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Monthly Compendium (NATIONAL AFFAIRS)

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

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

#MID DAY MEAL SCHEME (PM POSHAN SCHEME)

Recently, the Ministry of Finance has approved a hike of 9.6 % **cooking cost per child under the Mid-Day Meal Scheme**.

Since the last hike in early 2020, the cooking cost per child has been Rs 4.97 per child per day in primary classes (class I-V), and Rs 7.45 (class VI-VIII) in upper primary classes. After the hikes come into effect, the allocation at the primary level and upper primary levels will be Rs 5.45 and Rs 8.17, respectively.



What is the Midday Meal Scheme?

- The Midday meal scheme (under the Ministry of Education) is a **centrally sponsored scheme** which was launched in 1995.
- It is the world's largest school meal programme aimed to attain the goal of universalization of primary education.
- Provides cooked meals to every child within the age group of six to fourteen years studying in classes I to VIII who enrolls and attends the school.
- In 2021, it was renamed as '**Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman**' scheme (**PM Poshan Scheme**) and it also covers students of balvatikas (children in the 3–5-year age group) from pre-primary classes.
- **Objective:** Address hunger and **malnutrition**, increase enrolment and attendance in school, improve socialisation among castes, and provide employment at grassroot level especially to women.
- **Quality Check:** **AGMARK** quality items are procured, tasting of meals by two or three adult members of the school management committee.
- **Food Security:** If the Mid-Day Meal is not provided in school on any school day due to non-availability of food grains or any other reason, the State Government shall pay food security allowance by 15th of the succeeding month.
- The State Steering-cum Monitoring Committee (SSMC) oversees the implementation of the scheme including establishment of a mechanism for maintenance of nutritional standards and quality of meals.

Coverage:

- All government and government aided schools, Madarsa and Maqtabs supported under the **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**.
- The scheme covers **11.80 crore children across Classes 1 to 8** (age group 6 to 14) in 11.20 lakh government and government-aided schools and those run by local bodies such as the municipal

corporations in Delhi under the provisions of the **National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA)**.

- In the **Budget for 2022-23**, the Centre has earmarked **Rs 10,233 crore for the scheme**, while the states are expected to spend Rs 6,277 crore.

#COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC & INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH

Recently, **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** celebrated its **81st Foundation Day**.

What is CSIR?

- **CSIR** is the largest **research and development (R&D)** organisation in India. **CSIR has a pan-India presence** and has a dynamic network of 37 national laboratories, 39 outreach centres, 3 Innovation Complexes and 5 units.
- **Established:** September 1942
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **CSIR** is funded by the Ministry of Science and Technology and it operates as an autonomous body **through the Societies Registration Act, 1860**. CSIR covers a wide spectrum of streams – from radio and space physics, oceanography, geophysics, chemicals, drugs, genomics, biotechnology and nanotechnology to mining, aeronautics, instrumentation, environmental engineering and information technology.
- It provides significant **technological intervention** in many areas with regard to **societal efforts** which include the **environment**, health, drinking water, food, housing, energy, and farm and non-farm sectors.

Organisational Structure:

- **President:** Prime Minister of India (Ex-officio)
- **Vice President:** Union Minister of Science and Technology (Ex-officio)
- **Governing Body:** The Director-General is the head of the governing body.
- The other ex-officio member is the finance secretary (expenditures).
- Other members' terms are of **three years**.
- **CSIR Advisory Board:** 15-member body composed of prominent members from respective fields of science and technology. Its function is to provide science and technology input to the governing body.
- Member **terms are of three years**.

Objectives:

- The objectives of the Council are **scientific and industrial/applied research of national importance**. **The activities include:**
- **Promotion, guidance and coordination of scientific and industrial research** in India including the institution and the financing of specific researchers.
- Establishment and award of **research studentships and fellowships**.
- **Utilization of the results of the research conducted** under the auspices of the Council towards the development of industries in the country.
- **Establishment, maintenance and management of laboratories**, workshops, institutes and organisations to further scientific and industrial research.
- **Collection and dissemination of information** in regard not only to research but to industrial matters generally.
- **Publication of scientific papers and a journal** of industrial research and development.

#NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Recently, the Union Education ministry launched the National Curriculum Framework for foundational stage education of children in the three to eight years age group.



What is the National Curriculum Framework?

- The NCF has four sections:
 - the National Curriculum Framework for School Education
 - the National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education
 - the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education
 - National Curriculum Framework for Adult Education
- The framework focuses on the '**panchakosha**' concept - the ancient Indian emphasis on the body-mind connection.
- The NCF says its **five parts are physical development** (sharirik vikas), development of life energy (pranik vikas), emotional and mental development (manasik vikas), intellectual development (bauddhik vikas) and spiritual development (chaitisik vikas).
- It is an important step taken to implement the **New Education Policy-2020**.

What is NEP, 2020?

- The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is transforming education in India.
- It has set the **education system on a path to delivering the highest quality education** for all, with equity and inclusion.
- Amongst the most transformative aspects of NEP 2020 is the **new 5+3+3+4 curricular structure** which integrates Early Childhood Care and Education for all children of ages 3 to 8.
- **Early childhood lays the foundation for life-long learning** and development - it is a key determinant of the quality of overall life.

What are the Constitutional Provisions and Laws related to Education in India?

Constitutional Provisions:

- Part IV of Indian Constitution, **Article 45 and Article 39 (f) of Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)**, has a provision for state-funded as well as equitable and accessible education.
- The **42nd Amendment to the Constitution in 1976** moved education from the State to the Concurrent List.
- The education policies by the Central government provide a broad direction and state governments are expected to follow it. But it is not mandatory, for instance Tamil Nadu does not follow the three-language formula prescribed by the first education policy in 1968.
- The **86th Amendment in 2002** made education an enforceable right under Article 21-A.
- **Article 21A** of the Constitution makes it obligatory on the State to provide free and compulsory education to children between the age of 6 and 14 years.

Related Laws:

- **Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009** aims to provide primary education to all children aged 6 to 14 years and enforces education as a Fundamental Right.
- It also **mandates 25% reservation for disadvantaged sections** of the society.
- **Government Initiatives:** Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid Day Meal Scheme, Navodaya Vidyalayas (NVS schools), Kendriya Vidyalayas (KV schools) and use of IT in education are the result of the NEP of 1986.

#QUALITY COUNCIL OF INDIA

- Recently, the **Quality Council of India (QCI)** has completed the 25 years of its existence.
- The QCI has also launched a campaign, '**Gunvatta Se Atmanirbharta: India's Quality Movement**' to celebrate India's quality hubs, create awareness about India's landmark achievements and inform people about initiatives to enhance the quality of life of all citizens.



What is the Quality Council of India (QCI)?

History:

- Quality Council of India (QCI) was established as a National body for Accreditation in 1996.
- Accordingly, QCI was set up through a **PPP model** as an independent autonomous organization with the support of Government of India and the Indian Industry represented by the three premier industry associations,
- **Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)**
- **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)**
- **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)**

About:

- QCI is a **non-profit organization** registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860.
- Nodal Ministry is the **Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion** under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Composition:** It is governed by a Council of 38 members with equal representations of government, industry and consumers. Chairman of QCI is appointed by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the industry to the government.

Objective:

- **To create a mechanism for independent third-party assessment** of products, services, and processes.
- It plays a **pivotal role at the national level in propagating, adoption and adherence to quality standards** in all important spheres of activities including education, healthcare, environment protection, governance, social sectors, infrastructure sector and such other areas of organized activities that have significant bearing in improving the quality of life and wellbeing of the citizens of India.

#HOLISTIC WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

With the rapid growth of cities, water **demand has exponentially increased**. Even as aspirations cause people to migrate to urban areas, **water depletion and scarcity remains a huge challenge** staring at people's faces in the near future.

What is the Need for a Holistic Water Management System?

- Around 35 % of India's population lived in urban areas as of 2020, it is expected to double by 2050.
- In urban areas, only 45 % of the demand is met **using groundwater resources**. Apart from this, **climate change, pollution and contamination have also added to the burden** on water resources.
- As water demand exceeds supply in most cities, **water management needs to undergo a revolution** to ensure most urban areas can be self-sufficient in the future.
- In India, there are different water management systems based on **utilities like sanitation, urban water, stormwater and wastewater** that deal with water-related issues in different localities. Since areas and localities define distribution and water allocation, it is **often a challenge to find a unified solution**.

What is an Integrated Urban Water Management System?

IUWM is a process, which ensures water supply, used water management; sanitation and stormwater management can be planned in line with economic development and land use.

This holistic process **makes coordination among water departments easier** at the local level. It also helps **cities adapt to climate changes and manage water supply** more efficiently.

What are the Related Initiatives?

- Swachh Bharat Mission.
- Jal Jeevan Mission
- National Water Policy, 2012
- Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana
- Jal Shakti Abhiyan- Catch the Rain Campaign
- Atal Bhujal Yojana
- Sujalam 2.0
- Amrit Sarovar Mission

#WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT

Recently, the representation of women in parliament in New Zealand crossed the **50% mark**.

