi Agency Centre)** platform.
- West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Sikkim and Union Territory of Dadra, Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu have not uploaded a single alert.
- Delhi, Assam and Haryana uploaded the maximum number of alerts on the portal.

What is Cri-MAC?

- The Cri-MAC was launched in 2020 by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which is run by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).**
- It was launched to share **information on crime and criminals** with various law enforcement agencies and ensure a seamless flow of information among them.
- It aims to help in early detection and prevention of crime incidents across the country.
- Cri-MAC facilitates **dissemination of information about significant crimes,** including human trafficking across the country on real-time basis and enables inter-State coordination. It can help in locating and identifying the **trafficked victims** as also in prevention, detection and investigation of crime.

What is Human Trafficking?

- Human trafficking involves recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, for the purpose of exploitation.
- Exploitation include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs.

Relevant Laws in India:

- **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956** is the premier legislation to deal with this issue.
- **Article 23 and 24 (Right Against Exploitation)** of the Constitution of India.
- 25 sections in IPC such as 366A, 366B, 370 and 374.
- **The Juvenile Justice Act and the Information Technology (IT) Act** and also the **Prevention of Child Labour Act, the Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act,** among others.

India's Efforts in Combating Human Trafficking:

- **In July 2021**, the Ministry of Women and Child Development released **Draft anti-trafficking Bill,** the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2021.
- India has ratified the **United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime (the Palermo Convention)** which has a Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.
- India has ratified the **SAARC Convention** on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution.
- **Anti-Trafficking Nodal Cell** was set up in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in 2006 to act as a focal point for communicating various decisions and follow up on action taken by the State Governments to combat the crime of Human Trafficking.

- **Judicial Colloquium:** In order to train and sensitize the trial court judicial officers, Judicial Colloquium on human trafficking are held at the High court level.
- Various initiatives such as **"SwadharGreh Scheme",** "Sakhi", "Universalization of Women Helpline", provide for a supportive institutional framework and mechanism for addressing concerns of women affected by violence.

#HYDERABAD LIBERATION DAY

- The Telangana Government and Central government will observe 75 years of Liberation of Hyderabad on 17th September 2022 to signify the merger of erstwhile Hyderabad State under Nizam rule **with the Indian Union.**

What is the History about Integration of Princely State of Hyderabad into India?

- Hyderabad was one of the largest natives/princely states in India. It was **ruled by the Nizams who accepted the paramountcy** of the British sovereign.
- The Nizam of Hyderabad like the **Nawab of Junagadh** and the ruler of Kashmir did not accede to India before the date of independence, i.e., **15th August 1947.**
- He was encouraged by Pakistan and Muslim natives peoples, **to stay as an independent power** and improve his armed forces to resist the integration.
- During this military improvisation, internal chaos emerged in the state of Hyderabad because of which, on **13th September 1948, the Indian Army was sent into Hyderabad under Operation Polo** (military operation to annex Hyderabad into the Union of India), on the grounds that the law-and-order situation in Hyderabad threatened the peace of South India.
- The troops met little resistance by the Razakars (the private militia who were resisting the integration), and between the **13th and 18th September, the military took complete control of the state.**
- The operation led to **massive communal violence with estimates of deaths ranging from the official one of 27,000 to 40,000** to scholarly ones of 200,000 or more.
- After the integration, the **Nizam was retained as the head of state in the same manner** as the other princes who acceded to India.
- He thereupon, disowned the complaints that had been made to the UN and, despite vehement protests from Pakistan and strong criticism from other countries, the UN Security Council did not deal further with the question, and **Hyderabad was absorbed into India.**

#PM SHRI SCHOOLS

- On the occasion of **Teacher's Day 2022,** the Prime Minister of India announced a new initiative - **PM SHRI Schools** (**PM S**c**H**ools for **R**ising India).
- It will be a laboratory for the new **National Education Policy (NEP)** and under the first phase, 14,500 schools will be upgraded.

Why is Teacher's Day Celebrated in India?

- Teachers' Day is celebrated every year, **since 1962**, on **September 5**, to recognise and celebrate the **works of educators including teachers, researchers and professors in India.**
- After **Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan** took charge as the President of India in 1962, some students sought permission from him to celebrate his birthday. Dr Radhakrishnan, however, did not approve any fancy celebration but rather requested that the day be observed as **Teachers' Day.**

About Radhakrishnan:

- **Birth:** He was born into a Telugu family in Tiruttani town of Tamil Nadu, on September 5, 1888.

- **Recognition:** In 1984, he was posthumously (after death) awarded the **Bharat Ratna.**

- **Notable Works:** Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy, Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore, The Hindu View of Life, Kalki or the Future of Civilisation, An Idealist View of Life, The Religion We Need, India and China, and Gautama the Buddha.

National Teachers Awards 2022

- On the Occasion of Teacher Day (5th September), the President of India conferred the National Teachers Awards 2022 to **45 exceptional teachers** from across India today.
- The coveted prize was awarded to teachers from various states including Telangana, Maharashtra, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Punjab.
- Every year on Teachers Day, the Ministry of Education organizes a national level function to confer the **National Awards to Teachers** to the best teachers in the country.
- Every winner of the National Teachers Awards is honored with a certificate of merit, a cash reward of **Rs 50,000 and a silver medal.**
- The National Awards to Teachers 2022 seek to **celebrate the unique and major contributions of the teachers in the nation-building** of India.
- The awards are conferred to honor those teachers who through their commitment and industry have not only improved the quality of school education but have **also enriched the lives of their students.**

Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) Yojana?

- **About:** It is a **centrally sponsored scheme** for upgradation and development of more than 14500 Schools across the country.
- It aims at **strengthening the selected existing schools** from amongst schools managed by Central Government/ State/ UT Government/ local bodies.

#DILUTION OF LOKAYUKTA POWERS IN KERALA

Recently, the **Kerala Legislative Assembly passed the Kerala Lok Ayukta (Amendment) Bill, 2022.**

What are the Amendments?

- The amendment Bill has **diluted the binding aspect of the Lokayukta order,** allowing the **competent authority** to now either reject or accept the ombudsman's report.
- With the amendment the **state government will get the power to either accept** or reject the verdict of the anti-corruption body, after giving an opportunity to be heard.
- The amendment will **make Lokayukta a body** for just making recommendations or sending reports to the government.
- It has also made the **Legislative Assembly the competent authority** to review an indicting report against the Chief Minister.
- If a Lokayukta report indicts a cabinet minister, the Bill vests the reviewing authority in the Chief Minister.
- And in the case of **legislators**, the competent authority will be **the House Speaker.**
- The **Bill exempts political leaders from the purview of the Act.**
- The Bill allows for retired High Court judges to be appointed Lokayukta.
- **Section 14 of the Act** which has now been amended said that **if the Lokayukta is satisfied on the complaint against the public servant** being substantiated that he should not continue to hold the post held by him, he shall make a declaration to that effect in his report to the competent authority who shall accept it and act upon it.
- In other words, if the public servant is the Chief Minister or a Minister, he shall forthwith resign his office. Such a provision **does not exist in any of the State laws or the Lokpal Act of the Centre.**

What are the Concept of Lokpal and Lokayuktas?

- The **Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013** provided for the **establishment of Lokpal for the Union and Lokayukta for States.**
- These institutions **are statutory bodies** without any constitutional status.
- They **perform the function of an "ombudsman"** and inquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries and for related matters.
- The **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 provides for establishing a Lokpal headed by a Chairperson,** who is or has been a **Chief Justice of India, or is or has been a judge of the Supreme Court, or an eminent person** who fulfills eligibility criteria as specified.
- Of its **other members,** not exceeding eight, 50% are to be judicial members, provided that not less than 50% belong to the SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, or are women.
- The **Lokpal was appointed in March 2019** and it started functioning since March 2020 when its rules were framed.
- The Lokpal is at present headed by **former Chief Justice of Jharkhand High Court Pradip Kumar Mohanty.**
- The **Lokpal has jurisdiction** to inquire into allegations of corruption against anyone who is or has been **Prime Minister, or a Minister in the Union government, or a Member of Parliament,** as well as officials of the Union government under Groups A, B, C and D.
- Also covered are **chairpersons, members, officers and directors of any board, corporation, society, trust or autonomous body** either established by an Act of Parliament or wholly or partly funded by the Centre.
- It also **covers any society or trust or body that receives foreign contributions above Rs. 10 lakhs.**

#INDIA START-UP ECOSYSTEM

Recently, the government of India has stated that **India ranks 3rd globally in <u>Start-Up ecosystem</u>** and also, in terms of **the number of Unicorns**.

What are Startups & Unicorns?

Startup:

- The term startup refers to a **company in the first stages of operations**. Startups are founded by **one or**

more entrepreneurs who want to develop a product or service for which they believe there is demand.
- These companies **generally start with high costs** and **limited revenue,** which is why they look for capital from a variety of sources such as venture capitalists.

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.

What is the State of Startups India?

- **Status:** India has become the **3rd largest start-up ecosystem** in the world after the US and China. India is home to as many as **75,000 Startups.** 49% of start-ups are from **tier-2 and tier-3 cities.** There are currently **105 unicorns**, out of which 44 were born in 2021 and 19 in 2022.
- Startups are also emerging in the fields like **IT, agriculture, aviation, education, energy, health and space sectors.**

- **Global Innovation Index:** India has been ranked in its global ranking of **Global Innovation Index (GII)** from 81st in the year 2015 to **46th in 2021** among 130 economies of the world. India ranks 2nd among 34 **lower middle-income economies** and 1st among 10 **Central and Southern Asian economies** in terms of GII.

Other Rankings:

- Publications: Globally ranked 3rd (2021) from 6th in 2013 based on the National Science Foundation database.
- Patents: Globally ranked **9th** (2021) in terms of **resident patent filing**.
- **Quality of Research Publications**: Globally ranked 9th (2021) from 13th in 2013.

What are Government's Initiatives for Startups?

- **National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI)**
- **Startup India Action Plan (SIAP)**
- **Ranking of States on Support to Startup Ecosystems (RSSSE)**
- **Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS):** It aims to provide financial assistance to startups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry and commercialization.

