

# pravahini

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## CURRENT AFFAIRS



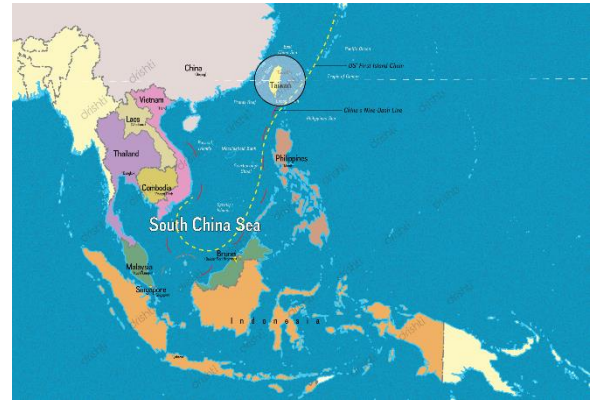
**EASEVIDYA**

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## Ongoing tensions in the South China Sea between the Philippines and China

The Philippines removed a 300-meter floating barrier installed by China near the disputed Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea. This move has escalated tensions in the region.

- China claims a significant portion of the South China Sea, including areas that are far from its own coast. The Philippines has been more assertive in recent months in response to what it perceives as Chinese interference with its shipping vessels in the Scarborough Shoal.
- The **Scarborough Shoal is a triangular reef with a resource-rich lagoon. China seized it from the Philippines in 2012. The recent removal of the barrier by the Philippines was ordered by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.**, potentially risking further tensions with China.
- Malaysia and Indonesia, both of which have disputes with China in the South China Sea, have also sent vessels to the disputed waters for surveying purposes this year.
- The Philippines had previously downplayed tensions with China under former President Rodrigo Duterte. However, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who took office in June 2022, has adopted a different approach. His administration has criticized China's actions while strengthening defense and strategic ties with the United States.
- The Philippines and the United States announced a defence cooperation agreement that allows the U.S. access to 9 Philippine bases. This enhanced cooperation, along with assurances from Washington regarding the mutual defence treaty, seems to have emboldened the Philippines in its disputes with China.



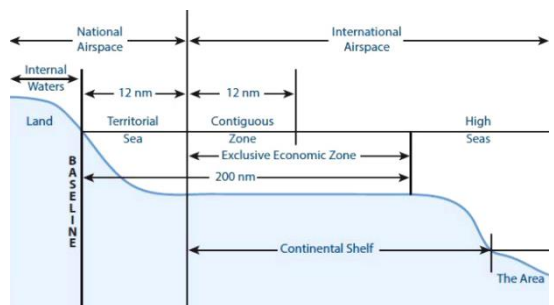
### South China Sea

It is bordered by Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

- It is connected by the Taiwan Strait with the East China Sea and by the Luzon Strait with the Philippine Sea.
- It comprises three archipelagos, namely, the Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, Pratas Islands and Macclesfield's Bank and Scarborough Shoal.

### DISPUTE

- China's territorial claim in the South China Sea is represented by the Nine-Dash Line, which encompasses a vast portion of the sea. This claim is disputed by several neighboring countries.
- Scarborough Shoal (Huangyan Island):** Scarborough Shoal is a disputed feature in the South China Sea claimed by both the Philippines and China (known as Huangyan Island in China).
- Spratly Islands:** The Spratly Islands are a group of islands and reefs in the South China Sea claimed and occupied by multiple countries, including Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, China, and Malaysia.
- Paracel Islands:** The Paracel Islands are another group of islands in the South China Sea subject to overlapping claims, primarily by China, Vietnam, and Taiwan.
- The **Island Chain Strategy is a geopolitical concept, originally developed by the United States during the Cold War in the 1940s**, aimed at deterring the maritime ambitions of both China and the Soviet Union. It involves maintaining a network of military bases and alliances along a chain of strategically located islands in the western Pacific Ocean, with the goal of protecting American interests and regional stability.



### MCQ

- Q1. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982 also known as:
- Law of the Sea Convention or the Law of the Sea Treaty
  - Law of the Maritime Convention
  - Law of the Sea and Maritime boundaries
  - Law of Maritime

**Answer: A.** Law of the Sea Convention or the Law of the Sea Treaty

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982 is an international agreement that establishes the legal framework for marine and maritime activities. It divides marine areas into 5 main zones namely- Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the High Seas.

- Q2. According to UNCLOS, The territorial sea extends seaward up to:

- 12 nautical miles (nm) from its baselines.
- 24 nautical miles (nm) from its baselines.
- 36 nautical miles (nm) from its baselines.
- 200 nautical miles (nm) from its baselines.

**Answer: A.** 12 nautical miles (nm) from its baselines.

**Ruixiang Zhang to receive SASTRA Ramanujan Prize**

The 2023 SASTRA Ramanujan Prize will be awarded to Ruixiang Zhang of the University of California, Berkeley.

- This annual \$10,000 prize is for outstanding contributions by individuals in areas of mathematics influenced by Indian mathematics great Ramanujan (in a broad sense).
- The prize will be awarded at an International Conference in Number Theory on December 20-22 at SASTRA University in Kumbakonam, Ramanujan's hometown.
- SASTRA Ramanujan Prize for 2022 will be awarded to Yunqing Tang, Assistant Professor with the University of California, Berkeley, U.S.A.

**SASTRA Ramanujan Prize**

- The award was instituted by the Shanmugha Arts, Science, and Technology & Research Academy (SASTRA) in 2005.
- A cash prize of USD 10,000 is presented annually to individuals aged 32 and below, who made outstanding contributions in the field of mathematics, influenced by Srinivasa Ramanujan in a broad sense.
- Ramanujan was born on 22nd December 1887 in the village Erode (400 km from Chennai, then known as Madras).
- In India, 22nd December is celebrated as National Mathematics Day in the memory of Srinivasa Ramanujan.
- 1729 is known as the Ramanujan number.
- It is the smallest number which can be expressed as the sum of two different cubes in two different ways.
- 1729 is the sum of the cubes of 10 and 9 - cube of 10 is 1000 and cube of 9 is 729 adding the two numbers results in 1729.
- 1729 is also the sum of the cubes of 12 and 1, cube of 12 is 1728 and cube of 1 is 1 adding the two results in 1729.

**MCQ**

Q 1. A recent movie titled The Man Who Knew Infinity is based on the biography of (2016)

- a) S. Ramanujan                      b) S. Chandrasekhar                      c) S.N. Bose                      d) C.V. Raman

**Ans: A.** 'The Man Who Knew Infinity' is a movie based on the biography of S. Ramanujan (1887-1920), an Indian mathematician, known for his immense contribution in mathematical analysis. He was a fellow of the Royal Society.

**Scientists released the map of "Zealandia", the 8th continent submerged in the Pacific Ocean**

- An international team of geologists and seismologists has created a sophisticated map of 'Zealandia' or 'Te Riu-a-Maui', considered the 'Eighth continent of the world', submerged under the Pacific Ocean.
- Zealandia meets all the requirements to be considered a continent rather than a microcontinent. It was discovered in the year 2017 but this time scientists have released its new map. In this new effort, the research team attempted to refine existing maps of Zealandia by studying a collection of rock and sediment samples brought up from the ocean floor. This included analysis of seismic data from the area. Study of rock samples revealed geologic patterns in West Antarctica indicating the possibility of a subduction zone near the Campbell Plateau near the west coast of New Zealand. 94% of Zealandia is thought to be under the sea - the remaining 6% makes up New Zealand and the surrounding islands.
- A study conducted earlier in 2021 showed that Zealandia is 1 billion years old, almost twice as old as geologists previously thought. About 23 million years ago, the land mass may have been completely submerged. With a total area of about 4,900,000 km<sup>2</sup> (1,900,000 sq mi), Zealandia is much larger than any of the so-called microcontinents and continental fragments. Its area is 6 times the area of the world's next largest continent, Madagascar, and more than half the area of the Australian continent. Zealandia is larger than the Arabian Peninsula (3,237,500 km<sup>2</sup> or 1,250,000 sq mi), the world's largest peninsula, and the Indian subcontinent (4,300,000 km<sup>2</sup> or 1,700,000 sq mi).

**Taiwan unveiled its first domestically built submarine 'Haikun'**

Taiwan, a self-ruled island in East Asia, unveiled its 1st first domestically built submarine, named Haikun, to strengthen its defence against the ongoing threat of a possible Chinese attack.

- President Tsai Ing-wen presided over the launch ceremony in the port city of Kaohsiung.
- It is named Haikun after a mythical giant fish that can fly, which is mentioned in classic Chinese literature.
- The \$1.54 billion (£1.27 billion) diesel-electric powered submarine will undergo multiple trials and be handed over to the Navy by the end of 2024.
- The submarine is being built by Taiwan's CSBC Corp.
- Taiwan aims to operate a fleet of 10 submarines, including two older Dutch-built boats, and equip them with missiles.
- The successful development of Taiwan's submarine program has received support from many countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom. These countries have provided components, technology and talent for the project. Taiwan plans to deploy at least two such domestically developed submarines by 2027.

**Scientists at Kiel University discovered 'PET46', an enzyme that breaks down PET plastic**

A recent study involving scientists from the University of Kiel (Germany) has discovered an enzyme, PET46, in the deep sea that is capable of continuously breaking down PET plastic commonly found in plastic bottles.

- PET46 has unique properties, such as the ability to decompose long chain and short-chain PET molecules, which make it valuable for biotechnology applications.
- This research is part of the PLASTISEA project and highlights the potential for degradation of plastic waste in the ocean and on land.



- At the molecular level, PET46 is similar to another enzyme, ferulic acid esterase. It destroys lignin, the natural polymer in plant cell walls, causing the lignin polymers to break down and release sugars from woody plant parts.
- The biochemical properties of PET46 therefore make it a very interesting enzyme for both marine and terrestrial plastics and biotechnology. PET46 works more efficiently at 70 °C.
- PET Plastic Polyethylene terephthalate is a common type of plastic used to make bottles, containers, and synthetic fibers. It is known for its transparency, mild nature and recyclability.
- PET is widely used for packaging beverages, food and personal care products. Earlier, researchers at the University of Cambridge created a system to convert PET plastic waste and greenhouse gases into sustainable fuels and valuable products using solar energy.

#### **MS Swaminathan, father of Green Revolution in India, passes away in Chennai.**

- Famous agricultural scientist and father of India's Green Revolution, Mankombu Sambasivan Swaminathan alias MS Swaminathan passed away on 28 September 2023 in Chennai at the age of 98.
- Swaminathan saved India from a famine-like situation in the 1960s by bringing about a social revolution through his policies.
- He established the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation and developed high-yield wheat seeds that led to the Green Revolution in India.
- Swaminathan served as Director of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (1961–72), Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Secretary of the Department of Agricultural Research and Education, Government of India (1972–79), Director of the Planning Commission (1980–82) and Director General of International Rice Research Institute, Philippines (1982–88).
- He was awarded the Albert Einstein World Science Prize in 1986, the 1st World Food Prize in 1987, the Tytler Environmental Achievement Award in 1991, and the International Geography Union Medal in 2000. He was also honored with Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan.
- MS Swaminathan Swaminathan was recognized by Time magazine as one of the 20 most influential Asian people of the 20th century and one of only 3 from India, the other two being Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore.
- The United Nations Environment Program described him as the “Father of Economic Ecology” for his leadership of the Evergreen Revolution movement in agriculture.
- Born on August 7, 1925 in Kumbakonam, Mankombu Sambasivan Swaminathan left medical studies and turned to agriculture after witnessing the Great Bengal Famine of 1943.
- In the 1960s, when India was on the brink of mass famine, Swaminathan collaborated with Norman Borlaug and other scientists to develop seeds for a high-yielding variety of wheat.