According to the **Inter-Parliamentary Union**, New Zealand is among a half-dozen nations in the world that can claim at least 50% female representation in their parliament by 2022.

In 1893, New Zealand became the first nation to allow women to vote.

Other nations include **Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, Rwanda and the United Arab Emirates**.

Globally, about 26% of lawmakers are women.



What is the Indian Scenario?

- As per the data compiled by the IPU, of which India is a member, women **represent 14.44% of the total members of the Lok Sabha**.
- As per the latest **Election Commission of India (ECI) data**:
- As of October 2021, Women represent **10.5%** of the total members of the Parliament.
- The scenario for women **Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs)** across all state assemblies in India is even worse, with the national average being a pitiable 9%.
- In the last 75 years of independence, **women's representation in Lok Sabha has not even increased by 10%**.
- In electoral representation, India has fallen several places in the **Inter-Parliamentary Union's global**

ranking of women's parliamentary presence, from 117 after the 2014 election to 143 as of January 2020.

- India is currently behind Pakistan (106), Bangladesh (98) and Nepal (43) and ahead of Sri Lanka (182).

What are the Government Efforts?

- The Women's Reservation Bill 2008:** It proposes to amend the Constitution of India to reserve 1/3rd of all seats in the Lower house of Parliament of India, the Lok Sabha, and in all state legislative assemblies for women.
- Reservation for Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions:** Article 243D of the Constitution ensures participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions by mandating not less than one-third reservation for women out of total number of seats to be filled by direct election and number of offices of chairpersons of Panchayats.
- Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women:** The Committee on Empowerment of Women was constituted for the first time in 1997 during the 11th Lok Sabha of the Parliament for improving the status of women. The Members of the Committee are expected to work together for the empowerment of women cutting across party affiliations.

#EK BHARAT SHRESHTHA BHARAT INITIATIVE

Recently, Government of India has announced a month-long programme named the 'Kashi-Tamil Sangamam' "to strengthen" and "rekindle" the cultural and civilisational bond between Tamil Nadu and Varanasi. This programme would be a part of the Ek Bharat Sreshtha Bharat initiative.

What is Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat?

- Launched:** It was launched in 2015 to promote engagement amongst the people of different States/UTs so as to enhance mutual understanding and bonding between people of diverse cultures, thereby securing stronger unity and integrity of India.
- Ministry Involved:** It is an initiative of the Ministry of Education.
- Activities under the Scheme:** Every State and UT in the country would be paired with another State/UT for a time period, during which they would carry out a structured engagement with one another in the spheres of language, literature, cuisine, festivals, cultural events, tourism etc.



Objectives:

- Create the Unity in Diversity of our Nation** and to maintain and strengthen the fabric of traditionally existing emotional bonds between the people of our Country.
- Promote the Spirit of National Integration** through a deep and structured engagement between all Indian States and Union Territories through a year-long planned engagement between States.
- Showcase the rich Heritage and Culture, Customs and Traditions** of either State for enabling people to understand and appreciate the diversity that is India, thus fostering a sense of common identity.
- Establish long-term Engagements.** Create an environment which promotes learning between States by sharing best practices and experiences.

#SWACHH SURVEKSHAN AWARDS

Recently, the President awarded **Indore** as the cleanest city for the sixth consecutive year as part of the Azadi@75 Swachh Survekshan 2022, hosted as part of the **Swachh Bharat Mission- Urban 2.0**. Indore further emerged as **India's first 7-star Garbage Free city**, while Surat, Bhopal, Mysuru, Navi Mumbai, Vishakhapatnam, and Tirupati earned 5-star Garbage Free certifications.

What are Swachh Survekshan Awards?

- Swachh Survekshan has been conducted since 2016 and is the **world's largest urban sanitation and cleanliness survey**.
- It has been instrumental in fostering a spirit of healthy competition among towns and cities to improve their service delivery to citizens and towards creating cleaner cities.
- It is conducted under the ambit of the **Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban)**,
- **Goal:** The primary goal of Swachh Survekshan is to encourage **large-scale citizen participation and create awareness** amongst all sections of society about the importance of working together toward making towns and cities better places to reside in.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

What are the Key Highlights of Swachh Survekshan Awards 2022?

Cleanest City:

- **More than 1 lakh Population:** **Indore**, the city of lakes and palaces, walked away with the **Cleanest City** title, while **Surat** was adjudged the **second cleanest city**, for the second time in a row, **Navi Mumbai** bagged the third spot. **Less than 1 lakh Population:** **Panchgani and Karad** from Maharashtra bagged the first and **third positions** respectively, while Patan from Chhattisgarh bagged the second position.
- **Best Ganga Town:** **Haridwar** in Uttarakhand received the award for the best Ganga town in more than one lakh population cities.
- **Fast Mover City Award:** Shivamogga in Karnataka.

Cleanest States:

- States with More than 100 Urban Local Bodies: Madhya Pradesh emerged as the 'Cleanest State', **Chattisgarh in second place and third in Maharashtra**.
- **States with less than 100 Urban Local Bodies:** Tripura emerged as the Cleanest State. Jharkhand and Uttarakhand received the second and third spots respectively.

What is Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0?

- SBM-U 2.0, announced in **Budget 2021-22**, is the continuation of **SBM-U first phase**.
- The government is trying to tap safe containment, transportation, disposal of faecal sludge, and septage from toilets. It will be implemented over five years from **2021 to 2026 with an outlay of Rs. 1.41 lakh crore**.
- It focuses on source segregation of garbage, reduction in single-use plastic and air pollution, by effectively managing waste from construction and demolition activities and **bioremediation of all legacy dump sites**.
- Under this mission, all wastewater will be treated properly before it is discharged into water bodies, and the government is trying to make maximum reuse a priority.

#MULTI-STATE COOPERATIVES

The Union Cabinet has approved the **Multi-State Cooperative Societies (MSCS) Amendment Bill, 2022**, which seeks to amend the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002

A new Ministry of Cooperation was formed in July 2021 with an objective to provide renewed impetus to the growth of Cooperative Sector.



What is the Changes Proposed in the Bill?

- The amendments seek to improve ease of doing business, bringing greater transparency and enhance governance.
- It has included provisions relating to **representation of women and Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe members on the board** of multi-state cooperative societies.
- The amendments have been brought to **reform the electoral process**, strengthen monitoring mechanisms and enhance accountability.
- It will also **widen the composition of board and ensure financial discipline**, besides enabling the multi-state cooperative societies to raise funds.
- To improve the governance of multi-state cooperative societies, the Bill has specific provisions for setting up of **Cooperative Election Authority, Cooperative Information Officer and Cooperative Ombudsman**.
- There will also be a **provision for issuing non-voting shares** in multi-state co-operative societies to help them raise funds.
- Further, the newly proposed **Rehabilitation, Reconstruction & Development Fund** will help in revitalising sick co-operative societies.
- The Bill will incorporate the provisions of the **97th Constitutional Amendment**.
- Moreover, the provision for stipulating prudential norms will bring in financial discipline. The amendments relating to auditing mechanism will ensure more accountability.

What are the Key Points of MSCS Act, 2002?

- **Multi State Cooperative Societies:** Although Cooperatives is a state subject, there are many societies such as those for sugar and milk, banks, milk unions etc whose members and areas of operation are spread across more than one state.
- For example, most sugar mills along the districts on the Karnataka-Maharashtra border procure cane from both states.
- Maharashtra has the highest number of such cooperative societies at 567, followed by Uttar Pradesh (147) and New Delhi (133).
- The MSCS Act was passed to govern such cooperatives.
- **Legal Jurisdiction:** Their board of directors has representation from all states they operate in.
- Administrative and financial control of these societies is with the central registrar, with the law making it clear that no state government official can wield any control on them.
- The exclusive control of the central registrar was meant to allow smooth functioning of these societies, without interference of state authorities.

What are Cooperatives in India?

- **Definition:** The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) defines a **Cooperative** as “an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.”
- Examples of Successful Cooperatives in India:
- **National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED),**
- **Indian Farmers Fertilisers Cooperative Limited (IFFCO)**

- AMUL

Constitutional Provisions:

- The **Constitution (97th Amendment) Act, 2011** added a new Part IXB regarding the cooperatives working in India. The word “cooperatives” was added after “unions and associations” in Article 19(1)(c) under Part III of the Constitution.
- This enables all the citizens to form cooperatives by giving it the status of **fundamental right** of citizens.
- A new Article 43B was added in the **Directive Principles of State Policy** (Part IV) regarding the “promotion of cooperative societies”.

Supreme Court Judgement:

- In July, 2021, the Supreme Court **struck down certain provisions of the 97th Amendment Act, 2011**.
- As per the SC, Part IX B (Articles 243ZH to 243ZT) has “significantly and substantially impacted” State legislatures’ “exclusive legislative power” over its co-operative sector.
- Also, the provisions in the 97th Amendment were passed by Parliament without getting them ratified by State legislatures as required by the Constitution.
- The SC held that states have exclusive power to legislate on topics reserved exclusively to them (cooperatives are a part of State list).
- The 97th Constitutional Amendment required ratification by at least one-half of the state legislatures as per Article 368(2).
- Since the ratification was not done in the case of the 97th amendment, it was liable to strike it down.
- It upheld the validity of the provisions of Part IX B which are related to Multi State Cooperative Societies (MSCS).
- It said that in case of MSCS with objects not confined to one state, the legislative power would be that of the Union of India.

#NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Recently, the **(NDMA)** celebrated its **18th Formation Day** on 28th September, 2022.

Theme 2022: Volunteerism in Disaster Management.

What is NDMA?

- The National Disaster Management Authority is **India’s apex statutory body for disaster management**.
- The NDMA was formally constituted on **27th September 2006**, by the Disaster Management Act, 2005. The Prime Minister is its chairperson and it has nine other members. One of the nine members is designated as Vice-Chairperson. The primary responsibility for the management of disaster rests with the **State Government concerned**. However, the National Policy on Disaster Management puts in place an enabling environment for all i.e., the Centre, state and district.
- The government is working on a programme to set up disaster management volunteers (**Aapada Mitra**) in 350 districts of the country.

Aapada Mitra:

- It is a **Central Sector Scheme** that was launched in May 2016.
- NDMA is the implementing agency.
- It is a programme to **identify suitable individuals in disaster-prone regions** who can be trained to be first responders in times of disasters. To provide the community volunteers with the skills that they would need to respond to their community’s immediate needs in the aftermath of a disaster thereby enabling them to undertake basic relief and rescue tasks during emergency situations such as floods,

flash-floods and urban flooding.

What are the Functions and Responsibilities of NDMA?

- Approve the National Disaster Plan
- Lay down policies on disaster management
- Approve plans prepared by Ministries or Departments of the Central Government in accordance with National Plan
- Lay down guidelines to be followed by State Authorities in drawing up State Plan
- Lay down guidelines to be followed by different Ministries or Departments of Central Government for the purpose of integrating measures for disaster prevention or mitigation of its effects in their development plans and projects
- Coordinate enforcement and implementation of disaster management policy and plan
- Recommend provision of funds for the purpose of mitigation
- Provide such support to other countries affected by major disasters as determined by the Central Government
- Take such other measures for prevention of disasters or mitigation or preparedness and capacity building for dealing with threatening disaster situation or disaster as it may consider necessary
- Lay down broad policies and guidelines for the functioning of National Institute of Disaster Management

What are India's Efforts in Managing Disaster?

- **Establishment of National Disaster Reaction Force (NDRF):** India has increasingly mitigated and responded to all types of disasters, including with the establishment of its **National Disaster Reaction Force (NDRF)**, the world's largest rapid reaction force dedicated to disaster response.
- **India's Role as a Foreign Disaster Relief:** India's foreign humanitarian assistance has increasingly included its military assets, primarily deploying naval ships or aircraft to deliver relief.
- **Managing Climate Change related Disaster:** India has adopted the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction**, the **Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030)**, and the **Paris Agreement** on Climate Change, all of which make clear the connections among DRR, Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), and sustainable development.

#CORBETT TIGER RESERVE: UTTARAKHAND

Over 6,000 trees were illegally cut for the proposed Pakhro tiger safari project in Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR), according to a report of the Forest Survey of India (FSI).

The FSI has come up with an observation that the area cleared under CTR is estimated as **16.21 hectare (ha)** for the Safari Project.

Pakhro tiger safari will be spread over an area of 106 hectares, when completed, it would have **been the State's first tiger safari** that would have tigers in enclosures to **ensure "100% sighting"**.



What are the Key Points of Corbett Tiger Reserve?

- It is located in **the Nainital district of Uttarakhand**. The **Project Tiger** was launched in 1973 in **Corbett National Park (first National Park of India)**, which is part of Corbett Tiger Reserve.
- The national park was established in 1936 as Hailey National Park to protect the endangered Bengal tiger.
- It is named after Jim Corbett who played a key role in its establishment.
- The core area forms the **Corbett National Park while the buffer contains reserve forests** as well as the Sonanadi Wildlife Sanctuary.
- The entire area of the reserve is mountainous and falls in the Shivalik and Outer Himalaya geological provinces.
- **Ramganga, Sonanadi, Mandal, Palain and Kosi** are the major rivers flowing through the Reserve.

- Sprawling over **500 square kilometres**, CTR is home to 230 tigers and has the world's highest tiger density — at 14 tigers per hundred square kilometres.

Other Major Protected Areas of Uttarakhand:

- **Nanda Devi National Park.**
- Valley of Flowers National Park.
- Valley of Flowers National Park and Nanda Devi National Park together are a **UNESCO World Heritage Site.**
- **Rajaji National Park.**
- **Gangotri National Park.**
- Govind National Park.

#PEOPLE RIGHT VS. ANIMAL WELFARE

In view of cases of stray dogs menace, **the** Supreme Court of India said that a balance has to be maintained between the safety of people and animal rights.

- The court also **suggested that people who feed stray dogs** could be made responsible for vaccinating them and bearing costs if somebody is attacked by the animal.



What are the Related Judgements?

Animal Welfare Board of India v. Nagaraja (2014):

- In this case, while striking down the practice of Jallikattu (bull-wrestling) and bullock cart racing in the Indian states of Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, respectively, the **Supreme Court had ruled that the right to dignity and fair treatment** as enshrined in and arising out of **Article 21 of India's Constitution is not confined to human beings alone, but animals as well.**

Other Judgements:

- In **July 2018 the Uttarakhand High Court and in June 2019, Judge Rajiv Sharma** of the Punjab and Haryana High Court observed that **animals have a distinct legal persona with corresponding rights, duties, and liabilities** of a living person and subsequently declared all the citizens throughout their to be persons in loco parentis as the human face for the welfare/protection of animals.
- All citizens of Uttarakhand and Haryana were declared to have legal responsibilities and functions similar to those of a parent vis-à-vis minor children for the welfare and protection of animals within their respective States.

What is the Constitutional Protection for Animal Rights?

- According to the Indian Constitution, it is everyone's responsibility to care for and preserve the country's natural resources, such as its forests, lakes, rivers, and animals. However, many of these provisions come in the **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)** and **Fundamental Duties** – which cannot be enforced unless there is statutory backing.
- **Article 48 A states** that the State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country.
- **Article 51A (g) states** it to be a duty of every citizen of India "to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife, and to have compassion for living creatures."
- Further, the **State and Concurrent List have been assigned** the following items about animal rights.
- The States are given the authority to "preserve, maintain and improve stock and prevent animal diseases and enforce veterinary training and practice," according to State List Item 14.
- The Concurrent List contains legislation that both the Centre and the States may pass
- "Prevention of animal cruelty," which is mentioned in item 17.
- "Protection of wild animals and birds" which is mentioned as item 17B.

What are the Important Laws in India for the Protection of Animals?

Indian Penal Code (IPC):

- The Indian Penal Code (IPC) 1860 is the **official criminal code of India which covers all substantive aspects of criminal law**.
- Section 428 and 429 of the IPC provides for punishment of all acts of cruelty such as killing, poisoning, maiming or rendering useless of animals.

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1960:

- The objective of the Act is to **prevent the infliction of unnecessary pain** or suffering on animals and to amend the laws relating to the prevention of cruelty to animals.
- The Act defines "animal" as any living creature other than a human being.

Wildlife Protection Act 1972:

- The act **aims to safeguard all plants and animal species in the country** to ensure environmental and ecological security. The Act **prohibits the hunting of endangered animals** while providing for the establishment of wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, and zoos.

#PM KISAN SAMMAN SAMMELAN 2022

- Recently, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the PM Kisan Samman Sammelan 2022 at Indian Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi.

What are the Key Highlights of PM Kisan Samman Sammelan?

- PM released the 12th installment of **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)** funds. Rs 16,000 crores were transferred to over 8.5 crore eligible farmers as part of the scheme.
- PM also inaugurated 600 '**Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samruddhi Kendras**' (PMKSK) under the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers. Under this scheme, more than 3.3 lakh retail fertilizer shops in the country will be converted into PMKSK in a phased manner.
- These Kendras will cater to several farmer needs like providing agri-inputs (fertilizers, seeds, implements); testing **facilities for soil, seeds, fertilizers; generating awareness among farmers; providing information regarding various government schemes and ensuring regular capacity building of retailers at block/ district level outlets.**

- The PM also launched the 'Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Urvarak Pariyojana' – One Nation, One Fertilizer.
- Under this scheme, 'Bharat Urea Bags' are launched. These will help companies market fertilizers under the single brand name "Bharat
- An e-magazine on fertilizer, 'Indian Edge' also launched by the PM.
- It will provide information on domestic and international fertilizer scenarios, including recent developments, price trends analysis, availability and consumption, success stories of farmers, among others.

What is PM Kisan?