- **National Startup Awards:** It seeks to recognize and reward outstanding startups and ecosystem enablers that are contributing to economic dynamism by spurring innovation and injecting competition.
- **SCO Startup Forum:** The first-ever **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** Startup Forum was launched in October 2020 to develop and improve startup ecosystems collectively.
- **Prarambh:** The 'Prarambh' Summit aims to provide a platform to startups and young minds from around the world to come up with new ideas, innovation and invention.

#CYBER SURAKSHIT BHARAT

Recently, the **National e-Governance Division (NeGD)**,organised the 30th **Chief Information Security Officers (CISO) Deep-Dive training programme** at the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi.

What is Cyber Surakshit Bharat?

- Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative was conceptualized with **the mission to spread awareness about <u>cyber-crime</u>** and build capacities **of Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs) and frontline IT officials,** across all government departments.
- It was launched in 2018 by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).** The CISO training is the first-of-its-kind partnership between **the Government and industry consortium** under **Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.**

Objectives:

- It aimed at educating and enabling CISOs to understand cyber-attacks comprehensively and thoroughly, get necessary exposure in latest technologies of safeguard, and translate the benefits of a resilient e-infrastructure to individual organizations and citizens at large.
- Create awareness on the emerging landscape of cyber threats.
- Provide in-depth understanding of related solutions.
- Applicable frameworks, guidelines & policies related to cyber security.
- Share best practices to learn from success & failures.
- Provide key inputs to take informed decisions on Cyber Security related issues in their respective functional area.

#STATUS OF SOCIAL PROTECTION IN INDIA

According to the latest report **(World Social Protection Report 2020-22: Regional companion report for Asia and the Pacific)** on social protection by the **International Labour Organisation (ILO)**, only 24.4% of Indians, even fewer than Bangladesh (28.4%), are under any sort of social protection benefit.

What is Social Protection?

Social protection systems help individuals and families, especially the poor and vulnerable, cope with crises and shocks, find jobs, improve productivity, invest in the health and education of their children, and protect the aging population.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **About:** The Report is a **companion to the ILO's 'World Social Protection Report 2021-22' that** gives a regional overview of the social protection in the Asia and Pacific region.

Global:

- **Social Protection:** It notes that **Mongolia**, **New Zealand**, **Singapore and Australia have 100% social protection net**, while in **Myanmar and Cambodia,** the number stands below **10%.**

- **Lower Coverage:** As per the report, three o**ut of four workers in the Asia Pacific region are not protected** in the event of illness or injury sustained at work.
- Countries with lower **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** per capita tend to have low levels of work injury coverage for example, Afghanistan, India, Nepal and Pakistan cover fewer than 5% of their workers.

- **Uneven Coverage:** According to the report, as of 2020, **only 46.9% of the global population was effectively covered by at least one social protection benefit,** while the remaining 53.1% as many as 4.1 billion people were left wholly unprotected.

- The report further notes that the large majority of the working-age population in the world 69.4%, or **4 billion people, are only partially protected or not protected at all.**
- **Gender Inequality:** Highlighting the inherent gender inequality in the social protection coverage, the report makes note women's coverage lag behind men's by a substantial 8% points.

Indian Perspective:

- **Low Investment in Social Protection:** The report notes that owing to the relatively **low investment in social protection i.e.,** only 24.4% of Indian population, the amounts transferred under **non-contributory benefits are usually too low to** provide adequate protection.

- **Disparity in Coverage:** With **contributory schemes typically limited to those working in the formal sector** and non-contributory schemes still mostly targeted on the poorest, India's social security benefits are **lower than the 5% of GDP per capita (USD 2,277).**

- **Recent Initiatives:** It appreciated India's **higher coverage rate achieved through a combination of contributory and non-contributory schemes** through its progressive extension of coverage by combining different tiers of social protection such as the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGA),** which offers a degree of protection for informal sector workers for up to 100 days.

What are the various Indian Government Initiatives Regarding Social Security?

- **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-SYM).**
- **National Pension Scheme for Traders and The Self-employed Persons (NPS).**
- **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana (PMJJBY).**
- **Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY).**
- **Atal Pension Yojana.**
- **National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC).**
- **Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers.**

What is International Labour Organisation (ILO)?

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.

#IMPORTANCE OF REGIONAL LANGUAGES IN INDIA

Recently, the Chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) emphasised that early initiation of learning a mother tongue is important for a **child's creative thinking.**
What are Regional Languages?
Regional language is a **term used to refer to a language that is spoken by a sizeable number of people** but is not the de facto language of communication in the rest of the country.
A language is considered regional when it is mostly spoken by **people who reside largely in one particular area of a state or country.**
Article 343(1) of the Indian Constitution states that the official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagiri Script.

What is the Need for Regional Language?

- **Remove Dilemma:** To remove the **dilemma regarding giving preference to English language** rather than any vernacular language and let the child think naturally in their own mother tongue.
- **Colonial Mindset:** There was a need to **change our attitudes**, so that when someone asked a question in a class in a regional language, they should not feel inferior.
- **What are the Initiatives taken by the Government for the Promotion of Vernacular Languages?**
- The University Grants Commission is in talks with various regulatory bodies such as **Bar Council of India** for promotion of vernacular languages, therefore, a **committee had been formed under former Chief Justice of India** which would look into how institutions could provide legal education in local languages.
- The **All India Council of Technical Education** too had introduced courses in regional languages in 10 colleges.
- It is also working with the **High-Powered Committee** on **Indian Language Development** established by the **Ministry of Education** to identify experts as well as 10-12 disciplines so that books could either be translated or written afresh.
- The regulatory body was aiming at preparing 1,500 books in regional languages in the next one year across different disciplines.
- The **Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT)** is providing publication grant towards the publications of University Level Books in regional languages.
- **The National Translation Mission (NTM)** is being implemented through the **Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL).**

How would Regional Language be promoted in Education?

- Either **institutes would adopt a regional language as a medium of instruction** or it would **serve as a learning aid for students in English medium** who may not be proficient in the language.
- **Use of Technology:** There was **artificial intelligence-based technology** available to enable real-time translations that would be seen in classrooms in the future.
- **National Education Policy:** The **National Education Policy 2022** lays emphasis on promoting mother tongue which should be a medium of instruction at least till class fifth or class eighth and after which it should be offered as a language.
- It also urges universities to develop study material in regional languages.

What are the Constitutional Provisions related to Regional Language?

- **Article 345:** The legislature of a **State may by law adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State or Hindi as the Language or Languages** to be used for all or any of the official purposes of that

State.
- **Article 346:** The language authorised for use in the Union **for official purposes shall be the official language for communication between one State and another State and between a State and the Union.**
- **For example**- If two or more States agree that the Hindi language should be the official language for communication between such States, that language may be used for such communication.
- **Article 347:** It gives the **President the power to recognise a language as an official language of a given state,** provided that the President is satisfied that a substantial proportion of that state desires that the language be recognised. Such recognition can be for a part of the state or the whole state.
- **Article 350A:** The facilities for **instruction in mother-tongue at the primary stage.**
- **Article 350B**: It provides for the **establishment of a Special Officer for linguistic minorities**.
- **Article 351**: It gives power to the union government to **issue a directive for the development of the Hindi language.**

#REVIEW OF GAS PRICING FORMULA

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has set up a committee under noted energy expert Kirit Parikh to review the current **pricing formula for domestically-produced gas.**

What is the Need to revisit the Gas-Pricing Formula?

- **High Prices:** Local gas **prices are at a record high due to the surge in global prices** because of the ongoing **Russia-Ukraine conflict** and are expected to rise further.
- Skyrocketing global natural gas prices lifting energy and industrial costs and derailing the efforts to contain inflation are raising concerns.
- The country has been battling inflation above the Reserve Bank of India's tolerance band of 2%-6% for seven consecutive months.

Current Formula is Myopic:

- The current formula is "myopic" and **does not incentivise gas producers.**
- In India, gas penetration in its energy mix is 6% as against a global average of 23%.
- The objective is to improve this number to 15% over the next few years.
- **Underpricing Penalizes the Producers:**
- India's gas price is determined at an average price of LNG imports into India and benchmark global gas rates.
- India is simply underpricing a scarce resource.
- At current prices, the producer is penalised and somehow the consumer trumps the producer.

What is the Scenario of Gas Market in India?

- Total consumption in India is 175 million standard cubic meters a day (MMSCMD).
- Of this 93 MMCMD is **met through domestic production and 82 MMSCMD through LNG imports.** Gas consumption is directly linked to supply availability.
- Of natural gas consumed in the country, **almost 50% is imported LNG.**
- Fertiliser sector is the **largest consumer of gas**, accounting for a third of the consumption, followed by city gas distribution or CGD (23%), power (13%), refineries (8%) and petrochemicals (2%).
- The industry fears that the **world's third largest energy consumer could see its natural gas consumption decline** from the current levels if LNG (imported gas) prices in the international **market continue to rule in the range of USD 45 an mmBtu (Metric Million British Thermal Unit).**

What is the Current Gas Pricing in India?

- **Gas priced under APM (Administered Price Mechanism)** is set by the Government of India.
- **Under this system**, the oil and gas sector are controlled at four stages viz. **production, refining, distribution and marketing.**
- **Non-APM or Free Market Gas** is further divided into two categories, namely, **domestically produced gas from Joint Venture fields and imported LNG.**
- The **pricing of JV gas** is governed in terms of the **PSC (Production Sharing Contract)** provisions.
- While the **price of LNG** under term contracts is governed by **the** SPA (Sale and Purchase Agreement) between the **LNG seller and the buyer,** the spot cargoes are purchased on mutually agreeable commercial terms.
- Further, there **is differential pricing existing for different sectors**. Subsidized sectors such as power and fertilizer get **relatively less prices as compared to other sectors.**
- Also, **region specific pricing exists in the country** with North Eastern states getting gas at relatively cheaper prices as compared to other parts of the country.
- Pricing of a major share of gas supplies in the Indian market is **controlled and is not market driven as government approval is required before changing** the price.

#HEALTHCARE SECTOR IN INDIA

The Healthcare sector in India is expected to grow to reach a size of USD 50 billion by 2025.
Healthcare has become more focused on innovation and technology over the past two years and **80% of healthcare systems are aiming to increase their investment in digital healthcare tools in the coming five years.**

What is the Scenario of the Healthcare Sector in India?