#### **DELHI'S 15- point winter action plan to fight Air Pollution**

- Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has announced a 15-point action plan to address air pollution in Delhi during the winter months when the city grapples with smog, poor visibility, and deteriorating air quality, primarily due to meteorological conditions and stubble burning.
- Kejriwal described air pollution as a “regional problem” and called on the Central government to convene a meeting of northern states to collaborate on a joint plan to tackle the issue.
- The action plan focuses on various areas, including controlling stubble burning, addressing vehicular pollution, curbing open burning, and tackling dust pollution.
- Special Teams: Special teams will be formed to enforce existing bans, such as the ban on open garbage burning.
- Bio-decomposer: The government will utilize a microbial liquid spray known as a bio-decomposer, developed by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa, to treat paddy stubble. This helps break down stubble so that it can be absorbed into the soil, eliminating the need for burning.
- Air Quality Improvement: Kejriwal mentioned that PM2.5 and PM10 levels in the city had decreased by nearly 30% between 2014 and 2022, indicating an improvement in air quality. PM2.5 and PM10 are fine inhalable particles that can cause respiratory and other health issues.
- Firecracker Ban: To combat the spread of harmful particulate matter, the government has imposed a complete ban on the sale, storage, production, and bursting of firecrackers for the third consecutive year.
- Pollution Hotspots: The government has identified 13 pollution hotspots in Delhi and developed specific action plans for each of them.
- War Room: A war room has been established to monitor the implementation of the action plans, and 13 special teams have been formed for this purpose.
- Garbage Burning Ban: A total of 611 teams have been formed to enforce the existing ban on open garbage burning.
- Dust Control: To control dust pollution on roads, the government plans to deploy 82 mechanical road sweeping machines, 530 water sprinkling machines, and 258 anti-smog guns during the winter months.

#### **EXTENSION OF AFSPA IN MANIPUR**

[Chief Minister N Biren Singh]

- On 27.09.2023, the Manipur government extended the imposition of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in the whole State; except in the jurisdiction of 19 police stations in 7 districts of the Imphal valley for a further period of six months.
- The “Disturbed area” status under the Act will remain applicable in all the hill districts, which are dominated by tribal communities.

- Notably, the areas that have been kept out of the purview of AFSPA are dominated by the majority Meitei community which includes Jiribam, adjacent to Silchar valley of Assam.
- With the extension of AFSPA, the Army and Assam Rifles cannot operate inside the areas under the 19 police stations without the consent of the state police.
- The police station areas where the Disturbed Areas Act has not been imposed are Imphal, Lamphel, City, Singjamei, Sekmai, Lamsang, Pastol, Wangoi, Porompat, Heingagng, Lamlai, Iribung, Leimakhong, Thoubal, Bishnupur, Nambol, Moirang, Kakchin and Jiribam.
- Meiteis account for about 53% of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal valley, while tribals, including Nagas and Kukis, constitute 40% and reside mostly in the hill districts.
- However, since 2022, the AFSPA has been gradually withdrawn from the valley districts, which are dominated by the Meitei community, due to a "significant improvement" in the security situation.
- The State government's notification maintaining this "status quo" is applicable from **October 1**.
- It comes despite the Army's demand for the re-imposition of AFSPA in the valley districts, arguing that its absence had hampered operations against insurgent groups.
- After a lull of many years, these groups are said to have regained a foothold in the State during the current wave of ethnic violence. Mostly operating from Myanmar, they advocate the secession of Manipur from India.
- The National Investigation Agency (NIA) had registered a *suo motu* case on July 19 to investigate a transnational conspiracy by the Myanmar-based leadership of these terror outfits to wage a war against the government by "exploiting the current ethnic unrest".
- The State government is now mulling a "one district, one force" deployment of security forces, for better operations. Other than the State police, around 40,000 Central security forces, including the Army, have been deployed in the State.
- The **AFSPA 1958** gives unbridled power to the Army and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) deployed in "disturbed areas" **to kill anyone acting in contravention of the law; to arrest people and search any premises without a warrant; and protection from prosecution and legal suits without the Union government's sanction.**
- Both the State and Union governments can issue notifications regarding AFSPA. Currently, the **Union Ministry of Home Affairs has issued "disturbed area" notifications only for Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.**
- The notifications for **Manipur and Assam have been issued by their respective State governments.**

#### AFSPA 1958:

- It was known initially as the Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Act, 1958.
- The AFSPA gives unfettered powers to the armed forces and the Central armed police forces deployed in "disturbed areas" to kill anyone acting in contravention of law and arrest and search any premises without a warrant and with protection from prosecution and legal suits.
- The law first came into effect in 1958 to deal with the uprising in the Naga.
- The Act was amended in 1972 and the powers to declare an area as "disturbed" were conferred concurrently upon the Central government along with the States.
- Tripura revoked the Act in 2015 and Meghalaya was under AFSPA for 27 years, until it was revoked by the MHA from 1st April 2018.
- Currently AFSPA is in some parts of Assam, Nagaland, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.
- In November 2004, the Central government appointed a five-member committee headed by Justice B P Jeevan Reddy to review the provisions of the act in the northeastern states.
- Committee recommended that AFSPA should be repealed and appropriate provisions should be inserted in the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.
- The 5th report of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) on public order has also recommended the repeal of the AFSPA. However, these recommendations have not been implemented.
- The Supreme Court has upheld the constitutionality of AFSPA in a 1998 judgment (Naga People's Movement of Human Rights v. Union of India).

#### MCQ

**Q1.** Under which section of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958, Governor of that State or the Administrator of that Union Territory or the Central Government may declare the whole or such part of such State or Union territory to be a disturbed area.

- a) Section 6                                      b) Section 4                                      c) Section 7                                      d) Section 3

**Answers: D.** Section 3 Powers to declare areas to be disturbed areas.

**Q2.** The High Court of Guwahati, in which of the following case, observed that in case of arrest of any person, army authority is duty bound to handover to the officer-in-charge of the nearest police station with least possible delay.

- a) Horendi Gogoi v. Union of India                                      b) Smt. Luithukla v. Rishang Keishing & Ors.  
c) Inderjit Barua v. State of Assam                                      d) Naga People's Movement of Human Rights v. Union of India

**Answer: A.**

**Q3.** Recently, the State Assembly of which state, has passed the unanimous resolution to repeal AFSPA from the north east states.

- a) Manipur                                      b) Nagaland                                      c) Arunachal Pradesh                                      d) Meghalaya

**Answer: B.** The Nagaland Assembly, in a special session, had “unanimously resolved” to demand the Government of India to repeal the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 from the North East, specifically from Nagaland.

**Q4.** The Union Govt, in June 2020, declared the whole area of which state as disturbed area and extended the AFSPA for a further period of 6 months.

- a) Nagaland                      b) Assam                      c) Manipur                      d) Mizoram

**Answer: A.** The Central Government has declared the whole of the State of Nagaland to be a “disturbed area” to extend the operation of Armed Forces (Special Power) Act [AFSPA] in the state for a further period of six months with effect from 30th June, 2020.

### Joshimath's Temple Sinking

- The year began on a calamitous note with reports that the temple town of Joshimath in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand was ‘sinking’ and that cracks had appeared on residential and commercial structures.
- This prompted a humanitarian crisis with people fleeing and taking refuge in tents and open spaces, fearing that their homes would crumble.
- A proximate reason for the acceleration in the fissures and cracks was attributed to tunneling activities from the **Tapovan Vishnugad power project being developed by the National Thermal Power Corporation**. There were also concerns on whether groundwater depletion, or increased urbanisation that encouraged faulty construction, had reached a point from which disasters had become inevitable.
- To address all these, the Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority had commissioned eight reputed institutions to study the land subsidence phenomenon from multiple angles. Surprisingly, it banned the public dissemination of information from scientists involved with the institutions on the grounds that satellite imagery pictures – from Indian and international sources – of the subsurface in Uttarakhand were aggravating “panic” and that information was to be shared only after it was “cleared” by the Centre.
- The net result of this is that despite reports of all institutions being available for months, it took a strong rebuke from the High Court of Uttarakhand last week for the State authorities to make this information public.
- Though these **reports** are technical, they **reiterate** what has been known about the **risks underlying infrastructure development in Uttarakhand**. The **Central Building Research Institute, Roorkee**, for instance, pointed out that **99% of construction in the region did not comply with the mandatory building codes**. The **National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee**, in its **report**, said that the **network of springs, drainage systems and areas of subsidence may influence land subsidence and there was a need to monitor them**. Overall, **the tenuous geology made city-like infrastructure projects risky and strict town planning and construction measures were necessary to minimize the risk from accidents and a loss of lives**.
- The Border Roads Organization (BRO) is employing large machinery to construct a Helang bypass, which will cut the journey to the Badrinath shrine by around 30 kilometers. According to experts, this development beneath the tectonic activity may cause more landslides. The Mishra Commission had cautioned against substantial building in the vicinity of Joshimath in its 1976 report.
- A report from the 1976 Mishra Commission noted the first case of sinking in Joshimath, which is situated in a region vulnerable to landslides. The town is located on the middle slopes of a hill that is bordered on the west and east by the Karmanasa and Dhaknala streams and on the south and north by the Dhauliganga and Alaknanda rivers.
- Dhaknala, Karmanasa, Patalganga, Belakuchi and Garurganga are just a few of the streams that have their beginnings in the Central Himalayan region near Kunwari Pass. While the others empty into the Alaknanda, the first is a tributary of the Dhauliganga. Due to the flash floods that followed their blockage by landslides, these streams are infamous for the destruction they have previously inflicted.
- The most recent satellite data shows that mountain streams have altered their courses and extended their channels, adding to an already vulnerable belt's slope instability. This is evidence of the influence of significant rainfall events.
- Joshimath is extremely prone to sinking due to tectonic activity because it is on a fault line and close to two other ones. A geological fault line called the Vaikrita Thrust (VT) almost touches Joshimath. Additionally, the Main Central Thrust (MCT) and Pandukeshwar Thrust (PT), two major geological faults, are relatively near the town. Joshimath Village is placed within the effect zone of any tectonic activity on MCT as it passes beneath Helang, a small town to the south of Joshimath Town, and juxtaposes with the rocks of the Garhwal Group.
- A necessary step is in ensuring that information on the risks is widely disseminated and communicated in a way that it becomes a part and parcel of public life. Independent scientific counsel must form the backbone of policymaking and clear lines must be drawn around the limits to development in the region.



### MCQ

**Q1.** What is the proximate reason for the acceleration in fissures and cracks in Joshimath, Uttarakhand?

- a) Groundwater depletion                      b) Increased urbanization  
c) Tunneling activities from the Tapovan Vishnugad power project                      d) Heavy rainfall events

**Answer: C.** Tunneling activities from the Tapovan Vishnugad power project



**[Pending judicial appointments and transfers]  
[Advocates Association Bengaluru Vs. Barun Mitra And Anr.]  
[Bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Sudhanshu Dhulia]**

**70 HC collegium recommendations are pending for over 10 months, says Justice Kaul**

The Supreme Court has expressed concern over the delay in judicial appointments and transfers, which has resulted in the loss of talented legal professionals who were willing to join the Bench.