- It was launched on 1 Nov 2018 to supplement financial needs of land holding farmers.
- **Financial Benefits:** Financial benefit of Rs 6000/- per year in three equal installments, every four months is transferred into the bank accounts of farmers' families across the country through **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode**.
- **Scope of the Scheme:** The scheme was initially meant for **Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs) having landholding upto 2 hectares** but scope of the scheme was **extended to cover all landholding farmers**.
- **Funding and Implementation:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme** with 100% funding from the Government of India. It is being **implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**.

Objectives:

- To supplement the financial needs of the Small and Marginal Farmers in procuring various inputs to ensure proper crop health and appropriate yields, commensurate with the anticipated farm income at the end of each crop cycle.
- To protect them from falling in the clutches of moneylenders for meeting such expenses and ensure their continuance in the farming activities.

#LOTHAL: WORLD'S EARLIEST KNOWN DOCK

Recently, the Prime Minister has reviewed the construction of the **National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) site at Gujarat's Lothal**.

What is the National Maritime Heritage Complex?

- The project began in March 2022, and is being developed at a cost of Rs 3,500 crore.
- It will have several innovative features such as **Lothal mini-recreation, which will recreate Harappan architecture and lifestyle** through immersive technology.
- It has four theme parks – Memorial theme park, Maritime and Navy theme park, Climate theme park, and Adventure and Amusement theme park. It will act as **a center for learning and understanding India's maritime history**.
- The NMHC is being developed with the aim of **displaying India's diverse maritime heritage and also help Lothal emerge as a world-class international tourist destination**.

Where is Lothal?

- **Lothal** was one of the **southernmost sites of the Indus Valley civilization (IVC)**, located in the Bhāl region of what is now the state of Gujarat.
- The port city is believed to have been built in **2,200 BC**.
- Lothal was a thriving trade center in ancient times, with its trade of **beads, gems and ornaments reaching West Asia and Africa**.
- The meaning of Lothal (a combination of Loth and (s) thal) in Gujarati is **"the mound of the dead"**.
- Incidentally, the name of the city of **Mohenjo-daro (also part of the Indus Valley Civilisation, now in Pakistan)** means the same in Sindhi.

- Lothal had the **world's earliest known dock**, which connected the city to an ancient course of the Sabarmati River on the trade route between **Harappan cities in Sindh and the peninsula of Saurashtra**.

Discovery:

- Indian archaeologists started the search for cities of the Harappan Civilisation post-1947 in Gujarat's Saurashtra.
- Archaeologist SR Rao led the team which discovered **a number of Harappan sites at the time, including the port city of Lothal**.
- Excavation work was carried out in Lothal between **February 1955 and May 1960**.

What is the Heritage Value of Lothal?

- Lothal was nominated in April 2014 as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, and its application is pending on the tentative list of UNESCO.
- The excavated site of Lothal is the **only port-town of the Indus Valley Civilisation**.
- Its heritage value is comparable to other ancient port-towns around the world including,
 - Xel Ha (Peru)
 - Ostia (Port of Rome) and Carthage (Port of Tunis) in Italy
 - Hepu in China
 - Canopus in Egypt
 - Gabel (Byblos of the Phoenicians)
 - Jaffa in Israel
 - Ur in Mesopotamia
 - Hoi An in Vietnam
- In the region, it can be compared with other Indus port towns of **Balakot (Pakistan), Khirasa (in Gujarat's Kutch) and Kuntasi (in Rajkot)**.

What are the Important Sites of IVC?

- **Harappa in present Pakistan** – granaries with big platform, stone symbol of lingam and yoni, mother goddess figure, wheat and barley in wooden mortar, dice, copper scale and mirror.
- **Mohenjo-daro in present Pakistan** - bronze dancing girl, the sculpture of bearded priest, the great bath, the great granary.
- **Dholavira in Gujarat** – giant water reservoir, unique water harnessing system, stadium, dams and embankments, inscription comprising 10 large sized signs like an advertisement board.
- **Ropar in Punjab** – dog buried with human oval pit burials.
- **Balathal and Kalibangan in Rajasthan** – bangle factory, toy carts, bones of camel, decorated bricks, citadel and lower town.
- **Banawali in Haryana** – toy plough, barley grains, oval-shaped settlement, the only city with radial streets.
- **Alamgirpur in Uttar Pradesh** – impression of a cloth on a trough.

#WHAT IS ONE HEALTH CONCEPT?

One Health Joint Plan of Action was launched by the Quadripartite-the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**, the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, and the **World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, founded as OIE)**.

- In April 2022 a **pilot project in the state of Uttarakhand** was launched to implement the One Health Framework by One Health Support Unit.

What is One Health Joint Plan of Action?

- The Action plan developed through a participatory process, provided a set of activities that **aim** to strengthen collaboration, communication, capacity building and coordination equally across all sectors responsible for addressing health concerns at the human-animal-plant-environment interface.
- The plan is valid from **2022-2026** and is aimed at **mitigating the health challenges at global, regional, and country levels**.

What is the One Health Concept?

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

#CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME FOR STARTUPS

Recently, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry has notified the **credit guarantee scheme for start-ups**.

What is the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups (CGSS)?

- The scheme has been **approved for the purpose of providing credit guarantees** to loans extended by Member Institutions (MIs) to finance eligible borrowers being startups. MIs include **financial intermediaries (banks, financial institutions, Non-Banking Financial Companies) engaged in lending/investing** and conforming to the eligibility criteria approved under the Scheme.
- This scheme **would help provide the much-needed collateral-free debt** funding to start-ups.
- The credit guarantee cover under the Scheme would be **transaction based and umbrella based**.
- The exposure to individual cases would be **capped at Rs. 10 crore per case** or the actual outstanding credit amount, whichever is less.
- In respect of **transaction-based guarantee cover**, the guarantee cover is obtained by the MIs on a single eligible borrower basis.
- Transaction based guarantees will promote lending by Banks/ NBFCs to eligible startups.
- The umbrella-based guarantee cover will provide guarantee to Venture Debt Funds (VDF) registered under Alternative Investment Funds (AIF) regulations of **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)**.

Aim:

- To **support startups that are hit hard by the pandemic** and are now going to be impacted further by

the rising interest rate scenario when liquidity is unlikely to be easily available to new entrepreneurs.

- What is the State of Start-ups in India?
- 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**.

Related Initiatives:

- National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI)
- **Startup India Action Plan (SIAP)**
- **Ranking of States on Support to Startup Ecosystems (RSSSE)**
- **Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS)**

#POST FACTO ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCES

Recently, the Supreme Court has concluded that ex post facto (after being started) **Environmental Clearances (EC)** are acceptable.

The court has concluded in response to a claim that a **bio-medical treatment facility** was set up and run without an EC and it raises concern over Environmental Degradation.

What is an Ex Post Facto Environment Clearance?

- Ex post facto environmental clearance refers to allowing functioning of an industry or project which has started operating without obtaining the green clearance and disclosing the probable environmental impacts of the project. A bench of SC observed that the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**, did not absolutely prohibit the grant of **ex post facto environmental clearance**. It should not be granted routinely, **but in exceptional circumstances** taking into account all relevant environmental factors.

What is the Environment Impact Assessment?

- It can be defined as the study for predicting the effect of a proposed activity/project on the environment.
- It is statutory **under the Environment Protection Act, 1986** for some projects.
- Process:
- **Screening** based upon scales of investment, type of development, and location of the development is done to see whether a project requires an environmental clearance as per the statutory notifications.
- **Scoping** is a process of detailing the Terms of Reference (ToR) of EIA, that is the main issues or problems in the development of a project.
- **Impact Prediction** involves mapping the environmental consequences of the significant aspects of the project and its alternatives.
- The public mandatorily needs to be informed and consulted on the proposed development after the completion of the EIA report.

What is the Environment Clearance Process?

- An EIA report is prepared to get **Environment Clearance (EC) for a project**.
- A process of '**Public Hearing**' is conducted before the issue of 'Consent to Establish (NOC)' by state regulators. Concerns of people living in the proposed project area are heard.
- An application form with **EIA report, details of public hearing and NOC** is submitted for **environmental clearance** with the **Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** if the project falls under Project A category or the state government if the project falls under

Project B category.

- **Category A projects** requires **mandatory environmental clearance** and thus they do not undergo the screening process.
- **Category B projects undergo a screening process** and they are classified into two types.
 - **Category B1 projects** (Mandatorily requires EIA).
 - **Category B2 projects** (Do not require EIA).
- The documents submitted are then analyzed by an **Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) under the Ministry**. The recommendations of the Committee get processed in the MoEFCC for final approval or rejection.

#USE OF REGIONAL LANGUAGES IN LEGAL SYSTEM

Recently, the **Prime Minister inaugurated the All-India Conference of Law Ministers and Law Secretaries via video conference**.

While Inaugurating the Conference, PM bats for **use of regional languages in the legal system to bring ease of justice**. He stressed that new laws should be written in a clear manner and in regional languages to bring in “ease of justice,” so that even the poor can easily understand them and legal language doesn’t become a barrier for citizens.



What is the Background of Languages in the Legal System?