- Healthcare comprises **hospitals, medical devices, clinical trials, outsourcing, telemedicine, medical tourism, health insurance and medical equipment.** India's healthcare delivery system is categorised into two major components - public and private.
- The government (public healthcare system), comprises **limited secondary and tertiary care institutions** in key cities and focuses on providing basic healthcare facilities in the form of **Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs)** in rural areas.
- The private sector provides a **majority of secondary, tertiary, and quaternary care institutions** with major concentration in metros, **tier-I and tier-II cities.**

What is the Potential of the Indian Health Sector?

- India's competitive advantage lies in its **large pool of well-trained medical professionals**. India is also cost competitive compared to its peers in Asia and western countries. The **cost of surgery in India is about one-tenth** of that in the US or Western Europe.
- India has all **the essential ingredients for the exponential growth** in this sector, including **a large population, a robust pharma and medical supply chain, 750 million plus smartphone** users, **3rd largest start-up pool** globally with easy access to **VC (Venture Capital Fund) funding and innovative tech entrepreneurs** looking to solve global healthcare problems.
- India will have about 50 clusters for faster clinical testing of medical devices to boost product development and innovation.
- The sector will be driven by life expectancy, shift in disease burden, changes in preferences, growing middle class, increase in health insurance, medical support, infrastructure development and policy support and incentives. As of 2021, the Indian healthcare sector is **one of India's largest employers as it employs a total of 4.7 million people.** The sector has generated 2.7 million additional jobs in India between 2017-22 -- over 500,000 new jobs per year

What are the Initiatives for the Health Care Sector?

- **National Health Mission**

- **Ayushman Bharat.**
- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).**
- **National Medical Commission**
- **PM National Dialysis Programme.**
- **Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK).**
- **Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK).**

#PRADHAN MANTRI TB MUKT BHARAT ABHIYAN

Recently, to speed up the country's fight against **tuberculosis (TB)** and achieve the target set by the Prime Minister of eliminating the disease by 2025, President launched the **Pradhan Mantri TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyan.**

What is Tuberculosis?

- **About:** Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by **Mycobacterium** tuberculosis.
- It commonly affects the lungs, but can also affect other parts of the body.
- It is a **treatable and curable disease.**
- **Transmission**: TB is **spread from person to person through the air.** When people with lung TB cough, sneeze or spit, they propel the TB germs into the air.

- **Symptoms: Common** symptoms of active lung TB are cough with sputum and blood at times, chest pains, weakness, weight loss, fever and night sweats.
- **Vaccine:** Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) is a vaccine for TB disease.
- **Statistics:** A total of 1.5 million people died from TB and an estimated 10 million people fell ill with tuberculosis (TB) worldwide **in 2020**.
- **India** has the **world's highest tuberculosis (TB) burden,** with an estimated 26 lakh people contracting the disease and approximately 4 lakh people dying from the disease every year.

What Pradhan Mantri TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyan?

- **It's an initiative of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW)** to accelerate the country's progress towards TB elimination by 2025.

- **Objectives:** Provide additional patient support to improve treatment outcomes of TB patients Augment community involvement in meeting India's commitment to end TB by 2025.
- Leverage **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** activities.

Components:

- **Ni-kshay Mitra Initiative:** It is to ensure **additional diagnostic, nutritional, and vocational support** to those on TB treatment.
- **Ni-kshay Mitra** (Donor) are those who can support by adopting health facilities (for individual donor), blocks/urban wards/districts/states for accelerating response against TB to complement government efforts.
- **Ni-kshay Digital Portal:** It will provide a platform for community support for persons with TB.

What are the other related Initiatives Regarding Tuberculosis?

Global Efforts:

- The **WHO (World Health Organisation)** has launched a joint initiative **"Find. Treat. All. #EndTB"** with the **Global Fund** and **Stop TB Partnership.**
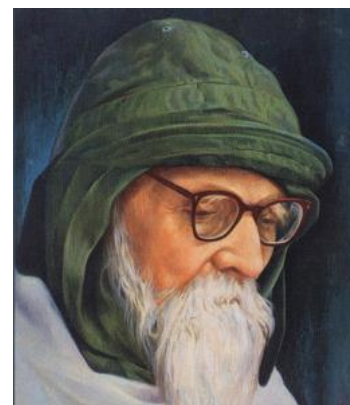- WHO also releases the **Global Tuberculosis Report.**

India's Efforts:

- India's **National TB Elimination Programme** is strengthened to meet the goal of ending the TB epidemic by 2025 from the country, five years ahead of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for 2030.**
- National Strategic Plan (NSP) for Tuberculosis Elimination (2017-2025), **The Nikshay Ecosystem** (National TB information system), **Nikshay Poshan Yojana (NPY-** financial support), **TB Harega Desh Jeetega Campaign.**
- Currently, two vaccines **VPM (Vaccine Projekt Management) 1002 and MIP (Mycobacterium Indicus Pranii)** have been developed and identified for TB, and are under **Phase-3 clinical trial.**
- **Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana:** It provides Rs 500 support through **direct benefit transfer to the patients.**
- **Ayushman Bharat Digital Health Mission:** The government has also focused on utilising technology and creating digital health IDs for TB patients under the **Ayushman Bharat Digital Health Mission** to ensure proper diagnostics and treatment are available.

#WHO IS ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE?

Recently, the Prime Minister paid rich tributes to **Acharya Vinoba Bhave** on his birth Anniversary.

What do we need to know about Acharya Vinoba Bhave?

- Vinayak Narahari Bhave was born on **11th September 1895 in Gagode, Bombay Presidency** (Maharashtra). He was the eldest son of **Narahari Shambhu Rao and Rukmini Devi.**

- Vinoba was the first recipient of the international **Ramon Magsaysay Award** for **Community Leadership in 1958.** He was also conferred with the **Bharat Ratna** (India's highest civilian awards) posthumously in **1983.**

Association with Gandhi:

- Vinoba met Gandhi on **7th June 1916 and took residence at the Ashram.**
- Gandhi's teachings led Bhave to a life of austerity dedicated to improving Indian village life.
- The name Vinoba **(a traditional Marathi epithet signifying great respect)** was conferred upon him by **Mama Phadke, another member of the Ashram.** On 8th April 1921, Vinoba went to Wardha to take charge of a Gandhi-ashram there under the directives from Gandhi. During his stay at Wardha, Bhave also brought out a monthly in Marathi, named, `**Maharashtra Dharma'** which consisted of **his essays on the**

Upanishads.

Role in Freedom Struggle:

- He took part in programs of **non-cooperation** and especially the call for **use of Swadeshi goods** instead of foreign imports.
- He took up the **spinning wheel churning out Khadi** and urged others to do so, resulting in mass production of the fabric.
- In 1932, **Vinoba was sent to jail for six months to Dhulia** as he was accused of conspiracy against British rule.
- During the imprisonment, he explained to fellow prisoners the different subjects of **'Bhagwad Gita',** in Marathi.
- All the lectures given by him on Gita in Dhulia jail were collected and later published as a book.
- He was also chosen as the **first Individual Satyagrahi** (an Individual standing up for Truth instead of a collective action) **by Gandhi himself.**
- He served a **five-year prison sentence in the 1940s** for leading nonviolent resistance to British rule.
- He was given the honorific title **"Acharya"** (teacher).

Bhoodan Movement:

- In 1951, Vinoba Bhave started his **peace-trek on foot through the violence-torn region of Telangana.**
- On 19th 1951, the **Harijans of the Pochampalli** village requested him to provide them with around 80 acres of land to make a living.
- Vinoba asked the **landlords of the village to come forward and save the Harijans.**
- A landlord got up and offered the required land.
- It was the beginning of the **Bhoodan (Gift of the Land) movement.**
- The movement **continued for thirteen years** and Vinoba toured the length and breadth of the country, a total distance of 58741 Km.
- He was successful in **collecting around 4.4 million acres of land, of which around 1.3 million was distributed** among poor landless farmers.
- The movement attracted admiration from all over the world and was commended for being the only experiment of his kind to incite voluntary social justice.

#PRADHAN MANTRI MATSYA SAMPADA YOJANA

Recently, the **second Anniversary of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) was celebrated.** PMMSY envisages **generation of 68 lakh Employment by the end of 2024-25.**

What is PMSSY?

- PMMSY was introduced by the Government of India, **as part of the 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' package** with the investment of **Rs. 20,050 crores, the highest ever investment in the Fishery sector.**
- Fishermen are provided with **insurance cover, financial assistance and a facility of** <u>Kisan Credit Card</u> **as well.**

Aim and Objectives:

- PMMSY aims towards the purpose of **rural development by utilizing rural resources and boosting rural economy in a rapid way.**
- The main motto of PMMSY is **'Reform, Perform and Transform**' in the fisheries sector.
- The **reforms and initiatives in PMMSY scheme** have been inculcated in:
- **Core & trunk infrastructure development**
- **Modernization** of Indian fisheries by undertaking the efforts such as:

- ➢ Push for **new fishing harbours/landing centres**
- ➢ Modernisation and **mechanization of traditional fishermen crafts-trawlers-deep sea going vessels**
- ➢ Provision of **post-harvest facilities to reduce post-harvest loss**
- ➢ **Cold chains facilities**
- ➢ **Clean and hygienic fish markets**
- ➢ **Two wheelers** with ice boxes

Achievements:

- **Fisheries sector** showed **impressive growth of 14.3% from 2019-20 to 2021-22.**
- Fish production reached an all-time high of 141.64 lakh tons during 2019-20 to 161.87 lakh tons during 2021-22.
- Fisheries sector saws all-time high exports of 13.64 lakh tonnes valuing Rs 57,587 crore dominated by exports of shrimps.
- Currently, exports to 123 countries are taking place including China, Thailand, Japan, Taiwan, Tunisia, the United States, Hong Kong, Kuwait, etc.
- PMMSY has **supported 31.47 lakh farmers under insurance coverage from 22 states and 7 UTs.**

Implementation:

- It is implemented as an **umbrella scheme with two separate components namely:**
- **Central Sector Scheme**: The project cost will be borne by the Central government.
- **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**: All the sub-components/activities will be implemented by the States/UTs and the cost will be shared between the Centre and State.