The Bench noted that many prospective candidates shortlisted for judgeships in the High Courts have given up their aspirations as months pass without a decision from the government on their appointments.

Justice Kaul raised the issue that the government appears to be segregating names of candidates recommended for judgeships by High Court collegiums without providing clear reasons for their preferences. This has led to the withdrawal of some promising candidates who were initially willing to sacrifice their law practice to become judges. Justice Kaul mentioned that the Bench has lost good talent due to this segregation.

He also highlighted that there are 70 names recommended for judgeships by High Court collegiums that have been pending with the government for over 10 months since November 2022. These delays have resulted in 70 vacant posts for High Court judges. Furthermore, Justice Kaul pointed out that there has been no communication from the government regarding 26 transfers recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium. The Memorandum of Procedure mandates that the government appoint names reiterated by the Collegium without undue delay.

Senior advocate Arvind Datar and advocate Amit Pai, representing the petitioner, Advocates Association of Bengaluru, expressed their concern about the practice of segregating names from the collegium's list, calling it embarrassing. Advocate Prashant Bhushan noted that the government was segregating names despite the collegium's prohibition on such practices and suggested that it might be time for the court to take action for contempt of its directives.

The Attorney-General, R. Venkataramani, requested a week's time to inquire about the status of pending appointments and transfers. The court granted him until October 9, the next date of the hearing, to address the issues related to pending judicial appointments and transfers. Justice Kaul specifically mentioned the pending recommendation of appointing Justice Siddharth Mridul as the Chief Justice of the Manipur High Court, which is awaiting action from the government.

### Collegium System

The Collegium system for the appointment and transfer of judges in India has evolved through judicial pronouncements by the Supreme Court and is not governed by an Act of Parliament or a provision of the Constitution.

- Constitutional Provisions: Articles 124(2) and 217 of the Indian Constitution deal with the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court and High Courts, respectively.

### Evolution of the Collegium system:

- **First Judges Case (1981):** It established that the Chief Justice of India's recommendation on judicial appointments and transfers can be refused by the Executive for "cogent reasons" giving the Executive primacy for the next 12 years.
- **Second Judges Case (1993):** The Supreme Court introduced the Collegium system, emphasizing that "consultation" actually meant "concurrence." It clarified that the CJI's opinion is not individual but institutional, formed in consultation with the 2 senior-most judges in the Supreme Court.
- **Third Judges Case (1998):** The Supreme Court expanded the Collegium to a 5-member body, comprising the CJI and 4 of his senior-most colleagues.
- Appointment of Supreme Court Judge: 4 senior-most judges of the Supreme court
- Appointment of High Court Judge: 2 senior-most judges of the Supreme court
- Transfer of High Court Judge: 4 senior-most judges of the Supreme Court along with the judges of the two High Courts in concern.

### Composition of Collegiums:

- Supreme Court Collegium: Headed by the CJI and includes the 4 other senior-most judges of the Supreme Court.
- High Court Collegium: Led by the incumbent Chief Justice of the High Court and includes the 2 other senior-most judges of that High Court.

### Appointment Process:

- CJI: The President of India appoints the CJI and other SC judges. The outgoing CJI typically recommends his successor based on seniority.
- SC Judges: For other SC judges, the proposal is initiated by the CJI. The CJI consults with other Collegium members and the senior-most judge from the recommended judge's High Court. Opinions are recorded in writing.
- Chief Justice of High Courts: Appointed based on the policy of having Chief Justices from outside the respective States. The Collegium decides on the elevation, and the outgoing Chief Justice of the High Court initiates the proposal.



- **Role of the Government:** Judges of the higher judiciary are appointed only through the Collegium system, and the government's role comes into play after the Collegium has decided on the names.
- **Attempt to Replace Collegium System:** The attempt to replace the Collegium System with a 'National Judicial Appointments Commission' (through the 99th Amendment Act, 2014) was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2015 on the grounds that it posed a threat to the independence of the judiciary.

### MCQ

**Q1.** Which of the statements given below is/are correct?

1. The Supreme Court of India struck down the 99th Amendment to the Constitution of India as being violative of the independence of judiciary.
  2. The 44th Amendment to the Constitution of India introduced an Article placing the election of the Prime Minister beyond judicial review.
- a) 1 only                      b) 2 only                      c) Both 1 and 2                      d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: A.** 1 only

The 39th Constitutional Amendment in 1975 removed the authority of the Supreme Court to decide petitions regarding elections of the President, Vice-President, Prime Minister, and Speaker of the Lok Sabha. This power was vested in a body constituted by Parliament. The Supreme Court struck down the NJAC Act because it was deemed to impinge upon the principles of the "independence of the judiciary" and the "separation of powers."

**Q2.** By whom can the judges of the High Court be removed from their office even before the expiry of their term on the ground of incapacity or proved misbehavior?

- a) By the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.
- b) By the prime minister.
- c) By the President on the recommendations of the two Houses of Parliament.
- d) By the Prime Minister and the Vice President.

**Answer: C.** [Article 124(4)] The judges of the High Court in India can be removed from their office even before the expiry of their term on the ground of incapacity or proved misbehavior by the President on the recommendations of the two Houses of Parliament.

**Q3.** By whom are the district judges appointed in the state?

- a) Governor
- b) By Chief Minister
- c) By the prime minister
- d) By the president

**Answer: A.** The Governor acts on the advice of the State High Court, which has the authority to conduct examinations and interviews to recommend candidates for appointment as district judges.

**Q4.** Which of the following is a qualification required to be appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court of India?

- a) Citizen of India
- b) Must have been, for at least 5 years, a Judge of a High Court or of 2 or more such Courts in succession
- c) or an Advocate of a High Court or of 2 or more such Courts in succession for at least 10 years
- d) Either A & B Or A & C

**Answer: D**

The qualifications required to be appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court of India are as follows:

- The candidate must be a citizen of India.
- The candidate must have Either of the following qualifications:
- Must have been, for at least 5 years, a Judge of a High Court or of 2 or more such Courts in succession.

OR

- Must have been an Advocate of a High Court or of 2 or more such Courts in succession for at least 10 years.

**Q5.** The Concept of "Stare Decisis" Implies:

- a) Deciding in favor of the government
- b) Let the decision stand
- c) Deciding without any precedent
- d) Deciding in favor of the accused

**Answer: B.** The concept of "Stare Decisis" implies "Let the decision stand." It is a legal principle that suggests that courts should generally adhere to precedent and make decisions that are consistent with previous rulings.

### Dadasaheb Phalke award for actor Waheeda Rehman

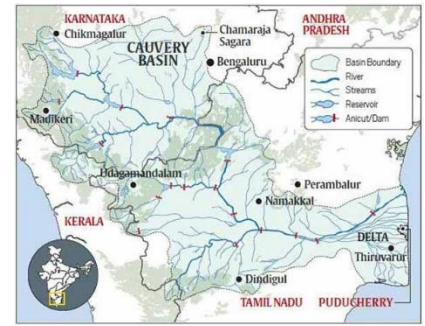
Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur announced that veteran Bollywood actor Waheeda Rehman would be given the Dadasaheb Phalke Lifetime Achievement Award for 2021, honouring her stellar contribution to Indian cinema.

- Waheeda Rehman is regarded as one of India's finest actors and is best known for her roles in films like "Pyaasa", "CID", "Guide", "Kaagaz Ke Phool", "Khamoshi" and "Trishul".
- Waheeda Rehman made her acting debut with the 1955 Telugu films "Rojulu Marayi" and "Jayasimha".

## Cauvery water conundrum

CWRC directs Karnataka to release 3,000 cusecs of water to T.N. till Oct. 15

- Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC), at its meeting in New Delhi on 26.09.2023, decided that Karnataka should release water at the rate of 3,000 cubic feet per second (cusecs) to Tamil Nadu from September 28 to October 15.
- The 15 -day spell of 5,000 cusecs, determined by the CWRC during its meeting on September 12, is coming to an end on 27.09.2023.
- As in the past, the revised quantity of 3,000 cusecs has to be released at Biligundlu on the Inter- State border.



The Supreme Court of India chose not to interfere with the order of the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA), which directed Karnataka to release 5,000 cubic feet of water per second (cusecs) to Tamil Nadu until September 27. This decision reflects a deference to the expertise of the CWMA in managing water resources.

- The CWMA's directive mandated Karnataka to maintain the discharge of 5,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu for an additional 15 days. However, officials have stated that there is an insufficient water supply available for this release.
- Karnataka had challenged the order, citing a 53% shortfall in inflows to its reservoirs due to a weak southwest monsoon, and argued that it couldn't release the stipulated amount of water for 15 more days.
- Despite pressure and protests, Karnataka complied with the CWMA's order.
- Tamil Nadu had earlier approached the Supreme Court in August 2023 to seek directions for water release from Karnataka's reservoirs to meet its water requirements for August and September.
- The CWMA order is applicable until September 27, and the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) is scheduled to meet on September 26 to reevaluate the situation.
- Disputes over water-sharing between these states tend to resurface in years of deficient monsoon rainfall, emphasizing the need for a regular formula to allocate water during such times.
- During years of abundant rainfall, Karnataka is usually able to release water without issues. However, in deficit years, the states often turn to the courts for resolution.

### SUGGESTIONS:

- Instead of annual adjudication and litigation, the CWMA should work on developing a permanent formula for assessing water deficits in a given year. This formula should consider factors like rainfall, inflows, and storage.
- The two states, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, have different views on how to assess deficits, making it crucial for the CWMA and CWRC to come up with an acceptable and equitable formula.
- While neither state may be entirely satisfied with the CWMA's orders, politics should yield to domain expertise when determining water allocations.
- Importance of expert bodies like the CWMA and CWRC in managing water resources and calls for the development of a permanent and equitable formula for sharing water during deficit years to reduce the need for frequent legal disputes.
- The ongoing protests in the Mandya region of Karnataka have been triggered by the Supreme Court's refusal Thursday to interfere with the Cauvery Water Management Authority's (CWMA) direction to the state to release 5,000 cusecs of water per day for 15 days to neighbouring Tamil Nadu.
- Cauvery, also known as the 'Dakshin Ganga', is the 4th largest river of southern India. It has been considered as the economic backbone of the states through which it flows, making its impact felt most strongly in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

### Historical Context:

- The origins of the Cauvery water dispute date back 150 years, primarily stemming from two arbitration agreements in 1892 and 1924 between the then Madras presidency and the princely state of Mysore (now Karnataka). These agreements established the principle that the upper riparian state (Karnataka) must obtain consent from the lower riparian state (Tamil Nadu) for any construction activities like reservoirs on the Cauvery river.
- The dispute over the Cauvery river's waters can be traced back to the 11th century AD when various dynasties in the region contested for control of the river's resources. However, the modern dispute primarily revolves around the allocation of water between the Indian states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- British Colonial Period: During British colonial rule, an agreement was reached in 1924 between the princely state of Mysore (now part of Karnataka) and the presidency of Madras (now part of Tamil Nadu). This agreement allowed Mysore to construct a dam in Kannambadi village for the storage of 44.8 thousand million cubic feet of water, with a review scheduled to take place after 50 years.
- Post-Independence Disputes: After India gained independence in 1947, the Cauvery river water dispute continued to simmer, and both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu brought the matter to the Supreme Court of India multiple times. Despite legal interventions, no lasting resolution was achieved.
- Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT): In 1990, the Indian government established the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) to address the ongoing conflict over the river's waters. This tribunal was set up with the aim of settling water disputes not only between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu but also involving the neighboring states of Kerala and Puducherry.