Background:

- The language used in Courts in India has seen a transition over centuries with the shift from Urdu to Persian and Farsi scripts during the Mughal period which continued in subordinate courts even during the British Rule.
- The British introduced a codified system of law in India with English as the official language.
- Post-independence, **Article 343** of the Constitution of India provides that the official language of the Union shall be Hindi in the Devanagari script.
- However, it mandated that the **English language will continue to be used for all official purposes of the Union for 15 years from the commencement of the Constitution of India**.
- It further provides that the **President** may, during the said period, **by order to authorise the use of the Hindi language for any official purpose of the Union, other than the English language**.

Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 348(1)(a)** states that unless Parliament by law provides otherwise, all proceedings before the **Supreme Court** and in every High Court shall be conducted in English.
- **Article 348(2)** provides further that notwithstanding the provisions of Article 348(1), the **Governor** of a state may, with the previous consent of the President, authorise the use of Hindi or any other language used for any official purpose, in proceedings in the High Court.
- States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have already authorised the use of Hindi in proceedings before their respective high courts and taking a cue, Tamil Nadu is also working in that direction – to authorise the use of Tamil before its high court.
- A further provision states that nothing in this clause would apply to any judgement, decree, or order made by the High Court.
- Therefore, the **Constitution recognizes English as the primary language of the Supreme Court and the High Courts**, with the caveat that when some other language is used in the proceedings of High Courts, judgments of the High Courts must be delivered in English.

Official Languages Act 1963:

- It empowers the **Governor of a state to, with previous consent of the President, authorise the use of Hindi/the official language of the state**, in addition to English, for the purpose of any judgement, decree or order passed by the High Court of that state.
- It further **provides that where any judgement/decreed/order is passed in any such language** it shall be accompanied by a translation of the same in English.
- Read with the constitutional provisions, it is clear that primacy is given to English even by this Act.
- The Official Languages Act makes no mention of the Supreme Court, where English is the only language in which proceedings are conducted.

Language of Subordinate Courts:

- The **language of all courts subordinate to High Courts** generally remains the same as the language on the commencement of the **Civil Procedure Code 1908**, till the state government determines.
- There are two provisions **regarding the use of language in subordinate courts**. Under Section 137 of the Code of Civil Procedure, the language of the district courts shall be similar to the language of the act.
- The state government has the **power to declare any regional language as an alternative** for the proceedings of the court.
- However, judgments, orders, and decree may be passed by the magistrate in English.
- The recording of the evidence shall be done in the prevailing language of the state.
- In case of a pleader being unacquainted with English, a translation into the language of the court shall be supplied to him on his request and the court shall bear such costs.
- Section 272 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973, states that the **State government shall determine the language of all courts** other than the High Courts. So, broadly it means that the language used in the district courts shall be in the regional language as the state government directs.

What are the Reasons for Using English Language in Legal System?

- Just like cases from all over the country come to the Supreme Court, judges and lawyers of the Supreme Court also come from all parts of India. Judges can hardly be expected to read documents and hear arguments in languages with which they are not familiar.
- Without the use of English, **it would be impossible to discharge their duty**. All judgments of the Supreme Court are also delivered in English.
- Though, in 2019, the Court introduced an initiative to translate its judgments into regional languages, it is rather a tall order given the sheer volumes of judgments which the Court delivers.

#90TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF APJ ABDUL KALAM

Recently, the PM paid tribute to the former President APJ Abdul Kalam on his 90th birth anniversary.

Who was Dr A. P. J. Abdul Kalam?

- Born on 15th October 1931 at Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu.
- His birth anniversary is celebrated as the National Innovation Day and World Students' Day.
- He graduated in Science from St Joseph's College, Trichy in 1954 and specialized in Aeronautical Engineering from Madras Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1957.
- He is one of the most distinguished scientists of India with the unique honour of receiving honorary doctorates from 48 Universities and institutions from India and abroad.
- He was sworn in as India's 11th President in 2002 and completed the full term in 2007. He planned programmes to produce a number of successful missiles, which helped earn him the nickname "**Missile Man of India**".
- **Awards Received:** He was awarded the coveted civilian awards - **Padma Bhushan** (1981) and Padma Vibhushan (1990) and the highest civilian award Bharat Ratna (1997).
- **Literary Works:** "Wings of Fire", "India 2020 - A Vision for the New Millennium", "My journey" and "Ignited Minds - Unleashing the power within India", "Indomitable Spirit", "Guiding Souls", "Envisioning an Empowered Nation", "Inspiring Thoughts" etc.

What has been the Contribution of Dr A. P. J. Abdul Kalam?

His Contribution:

- **Pioneer in Fiberglass Technology:** He was a **pioneer in fiberglass technology** and led a young team to initiate this effort in **ISRO** from design, development leading to the production of composites rocket motor cases.

Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-3):

- He made a significant contribution as Project Director to develop India's first indigenous Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-3) which successfully injected the Rohini satellite into **Near-Earth Orbit** in July 1980 and made India an exclusive member of Space Club. He was responsible for the evolution of ISRO's launch vehicle programme, particularly the **PSLV configuration**.

Indigenous Guided Missiles:

- After working for two decades in ISRO and mastering launch vehicle technologies, he took up the responsibility of developing Indigenous Guided Missiles at the DRDO.
- He was the Chief Executive of **Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP)**.
- He led to the weaponization of strategic missile systems and the **Pokhran-II nuclear tests** in collaboration with the Department of Atomic Energy, which made India a nuclear weapon State.

Technology Vision 2020:

- In 1998, he put forward a countrywide plan called **Technology Vision 2020**, which he described as a road map for transforming India from a less-developed to a developed society in 20 years.
- The plan called for, among other measures, increasing agricultural productivity, emphasising technology as a vehicle for economic growth, and widening access to health care and education.

Light Combat Aircraft project:

- He was deeply involved in the country's **Light Combat Aircraft project**.
- He had been associated with avionics. He also became the **first Indian Head of State** to fly a fighter plane. His first **aeronautical project** led him to designing **India's first indigenous hovercraft 'Nandi'**.
- A hovercraft is a vehicle that can travel over land, water, mud and ice by lifting itself off the ground with large blowers that create an air cushion beneath the craft.

Others:

- He was passionate about **bringing rural prosperity through PURA (Providing Urban Amenities to Rural Areas)**, in which science and technology has to play a key role.
- Based on his diverse experience he propagated the concept of **World Knowledge Platform** through which the core competencies of organizations and nations can be synergized to innovate and create solutions and products for the challenges of the 21st century.

#WHAT IS MNREGA?

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) helped **compensating 20-80% of the income loss** incurred because of the **Covid-19 induced lockdown**, as per a study conducted by Azim Premji University across four states (Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh). However, **39% of the surveyed households didn't get a single day of work in the Covid-19 year** due to **lack of adequate works** being sanctioned/opened.



What is MGNREGA?

- MGNREGA is **one of the largest work guarantee programmes** in the world **launched in 2005** by the **Ministry of Rural development**.
- The primary objective of the scheme is to **guarantee 100 days of employment** in every financial year to **adult members of any rural household** willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work.
- As of 2022-23, there are **15.4 crore active workers under the MGNREGA**.
- **Legal Right to Work:** Unlike earlier employment guarantee schemes, the act **aims at addressing the causes of chronic poverty** through a rights-based framework.
- At least **one-third of beneficiaries have to be women**.
- Wages must be paid according to the statutory minimum wages specified for agricultural labourers in the state under the **Minimum Wages Act, 1948**.
- **Demand-Driven Scheme:** The most important part of MGNREGA's design is its **legally-backed guarantee for any rural adult to get work within 15 days of demanding it**, failing which an 'unemployment allowance' must be given.
- This demand-driven scheme enables the self-selection of workers.
- **Decentralised planning:** There is an emphasis on strengthening the process of decentralisation by giving a significant role in **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)** in planning and implementing these works.

- The act **mandates Gram sabhas to recommend the works that are to be undertaken** and at least 50% of the works must be executed by them.

#WHAT IS GREEN STEEL?

A clean steel sector in Eastern India can become **essential for the country's transition to 'Green Steel'**. To move towards 'Green Steel', the **Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry launched Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga Project in Eastern India** in 2019 to provide gas to all steel plants located in the area.

What is Green Steel?

- Green Steel is the **manufacturing of steel without the use of fossil fuels**.
- This can be done by using **low-carbon energy sources such as hydrogen, coal gasification, or electricity** instead of the traditional carbon-intensive manufacturing route of coal-fired plants.
- It eventually **lowers greenhouse gas emissions, cuts costs and improves the quality of steel**.
- Low-carbon hydrogen (blue hydrogen and green hydrogen) can help **reduce the steel industry's carbon footprint**.
- **National Hydrogen Energy Mission (NHM)** capitalizes on **hydrogen for a cleaner alternative fuel option**.

Ways of Production:

- **Substituting the Primary Production Processes with Cleaner Alternatives:**
- **Carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS)**
- Replacing conventional sources of energy with low-carbon hydrogen
- Direct electrification through electrolysis of iron ore

What are the Types of Hydrogen?