#NITI AAYOG LIKE BODIES IN STATES

The **National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog will assist each state to set up similar bodies**, replacing their planning boards **for faster and inclusive economic growth** along with the **vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047.**

What is NITI Aayog?

- NITI Aayog **is the apex public policy think tank** of the Government of India.
- **It replaced the Planning Commission on 1st January, 2015** with emphasis on **'Bottom –Up' approach to envisage the vision of Maximum Governance, Minimum Government**, echoing the spirit of **'Cooperative Federalism'.**
- It has two Hubs.
- **Team India Hub** acts as interface **between States and Centre.**
- **Knowledge and Innovation Hub** builds the think-tank acumen of NITI Aayog.

What is the Agenda for Implementation?

- Initially, it **aims for 8-10 states to set up such bodies,** before reaching out to all by March 2023.
- Four states i.e., **Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Assam** have already begun work in this regard.
- Maharashtra, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat will likely begin work soon.
- **A plan has been chalked** out by NITI Aayog to:
- Help in the **creation of teams that will examine the existing structure** of state planning boards.
- Conceptualise the **State Institution for Transformation (SIT)** in the next 4-6 months.

- **Lateral entry of professionals will be encouraged in SITs** to undertake high-quality analytical work and policy recommendations.
- Besides reorienting state planning boards as SITs, a blueprint will be made on:
- **Guiding states in policy formulation.**
- **Monitoring and evaluation of government policies and programmes.**
- **Suggesting better technology or models for delivery of schemes.**

#DEEMED UNIVERSITY STATUS

Recently, the **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)** has applied to the **University Grants Commission (UGC)** for the **deemed university** status.

Why did NCERT apply for Deemed University Tag?

- The government's proposal to make the NCERT an institute of national importance is on hold.
- **Benefits**: The status would allow NCERT to **offer its own graduate, postgraduate and doctoral degrees and have autonomy** in terms of introduction of programmes, course structure, conducting examinations and management, among others.
- **Present Status:** The graduate and post-graduate programmes offered by NCERT's **Regional Institute of Education (RIE)** are affiliated with local universities like Barkatullah University, Bhopal, M D S University, Ajmer, University of Mysuru, Utkal University, Bhubaneshwar and North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong.

What is the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)?

- The NCERT is an **autonomous organization** set up in 1961 by the Government of India to **assist and advise the Central and State Governments** on policies and programmes for qualitative improvement in school education.
- The **Executive Committee (EC)** is the highest decision-making body of NCERT and is chaired by the Education Minister.

Objectives:

- To **undertake, promote and coordinate research** in areas related to school education, prepare and publish model textbooks, supplementary material, newsletters, journals and develop educational kits,

multimedia digital materials, etc.

What is a Deemed University?

- Deemed University is a type of higher education institute, it has been **recognized by the status of "deemed to be university" under Section 3 of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956.**
- In broad terms, it means that the institution has been **granted permission to offer its own degree programs, which are equivalent to those provided by regular universities.**

What are the other Different types of Universities in India?

- **Central University:** A university established or incorporated by a Central Act. The establishment and operation are funded by the Union Government.

- **State University:** A university established or incorporated by a Provincial Act or by a State Act.

- **Private University:** A university established through a State/Central Act by a sponsoring body viz. A Society registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860, or any other corresponding law for the time being in force in a State or a Public Trust or a Company registered under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956.

- **Institution of National Importance:** An Institution established by Act of Parliament and declared as Institution of National Importance. They are funded by the Government of India and include all the IITs, NITs and AIIMs institutes.

- **Institution under State Legislature Act:** An Institution established or incorporated by a State Legislature Act.

#PEACE IN NORTH-EASTERN STATES

- Recently, a historic agreement has been signed between the Government of India, Government of Assam **and representatives of** eight Armed Adivasi Groups.
- The agreement was signed to end the **decades old crisis of Adivasis and tea garden workers** in Assam.

What do we need to Know about the Agreement?

- With the signing of this tripartite agreement, **1182 cadres of tribal groups of Assam** have joined the mainstream by laying down arms.
- **Aim:** The agreement is intended to **protect & strengthen** the social, cultural, linguistic and community-based identity of the groups. It also aims to fulfill the **political, economic and educational aspirations** of the Adivasi groups. It also aims to ensure **rapid and focused development of tea gardens** along with Adivasi villages/areas throughout the state.

Provisions of the Agreement:

- The agreement provides for the establishment of a **Tribal Welfare and Development Council** with a view to ensure speedy and focused development of tea gardens.
- The agreement also provides for **rehabilitation and resettlement of armed cadres** and measures for the welfare of **tea garden workers.** A **special development package** of Rs.1000 crore will be provided over a **period of five years for infrastructure development** in villages/areas with tribal population.

What Efforts has the Government Taken for Peace in North East India?

NLFT Agreement 2019:

- National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) has been banned under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967** since 1997 and has been involved in violence, operating from their camps across the international border.
- **NLFT Agreement 2019** resulted in the surrender of 88 cadres with 44 weapons.

BRU-REANG:

- Bru or Reang is a community **indigenous to Northeast India**, living mostly in Tripura, Mizoram and Assam. In Tripura, they are recognised as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group.**
- A landmark agreement was signed on 16th January 2020 to resolve the **23-year-old Bru-Reang refugee crisis** by which more than **37,000 internally displaced people are being settled in Tripura.**

Bodo Accord 2020:

- Bodos are the **single largest community** among the notified **Scheduled Tribes** in Assam.
- They have been demanding a **Bodo state since 1967-68.**
- To resolve the **five-decade-old Bodo issue in Assam**, Bodo Accord was signed on 27th Januay, 2020 resulting in the **surrender of 1615 cadres** with a huge cache of arms and ammunition at Guwahati on 30th January 2020.

Karbi Anglong Agreement 2021:

- It was signed to resolve the **long-running dispute in the Karbi regions of Assam** in which more than **1000 armed cadres renounced violence** and joined the mainstream of society.
- **Assam-Meghalaya Inter-State Boundary Agreement 2022:**
- **AMISB Agreement 2022** was signed on 29th March 2022 to settle the **dispute over six out of total twelve areas of interstate boundary dispute** between the states of Assam and Meghalaya.

Partial Withdrawal of AFSPA:

- The government of India, in April 2022, partially withdrew the **Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), 1958** from parts of three Northeast states namely Assam, Nagaland and Manipur.

#RAMKRISHNA MISSION AWAKENING PROGRAMME

Recently, the Union Minister for Education launched **Ramakrishna Mission's 'Awakening' Programme** for school students.

What do we know about the Awakening Programme?

- **About:** It is an initiative towards ensuring overall personality development of a child in line with the philosophy of National Education Policy (NEP), 2020. It is for the students of **classes I to V.**

- Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi branch, from 2014 onwards, has been successfully conducting the **Awakened Citizen Program (ACP)** for **middle school students** to enable them to build **"ATMASHRADDHA"** (Self-esteem) and make responsible choices. It helps them to find solutions for all problems of life.
- There has been **a demand** from educationists for a similar program for Primary school students.
- In response to this, **'Awakening'** has been designed and piloted across 126 schools.

What do we know about Ramakrishna Mission?

- **Ramakrishna Mission** carries out extensive educational and philanthropic work and expounds a modern version of **Advaita Vedanta**—a school of Indian philosophy.
- The society was founded near Kolkata by Vivekananda in 1897 with a twofold purpose: to spread the teachings of Vedanta as embodied in the life of the saint Ramakrishna (1836–86) and to improve the social conditions of the Indian people.
- The organizations were brought into existence by **Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886),** the great 19th-century saint from Bengal who is regarded as the Prophet of the Modern Age, and Sri Ramakrishna's chief disciple, **Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902).**
- **Motto: "ATMANO MOKSHARTHAM JAGAD HITAYA CHA"** ("For one's own salvation and for the welfare of the world").

What do we know about Swami Vivekanand?

- He was born **as Narendranath Datta on 12th January 1863.**
- **National Youth Day** is held every year to observe the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.
- In **1893**, upon the request of **Maharaja Ajit Singh of the Khetri State**, he **took the name 'Vivekananda.'**

Contributions:

- Introduced the world to the Indian philosophies of **Vedanta and Yoga.**
- He **preached 'neo-Vedanta',** an interpretation of Hinduism through a Western lens, and believed in combining spirituality with material progress.
- Laid the greatest emphasis on **education** for the **regeneration of our motherland.** Advocated a **man-making character-building education**.
- Best known for his **speech at the World Parliament of Religion in Chicago** in 1893.
- Spelt out the **four pathways of attaining moksha** from the worldly pleasure and attachment in **his books** - Raja-yoga, Karma-yoga, Jnana-yoga and Bhakti-yoga.
- **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose** had called **Vivekananda the "maker of modern India."**
- **Associated Organisations:**
- He was the **chief disciple of the 19th-century mystic Ramakrishna Paramhansa and established the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897.**
- In 1899, he **established Belur Math**, which became his permanent abode.
- **Nationalism**
- Though growth of Nationalism is attributed to Western influence but Swami Vivekananda's nationalism is deeply rooted in Indian spirituality and morality.
- His nationalism is based on Humanism and Universalism, the two cardinal features of Indian spiritual culture.
- Unlike western nationalism which is secular in nature, Swami Vivekananda's nationalism is based on religion which is life blood of the Indian people.

The basis of his nationalism is:

- Deep concern for masses, freedom and equality through which one expresses self, spiritual integration of the world on the basis of universal brotherhood.
- "Karmyoga" is a system of ethics to attain freedom both political and spiritual through selfless service.
- His writings and speeches established motherland as the only deity to be worshipped in the mind and heart of countrymen.
- **Death:** He **died at Belur Math in 1902**. Belur Math, **located in West Bengal**, is the headquarters of Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission.

#REGISTERED UNRECOGNIZED POLITICAL PARTY

The Election Commission of India has delisted 86 non-existent **Registered Unrecognized Political Parties** (RUPP) and declared additional 253 as '**Inactive RUPPs'.**

What do we need to know about the Delisting by ECI?

Declared Inactive:

- 253 RUPPs have **not responded to the letter/notice delivered to them** and have **not contested a single election** either to the **General Assembly of a State** or the **Parliament Election** of 2014 & 2019.
- As per **Section 29A of the Representation of People Act 1951**, every political party has to communicate any change in its **name, head office, office bearers, address, PAN** to the Commission without delay.