- CWDT's Temporary Directives: The CWDT issued temporary directives, mandating the release of 205 million cubic feet of water from Karnataka to Tamil Nadu on a monthly or weekly basis. These directives were intended to provide some interim relief while the tribunal conducted a thorough examination of the issue.
- The Cauvery river water dispute has been a deeply emotional and politically charged issue, leading to widespread protests and tensions in both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. It highlights the challenges in managing water resources in a country as diverse and populous as India, where multiple states depend on the same river for their agricultural and drinking water needs. The dispute underscores the importance of finding equitable and sustainable solutions to water-sharing conflicts to ensure the well-being of all stakeholders involved.
- 1974 Conflict: The dispute in its modern form emerged in 1974 when Karnataka initiated water diversion without Tamil Nadu's consent, leading to heightened tensions.
- Water Allocation: The CWDT's final award in 2007 specified water allocations among the four states in the Cauvery basin. In a normal year, the allocations were as follows: Tamil Nadu - 404.25 TMC, Karnataka - 284.75 TMC, Kerala - 30 TMC, and Puducherry - 7 TMC.
- Supreme Court Intervention: In 2018, the Supreme Court of India declared the Cauvery river a national asset and largely upheld the water-sharing arrangements determined by the CWDT. The Court also directed the Central Government to notify the Cauvery Management Scheme.
- Cauvery Management Scheme: The Central Government notified the 'Cauvery Water Management Scheme' in June 2018, which established the 'Cauvery Water Management Authority' and the 'Cauvery Water Regulation Committee.' These bodies are responsible for implementing and regulating the sharing of Cauvery river waters among the concerned states and Union Territory.
- The Cauvery water dispute remains a significant and ongoing issue in India, requiring careful management and cooperation among the involved parties to ensure equitable distribution of water resources and address the needs of all stakeholders in the region.

#### River Cauvery (Kaveri):

- Origin: Tarakaveli, Kodagu district, Karnataka, in the Bramagiri hills of the Western Ghats.
- It is known as 'Ponni' in Tamil and is a sacred river of southern India.
- It rises on Brahmagiri Hill of the Western Ghats in southwestern Karnataka state, flows in a southeasterly direction through the states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, and descends the Eastern Ghats in a series of great falls and drains into Bay of Bengal through Pondicherry.
- Left Bank Tributary: Arkavathi, Hemavathi, Shimsa, and Harangi.
- Right Bank Tributary: Lakshmantirtha, Suvarnavati, Noyil, Bhavani, Kabini, and Amaravathi.

**Q1.** Which of the following Protected Areas are located in the Cauvery basin?

1. Nagarhole National Park
2. Papikonda National Park
3. Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve
4. Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1, 3 and 4 only      b) 3 and 4 only      c) 1, 2, 3 and 4      d) 1 and 2 only

**Answer: A.** Nagarhole National Park, Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve, and Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary are located in the Cauvery basin.

**Q2.** Which of the statements given below is / are correct.

1. Article 262 of the constitution empowers the state legislatures to make laws for the adjudication of inter-state water disputes.
2. The Inter-State Water Disputes Act 1956 was enacted to deal with inter-state water disputes.
3. The Government of India can constitute a tribunal to hear the disputes concerning claims of water sharing.
4. The members of the tribunal are appointed by the Chief justices of India.

- a) 1, 3 & 4 only      b) 1, 2 & 3 only      c) 2, 3 & 4 only      d) All of the above

**Answer: C.**

**Q3.** Which of the following Inter-State water disputes tribunals is not correct.

- a) Tungabhadra Water Dispute Tribunal (1979-1984)      b) Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (1969-1976)  
c) Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (1969-1979)      d) Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (1990-2007)

**Answer: A.** Tungabhadra Water Dispute Tribunal (1979-1984).

The Tungabhadra Water Disputes Tribunal was constituted in 1956 and submitted its report in 1976, not from 1979 to 1984.

**Q4.** The Cauvery river dispute Primarily involves the states of Tamil Nadu, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

- a) Punjab, Haryana      b) Kerala, Karnataka      c) Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh      d) Puducherry, lakshadweep

**Answer: B.** The Cauvery river dispute primarily involves the states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala.

**Q5.** What did the Supreme Court of India declare in 2018 regarding the Cauvery river?

- a) It declared the river a national asset      b) It upheld Karnataka's exclusive rights to the river  
c) It ruled in favor of Kerala's water allocation demands      d) It dissolved the Cauvery Water Management Authority

**Answer: A.** It declared the river a national asset

## Moody's Report on Aadhaar

[Centre rebuffs Moody's Aadhaar report; says a billion Indians trust it, no breach of database]

The Electronics and IT Ministry has responded to a report from Moody's Investors Service that raised concerns about the efficacy of Aadhaar, India's unique identification system. The Ministry asserted that there have been no reported breaches of the Aadhaar database to date and criticized Moody's for what it saw as baseless opinions.

- **Global Recognition:** The Ministry highlighted that international agencies such as the IMF and the World Bank have praised Aadhaar. Many nations have also engaged with India's UIDAI to explore the implementation of similar digital ID systems.
- **Biometric Authentication:** **Moody's report criticized Aadhaar's biometric authentication systems, claiming they often result in service denials and are unreliable in hot and humid conditions.**
  - The Ministry countered by stating that the seeding of Aadhaar in certain databases, like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), does not require biometric authentication. Payments under the scheme are made directly into workers' accounts, eliminating the need for biometric verification.
- **Alternative Authentication Methods:** The Ministry pointed out that Aadhaar offers alternative means of biometric submission, such as face authentication and iris authentication. Additionally, mobile OTP (One-Time Passcode) is available in many use cases, providing flexibility and accessibility.
- **Security and Privacy Protections:** The Ministry rebuffed concerns about security and privacy vulnerabilities in a centralized Aadhaar system. It noted that privacy protections are enshrined in the law governing Aadhaar and are supported by robust technological and organizational measures.
- **Lack of Supporting Data:** The Ministry criticized Moody's for making sweeping assertions without citing any evidence or basis for its claims. It noted that the report did not attempt to verify the issues raised with the UIDAI.
- **The Electronics and IT Ministry defended Aadhaar's reputation as the most trusted digital ID system globally and refuted the criticisms raised in the Moody's report. They argued that Aadhaar's track record, global recognition, and privacy protections demonstrate its effectiveness and reliability.**
- **Moody's Investors Service has recently raised questions regarding the reliability of Aadhaar, specifically concerning biometric technology's effectiveness in India's hot and humid climate. The agency also noted that Aadhaar has often led to service denials, further questioning the system's security and privacy safeguards.**
- **Moody's Investors Service has raised concerns about security and privacy vulnerabilities in centralized identification systems like India's Aadhaar program. According to Moody's, the Aadhaar system often leads to "service denials," and the use of biometric technologies in hot and humid conditions is considered unreliable.**
- **Service Denials:** Moody's noted that the Aadhaar system frequently results in service denials, which can create challenges for users attempting to access public and private services.
- **Biometric Reliability:** The report raised concerns about the reliability of biometric technologies, especially for manual labourers working in hot and humid climates. This reliability issue can potentially hinder the effectiveness of the Aadhaar system.
- **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI):** Moody's acknowledged that UIDAI administers Aadhaar with the aim of integrating marginalized groups and expanding access to welfare benefits. However, it expressed reservations about the program's performance.
- **Government Adoption:** The rating agency's remarks are significant because the Indian government has adopted Aadhaar for routing direct benefit transfers to beneficiaries of official welfare schemes. This includes the mandate to use Aadhaar-based payments for laborers participating in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).
- **Extension of Deadline:** The government has extended the deadline for transitioning to Aadhaar-based payment systems for MGNREGS beneficiaries several times, with the latest extension pushing the deadline to December 31 of the current year.
- **Aadhaar's Scale:** Moody's recognized Aadhaar as "the world's largest digital ID program," assigning unique identification numbers to over 1.2 billion Indian residents.

**MCQ**

Q1. In which of the following case/s, the Supreme Court held that Right to Privacy is fundamental rights enshrined under Article 21 of Constitution of India.

- a) Sajjan singh vs state of madras  
b) K.S. Puttaswamy vs Union of India  
c) Minerva Mills case  
d) D.K. Basu vs state of West Bengal

**Answer: B.** The Supreme Court of India held that the Right to Privacy is a fundamental right enshrined under Article 21 of the Constitution of India in the case of “K.S. Puttaswamy vs Union of India.” This landmark judgment was delivered on August 24, 2017

**Q2.** In the United States, which constitutional amendment is often cited in cases related to the Right to Privacy, especially regarding issues like abortion and contraception?

- a) First Amendment                      b) Fourth Amendment                      c) Ninth Amendment                      d) Fourteenth Amendment

**Answer: D.** Fourteenth Amendment

**Q3.** Which of the following aspects is NOT typically covered under the Right to Privacy?

- a) Personal liberty                      b) Data protection                      c) Freedom of speech                      d) Bodily autonomy

**Answer: C. Freedom of speech**



- Q4.** What is the primary concern raised by Moody's regarding the reliability of biometric technologies used in the Aadhaar system?
- They are too expensive to implement.
  - They are too reliable in all conditions.
  - They may not work well for manual laborers in hot and humid climates.
  - They are too slow in processing authentication requests.

**Answer: C.** They may not work well for manual laborers in hot and humid climates.

- Q5.** How many Indian residents have unique identification numbers assigned through Aadhaar, according to Moody's?

- Approximately 120 million
- Over 1.2 billion
- Less than 10 million
- Around 500 million

**Answer: B.** Over 1.2 billion

- Q6.** What alternative means of biometric submission does Aadhaar offer, as mentioned in the passage?

- Voice recognition and fingerprint scanning
- Face authentication and iris authentication
- Palm print scanning and retinal scanning
- Earlobe recognition and handprint scanning

**Answer: B.** Face authentication and iris authentication

- Q7.** Moody's Investors Service is known for evaluating the creditworthiness of:

- Individuals seeking personal loans
- Corporations and governments seeking to issue debt
- Real estate properties for rental purposes
- Stock market performance

**Answer: B.** Corporations and governments seeking to issue debt

- Q8.** Moody's credit ratings typically range from:

- A to Z
- 1 to 100
- AAA to D
- Red to Green

**Answer: C.** AAA to D

- Q9.** Moody's Investors Service is headquartered in:

- New York City, USA
- London, United Kingdom
- Tokyo, Japan
- Dubai, United Arab Emirates

**Answer: A.** New York City, USA

### [One nation One pole]

### Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries

#### Simultaneous polls — but only in a presidential system

A fresh attempt is being made by the Narendra Modi government to veer towards one nation one poll, which would mean that all State elections are held simultaneously with the general election to the Lok Sabha.

In order to kickstart this process, one would need to curtail the term of the Assemblies in several States, whose terms have not ended at the time the Lok Sabha election is to take place.

There is a deeper problem in implementing one nation one poll. In the present parliamentary system of India's democracy, at both the central and State levels, since the survival of the government is dependent on its enjoying the confidence of the majority of the house (majorities can change mid-term because of splits in parties, defections or even if some Members of Parliament/Members of the Legislative Assemblies from the ruling party refusing to support the government) the government can fall mid-term thus leading to mid-term elections.

However, in one nation one poll you cannot have midterm elections if the rest of the States and the Centre have to go to the polls together. Therefore, the only option would be to either continue with a minority government headed by a Chief Minister/Prime Minister who has lost the confidence of the House or to impose President's rule for the rest of the term.