- **Green hydrogen** is produced by electrolysis of water using renewable energy (like Solar, Wind) and has a lower carbon footprint.
- **Brown hydrogen** is produced using coal where the emissions are released to the air.
- **Grey hydrogen** is produced from natural gas where the associated emissions are released to the air.
- **Blue hydrogen** is produced from natural gas, where the emissions are captured using carbon capture and storage.

What is the Status of Steel Production in India?

- **Production:** India is currently the world's 2nd largest producer of crude steel, producing 120 Million Tonnes (MT) crude steel during financial year 2021- 2022.
- **Reserves:** More than 80 per cent of the country's reserves are in the states of Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and the northern regions of Andhra Pradesh.
- **Important steel-producing centers** are Bhilai (Chhattisgarh), Durgapur (West Bengal), Burnpur (West Bengal), Jamshedpur (Jharkhand), Rourkela (Odisha), Bokaro (Jharkhand).
- **Consumption:** India is the 2nd largest consumer of finished steel in 2021 (106.23 MT), preceded by China as the largest steel consumer as per World Steel Association.

#SHRI MAHAKAL LOK CORRIDOR

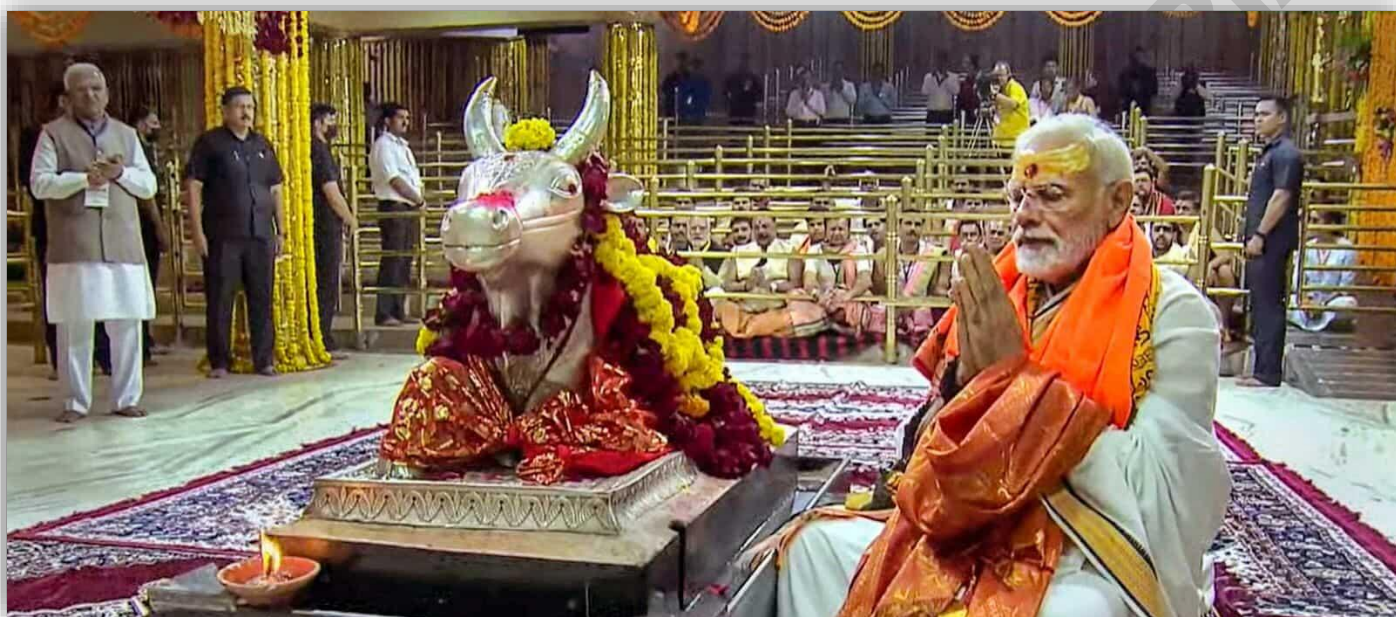
Recently, the **Prime Minister** inaugurated the first phase of the '**Shri Mahakal Lok**' corridor in **Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh**.

After Vishwanath temple in Varanasi and the Kedarnath shrine in Uttarakhand, **Mahakal temple is the third 'jyotirlinga' site to see a major upliftment exercise**.

The Rs 800-crore Mahakal corridor is four times the size of the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor.

What is the Shri Mahakal Lok Corridor?

- It is a **plan for the expansion, beautification, and decongestion** of the Mahakaleshwar temple and its adjoining area in Ujjain district.
- Under the plan, the Mahakaleshwar temple premises of around **2.82 hectares are being increased to 47 hectares**, which will be **developed in two phases by the Ujjain district administration**.
- This will include the **17 hectares of Rudrasagar lake**.
- The project is expected to increase annual footfall in the city from the current 1.50 crore to nearly three crores.



First Phase:

- One of the aspects of the Vistar Yojna's first phase is a **visitor plaza with two entrances** or Dwaars i.e., the **Nandi Dwaar** and the **Pinaki Dwaar**.
- The visitor plaza can **hold up to 20,000 pilgrims at a time**.
- A **circulation plan to reduce congestion** has also been developed, keeping in mind the entry of visitors into the city and their movement up to the temple.
- A **900-metre pedestrian corridor** has been constructed, **connecting the plaza to the Mahakal temple**, dotted with **108 murals** and **93 statues** depicting stories related to Lord Shiva, such as Shiv Vivah, Tripurasur Vadh, Shiv Puran, and Shiv Tandav Swaroop.
- There are also **128 convenience points, eateries and shopping joints, florists, handicraft stores**, etc. along this pedestrian corridor.

Second Phase:

- This includes **expansion of the eastern and northern fronts** of the temple.
- It also includes development of various areas of Ujjain city, such as **Maharajwada, Mahal Gate, Hari Phatak Bridge, Ramghat façade, and Begam Bagh Road**.
- **Buildings in Maharajwada will be redeveloped** and connected to the Mahakal temple campus, while a **heritage dharamshala and Kumbh museum** will be built.
- The second phase is being developed with funding from **Agence Francaise de Development (AFD)** under the **City Investments to Innovate, Integrate and Sustain (CITIIS)** programme.

What is the Historical Significance of the City of Ujjain?

- The city of Ujjain was one of the primary centres of learning for Hindu scriptures, called Avantika in the 6th and 7th centuries BC.
- Later, astronomers and mathematicians such as **Brahmagupta** and **Bhaskaracharya** made Ujjain their home.
- In the 18th century, an **observatory was built here by Maharaja Jai Singh II, known as the Vedh Shala or Jantar Mantar**, comprising **13 architectural instruments to measure astronomical phenomena**.
- Also, as per the **Surya Siddhanta**, one of the earliest available texts on Indian astronomy dating back to the 4th century, **Ujjain is geographically situated** at a spot where the **zero meridian of longitude and the Tropic of Cancer intersect**.

#REVISED BETI BACHAO BETI PADHAO SCHEME

The Central Government, expanding the mandate of its flagship scheme - 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' (BBBP Scheme) announced the inclusion of skilling of girls in **non-traditional livelihood (NTL)** options.

At the **national conference on skilling in non-traditional livelihoods for girls**, Ministries of Women and Child Development MW&CD emphasises the importance of convergence between various departments for providing quality education to empower girls.

What is BBBP Scheme?

- The Scheme was **launched** by Prime Minister on **January 22, 2015** to **addresses the declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR)** and related issues of women's empowerment over a life-cycle continuum.
- It is a **Tri-ministerial effort** of the Ministries of Women and Child Development (MW&CD), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MH&FW), and **Ministry of Education**.

Main Objectives:

- Prevention of gender-biased sex-selective elimination.
- Ensuring survival & protection of the girl child.
- Ensuring education and participation of the girl child.
- Protecting rights of Girl children.

What are the New Changes in the BBBP Scheme?

- Some of the new aims in the revised BBBP scheme include:
- **Ensuring 1% increment in enrolment at the secondary level** particularly in **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects**.
- Skilling of girls and women every year (mainly in non-traditional livelihoods)
- Raising awareness about **safe menstrual hygiene**
- Promulgating **elimination of child marriages**

Other Changes to the Scheme:

- The MW&CD also emphasised the convergence between various departments for providing quality education (including vocational) to empower girls.
- A MoU was signed between the MW&CD and Ministries Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and Minority Affairs to ensure adolescents complete their education, build skills, and enter the workforce in a diverse range of professions.
- A national committee headed by the Secretary of MW&CD, formed under the larger **Mission Shakti** will review the implementation of the BBBP scheme with states and UTs.

What are the Other Initiatives to Support Girl Children?

- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao
- Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana
- CBSE Udaan Scheme
- National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education
- National Girl Child Day
- Scheme for Adolescent Girls
- Sukanya Samridhi Yojana

#INDIA'S 1ST 24*7 SOLAR POWERED VILLAGE

Recently, the Prime Minister declared **Modhera**, a village in the Mehsana district of Gujarat as India's first **solar-powered village**.