Delisted:

- 86 RUPPs have been found to be **non-existent** either after a **physical verification carried out by** the **Chief Electoral Officers** of concerned States/UTs or based on a **report of undelivered letters/notices** from Postal Authority sent to the registered address of concerned RUPP.
- Additionally, they would not be entitled to have **benefits under the Symbols Order, 1968.**

What are the Key Points related to the Political Parties?

- **Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPP):** Either **newly registered parties** or those which have **not secured enough percentage of votes** in the assembly or general elections to **become a state party**, or those which have **never contested elections** since being registered are considered unrecognised parties.
- Such parties **don't enjoy all the benefits** extended to the recognised parties.
- **Symbol Allocation:** Common symbols are provided to RUPP under **Symbols Order, 1968.**
- Privilege of a common symbol is given to RUPP based upon an undertaking for **putting up at least 5% of total candidates with regard to said legislative assembly election of a State.**
- Possibility of such parties occupying the available pre-election political space by taking benefits of admissible entitlements without contesting elections **cannot be ruled out.**
- This also tends to crowd out the political parties actually contesting elections and also creating confusing situations for the voters.

Recognised Political Party:

- A recognized political party shall **either be a National party or a State party** if it meets certain laid down conditions. To become a recognised political party either at the state or national level, a party has to **secure a certain minimum percentage of polled valid votes** or a certain **number of seats in the state legislative assembly or the Lok Sabha** during the last election.
- The recognition granted by the Commission to the parties determines their right to certain privileges like **allocation of the party symbols, provision of time for political broadcasts on the state-owned television and radio stations and access to electoral rolls.**

What Powers does Symbol's Order 1968 provide to ECI?

- Under **Paragraph 15 of the Order,** EC can **decide disputes** among rival groups or sections of a recognised political party **staking claim to its name and symbol.**
- The EC is the **only authority to decide issues on a dispute or a merger under the order.**
- **The Supreme Court (SC)** upheld its validity in **Sadiq Ali and another vs. ECI in 1971.**
- This applies to **disputes in recognised national and state parties.**

- For splits in registered but unrecognised parties, the EC usually **advises the warring factions to resolve their differences internally or to approach the court.**
- In almost all disputes decided by the EC so far, **a clear majority of party delegates/office bearers, MPs and MLAs have supported one of the factions.**
- Before 1968, the EC **issued notifications and executive orders** under the Conduct of **Election Rules, 1961.**
- The splinter group of the party - other than the group that got the party symbol - **had to register itself as a separate party.**
- They could lay claim to national or state party status **only on the basis of its performance in state or central elections after registration.**

What is the Representation of People Act 1951?

- It regulates the **actual conduct of elections and by-elections.**
- It provides **administrative machinery** for conducting elections.
- It deals with the **registration of political parties.**
- It specifies the **qualifications and disqualifications for membership** of the Houses.
- It provides **provisions to curb corrupt practices** and other offences.
- It lays down the **procedure for settling doubts and disputes arising out of elections.**
- **Provisions Related to Political Parties:**
- Every association or body in order to become a political party **must be registered with the ECI** whose decision regarding registration will be final.
- Registered political parties, in course of time, **can get recognition as 'State Party' or National Party'.**

#PRADHAN MANTRI AWAS YOJANA (GRAMIN)

Recently, the Union Ministry of Rural Development has come up with penalties for any further delay in completing the flagship rural household scheme — **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin).**

Why is the Need for Imposing Penalties?

- The penalty would be levied on the state government. If the sanction of the house is delayed for more than one month from the date of issue of the target, **the State government will be penalised Rs 10 per house** for the first month of delay and Rs 20 per house for each subsequent month of delay.
- Similarly, if the first instalment due to the beneficiary is **delayed for more than seven days** from the date of sanction, then the State governments will have to pay **Rs 10 per house per week of delay.**
- No penalty would be imposed if the central funds are not available with the State.

What do we know about Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna Gramin?

- **Ministry Involved:** Ministry of Rural development.
- **Aim:** To **provide a pucca house with basic amenities to all rural families**, who are homeless or living in kutcha or dilapidated houses **by the end of March 2022.**
- To **help rural people Below the Poverty Line (BPL) in construction of dwelling units** and upgradation of existing unserviceable kutcha houses by providing assistance in the form of a full grant.
- **Beneficiaries:** People belonging to SCs/STs, freed bonded labourers and non-SC/ST categories, widows or next-of-kin of defence personnel killed in action, ex-servicemen and retired members of the paramilitary forces, disabled persons and minorities.
- **Selection of Beneficiaries:** Through a three-stage validation - **Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011, Gram Sabha, and geo-tagging.**
- **Cost Sharing:** The cost of unit assistance is shared between Central and State Governments in the ratio of **60:40 in plain areas and 90:10 for North Eastern and hilly states.**
- **Features:** The unit assistance has been increased from Rs. 70,000 to Rs. 1.20 lakh in plain and from Rs. 75,000 to Rs. 1.30 lakh in hilly states. The assistance for construction of toilets shall be leveraged through

convergence with **Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G)**, **MGNREGS** or any other dedicated source of funding.
- **Performance:** Under the scheme, the government has set the target of 2.95 crore houses and by August 2022, 2.02 crore houses have been constructed.

#TRIBES INCLUSION IN ST CATEGORY

- Recently, government has approved the inclusion of certain communities in the lists of Scheduled Tribes in Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, fulfilling long-pending demands from these states.

What is the Process of Inclusion in the ST List?

- The process to include tribes in the ST list begins with the **recommendation from the respective State governments,** which are then sent to the Tribal Affairs Ministry, which reviews and sends them to the Registrar General of India for approval.
- This is followed by the **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes'** approval before the list is sent to the Cabinet for a final decision.

What do we know about the Newly Added Tribe?

Hatti Tribe (Himachal Pradesh):

- The Hattis are a **close-knit community** who got their name from their tradition of selling homegrown vegetables, crops, meat and wool etc. at small markets called 'haat' in towns.
- The community has been **making the demand since 1967,** when tribal status was accorded to people living in the Jaunsar Bawar area of **Uttarakhand**, which shares a border with Sirmaur district.
- Their demand for **tribal status gained strength because of resolutions** passed at various maha Khumblis over the years.

Narikoravan and Kurivikkaran (Tamil Nadu):

- Nomadic tribes like the Narikuravas and Kuruvikaras (jackal catchers and bird eaters) pride themselves on their traditional occupations of hunting and gathering.
- **Binjhia (Chhattisgarh):**
- The Binjhia in Chhattisgarh were listed as ST in Jharkhand and Odisha but not in Chhattisgarh.
- The Binjhia are **non-vegetarians and agriculture is the mainstay** of their economy. They do not eat beef and pork but consume alcoholic drinks including the handia (rice beer).

Gond Community (Uttar Pradesh):

- The **Cabinet approved a proposal to bring the <u>Gond community</u> residing in 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh, under the ST list** from the Scheduled Caste list.
- This includes the **five subcategories of the Gond community** (Dhuria, Nayak, Ojha, Pathari, and Rajgond).

'Betta-Kuruba' (Karnataka):

- The ST status granted to the Betta-Kuruba community as a synonym of Kadu Kuruba of Karnataka.
- Betta-Kuruba community has been demanding to include in the ST category for the last 30 years.

What is the Status of Scheduled Tribes in India?

- As per Census-1931, Schedule tribes are termed as "backward tribes" living in the "Excluded" and

"Partially Excluded" areas. The Government of India Act of 1935 called for the first time for representatives of "backward tribes" in provincial assemblies.

- The Constitution does not define the criteria for recognition of Scheduled Tribes and hence the definition contained in 1931 Census was used in the initial years after independence.
- However, Article 366(25) of the Constitution only provides process to define Scheduled Tribes: "Scheduled Tribes means such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this Constitution."
- **342(1):** The President may with respect to any State or Union Territory, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor, by a public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within tribes or tribal communities as Scheduled Tribe in relation to that State or Union Territory.
- The **Fifth Schedule of the Constitution lays out provision for Administration** and Control of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in states other than Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
- The **Sixth Schedule deals with the administration** of the tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

Legal Provisions:

- Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 against Untouchability.
- **Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.**
- **Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996.**
- **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.**

Related Initiatives:

- **TRIFED**
- **Digital Transformation of Tribal Schools**
- **Development of PVTGs**
- **Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana**

Related Committees:

- **Xaxa Committee (2013)**
- Bhuria Commission (2002-2004)
- Lokur Committee (1965)

#NATIONAL TECHNICAL TEXTILES MISSION

The **Ministry of Textiles** recently cleared 23 strategic research projects worth around Rs 60 crores in **Specialty fibres, Sustainable Textiles, Geotextiles, Mobiltech and Sports textiles** under the **National Technical Textiles Mission.**

What are Technical Textiles?

- Technical textiles **are functional fabrics** that have applications across various industries including automobiles, civil engineering and construction, agriculture, healthcare, industrial safety, personal protection etc.
- Technical Textile products derive their demand from the development and industrialization in a country.
- Based on usage, there are 12 technical textile segments**:** Agrotech, Meditech, Buildtech, Mobiltech, Clothtech, Oekotech, Geotech, Packtech, Hometech, Protech, Indutech and Sportech.
- **For example,** 'mobiltech' refers to products in vehicles such as seat belts and airbags, airplane seats; geotech, which is incidentally the fastest growing sub-segment, used to hold back soil, etc.

What do we know about the National Technical Textiles Mission (NTTM)?

- It was **approved in 2020 by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** with total outlay of Rs.1480 Crore.
- The implementation period is four years, from FY 2020-21 to FY 2023-24.
- **Aim:** The aim of the mission is to position **India as a global leader in Technical Textiles** by taking the domestic market size from USD 40 billion to USD 50 billion by 2024. It also supports the '**Make in India**' Initiative promoting domestic manufacturing of related machinery and equipment.

Scenario of Textile sector:

- The growth of technical textiles in India has **gained momentum in the past five years,** currently growing at an **8% per annum rate.**
- It aims **to hasten this growth to the 15-20% range** during the next five years.
- Indian Technical Textiles segment is estimated at USD 16 Billion which is approximately 6% of the 250 billion USD global technical textiles market.
- The **biggest players are the USA,** Western Europe, China and Japan (20-40% share).