Both these options would be undemocratic as it would mean that the government rules the Centre/States without enjoying the confidence of the majority of the House. This will defeat the essence of democracy in a parliamentary system.

One nation One poll is possible only if we switch to a presidential form of government where the government is run by a directly elected President/Governor who does not need to enjoy the confidence of the majority of the House. This happens in countries such as the United States. In those countries, there is also a clear line of succession laid down for the President/Governor. If the President dies mid-term, the Vice-President and thereafter the Speaker becomes the President for the remainder of the term. Such a presidential system can have one nation one poll without compromising the essence of a democracy.

There were some suggestions that one nation one poll can happen even in a parliamentary democracy by ensuring that when a government loses the confidence of the majority of the House by a no confidence motion, such a no-confidence motion must be accompanied with a confidence motion in an alternative government. This will ensure that some government or the other continues for the remainder of the term. However, the problem here is that the legislators may not have confidence in an alternative government if they feel that a substantial number of Members of the House have lost the confidence of the people. Therefore, the will of the people about the government can only be determined by fresh elections.

If one provides that a no confidence motion has to be accompanied by a confidence motion in an alternate government, we may have a situation of a government continuing in office which effectively has lost the confidence of the majority of the members. It will not be able to pass legislation or even money Bills and finance Bills, without which it will become difficult to run the government.

These suggestions are impractical if we continue with parliamentary democracy in a one nation one poll system.

**The provisions of the Constitution that would need to be amended to switch to an essentially presidential system would be:**

Part V – The Union – Chapter I – Executive – Articles 52--78 and Chapter III – Legislative Powers of the President.

Part VI – The States – Chapter II – The Executive – Articles 153--167

Chapter IV – Legislative Power of the Governor Introduction of the presidential system would also require amendments to include several new provisions within the Constitution regarding the powers of the President, the Governors, the Council of Ministers, and provisions relating to the line of succession.

Some people feel that parliamentary democracy in India is part of the basic structure of the Constitution. Though the Constitution-makers had discussed the issue of a parliamentary versus presidential form of government at some length in the Constituent Assembly, they, for good reason, adopted the parliamentary system in a diverse country such as India.

Democracy is certainly a part of the basic structure, and is consistent with the presidential form. One cannot say that the American system is not democratic. Some people also feel that the presidential system would be antithetical to a federal country. But that is not the case either. The United States is a federal country, with its States enjoying vast powers even within a presidential form.

The devolution of powers to the States or to the lower tiers of government such as municipalities, and panchayats will not depend on whether the system is presidential or parliamentary.

In a presidential system, the power of the government is concentrated in one directly elected person whether he is the President of the country or the Governor of the State rather than being in the hands of multiple legislators.

This is probably a reason why the Constitution-framers chose a parliamentary rather than a presidential form since they did not want executive power to be in the hands of one person alone, especially in a diverse country such as India.

The Opposition, i.e., The INDIA alliance has indicated that it does not support this move.

The ruling party is staring at defeat in almost all these States and do not want to go to the general election on the back of a defeat. However, even postponing these elections in five states till April--May 2024 would involve constitutional issues. For instance, Article 172(1) states that a Legislative Assembly of a state, unless sooner dissolved, 'shall continue for five years from the date appointed for its first meeting and no longer and the expiration of the said period of five years shall operate as a dissolution of the Assembly'.

Perhaps what the ruling party may be wanting is to impose President's rule in these five States by exercising powers under Article 356 of the Constitution and then get a pliant Election Commission of India to toe the government's line to postpone the Assembly elections until the general election to the Lok Sabha.

Though the Supreme Court of India has held that the Election Commission of India has a leeway of up to six months to hold the elections after the dissolution of the Assembly (in Re Special Reference Case 1 of 2002), the justification of using that leeway merely because a committee is again considering the idea of one nation one poll would be a mala fide decision, and thus liable to be struck down by the courts.

#### MCQ:

1. The Idea of One Nation One Election in India was first given in the year of:

- a) 1991                                      b) 1999                                      c) 2006                                      d) 1973

Answer: B. The idea of conducting simultaneous elections was advocated in 1999 by the Law Commission headed by BP Jeevan Reddy.

However, until 1967, simultaneous elections were the norm in India. The 1st General Elections of Lok Sabha and all State Legislative Assemblies were held simultaneously in 1951-52. That practice continued in 3 subsequent General Elections held in the years 1957, 1962 and 1967. However, due to the premature dissolution of some Legislative Assemblies in 1968 and 1969, the cycle got disrupted. In 1970, the Lok Sabha was itself dissolved prematurely and fresh elections were held in 1971. Thus, the First, Second and Third Lok Sabha enjoyed full five-year terms. As a result of premature dissolutions and extension of terms of both the Lok Sabha and various State Legislative Assemblies, there have been separate elections to Lok Sabha and States Legislative Assemblies, and the cycle of simultaneous elections has been disturbed.

2. At present, which states legislative assembly elections are held together with the election of house of people elections in india.

- a) Manipur, Meghalay, Tripura and Mizoram                                      b) Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Manipur, Telangana  
c) Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim                                      d) Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

Answer c): Currently, the assembly polls in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha are held together with the Lok Sabha elections.

3. Which Article/s of the Indian Constitution stated that the tenure of House of People and state legislative elections will be held after five years.

- a) Article 83(2) and 172    b) Article 81(3) and 169                                      c) Article 79(2) and 172(1)    d) Article 64 and 173

Answer: A. Article 83(2) and 172 of the Constitution stipulates that the tenure of Lok Sabha and State Assemblies respectively will last for five years unless dissolved earlier.

4. What is the primary challenge in implementing the "one nation, one poll" concept in India, according to the passage?

- a) The need to synchronize State and Lok Sabha elections.  
b) The requirement to amend the Constitution to adopt a presidential system.  
c) The possibility of mid-term elections leading to undemocratic scenarios.  
d) The opposition of the INDIA alliance to the ruling party's proposal.

**Answer: C.** The possibility of mid-term elections leading to undemocratic scenarios

### Fukushima N-wastewater controversy

Japan's controversial plan to release treated waste water from the Fukushima nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean.

Since the 2011 tsunami which severely damaged the plant, more than a million tonnes of treated wastewater has accumulated there. Japan began discharging it on 24 August, in a process that will take 30 years to complete.

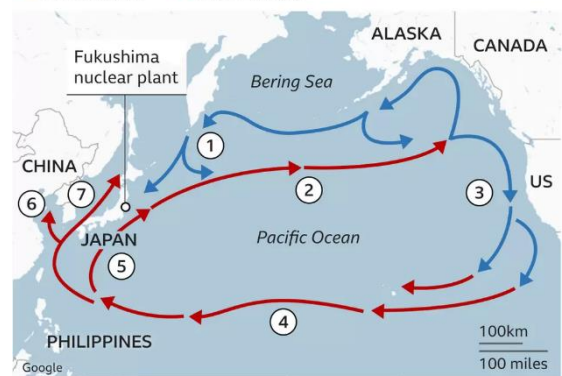
Fishing industry groups in Japan and the wider region are also worried about their livelihoods, as they fear consumers will avoid buying seafood.

In august 2023 Japan began the release of contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear plant into the sea.

- On April 13, 2021, Japan's government announced plans to release over one million tonnes of contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear plant into the sea over the next 30 years.
- The wastewater is a byproduct of the catastrophic 2011 earthquake and tsunami, which disabled the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, leading to the release of radioactive materials.
- After more than a decade of storing this wastewater, Japan says they are running out of storage space, and allege that the now treated water is safe for release.
- However, since the announcement in 2021, a sizable fraction of the public, both domestic and foreign, have been speaking out against this decision, claiming that mixing radioactive materials in the sea poses major health risks, especially since these countries rely heavily on seafood.
- The water is being treated by the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), Japan's largest electric utility firm. Since 2011, TEPCO has been in charge of decommissioning the Fukushima Daiichi power plant, and managing the waste.
- The water has been treated with multiple techniques, notably the Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS), which removes 62 types of radioactive materials. **However, it doesn't remove tritium.** TEPCO and the Japanese government argue that the concentration of tritium does not exceed international standards, in particular, those of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations' nuclear watchdog.
- According to TEPCO's website, the radiation emitted by tritium is "extremely weak, and can be blocked with a single sheet of paper." The concentration is also six times less than the limit for tritium in drinking water, set by the World Health Organization.
- Tritium is easily absorbed by the bodies of living creatures when it is in the form of tritiated water, and rapidly distributed throughout bodies via blood. Since tritiated water can pass through the placenta, it could lead to developmental effects in babies when ingested by pregnant women.
- The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant is a nuclear power facility located on the eastern coast of Japan, in the Fukushima Prefecture. It gained international prominence and notoriety due to a major nuclear accident that occurred there in March 2011. This accident was a result of a massive earthquake and tsunami that struck the region, leading to a series of events that resulted in the release of radioactive materials.
- The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant is operated by the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO).
- It consists of six nuclear reactors, with Units 1, 2, and 3 being BWR (Boiling Water Reactors) and Units 4, 5, and 6 being more modern and safer BWR designs.
- The plant was designed to withstand earthquakes and tsunamis, but the scale of the 2011 tsunami exceeded those design parameters.
- Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Disaster: On March 11, 2011, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake struck off the coast of Japan, causing a massive tsunami that inundated the Fukushima Daiichi plant.
- The tsunami disabled the power supply and backup generators, leading to a loss of cooling capability for the reactors.
- Without cooling, the reactor cores in Units 1, 2, and 3 overheated, leading to hydrogen gas explosions that damaged the reactor buildings.
- These explosions released radioactive materials into the environment, and a significant evacuation zone was established.
- Reactor Unit 4 also faced problems due to fuel stored in a pool, but it was later stabilized.
- The Japanese government declared a nuclear emergency, and it was categorized as a Level 7 event on the International Nuclear Event Scale, the same level as the Chernobyl disaster.
- Cleanup and Decommissioning: After the accident, efforts to stabilize the situation and mitigate the release of radioactive materials continued.
- TEPCO has been working on the long and complex process of decommissioning the damaged reactors and managing the radioactive waste.
- The cleanup and decommissioning process is expected to take several decades and will involve various technical challenges.

### Currents carry water around the Pacific

— Cold current — Warm current



- |                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| ① Oyashio Current          | ⑤ Kuroshio Current        |
| ② North Pacific Current    | ⑥ Yellow Sea warm Current |
| ③ California Current       | ⑦ Tsushima warm Current   |
| ④ North Equatorial Current |                           |

MCQ

- What is the primary concern of Japan's controversial plan to release treated wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean?
  - The risk of another tsunami damaging the plant
  - The shortage of storage space for the treated wastewater
  - Potential health risks from releasing radioactive materials into the sea
  - The impact on the fishing industry due to consumers avoiding seafood

**Answer: c)** Potential health risks from releasing radioactive materials into the sea

- How long is the planned timeline for releasing the treated wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear plant into the sea?
  - 5 years
  - 10 years
  - 20 years
  - 30 years

**Answer: d)** 30 years

- What is the primary reason for the accumulation of treated wastewater at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant?
  - Inadequate storage facilities
  - Continuous leakage from damaged reactors
  - Lack of treatment options
  - The 2011 earthquake and tsunami

**Answer: d)** The 2011 earthquake and tsunami

- Which organization has been responsible for treating the wastewater at the Fukushima Daiichi plant?
  - International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
  - World Health Organization (WHO)
  - Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)
  - United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP)

**Answer: c)** Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)

- What is the main radioactive substance that is not removed by the Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS) used for treating the wastewater?
  - Tritium
  - Cesium
  - Uranium
  - Plutonium

**Answer: a)** Tritium

- How do TEPCO and the Japanese government argue that the concentration of tritium in the treated water meets international standards?
  - It can be blocked by a single sheet of paper
  - It is six times lower than the limit for tritium in drinking water set by WHO
  - It has been safely ingested by pregnant women for years
  - It is not a radioactive substance

**Answer: b)** It is six times lower than the limit for tritium in drinking water set by WHO

- What was the cause of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident in March 2011?
  - Terrorist attack
  - Nuclear reactor malfunction
  - Earthquake and tsunami
  - Human error

**Answer: c)** Earthquake and tsunami

- How did the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant respond to the 2011 tsunami according to the passage?
  - It successfully withstood the tsunami's impact.
  - It was completely submerged by the tsunami.
  - The plant's backup generators provided uninterrupted power.
  - The reactor cores overheated, leading to explosions.