What are the Key Highlights of India's First Solar Powered Village?

- **About Modhera Village:** Modhera is famous for its **Sun temple**, a protected ancient site, which is situated on the river Pushpavati. It was built by **King Bhima-I of the Chalukya dynasty in 1026-27**.
- The temple will acquire a 3-D projection facility which will inform tourists about the history of Modhera.
- **Solar Power Generation:** The solar power village would be self-sufficient in solar energy generation, as it will utilise 1000 solar panels that have been installed on the village houses, **generating electricity round the clock for the villagers**.
- It is developed through Ground Mounted Solar power plant and more than 1300 Rooftop solar systems on residential and Government buildings, all integrated with **Battery Energy storage systems (BESS)**. A BESS is a type of energy storage system that uses batteries to store and distribute energy in the form of electricity.

Benefits:

- The project will demonstrate how India's renewable energy prowess can empower people at the grassroots.
- The people in the village wouldn't pay for electricity, rather they could **start selling it and earn from energy produced by the solar panel** by selling it to the government grid.
- It will generate employment at the village level, and ultimately improve the standard of living.
- It will enhance the **sustainable implementation of various welfare projects** in the area.
- Residents of the area will be able to **save 60-100% of their electricity bills**.
- It will **reduce the drudgery among rural women and girls** engaged in the collection of fuel wood from long distances and cooking in smoky kitchens.
- It will also result in **minimization of the risks of contracting lung and eye ailments**.

What is the Status of Solar Energy in India?

- The installed **solar energy** capacity has increased by 19.3 times in the last 8 years and stands at 56.6 GW.
- Further, India has set an **ambitious target to achieve a capacity of 175 GW worth of renewable energy by the end of 2022**, which expands to 500 GW by 2030. This is the world's largest expansion plan for renewable energy.
- India was the **second-largest market in Asia for new solar PV capacity** and third globally. It ranked fourth for total installations (60.4 GW), overtaking Germany (59.2 GW) for the first time.
- As of June 2022, **Rajasthan and Gujarat were the top states** for large-scale solar, accounting for 53% and 14% of installations, respectively, **followed by Maharashtra with 9%**.

Related Initiatives:

- **Solar Park Scheme:** The **Solar Park Scheme** plans to build a number of solar parks, each with a capacity of nearly 500 MW, across several states.
- **Rooftop Solar Scheme:** The **Rooftop Solar Scheme** aims to harness solar power by installing **solar panels** on the roof of houses.
- **Atal Jyoti Yojana (AJAY):** The AJAY scheme was launched in September 2016 for the installation of **solar street lighting (SSL)** systems in states with less than 50% of households covered with **grid power** (as per **Census 2011**).
- **National Solar Mission:** It is a major initiative of the Government of India and State Governments to promote ecologically sustainable growth while addressing India's energy security challenge.
- **SRISTI Scheme: Sustainable rooftop implementation of Solar transfiguration of India (SRISTI)** scheme to promote rooftop solar power projects in India.

#WHAT IS PM-DevINE SCHEME?

Recently, the Union Cabinet approved a new Scheme, **Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE)**.

PM-DevINE was announced in the **Union Budget 2022-23** to address development gaps in the North Eastern Region (NER).

What is PM-DevINE Scheme?

- It is a **Central Sector Scheme with 100% Central funding**.
- The new scheme, to be implemented during the remaining four years of the **15th Finance Commission** from 2022-23 to 2025-26 have an **outlay of Rs.6,600 crore**.
- The PM-DevINE is in addition to the quantum of resources available for the development of the NE region. It will not be a substitute for existing central and state schemes.
- **Implementation:** The scheme will be implemented by the **Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region through North Eastern Council or Central Ministries/ agencies**.

Objectives:

- Fund infrastructure convergently, in the spirit of **PM Gati Shakti**
- Support social development projects based on felt needs of the NER
- Enable livelihood activities for youth and women
- Fill the development gaps in various sectors

What are the Major Infrastructure Projects in the Northeast?

- **Rail, Road and Air Connectivity:**
- 4,000 km of roads, 20 railway projects for 2,011 km and 15 air connectivity projects are being developed.
- **Waterways Connectivity:**
- National waterways on the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Barak rivers (National Waterways (NW)-1 on the Ganges, NW-2 on Brahmaputra and NW-16 on Barak) are under development to provide better connectivity.
- **Eastern Waterways Connectivity Transport Grid:**
- It will **connect the northeast with the rest of India** by providing 5,000 km of navigable waterways.
- **North Eastern Region Power System Improvement Project (NERPSIP):**
- **(NERPSIP) is a major step towards economic development of the North Eastern Region** through strengthening of Intra - State Transmission and Distribution systems.
- Government is also emphasizing on projects related to power transmission and distribution, mobile networks, 4G, and broadband connectivity.

#RAILWAYS TO BID 16 STATIONS UNDER PPP MODEL

Recently, the railway ministry is planning to bid out 16 stations under the **public-private partnership (PPP) model**. These railway stations will be **upgraded to ensure improved basic facilities and accessibility for passengers**.

This is in addition to the 1253 railway stations that have been identified for development under the **Adarsh Station Scheme**.



What is Public Private Partnership Model?

- It is an **arrangement between the government and private sector** for the provision of public assets and/or public services.
- Public-private partnerships allow large-scale government projects, such as roads, bridges, or hospitals, to be completed with private funding.
- In this type of partnership, investments are undertaken by the private sector entity, for a specified period of time.
- As PPP involves **full retention of responsibility by the government for providing the services, it doesn't amount to privatization**.
- There is a well-defined allocation of risk between the private sector and the public entity.
- The private entity is chosen on the basis of open competitive bidding and receives performance-linked payments.
- PPP route can be an alternative in developing countries where **governments face various constraints on borrowing money for important projects**.
- It can also give required expertise in planning or executing large projects.

Benefits:

- The PPP model can bring **opportunities for investment**, operating efficiency and modern and clean technology.
- PPP railway projects provide for shared use of rail tracks may **lead to efficiency gains and an increased revenue basis** (or reduced cost basis) for states and private investors.
- Further, it could lead to **increased competition and modernization of railway infrastructure**.

What are Types of Public Private Partnership (PPP) Models?

- **Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT):** It is a **conventional PPP model** in which the private partner is responsible to design, build, operate (during the contracted period) and transfer back the facility to the public sector.
- The private sector partner has to bring the finance for the project and take the responsibility to construct and maintain it.
- The public sector will allow private sector partners to collect revenue from the users. The national highway projects contracted out by NHAI under PPP mode is a major example for the BOT model.
- **Build-Own-Operate (BOO):** In this model ownership of the newly built facility will rest with the private party. On mutually agreed terms and conditions the public sector partner agrees to 'purchase' the goods and services produced by the project.
- **Build, Own, Operate, Transfer (BOOT):** In this variant of BOT, after the negotiated period of time, the project is transferred to the government or to the private operator. BOOT model is used for the development of highways and ports.
- **Build-Operate-Lease-Transfer (BOLT):** In this approach, the government gives a concession to a private entity to build a facility (and possibly design it as well), own the facility, lease the facility to the public sector and then at the end of the lease period transfer the ownership of the facility to the government.
- **Design-Build-Operate-Transfer (DBFO):** In this model, **entire responsibility** for the design, construction, finance, and operation of the project for the period of concession **lies with the private party**.

- **Lease-Develop-Operate (LDO):** In this type of investment model **either the government or the public sector entity retains ownership** of the newly created infrastructure facility and receives payments in terms of a lease agreement with the private promoter. It is mostly followed in the development of airport facilities.
- **Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) Model:** Under this model, the cost is completely borne by the government. Government invites bids for engineering knowledge from the private players. Procurement of raw material and construction costs are met by the government. The private sector's participation is minimal and is limited to the provision of engineering expertise. A difficulty of the model is that financial is the high financial burden for the government.
- **The Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM):** In India, the new HAM is a **mix of BOT-Annuity and EPC models**. As per the design, the government will contribute 40% of the project cost in the first five years through annual payments (annuity). The remaining payment will be made on the basis of the assets created and the performance of the developer.

What is Adarsh Station Scheme?

Adarsh station scheme of the Ministry of Railways aims to upgrade the **suburban stations** of India to Adarsh stations. It was introduced in 2009.

The selection of railway stations under this scheme is based on the identified need for **up-gradation of amenities**.

Key features:

- Adarsh stations will be **beautified** and upgraded with **modern facilities** like:
- Improvement of facade of the **station building**.
- Duly streamlining **traffic flow**
- Improvement of **platform** surface
- Improvement of existing **waiting halls** and **retiring rooms**
- Toilet facilities
- Provision of **foot over bridges**
- Provision of **lifts** and **escalators** etc.
- The upgradation process will be monitored by the Indian Government and Indian Railways.

#WHAT IS IBSAMAR VII?

INS Tarkash reached Port Gqeberha (also known as Port Elizabeth), South Africa to participate in the **seventh edition of India-Brazil-South Africa Maritime (IBSAMAR) i.e., IBSAMAR VII**. IBSAMAR is an important part of **IBSA trilateral defence cooperation**.