What are the Other Initiatives Related to Technical Textile?

- **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Textiles Sector:** It aims to promote the production of high-value Man-Made Fiber (MMF) fabrics, garments and technical textiles.
- **Harmonized System of Nomenclature (HSN) Codes for Technical Textile:** In 2019, the Government of India dedicated 207 HSN codes to technical textiles to help in monitoring the data of import and export, in providing financial support and other incentives to manufacturers.
- **100% FDI under Automatic Route:** The Government of India allows 100% **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** under the automatic route. International technical textile manufacturers such as Ahlstrom, Johnson & Johnson etc have already initiated operations in India.
- **Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme:** To improve exports and indirectly promote investments in textile machinery.

#WHAT IS PM PRANAM SCHEME?

To reduce the use of chemical fertilisers the Government is Planning to Launch the **PM PRANAM (Promotion of Alternate Nutrients for Agriculture Management Yojana)** Scheme.

What do we Know About PRANAM Scheme?

- **Objectives:** To encourage the balanced use of fertilisers in conjunction with biofertilisers and organic fertilisers.
- **Aim:** To bring down the subsidy burden on chemical fertilisers, which is estimated to reach Rs 2.25 lakh crore in 2022-23 — 39% higher than 2021 figure of Rs 1.62 lakh crore.

Features of the Proposed Scheme:

- The scheme will have no separate budget and will be financed through the "savings of existing fertiliser subsidy" under schemes run by the Department of Fertilizers.
- 50% of subsidy savings will be passed on as a grant to the state that saves the money.
- 70% of the grant provided under the scheme can be used for asset creation related to the **technological adoption of alternate fertilisers** and alternate fertiliser production units at the village, block and district levels. The calculation of reducing chemical fertiliser use of urea in a year will be **compared to the average consumption of urea during the last three years.**
- For this purpose, data available on a Fertilizer Ministry dashboard, IFMS (Integrated Fertilizers Management System) **will be used.**

What is the Present Status of Fertilizer Usage in India?

- The expenditure on fertiliser subsidy was 1.62 lakh crore in 2020-21 and could cross Rs 2.25 lakh crore during 2022.
- The total requirement of four fertilisers — **Urea, DAP (Di-ammonium Phosphate), MOP (Muriate of potash), NPKS (Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium)** — in the country **increased by 21%** to 640.27 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) in 2021-22 from 528.86 lakh metric tonnes in 2017-18.
- **The maximum increase** — 25.44% — has been recorded in the **requirement of DAP.** It went up from 98.77 LMT in 2017-18 to 123.9 LMT in 2021-22.
- **Urea, the most used chemical fertiliser in the country**, recorded an increase of 19.64 per cent — from 298 LMT in 2017-18 to 356.53 in 2021-22 — in the last five years.

What are the Other Related Initiatives taken by the government?

- **Direct Benefit Transfer:** The Centre introduced a Direct Benefit Transfer system **in fertilizers** with effect from October 2016 under which a **100% subsidy on various fertiliser grades is released to the fertiliser companies on the basis of actual sales** made by the retailers to the beneficiaries.
- **Incorporation of new Nutrients**: The government had incorporated new nutrients like **Nano urea** and **"bio-stimulants"** in the Fertilizer Control Order-1985 (FCO).
- **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.

- **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.
- **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.

#NATIONAL LOGISTICS POLICY 2022

Recently, the Government has launched a **National Logistics Policy (NLP)** 2022, aiming to achieve 'quick **last-mile delivery', end transport-related challenges.**

What is Logistics?

- Logistics encompasses **planning, coordinating, storing, and moving resources** —people, raw materials, inventory, equipment, etc., from **one location to another,** from the production points to consumption, distribution, or other production points. The term "logistics" describes the **total process of controlling the acquisition, storage, and delivery of resources** to their intended location.
- It **entails locating potential distributors and suppliers and evaluating the viability** and accessibility of such parties.

What is NLP 2022?

- The policy focuses on key areas such as **process re-engineering, digitisation, and multi-modal transport.**
- It is a crucial move as **high logistics cost impacts the competitiveness** of domestic goods in the international market.
- The need for a national logistics policy was felt **since the logistics cost in India is high as compared to other developed economies.**

Goals:

- **Logistics costs have to be cut by half to be near global benchmarks by 2030** by reducing the cost of logistics from 14-18% of GDP to global best practices of 8%.
- Countries like the US, South Korea, Singapore, and certain European nations have such **a low logistics cost-to-GDP ratio.**
- The current cost is 16% of GDP.
- Being the 5th largest economy in the world, India aims to be **among the top 10 in the LPI (Logistics Performance Index) by 2030**. It has to match the pace of South Korea.
- In 2018, India was ranked 44th in the LPI.
- Creating data-driven Decision Support Systems (DSS) to **enable an efficient logistics ecosystem.**
- The policy's target is to **ensure that logistical issues are minimised**, exports grow manifold, and small industries and the **people working in them benefit significantly.**

What are the Initiatives Related to Logistics?

- **Multimodal Transportation of Goods Act, 1993**.
- **PM Gati Shakti Scheme**
- **Multi Modal Logistics Parks**
- **LEADS Report**
- **Dedicated Freight Corridor**
- **Sagarmala Projects**
- **Bharatmala Project**

#SELF RELIANCE IN THE ENERGY SECTOR

The Government of India has been undertaking various initiatives to attract more **E&P (Exploration & Production) investment** to increase self-reliance in the energy sector.

What is the Background?

- India's Energy sector is one of the **most diversified in the world.**
- Sources of power generation range from conventional sources such as coal, lignite, natural gas, oil, hydro and nuclear power, to viable non-conventional sources such as wind, solar, agricultural and domestic waste.
- India was **ranked fourth in wind power, fifth in solar power and fourth in renewable power** installed capacity, as of 2020.
- Near-universal household access to electricity was achieved in 2019, meaning that over 900 million citizens have gained an electrical connection in less than two decades.
- But, the per capita electricity consumption in India is **only one-third of the global average,** even though the demand for energy has doubled. So, to catch up with the increasing demand for energy, there is a need to make arrangements for a secure and **sustainable form of self-reliance in the energy sector.**

What is the need of becoming Self-Reliant in the Energy Sector?

- India is **not energy independent**. It spends over Rs **12 lakh crore on importing energy.**
- The government is planning to get energy independence before 100 years of independence is completed i.e., by 2047.
- As green power takes precedence in the global scheme of things, the Indian government has already **kick-started its green hydrogen journey.**
- For a nation, 85% dependent on imports for meeting its oil needs and 50 % for gas requirements, the **key is alternate energy sources** - from renewable power to hydrogen and switching to electric vehicles from current petrol and diesel-run automobiles.
- From solar energy to Mission Hydrogen to adoption to EVs, we need to take these initiatives to the next level for energy independence.
- India is the **world's fifth largest producer of ethanol** after the US, Brazil, EU and China. Ethanol worldwide is largely used for consumption but nations like Brazil and **India also dope it in petrol.**
- Self-reliance through green energy initiatives is the **foundation of a green and sustainable economy.** Green energy initiatives focus on clean energy and its availability to all individuals and businesses.

What are the Government's Achievements in the Energy Sector?

- The target of supplying petrol mixed with **10% ethanol** (10% ethanol, 90% petrol) was **achieved in June 2022,** ahead of the original schedule of November 2022.
- Encouraged by the success, the government **advanced the target of making petrol with 20% ethanol by five years to 2025.**
- As of March 2021, 2.82 crore households have been electrified under **Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana, "Saubhagya".**
- By June, 2022, over 36.86 crore LED bulbs, 72.18 lakh LED tube lights and 23.59 lakh energy-efficient fans have been distributed across the country, **saving around 48,411 million kWh per year and Rs. 19,332 crores in cost savings.**
- As of June 2022, over **44 lakh smart metres have been deployed under the** <u>National Smart Grid Mission (NSGM),</u> with a further 67 lakhs to be deployed.
- Solar tariffs in India have reduced from Rs. 7.36/kWh (US 10 cents/kWh) in FY15 to Rs. 2.45/kWh (US 3.2 cents/kWh) in July 2021.
- India's rank **jumped to 22 in 2019 from 137 in 2014 on World Bank's Ease of doing business - "Getting Electricity" ranking.**

What are the Initiatives to Achieve Self-reliance in the Energy Sector?

- **Gas Based Economy:**
- **Blending of Ethanol in Petrol**
- **Prime Minister Ujjwala Yojna**
- **Renewable Energy Initiatives**
- **National Hydrogen Mission**

#WHAT IS NAAC RATINGS?

Recently, there was a controversy related to the **National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) ratings** of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda as the institute's score changed from A to A+ on the back of improvement across parameters.

What do we Know about NAAC?

- It's an **autonomous body under the University Grants Commission (UGC)**, that **assesses and certifies Higher Education Institution's (HEIs)** with gradings as part of accreditation.
- Through a **multi-layered process**, a higher education institution learns whether it meets the standards of quality set by the evaluator in terms of curriculum, faculty, infrastructure, research, and other parameters.
- The ratings of institutions **range from A++ to C.** If an institution is graded D, it means it is not accredited.

Mission:

- To arrange for periodic assessment and accreditation of institutions of higher education or units thereof, or specific academic programmes or projects;
- To **stimulate the academic environment** for promotion of quality of teaching-learning and research in higher education institutions;
- To encourage self-evaluation, accountability, autonomy and innovations in higher education;
- To undertake quality-related research studies, consultancy and training programmes,and
- To collaborate with other stakeholders of higher education for quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance.

What is the Status of Accredited Institutions in India?

- There are 1,043 universities and 42,343 colleges listed on the portal of the All-India Survey on Higher Education.
- Around 406 universities and 8,686 colleges are NAAC-accredited.
- Among the states,**Maharashtra accounts for the highest number of accredited colleges at 1,869** followed by Karnataka's 914, the second highest.
- Tamil Nadu has the most **accredited universities** at 43.

Which Educational Institutes Can Apply for Accreditation?

- Only higher education **institutions that are at least six years old**, or from where **at least two batches of students have graduated,** can apply.
- The accreditation is **valid for five years.**
- Further, Aspiring institutes need to be recognised by the UGC and have regular students enrolled in their full-time teaching and research programmes.