**Answer: d)** The reactor cores overheated, leading to explosions.

### Mobile Internet Restored in Manipur

- Mobile Internet services restored in Manipur after 143 days which were suspended due to ethnic violence- in Manipur.
- Broadband Internet services were restored with several conditions on July 25. Mobile data services were allowed on numbers approved by the government all this while.
- The BJP -ruled Manipur witnessed the longest ever Internet shutdown in 2023 after Jammu and Kashmir, which saw Internet blockade for 552 days, after the removal of its special status under Article 370 of the Constitution.
- Ethnic violence erupted in Manipur on May 3 between the tribal Kuki-Zo and the Meitei communities after a tribal solidarity march, in protest against a High Court order directing the State government to consider including the Meiteis on the Scheduled Tribes list, turned violent.
- At least 175 people were killed in the violence in the past five months. More than 60,000 people were internally displaced, while around 12,000 Kuki-Zo people took shelter in the neighbouring State of Mizoram.



- There have been violent communal clashes in Manipur due to the Manipur High Court (HC) directing the State to pursue a 10-year-old recommendation to grant Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to the non-tribal Meitei community.
- The violence escalated after the All-Tribal Student Union Manipur (ATSUM) organized a “tribal solidarity rally” against the alleged move to include the Meiteis on the ST list.
- Manipur Imphal Valley comprises about 10% of Manipur’s landmass, is dominated by the non-tribal Meitei who account for more than 64% of the population of the State and yields 40 of the State’s 60 MLAs.
- The hills comprising 90% of the geographical area are inhabited by more than 35% recognised tribes but send only 20 MLAs to the Assembly.
- While a majority of the Meiteis are Hindus followed by Muslims, the 33 recognised tribes, broadly classified into ‘Any Naga tribes’ and ‘Any Kuki tribes’ are largely Christians.
- In 1972, the union territory of Manipur became the 19th state of India.
- The Meiteis were recognised as a tribe before the merger of the State with the Union of India in 1949.
- Why are tribal groups against ST status for Meiteis: The Meiteis have a demographic and political advantage and are also more academically advanced. ST status to the Meiteis would lead to loss of job opportunities and allow them to acquire land in the hills and push the tribals out. Kukis and Nagas point out that tribal areas are 90% of the state's geographical area, but the bulk of its budget and development work is focused on the Meitei-dominated Imphal valley.
- There are 16 districts in Manipur, but the state is commonly thought of as divided into ‘valley’ and ‘hill’ districts. Today’s valley districts of Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal, Bishnupur, and Kakching were part of the erstwhile kingdom of Kangleipak, ruled by the Ningthouja dynasty.
- The Manipur valley is encircled by skirts of low hills (hill areas comprise the bulk of Manipur’s geographical area), live 15 Naga tribes and the Chin-Kuki-Mizo-Zomi group, which includes the Kuki, Thadou, Hmar, Paite, Vaiphei and Zou peoples.
- Merger of Manipur with the Union of India: Pre-1947:
  - Manipur was a princely state under British colonial rule. The Maharaja of Manipur, Bodhachandra Singh, was the ruler of the state.
  - August 1947: The Maharaja of Manipur signed the Instrument of Accession, agreeing to accede to the Indian Union.
  - 1972: Manipur, along with Meghalaya and Tripura, became a full-fledged state under the North Eastern Region (Re-organisation) Act, 1971.

### MCQ

1. Which of the following festival known as manipur’s martial arts

- a) Thang-ta                      b) Chapchar                      c) Bamboo festival                      d) Durg

**Answer: A.** The Manipuri martial art Thang-ta had its origin in the Meitei knights during the king’s rule. festivals of meiteis are Lai Haraoba, Cheiraoba, Yaosang among others.

2. Which of the Article under the Indian constitution related with the direction issued by the Union government to any state to ensure compliance with the Union’s laws and regulations.

- a) 368                      b) 355                      c) 356                      d) 360

**Answer b):** Under Article 355, the Union government has the power to issue directions to any state to ensure compliance with the Union’s laws and regulations.

However, there are certain restrictions on this power:

- The directions can only be given when there is a failure of the state machinery to comply with or give effect to any Union law or regulation.
- The directions should be of an urgent nature and may not extend beyond the necessary period for remedying the failure of the state machinery.
- The state government should be given an opportunity to submit its views before the issuance of such directions.
- The Union government cannot use this power to intervene in the internal affairs of a state unless there is a failure of the state machinery.
- The duration of the assistance provided under Article 355 is not specified in the Constitution.
- The duration of the assistance provided under Article 355 is subject to judicial review and can be challenged in court if it violates any fundamental rights or constitutional provisions.

3. What percentage of Manipur's landmass does Manipur Imphal Valley comprise?

- a) 10%                      b) 35%                      c) 90%                      d) 64%

**Answer: A)** 10%

4. How many recognized tribes are mentioned in the passage?

- a) 16                      b) 33                      c) 60                      d) 15

**Answer: B)** 33

5. When did Manipur become a full-fledged state under Indian administration?

- a) 1947                      b) 1972                      c) 1950                      d) 1965

**Answer b)** 1972

6. What is the primary concern of tribal groups regarding Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for Meiteis?
- Loss of job opportunities
  - Land acquisition in the hills
  - Demographic imbalance
  - Lack of political representation

**Answer: B)** Land acquisition in the hills

7. Which group of tribes is mentioned as living in the hill areas of Manipur?
- Naga tribes
  - Kuki tribes
  - Meitei tribes
  - Vaiphei tribes

**Answer: A)** Naga tribes

### Norman Borlaug Award Won by Bihana Didi for introducing rice variety

On 21.09.23, Fondly called Bihana Didi (Seed Lady) by local communities in Odisha, agriculture scientist Swati Nayak became only the third Indian agriculture scientist to win the prestigious Norman E. Borlaug Award for 2023.

Now with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Ms. Nayak won the Borlaug Award for “Field Research and Application”.

Ms. Nayak and her team formulated a strategy for introducing the drought *tolerant Shahabhazi Dhan rice variety in Odisha*. It brought about a major change in rain-fed areas.

She introduced Sahbhagi Dhan, a drought-tolerant variety of rice suitable for hilly uplands, and ‘BINA Dhan-11’, which is flood-tolerant. BINA-Dhan-11, which contains a submergence-tolerant Sub1 gene identified from an indigenous land race of Odisha.

The Sub1 gene has been incorporated into many existing popular high-yielding varieties such as ‘Samba Mahsuri’, ‘Swarna’ and ‘Ranjit’.

There are, likewise, other drought-tolerant varieties, such as ‘DRR Dhan 42’ and ‘DRR Dhan 44’.

The WFP, currently headed by former U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad, recognised Ms. Nayak’s 13 years of service in agriculture, saying, “She is recognised for her innovative approach to engaging smallholder farmers in demand driven rice seed systems, from testing and deployment to equitable access and adoption of climate resilient and nutritious rice varieties.”

### About Norman E. Borlaug Award:

The award recognises exceptional scientists under 40 and someone who works in the field of food and nutrition security and hunger eradication.

It is given in memory of the Nobel awardee and Green Revolution's chief architect Dr Norman Borlaug.

Norman E. Borlaug Award honours an individual who is working closely and directly “in the field” or at the production or processing level with farmers, animal herders, fishers or others in rural communities in any discipline or enterprise across the entire food production, processing, and distribution chain.

The award diploma incorporates the image of Dr. Borlaug at work in the fields of Mexico and a cash prize of \$10,000.

It is endowed by the Rockefeller Foundation and presented in Des Moines, Iowa, by the World Food Prize Foundation.

Other Indian recipients of the Norman E. Borlaug Award:

- Aditi Mukherji (2012)
- Mahalingam Govindaraj (2022).

1. Norman E. Borlaug Award recognizes individuals who are involved in addressing food and nutrition security and hunger eradication. What is the age criterion for recipients of this award?

- Under 20 years old
- Under 30 years old
- Under 40 years old
- Under 50 years old

**Answer: C)** Under 40 years old

### Kaabal Gali- Mushkoh Valley

The high- altitude passes of the Gurez valley in north Kashmir, out of bounds to civilians, was once prone to frequent shelling from Pakistan. Now, it is all set to connect with the Mushkoh valley, in Kargil’s Drass Sector, Ladakh, the site of the war in 1999.

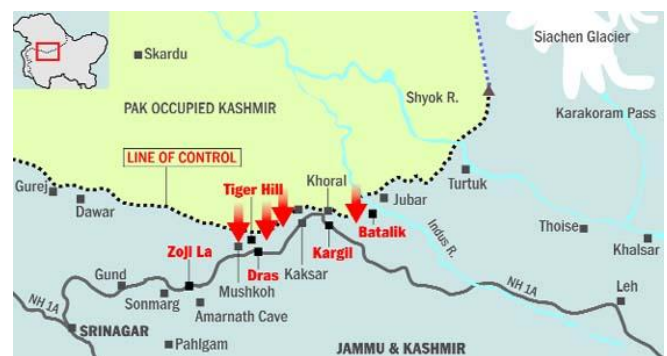
The 130-km road has been opened up for tourists.

Kaabal Gali, the highest pass at a height of 4,166.9 metres in Gurez, connects the two valleys.

The ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan continues for the 43rd month.

The administration sees huge tourist potential in opening the Gurez-Drass road to tourists. “The road connecting the two valleys is being maintained under Beacon (by the Border Roads Organisation) and at present is a fair weather road.

- The Mushkoh Valley, also spelled Mushko Valley, is a region located in the Union Territory of Ladakh in India. It is situated in the northernmost part of the Indian subcontinent and shares its borders with Pakistan-administered Gilgit-Baltistan.
- The Mushkoh Valley is known for its rugged and mountainous terrain, and it has gained historical significance due to its proximity to the Line of Control (LoC), which separates Indian-administered Kashmir from the Pakistani-administered territories.



- Kaobal Gali is a high mountain pass in the Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir.
- It links the Mushkoh Valley in Drass, Ladakh, with the Tulail Valley in Gurez.
- The westernmost portion of Ladakh, which is in the Jammu and Kashmir Union region that is managed by India, is where you'll find the Mushkoh Valley.
- The region is referred to as the Wild Tulip Valley.
- Kaobal Gali, which is 13,671 feet above sea level, is a restricted and hazardous pass. It offers a different path from Kashmir to Ladakh. Currently, only 4×4 vehicles can reach the pass, although plans exist to make it accessible to tourists.