What is IBSAMAR VII?

- It is a **joint Multinational Maritime Exercise between the Indian, Brazilian and South African Navies** currently being held in South Africa from **10-12 October, 2022**.
- The previous edition of IBSAMAR (IBSAMAR VI) was conducted in Simons Town, South Africa in 2018.
- The Indian Navy is represented by the **Teg class guided missile frigate, INS Tarkash, a Chetak helicopter and the personnel from the Marine Commando Force (MARCOS)**.
- The harbour phase of IBSAMAR VII includes **professional exchanges such as damage control and fire-fighting drills, Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure (VBSS)/cross boarding lectures and interaction among Special Forces**.
- The Joint Maritime Exercise will **strengthen maritime security, joint operational training, sharing of best practices and building interoperability** to address common maritime threats.

What is India's Other Maritime Exercises?

- **Thailand:** India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT)
- **United Kingdom:** Konkan - Shakti
- **Indonesia:** Samudra Shakti
- **Singapore:** Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX)
- **Qatar:** Zair-Al-Bahr
- **Japan:** Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX)

What is IBSA?

- The IBSA is a **trilateral, developmental initiative between India, Brazil and South Africa** to promote South-South cooperation and exchange.
- The idea of South-South Cooperation (SSC) is not new. Its genesis can be traced back to the decades of efforts by countries and groupings working together to ensure South-South solidarity such as **Bandung conference 1955, Non-Aligned Movement 1961, G77 grouping, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Buenos Aires Plan of Action 1978, and the 2009 Nairobi declaration.**
- **Formation:**
- The grouping was **formalized and named the IBSA Dialogue Forum** when the Foreign Ministers of the three countries met in Brasilia (Brazil) on 6th June 2003 and issued the **Brasilia Declaration.**
- **Headquarters:** IBSA does not have a headquarters or a permanent executive secretariat.

#VANDE BHARAT EXPRESS 2.0

Recently, the **Prime Minister flagged off Gandhinagar- Mumbai Vande Bharat Express 2.0** at Gujarat's Gandhinagar station. Earlier, two Vande Bharat Expresses were operational —one between New Delhi and Varanasi and the other from New Delhi to Katra.



What are Vande Bharat Trains?

- It is an **indigenously designed and manufactured semi high speed**, self-propelled train that is touted as the next major leap for the Indian Railways in terms of speed and passenger convenience since the introduction of Rajdhani trains.
- The first Vande Bharat was manufactured by the **Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai** as part of the '**Make in India**' programme, at a cost of about Rs. 100 crore.
- The Vande Bharat was **India's first attempt at adaptation of the train set technology** compared with conventional systems of passenger coaches hauled by separate locomotives.
- The train set configuration, though complex, is faster, easier to maintain, consumes less energy, and has greater flexibility in train operation.

What are the Features of the Vande Bharat Trains?

- These trains, dubbed as **Train 18 during the development phase**, operate without a locomotive and are based on a propulsion system called distributed traction power technology, by which each car of the train set is powered.
- It can **achieve a maximum speed of 160 kmph** due to faster acceleration and deceleration, reducing journey time by 25% to 45%.
- It also has an intelligent braking system with power regeneration for better energy efficiency thereby making it cost, energy and environment efficient.

What are the Features of Vande Bharat 2.0?

- The Vande Bharat Express 2.0 offers a myriad of superior and aircraft-like travelling experiences. It is equipped with **advanced state-of-the-art safety features** including an indigenously developed **Train Collision Avoidance System - KAVACH**.
- In the new design of Vande Bharat Express, a **photo-catalytic ultraviolet air purification system** is installed in the Roof-Mounted Package Unit (RMPU) for air purification.

#NEW CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF (CDS)

Recently, the **central government** appointed the former head of eastern command Lt General Anil Chauhan (retired) as the new **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)**.

What is Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)?

- **Background:** Its creation was recommended in 2001 by a **Group of Ministers (GoM)** that was tasked with studying the **Kargil Review Committee (1999) report**.
- After the GoM recommendations, in preparation for the post of CDS, the government created the **Integrated Defence Staff** in 2002, which was to eventually serve as the CDS's Secretariat.



- In 2012, the **Naresh Chandra Committee** recommended the appointment of a Permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee as a midway to eliminate apprehensions over the CDS.
- Finally, the post of **CDS was created in 2019** on the recommendations of a committee of defence experts headed by Lt General DB Shekatkar.
- **General Bipin Rawat** was the first CDS in the country and was appointed on December 31, 2019.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** His core function will be to foster greater operational synergy between the three service branches of the Indian military and keep inter-service frictions to a minimum.
- He also **heads the newly created Department of Military Affairs (DMA)** in the Ministry of Defence.
- The CDS will be the **single-point military adviser to the Defence Minister on matters involving all three services** and the service chiefs will be obliged to confine their counsel to issues pertaining to their respective services. As the head of DMA, CDS is vested with the authority in prioritising inter-service procurement decisions as **Permanent Chairman-Chiefs of Staff Committee**.
- The CDS is also **vested with the authority to provide directives to the three chiefs**. However, he does not enjoy any command authority over any of the forces.

- CDS is **first among equals**, he enjoys the rank of **Secretary within the DoD** (Department of Defence) and his powers will be confined to only the revenue budget.
- He will also perform an advisory role in the **Nuclear Command Authority (NCA)**.

Significance:

- **Synergy between Armed forces and Government:** CDS' role is not simply about **tri-service (Army, Navy and Indian Air Force) cooperation**, it is equally about fostering better cooperation between the Ministry of Defense bureaucracy and the Armed services.
- Since 1947, there have been three Service Headquarters (SHQ) designated as "Attached Offices" of the Department of Defense (DoD). Due to this, communication between SHQ and DoD takes place largely through the medium of files.
- With the creation of CDS as Principal Military Adviser (PMA) to Defense Minister, the process of decision-making will be accelerated.
- **Jointness in operations:** The Chiefs of Staff Committee-COSC (predecessor of CDS), has been dysfunctional because its chairmanship is held by one of the three chiefs on a part-time rotational basis.
- Historically, **the chairman COSC lacked the authority** as well as capacity and inclination to tackle tri-service issues of substance.
- With the CDS now being designated as "permanent chairman of COSC", he will be able to devote undivided attention to the administration of tri-service organisations.
- **Operationalisation of Theatre Command:** Creation of DMA will facilitate the operationalisation of joint/theatre command.
- Although a successful template for joint operations was created in the **Andaman & Nicobar Command**, the lack of political direction and indifference of the COSC has led to inactivity of this joint command.
- Theatre commands would need staff with the knowledge and experience to deploy land, maritime and air forces. Given the disruptive impact of each of these measures, they would best be implemented by the CDS. CDS as a key functionary in the nuclear command chain will also administer the **Strategic Forces Command**.
- This measure will go a long way in enhancing the credibility of India's nuclear deterrent.
- The CDS would also initiate an early review of **India's Nuclear Doctrine**.
- **In the approaching era of dwindling defence budgets**, a crucial function of CDS will be "prioritising" the capital acquisition proposals of individual services.

#BLUE FLAG CERTIFICATION

Recently, the Blue Flag certification has been accorded to two new beaches - **Minicoy Thundi Beach and Kadmat Beach**- both in **Lakshadweep**.

This takes the number of beaches certified under the Blue Flag certification to 12.

What is Blue Flag Certification?

- It is an **internationally recognised eco-label that is accorded based on 33 criterias**. These criterias are divided into **4 major heads namely**,
 - Environmental education and information
 - Bathing water quality
 - Environmental management
 - Conservation and safety services in the beaches
- Blue Flag beaches are **considered the cleanest beaches of the world**. It is an eco-tourism **model endeavouring to provide the tourists/beachgoers clean and hygienic** bathing water, facilities, a safe and healthy environment and sustainable development of the area. It is accorded by the international jury composed of eminent members - **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations**



World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), Denmark-based NGO Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) and **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**. On the lines of Blue Flag certification, India has also launched its own eco-label **BEAMS (Beach Environment & Aesthetics Management Services)**.

Other 10 Beaches which have received the Certification:

- Shivrajpur (Gujarat)
- Ghoghla (Daman & Diu)
- Kasarkod (Karnataka)
- Padubidri beach (Karnataka)
- Kappad (Kerala)
- Rushikonda (Andhra Pradesh)
- Golden beach (Odisha)
- Radhanagar beach (Andaman and Nicobar)
- Kovalam (Tamil Nadu)
- Eden (Puducherry)

What is BEAMS?

Beach Environment & Aesthetics Management Services comes under (Integrated Coastal Zone Management) project.

This was launched by the Society of Integrated Coastal Management (SICOM) and the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

The **objectives of BEAMS program** are to:

- Abate pollution in coastal waters,
- Promote sustainable development of beach facilities,
- Protect & conserve coastal ecosystems & natural resources,
- Strive and maintain high standards of cleanliness,
- Hygiene & safety for beachgoers in accordance with coastal environment & regulations.

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