What is the Present Status of India's Higher education Sector?

- India's higher education system is the **world's third-largest in terms of students,** next to China and the United States. India's Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since independence.
- In the prestigious **Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2023,** only three Indian Universities- IIT-Bombay, IIT-Delhi and IISc (Bangalore)- have been included in the top 200 institutes.

What are the Recent Initiatives taken by the Government in Higher Education?

- **Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion Programme (EQUIP):** This is a five-year vision plan to improve the quality and accessibility of higher education over the next five years (2019-2024).

- **UGC's Learning Outcome-based Curriculum Framework (LOCF):** LOCF guidelines, issued by UGC in 2018, aims to specify what graduates are expected to know, understand and be able to do at the end of their programme of study. This is to make student active learner and teacher a good facilitator.
- **Graded Autonomy to Universities & Colleges:** Three-tiered graded autonomy regulatory system has been initiated, with the categorization based on accreditation scores. Category I and Category II universities will have significant autonomy to conduct examinations, prescribe evaluation systems and even announce results
- Global Initiative for Academics Network (GIAN): The programme seeks to invite distinguished academicians, entrepreneurs, scientists, experts from premier institutions from across the world, to teach in the higher educational institutions in India.
- **All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE):** The main objectives of the survey are to- identify & capture all the institutions of higher learning in the country; and collect the data from all the higher education institutions on various aspects of higher education.
- **National Education Policy 2020.**

#CONVERGENCE PORTAL OF THE MoFPI

Recently, the **Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)** has launched the **Convergence Portal** between the **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF)** scheme, **Pradhan Mantri Micro Food Enterprises Upgradation Scheme (PMFME)** and **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY).**
A **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** was also issued with the objective of providing maximum benefits to the beneficiaries under AIF, PMFME and PMKSY.

What is the Convergence Module?

- The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) along with Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, jointly launched a Convergence Portal to **better reap the benefits of the Agriculture and Food Processing Sector.**
- It is launched on the idea that all Ministries and Departments of the Government should work **together in cohesion** to serve the people of the country to the best of their abilities.
- The portal will prove to be very important for the **Food Processing Enterprises of the country,** benefiting different sections of the country, including farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs of the processing industry.
- It is a stepping stone to achieve the Prime Minister's dream of an **Aatma Nirbhar Bharat** and will also boost the concept of **'Vocal For Local'.**

What is Pradhan Mantri Micro Food Industry Upgradation Scheme?

- It was launched by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries in June, 2020 under the **Atma Nirbhar Bharat Campaign** to enhance the **competitiveness of individual micro enterprises.**
- It provides financial, technical and commercial assistance for **the upgradation of micro food processing enterprises** in the country.
- 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 AIF?

- **Agriculture Infra Fund (AIF)** is a financing facility launched in July 2020 for creation of **post-harvest management infrastructure** and community farm assets, with benefits including **3% interest subvention and credit guarantee support.**
- Under this, Rs 1 lakh crore from 2020-21 to 2025-26 provision of funds has been made and interest subvention and credit guarantee assistance will be given till the year 2032-33.
- AIF scheme has the **facility of convergence with any other scheme of State or Central Government**,

therefore in order to optimize the benefits of multiple government schemes for a particular project, these are being integrated with multiple external systems/portals.

What is Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sampada Yojna?

- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana, a **Central Sector Scheme** of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, is envisaged as a **comprehensive package**, **which will result in creation of modern infrastructure** with efficient **supply chain management** from farm gate to retail outlet.

Seven component schemes under PMKSY:

- Mega Food Parks.
- Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure.
- Infrastructure for Agro-Processing Clusters.
- Creation of Backward and Forward Linkages.
- Creation/Expansion of Food Processing & Preservation Capacities.
- Food Safety and Quality Assurance Infrastructure.
- Human Resources and Institutions.

What are Other Related Initiatives?

- **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).**
- **Minimum Support Prices (MSP).**
- **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).**
- **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).**
- **Codex Alimentarius Commission**
- **Draft Food Safety and Standards (Labelling And Display) Regulation.**

#DRAFT INDIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS BILL, 2022

Recently, the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** released the **draft Indian Telecommunications 2022 Bill** to regulate Internet-based **OTT (Over-The-Top)** telecom services.

What are the Key Highlights of the Draft Bill?

- The draft Bill consolidates **three separate acts** which currently govern the telecommunication sector — **the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933**, and **The Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Protection) Act, 1950.**

INDIAN TELECOMMUNICATION BILL 2022

Draft Released by Department of Telecommunications

Comments are invited. Last date of sending the comments will be 20th October 2022

- **Dilution of TRAI Power:** The DoT has also proposed to dilute some crucial powers and responsibilities of the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** on issuing new licences to service providers.

OTT Regulation:

- The government has included internet-based and **OTT communication services** such as WhatsApp calls, Facetime, Google Meet etc under telecom services.
- It was the long-standing demand by telecom operators for creating a level playing field. At present, while **telecom companies need a licence to offer services, OTT platforms do not.** Further, bringing OTTs under the ambit of telecom services means that OTT and **internet-based communications would require a licence to offer services.**
- **Provision of Refund:** The telecom ministry has proposed a provision for refund of fees in case a telecom or internet provider surrenders his license.

What is the Present status of the Telecom Industry in India?

- The Telecom industry in India is the **second largest in the world** with a subscriber base of 1.17 billion as of 2022. India has an **overall teledensity of 85.11%.**
- The industry's exponential growth over the last few years is primarily driven by affordable tariffs, wider availability, the roll-out of **Mobile Number Portability (MNP), expanding 3G and 4G coverage,** and evolving consumption patterns of subscribers.
- The Telecom sector is the **3rd largest sector in terms of FDI inflows, contributing 6.44% of total FDI inflow,** and contributes directly to 2.2 million employment and indirectly to 1.8 million jobs.
- Between 2014 and 2021, the **FDI inflows in the Telecom sector rose by 150%** to USD 20.72 billion from USD 8.32 billion during 2002-2014.
- 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has now been allowed in the Telecom sector under the automatic route.
- India is on its way to becoming the **second-largest smartphone market globally by 2025 with around 1 billion installed devices** and is expected to have 920 million unique mobile subscribers by 2025 which will include 88 million 5G connections.

Initiatives:

- **PLI Schemes under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan: Production Linked Incentive (PLI)** Scheme worth INR 12,195 Crores for manufacturing of telecom and networking products. Incentives worth more than INR 4,000 Crores have been earmarked for the Design Led Manufacturing Scheme of the existing PLI Scheme.

- **Telecom Sector Reforms:** In 2021, large-scale structural and procedural reforms have been brought in to enhance liquidity and minimise financial stress within the telecom sector.

- **Bharat Net Project: Bharat Net Project** Optical fibre cables laid to 178,247-gram panchayats, out of which 161,870 are service ready. Additionally, 4,218-gram panchayats have been connected over satellite media, taking the total number of service-ready gram panchayats to 166,088.

- **Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI):** Provision of **public Wi-Fi service through Public Data Offices (PDOs)** spread across the country to accelerate the expansion of broadband internet services.

#ALIVA TO ERADICATE CHILD MARRIAGE

Recently, **Nayagarh, a district in Odisha,** has adopted a **unique initiative- Aliva to eradicate <u>child marriage.</u>**

As per Odisha's child marriage prevention strategy, the State aims to **eradicate child marriage by 2030.**

What are the Key Highlights of the Initiative?

- The programme was **launched in January, 2022.**
- **Anganwadi workers** had been asked to **identify every adolescent girl in their jurisdiction** and keep tabs on them.
- **Details about adolescent girls-** birth registration date, Aadhaar, family details, skill training, etc., are **recorded in registers named – Aliva** available in the Aanganwadi centres of the district.
- The age of the girl is approved by the local school head master, father, supervisor and Child Marriage Prohibition Officer (CMPO).
- As of now, the district has **registered information of 48,642 adolescent girls in the Aliva registers.**
- When tipped off about child marriages, **district administration and the police refer to registers for ascertaining proof of girls' age.**
- The district has **decided to maintain the record for a period of 10 years-2020 to 2030.**

What is the Current Status of Child Marriages in India?

- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates suggest that **each year, at least 1.5 million girls under 18 get married in India,** which makes it home to the largest number of child brides in the world - accounting for a third of the global total.
- According to **NFHS-5**, **23.3% women surveyed got married before attaining the legal age of 18 years**, down from 26.8% reported in NFHS-4. The figure for underage marriage among men is 17.7% (NFHS-5) and 20.3% (NFHS-4).
- **West Bengal and Bihar,** with around 41% such women each, had the **highest prevalence of girl child marriage.**
- Underage marriages are **lowest in J&K, Lakshadweep, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, Nagaland, Kerala, Puducherry** and **Tamil Nadu,** according to NHFS-5.
- The share of **women aged 20-24 who married before turning 18 has declined from 27% to 23%** in the last five years.
- **The maximum reduction** in the proportion of underage marriages was observed in **Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Haryana.**

What are the Government Laws and Initiatives to Prevent Child Marriage?

Minimum Age for Marriage:

- For Hindus, **The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, sets 18 years as the minimum age of marriage for the bride** and **21 years as the minimum age for the groom.**
- **In Islam**, the marriage of a minor **who has attained puberty is considered valid**.
- The **Special Marriage Act, 1954** also prescribes **18 and 21 years as the minimum age of consent** for marriage for **women and men respectively.**
- **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006** replaced the **Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929** which was enacted during the British era.
- It defines a **child to mean a male below 21 years** and **female below 18 years.**
- **"Minor"** is defined as a person **who has not attained the age of majority as per the Majority Act.**
- The **legal status of Child Marriage is voidable if so desired** by one of the parties.
- However, **if the consent is obtained by fraud**, deceit or if the child is enticed away from his/her lawful guardians, and if the sole purpose is to use the child for trafficking or other immoral purposes, **marriage**

would be void.
- There is also a **provision for maintenance of girl child. Husband is liable to pay** maintenance if **he is a major.**
- In case, the **husband is also a minor, his parents would be liable to pay maintenance.**
- It envisages preventing child marriage with punishments of **rigorous imprisonment for two years and/ or fine of Rs. 1 lakh.**
- The Act also provides for the **appointment of CPMO whose duties are to prevent child marriages and spread awareness** regarding the same.