### Draft patent amendment rules undermine pre-grant opposition

The concerns expressed by patient advocacy groups regarding the draft Patents (Amendment) Rules 2023 are significant and reflect a broader debate around intellectual property rights, access to essential medicines, and public health. These concerns often revolve around the balance between protecting the interests of patent holders and ensuring access to affordable healthcare for the general public.

The Patents Act explicitly permits anyone to file a pre-grant opposition; but as per the Draft patent amendment rules, the maintainability of persons or civil society organisations filing Pre- grant oppositions will be decided by the controller.

**Pre-grant Opposition:** Pre-grant opposition is a mechanism that allows third parties to raise objections to a patent application before it is granted. This is an important safeguard to prevent the grant of patents for inventions that do not meet the criteria for patentability or that could have a negative impact on public health.

Concerns about changes to this provision may center on whether it could limit the ability of third parties, including patient advocacy groups, to challenge potentially problematic patents.

**Working of Patents:** The working of patents refers to ensuring that a patented invention is available and accessible to the public. In some cases, patents may be granted but not effectively utilized, leading to concerns about patents being used to block competition rather than to promote innovation. Patient advocacy groups may worry that changes to the rules could weaken the obligations of patent holders to make their inventions available to the public.

**Access to Medicines:** Patient advocacy groups often focus on access to essential medicines, particularly in the context of life-saving drugs. They may argue that overly strong patent protection can result in high drug prices, limiting access for those in need. Any changes to patent rules that are perceived as favoring patent holders over the broader public interest could raise concerns about access to medicines.

**Balancing Interests:** The debate over patent rules is complex and requires a delicate balance between encouraging innovation and ensuring access to essential products, including medicines. Striking the right balance is crucial to promote innovation in the pharmaceutical industry while also addressing public health concerns.

**Stakeholder Engagement:** The fact that the draft rules were released for stakeholder comments is a positive step, as it allows for a broader discussion and input from various parties, including patient advocacy groups. It's essential for governments to carefully consider and address the concerns raised by different stakeholders before finalizing any changes to patent rules.

These concerns underscore the need for transparent and inclusive policy making processes to strike a balance between protecting intellectual property rights and ensuring access to essential healthcare products.

The draft patent amendment rules made public on August 23 this year could hugely benefit big pharma but turn out to be disastrous for patients in India and in countries in the global South, which rely on generic drugs manufactured in India, in accessing affordable drugs and vaccines.

The draft rules released by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade for stakeholder comments have made a few significant changes that will create needless hurdles in pre--grant opposition of patents.

The most important change is about granting the controller the power to determine the maintainability of representation by individuals or civil society organisations to file pre--grant oppositions.

Pre-grant opposition is an important public health safeguard against patent evergreening and unmerited monopolies. It is one sure way to ensure that quality -assured and affordable generics remain accessible.

Currently, the Patents Act explicitly permits "any person" to file a pre--grant opposition without the discretion of the Controller. But as per the draft patent amendment rules, the maintainability of the petitioners who file a pre--grant opposition will not be automatic but will be determined by the Controller. While "any person" can currently file a pre--grant opposition, only interested persons can file a petition when it comes to opposing patents that have already been granted.

The provision of pre--grant opposition in the India Patent Act is unique in the world, the reason why big pharma has been opposed to it as they want continued control over the market and charge high prices for their products. Any weakening of the provision will be disastrous for patients as they will not be able to afford the high price of medicines and the generic drug industry will be affected too," says Dr Biswajit

Dhar, Vice President, Council for Social Development. There have been innumerable instances when pre-grant opposition filed by patient groups and civil society organisations have resulted in the rejection of patent protection extension sought by big pharma based on frivolous claims of “novel invention”. For instance, in May 2006, in the case of Tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF), a first line antiretroviral used for treatment of people living with HIV, the pre-grant opposition was filed against Sahara by the Indian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS and the Delhi Network of Positive People. The pre-grant opposition was based on the ground that the drug consists of a previously known compound. In another instance, Boehringer Ingelheim’s patent application for its paediatric form of the anti-AIDS drug Nevirapine was rejected in 2008 based on a pre-grant opposition filed by socio legal group Lawyers Collective on behalf of patients’ groups in May 2006. Other high profile attempts at evergreening that failed due to pre-grant opposition filed by patients’ groups and civil society organisations include Glivec (imatinib mesylate), Zidovudine/Lamivudine (first line HIV medicines) and Lopinavir/Ritonavir (second line HIV medicines).

**MCQ:**

1. What is the primary concern raised by patient advocacy groups regarding the draft Patents (Amendment) Rules 2023?
  - a) The potential impact on the profits of big pharmaceutical companies
  - b) The weakening of the provision for pre-grant opposition
  - c) The lack of transparency in the policymaking process
  - d) The infringement on the intellectual property rights of patent holders

**Answer: B)** The weakening of the provision for pre-grant opposition

2. What is the significance of pre-grant opposition in the context of patent rules?
  - a) It allows patent holders to extend their patent protection indefinitely.
  - b) It enables patient advocacy groups to file patents for their inventions.
  - c) It provides a mechanism for third parties to challenge patent applications before they are granted.
  - d) It ensures that pharmaceutical companies have complete control over the market.

**Answer: C)** It provides a mechanism for third parties to challenge patent applications before they are granted.

3. What is the purpose of pre-grant opposition in the Indian patent system?
  - a) To challenge patents that have already been granted.
  - b) To raise objections to a patent application before it is granted.
  - c) To protect intellectual property rights.
  - d) To promote access to essential products.

**Answer: B)** To raise objections to a patent application before it is granted.

4. Which of the following best describes post-grant opposition in the Indian patent system?
  - a) It allows third parties to challenge patents before they are granted.
  - b) It enables patent holders to protect their intellectual property rights.
  - c) It permits objections to patents that have already been granted.
  - d) It is unrelated to access to essential products.

**Answer: C)** It permits objections to patents that have already been granted.

5. Why are pre-grant and post-grant opposition mechanisms considered important in India?
  - a) They protect the interests of patent holders.
  - b) They promote access to essential products like medicines.
  - c) They exclusively benefit third parties.
  - d) They have no impact on intellectual property rights.

**Answer B)** They promote access to essential products like medicines.

6. What is the primary concern regarding potential changes to the rules governing patent opposition in India?
  - a) Limiting the ability of third parties to challenge patents.
  - b) Strengthening patent holders' rights without any benefits.
  - c) Making patent opposition more complex.
  - d) Encouraging patent evergreening.

**Answer: A)** Limiting the ability of third parties to challenge patents.

**The ‘Economic Freedom of the World: 2021 Annual Report’ by Canada’s Fraser Institute has been released in India in conjunction with New Delhi-based think tank Centre For Civil Society..**

- India’s rank in the economic freedom index of 165 nations 87 India has fallen one notch to the 87th position out of 165 countries.
- Singapore topped the index, followed by Hong Kong, Switzerland, New Zealand, the US, Ireland, Denmark, Australia, the UK, and Canada
- Hong Kong has lost its position as the world’s freest economy to Singapore, which attributed the fall largely to the erosion of impartiality in the Chinese city’s legal system and judiciary.
- Hong Kong dominated the independent Canadian think tank’s “Economic Freedom of the World” report for over two decades, but in the 2023 edition, the city’s overall score fell by 0.07 points. This was due to a decrease in judicial independence, impartial courts and legal integrity, and an increase in military interference based on the latest available data collected in 2021.
- China stands at the 111th position. Japan (20th), Germany (23rd), France (47th), and Russia (104th).

China, U.S. and India absent at U.N.’s Climate Ambition Summit



**SIMMERING TENSIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND CANADA**

- The relations between India and Canada took a sharp downward turn as Canada's PM Justin Trudeau accused "agents of the Indian government" in the killing of prominent Khalistani leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar.
- The Sikh separatist leader was shot dead by unidentified shooters in June outside a Gurudwara in Canada's Surrey. The Indian government rejected the allegations and called them "absurd" and "motivated".
- Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has urged India to seriously investigate his claim that he has credible information linking New Delhi to the assassination of a Sikh separatist activist on Canadian soil, doubling down on an allegation that has triggered a diplomatic row and is threatening a deterioration in relations between the two countries.
- Nijjar was an outspoken supporter of the creation of a separate Sikh homeland known as Khalistan, which would include parts of India's Punjab state.
- The Khalistan movement is outlawed in India and considered a national security threat by the government. A number of groups associated with the movement are listed as "terrorist organizations" under India's Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).
- Nijjar's name appears on the Home Ministry's list of UAPA terrorists and in 2020, the Indian National Investigation Agency accused him of "trying to radicalize the Sikh community across the world in favor of the creation of 'Khalistan,'" adding that he had been "trying to incite Sikhs to vote for secession, agitate against the government of India and carry out violent activities."
- The Canadian government expelled the top Indian diplomat Pavan Kumar Rai, the head of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) from Canada. Thereafter, the Government of India also summoned the High Commissioner of Canada to India and expelled a senior Canadian diplomat from India. Unlike the Canadian side, India didn't name the diplomat but as per people with knowledge of the matter, it is Canadian intelligence agency station chief Olivier Sylvestere.
- The simmering tension has threatened to derail the economic bonds between the two nations that go far beyond mere commodities. According to a report by Livemint, bilateral investments surged over 37% in 4 years to Canadian \$36.2 billion (Rs 2.24 lakh crore) in 2022.
- A free trade deal was planned to boost the bilateral trade but Canada announced earlier this month that it had paused talks on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with India, though the two sides had previously aimed to seal an initial pact this year itself.
- In March 2022, the two countries had decided to re-launch the CEPA negotiations and consider an interim agreement or Early Progress Trade Agreement (EPTA) that could bring commercial gains to both sides. The two countries had held discussions on sectors like goods, trade remedies, rules of origin, origin procedures, services, institutional and core provisions, the report stated.
- The Indian industry was looking at duty-free access for products such as textiles and leather, besides easy visa norms for movement of professionals. Canada has interests in areas such as dairy and agricultural products.
- Canada is home to the world's largest Sikh population outside India, counting at nearly 770,000, which is 2.1 percent of the North American nation's total population.
- Since 2018, India has been the largest source country for international students in Canada. In 2022, the number of Indian students jumped 47% to nearly 320,000, accounting for about 40% of the total overseas students there, stated the Canadian Bureau of International Education.
- Canada, which has been held by India as a safe haven for Khalistani separatists, became a more serious cause for concern when Trudeau came to power in 2015 and appointed four Sikh ministers to his Cabinet.

**Visa service paused amid Canada tussle**

- Normal functioning of Indian missions in Canada has been affected because of "security threats" faced by Indian diplomats and they are therefore "temporarily unable" to issue visas, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced.
- MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi also said India would prefer "parity" in posting of diplomats in each other's missions, saying the number of Canadian diplomats in India is expected to be reduced. He further said New Delhi had not received any evidence from the Trudeau government regarding alleged Indian hand in the killing of Khalistan Tiger Force chief Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Surrey on June 18. 'Ensure safety.'
- He urged Canada to uphold the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations by ensuring safety of Indian diplomats. "You are aware of the security threats being faced by our High Commission and consulates in Canada. These have disrupted their normal functioning."

**Man wanted for Khalistani links shot dead in Canada:**

- Sukhdool Singh, alias Sukha Duneke, wanted by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for his links with Khalistani terrorists, was killed by two unidentified persons in Canada's Winnipeg. The Lawrence Bishnoi gang has reportedly claimed responsibility for the killing.