India's Efforts for Reducing Gender Gap:

- India had ratified the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1993.**
- **Article 16** of this Convention strictly **forbids child marriage** and asks governments to identify and enforce the minimum marriage age for women.
- Since 1998, India has had **national legislation exclusively on human rights protections** drafted in consonance with international instruments such as the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.**

#WHAT IS POSHAN MAAH?

Recently, under various interventions of the Ministry of Women and Child Development jointly (MWCD) with Ministry of Ayush, close to 4.37 lakh Anganwadi Centres have set up **Poshan Vatikas.**
Under ongoing **Poshan Maah 2022**, activities for setting-up Poshan Vatikas with backyard poultry / fishery units is being carried out in a big way across the country.
Additionally, so far, 1.10 lakh medicinal saplings have also been planted across some of the selected districts of 6 States.

What do we know about Poshan Maah?

- The Poshan Maah is being **celebrated during the month of September every year** under **POSHAN Abhiyaan.**
- It includes a month-long activity focused on antenatal care, optimal breastfeeding, Anemia, growth monitoring, girls' education, diet, right age of marriage, hygiene and sanitation and eating healthy (Food Fortification).
- The activities focus on **Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) and are based on Jan Andolan Guidelines.**
- SBCC is the strategic use of communication approaches to promote changes in knowledge, attitudes, norms, beliefs and behaviours.

What do we know about Poshan Vatika?

- **About:** Poshan Vatika means that **small piece of land where the people of the house grow vegetables** to make sure that all in the family specially children and women should not become victim of mal-nutrition.

Objective:

- Its **main objective is to ensure supply of nutrition through organically home-grown vegetables and fruits** simultaneously ensuring that the soil must also remain healthy.

- **Implementation:** Plantation drives for Poshan Vatikas would be taken up by all the stakeholders in the space available at anganwadis, school premises and gram panchayats.

What do we know about Poshan Abhiyan?

- **About POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission)** was launched by the government on March 8, 2018.

Aim:

- The Abhiyaan targets to **reduce stunting, undernutrition, anemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls)** and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively.
- The target of the mission is to bring down stunting among children in the age group 0-6 years from 38.4% to 25% by 2022.
- POSHAN Abhiyaan aims to **ensure service delivery and interventions by use of technology, behavioural change** through convergence and lays-down specific targets to be achieved across different monitoring parameters.
- Under the Abhiyaan, **Swasth Bharat Preraks will be deployed one in each district for coordinating with district officials** and enabling fast and efficient execution of the Abhiyaan across the country. Swasth Bharat Preraks would function as catalyst for fast tracking the implementation of the Abhiyaan.

POSHAN 2.0:

- The government has amalgamated various programmes with similar objectives such as **Supplementary Nutrition Programme** and POSHAN Abhiyaan under one umbrella–Mission POSHAN 2.0—for **creating synergies in operations and adopting an integrated approach** in the nutrition services mechanism.

What are the other Related Initiatives?

- **Anemia Mukt Bharat Abhiyan.**
- **The National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.**
- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY).**
- **PM-POSHAN Scheme.**

#OPERATION MEGHA CHAKRA

The operation code-named **"Megh Chakra" is being carried out following the inputs received from Interpol's Singapore special unit based** on the information received from the authorities in New Zealand.
It is a **pan-India drive against the circulation and sharing of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM)** conducted by the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).**

What are the Key Highlights of the Megh Chakra Operation?

- Searches at 59 locations across 20 States and one Union Territory were conducted. It has been alleged that a **large number of Indian nationals were involved in the online circulation,** downloading and transmission of the CSAM using cloud-based storage.
- The operation is sought to **collate information from various law enforcement agencies in India,** engage with the relevant law enforcement agencies globally and coordinate closely through the Interpol channels on the issue.
- The probe had led to the **identification of over 50 groups with more than 5,000 offenders, including the nationals of about 100 countries.**
- A similar exercise code named **"Operation Carbon" was conducted by CBI in November 2021.**

What is Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012?

- It was **enacted to protect the children from offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography** with due regard for safeguarding the interest and well-being of children.
- It **defines** a child as **any person below eighteen years of age** and regards the best interests and welfare of the child as a matter of paramount importance at every stage, to ensure the healthy physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of the child.
- It **defines different forms of sexual abuse**, including penetrative and non-penetrative assault, as well as sexual harassment and pornography.
- It deems a **sexual assault to be "aggravated" under certain circumstances,** such as when the abused child is mentally ill or when the abuse is committed by a person in a position of trust or authority like a family member, police officer, teacher, or doctor.
- It also **casts the police in the role of child protectors** during the investigative process.
- The Act stipulates that a **case of child sexual abuse must be disposed of within one year** from the date the offence is reported.
- It was **amended in August 2019** to provide **more stringent punishment,** including the death penalty, for sexual crimes against children.

What are the Related Constitutional Provisions?

- The Constitution guarantees to every **child the right to live with dignity (Article 21), the right to personal liberty (Article 21), the right to privacy (Article 21), the right to equality (Article 14)** and/or the **right against discrimination (Article 15),** the **right against exploitation (Article 23 & 24).**
- **Right to free and compulsory elementary education** for all children in the 6–14-year age group **(Article 21 A).**
- **The Directive Principles of State Policy**, and in particular **Article 39(f),** cast an **obligation on the State to ensure that children are given opportunities and facilities** to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

What are the Related Initiatives?

- **Child Abuse Prevention and Investigation Unit**
- **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao**

- **Juvenile Justice Act/Care and Protection Act, 2000**
- **Child Marriage Prohibition Act (2006)**
- **Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 2016**

#MAKE IN INDIA COMPLETED 8 YEARS

Make in India completes eight years of path-breaking reforms and annual FDI doubles to USD 83 billion in 2022.

What do we know about the Make in-India Programme?

- **Launched in 2014,** Make in India aims to **transform the country into a leading global manufacturing and investment destination.**
- The initiative is an open invitation to potential investors and partners across the globe to participate in the growth story of 'New India'. Make In India has substantial accomplishments across 27 sectors. These include strategic sectors of manufacturing and services as well.
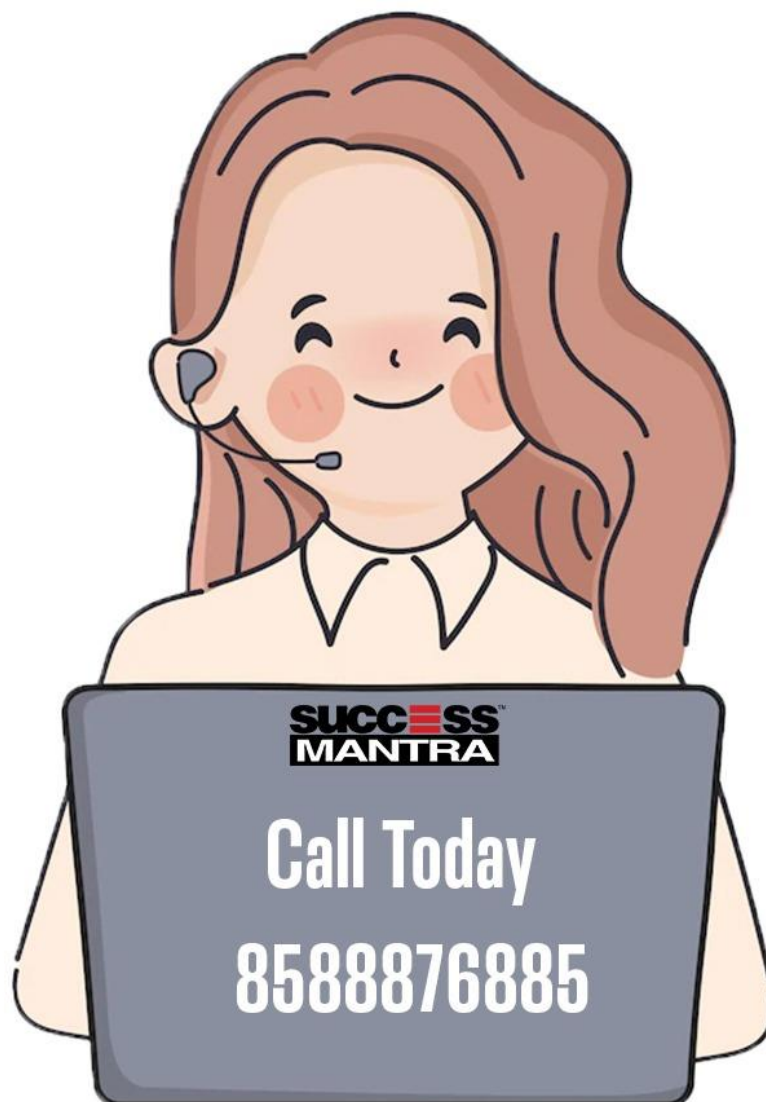
What are the Initiatives to Support Make in India Scheme?

- **National Single Window System (NSWS):** The **National Single Window System (NSWS) has been soft-launched in September 2021 to improve the ease of doing business** by providing a single digital platform to investors for approvals and clearances.

- **Gati Shakti:** The Government has also launched a programme for multimodal connectivity to manufacturing zones in the country**,** called the **Prime Minister's Gatishakti programme**, which will **ensure logistical efficiency in business operations through the creation of infrastructure that improves connectivity.**

- **One-District-One-Product (ODOP):** This initiative aims at facilitating the **promotion and production of indigenous products from each district** of the country and providing a global platform to the artisans and manufacturers of **handloom, textiles, agricultural and processed products, thereby further contributing to the socio-economic growth of various regions of the country.**

- **Improving toy exports and reducing Imports:** To **address the import of low-quality and hazardous toys and to enhance domestic manufacturing of toys,** several strategic interventions such as increase of **Basic Custom Duty from 20% to 60%**, implementation of Quality Control Order, mandatory sample testing of imported toys, granting more than 850 BIS licenses to domestic toy manufacturers, development of toy clusters etc. have been taken by the government.

- **Scheme for building Semiconductor Ecosystem:** Recognising the importance of semiconductors in the world economy, the Government has launched a USD 10 billion incentive scheme to build a semiconductor, display, and design ecosystem in India.

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