**The Khalistan movement**

- It is a Sikh separatist movement that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, primarily in the Indian state of Punjab. It sought to establish an independent Sikh state called "Khalistan" in the region. The movement was driven by various political, social, and religious factors.
- The roots of the Khalistan movement can be traced back to historical, political, and economic grievances among the Sikh community in Punjab. Sikhs have a distinct religious and cultural identity, and they felt marginalized within the Indian political system.
- Operation Blue Star: A significant turning point in the Khalistan movement was the Indian government's military operation in June 1984 to remove Sikh militants who had fortified themselves in the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar. The operation, known as "Operation Blue Star," led to the deaths of many militants and civilians and caused outrage among Sikhs worldwide.

- Assassination of Indira Gandhi: In retaliation for Operation Blue Star, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards in October 1984. This event triggered anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and other parts of India, resulting in the deaths of thousands of Sikhs.
- Armed Conflict: The Khalistan movement escalated into an armed insurgency during the 1980s, with various militant groups seeking an independent Sikh state. The conflict led to violence, human rights abuses, and instability in Punjab.

#### Strained ties with Canada likely to hit hospitality sector

- The strained diplomatic ties between India and Canada is a major cause for concern for the hospitality sector in the State, especially ahead of a major tourism season.
- Kerala receives around 25,000 to 30,000 Canadian tourists every year. In the latest development, the Indo -Canadian relationship has hit a new low with both countries issuing travel advisories urging their citizens to 'exercise utmost caution' while travelling to some regions in the other country.
- For Kerala, Canada is one of the top 10 countries to contribute to foreign tourists. The Russia -Ukraine conflict also had an impact on the tourism industry here with the number of tourists from European countries dipping.

#### MCQ:

1. What event triggered the strained relations between India and Canada mentioned in the passage?

- The assassination of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
- The shooting of a Sikh separatist leader in Canada
- The suspension of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) talks
- The expulsion of the Canadian High Commissioner from India

**Ans B)** The shooting of a Sikh separatist leader in Canada

2. What is the Khalistan movement, as described in the passage?

- A political party in India
- A Sikh separatist movement seeking an independent state
- A terrorist organization in Canada
- A religious pilgrimage site in Punjab

**Ans C)** A Sikh separatist movement seeking an independent state

3. Why is the Khalistan movement considered a national security threat in India?

- Because it is a religious pilgrimage site
- Because it is a political party
- Because it seeks to establish an independent Sikh state
- Because it supports the Indian government

**Ans C)** Because it seeks to establish an independent Sikh state

4. Which Sikh separatist leader's assassination is discussed in the passage?

- Indira Gandhi
- Justin Trudeau
- Hardeep Singh Nijjar
- Pavan Kumar Rai

**Ans C)** Hardeep Singh Nijjar

5. What is the primary goal of the Khalistan movement?

- Establishing a separate Sikh state called Khalistan
- Promoting tourism between India and Canada
- Strengthening economic bonds between India and Canada
- Expanding Canada's Sikh population

**Ans A)** Establishing a separate Sikh state called Khalistan

6. Why did the Indian government consider the Khalistan movement a national security threat?

- Due to the appointment of Sikh ministers in Canada
- Because of the assassination of Indira Gandhi
- The movement's attempt to radicalize the Sikh community
- Disagreements over trade agreements

**Answer C)** The movement's attempt to radicalize the Sikh community

7. Which significant event is NOT mentioned in the passage as a key factor in the Khalistan movement's history?

- Operation Blue Star
- Assassination of Indira Gandhi
- Strained diplomatic ties between India and Canada
- Armed Conflict in Punjab

**Ans C)** Strained diplomatic ties between India and Canada

#### SC to hear challenge to Section 6A of Citizenship Act

[TITLE: "In Re: Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955".]

A Constitution Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud with Justices AS Bopanna, MM Sundresh, JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra decided to hear from October 17 a series of petitions challenging the constitutionality of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955.

- Section 6A is a special provision inserted into the 1955 Act in furtherance of a Memorandum of Settlement called the 'Assam Accord' signed on August 15, 1985 by the then Rajiv Gandhi government with the leaders of the Assam Movement to preserve and protect the Assamese culture, heritage, linguistic and social identity.
- The Union government insisted that the Section is valid and urged the court to dismiss the petitions, filed after nearly 40 years since its enactment.

- Under Section 6A, foreigners who had entered Assam before January 1, 1966, and been “ordinarily resident” in the State, would have all the rights and obligations of Indian citizens. Those who had entered the State between January 1, 1966 and March 25, 1971 would have the same rights and obligations, except that they would not be able to vote for 10 years.
- As per Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, people who entered India between January 1, 1966 and March 25, 1971 and have been living in Assam, will be allowed to register themselves as citizens.
- The outcome of this case will have a major bearing on the National Register of Citizens (NRC) list.
- The petition, filed by the Assam Sanmilita Mahasangha and others, says the provision is discriminatory and unconstitutional as it permits the entry of foreigners to Assam till March 25, 1971, whereas for the rest of the country, the cut-off date as prescribed under Articles 5 and 6 of the Constitution is July 19, 1949.
- Critics of Section 6A contend that the provision promotes and protects illegal immigrants and that it is discriminatory as it has been specifically enacted to offer a shield to illegal immigrants from Bangladesh who have trespassed into Assam.
- The petitioners have pleaded that Section 6A be struck down as ultra-vires and the NRC in Assam be updated by taking 1951 as the base year.
- According to the petitioners, the huge influx had triggered clashes between Indian citizens and the migrants, resulting in loss of life and property.

#### ASSAM ACCORD 1985:

- Under the Assam Accord signed by the All Assam Students Union, Assam government and the Government of India on August 15, 1985 to detect and deport the foreigners, Section 6A was inserted to the Citizenship Act to grant citizenship to people who have migrated to Assam.
- A mass protest movement that took place in the state of Assam, India, during the early 1980s. The accord aimed to address the issues related to illegal immigration, specifically the influx of migrants from Bangladesh, and to restore peace and stability in Assam.
- The Assam Movement was primarily driven by concerns among the indigenous Assamese population about the large-scale migration of people, primarily from Bangladesh, into Assam. The movement demanded the detection and deportation of illegal immigrants and the protection of the political, cultural, and economic rights of the indigenous Assamese.
- All individuals who had entered Assam from Bangladesh after March 24, 1971, were to be identified and deported.
- Those who had entered Assam between January 1, 1966, and March 24, 1971, were to be detected and their names deleted from the electoral rolls. However, they were given the opportunity to reapply for citizenship after ten years of residency in Assam.
- The Accord aimed to protect the cultural, social, and linguistic rights of the indigenous Assamese people.
- The Accord included provisions for the economic development of Assam.
- The implementation of the Assam Accord has been challenging and contentious over the years. The process of identifying and deporting illegal immigrants has been slow and complex, leading to ongoing debates and legal disputes.
- National Register of Citizens (NRC): In recent years, the NRC was updated in Assam as part of an effort to identify genuine Indian citizens and exclude illegal immigrants. This process has led to significant controversy and disagreements over the inclusion and exclusion of individuals.
- Clause 6 of the Accord: It says that constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, as may be appropriate, shall be provided to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people.
- The committee chaired by Biplab Kumar Sarma was constituted to define ‘Assamese People’ and institute safeguards for them.
- Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA): The CAA, passed by the Indian government in 2019, has also been a source of controversy in Assam and other parts of India. It provides a path to Indian citizenship for certain religious minority groups from neighboring countries, but it has faced opposition in Assam due to concerns about its potential impact on the state's demographics.

1. What is the primary purpose of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, as described in the passage?
  - a) To grant citizenship to all individuals who entered Assam before January 1, 1966.
  - b) To provide voting rights to foreigners who entered Assam between January 1, 1966, and March 25, 1971.
  - c) To protect and preserve the cultural, linguistic, and social identity of Assam.
  - d) To address issues related to illegal immigration and restore peace and stability in Assam.

**Answer: B).**

2. According to the passage, what is the main argument presented by the petitioners regarding Section 6A?
  - a) Section 6A promotes the protection of Assamese culture and identity.
  - b) Section 6A should be upheld as it aligns with the Constitution's provisions.
  - c) Section 6A is discriminatory and allows the entry of foreigners until March 25, 1971, which differs from the rest of the country.
  - d) Section 6A should be extended to include individuals who entered Assam after March 25, 1971.

**Answer: C).**

3. What is the significance of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam, as discussed in the passage?
  - a) The NRC aims to include all residents of Assam in the electoral rolls.
  - b) The NRC is used to identify and deport illegal immigrants from Assam.
  - c) The NRC is a list of individuals who entered Assam after March 24, 1971.
  - d) The NRC is designed to provide citizenship to people who migrated to Assam.

Answer: B).

4. How has the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) been received in Assam, according to the passage?
- The CAA has been widely celebrated as a solution to the illegal immigration issue in Assam.
  - The CAA has faced opposition in Assam due to concerns about its impact on the state's demographics.
  - The CAA has been praised for its efforts to protect the cultural and linguistic rights of Assamese people.
  - The CAA has expedited the process of identifying and deporting illegal immigrants from Assam.

Answer: B).

5. Apart from the identification and deportation of illegal immigrants, what were some other objectives of the Assam Accord?
- To promote tourism in Assam.
  - To encourage further migration to Assam.
  - To protect the cultural, social, and linguistic rights of the indigenous Assamese people.
  - To establish a new government in Assam.

Answer: C).

### Historic Women's Quota Bill in Lok Sabha

["Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam"]

- 27 years after a Women's Reservation Bill was first introduced in Parliament, the Lok Sabha passed such a Bill with near unanimity, to amend the Constitution and provide one-third reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies.
- After the Special Session shifted to the new Parliament House on 19.09.2023, the Narendra Modi government introduced the women's reservation Bill in the Lok Sabha to reserve one-third of the seats in the Lower House and the Assemblies for women.
- The Constitution (128th Amendment) Bill, 2023 (Women's Reservation Bill), however, would be implemented only after the 2026 delimitation exercise using data from the Census to be conducted after the passage of the Bill this year.
- 454 Members of Parliament (MPs) voted in favour of the bill while 2 voted against it.
- The reservation in the Lok Sabha can hence be implemented only in the Lok Sabha election in 2029 and not in 2024. Union Law Minister Arjun Meghwal, who introduced the Bill, said going by the House's current strength, the number of women members would rise to 181 from 82 once the law comes into force.
- The old Parliament House from now will be called "Samvidhan Sadan".
- Data show women MPs make up a mere 15% of the strength of the Lok Sabha and around 10% in many Assemblies.
- The Bill says one-third of the seats shall be reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. There is, however, no separate reservation for women from the Other Backward Classes.
- The law will be in force for 15 years. The reserved seats will be rotated after every delimitation.
- A legislation on similar lines was sought to be introduced back in 2008. While that Bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha in 2010, it failed to see the light of day.
- The women's reservation Bill was brought in earlier by the Deve Gowda government in 1996, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government in 1998 and 1999 and the Manmohan Singh government in 2008, when it was introduced in the Rajya Sabha.
- The quota can be implemented only after the first delimitation or redrawing of constituencies after the bill becomes law. The constituencies shall be redrawn only after the next Census, which is likely in 2027. The Census was to be held last in 2021, but got delayed due to Covid pandemic, so the next census might be held in 2027.
- Article 82 of the Constitution, as amended in 2002, says the delimitation process can be carried out based on the first Census taken after 2026. Originally, the first Census after 2026 was to be carried out in 2031, which would be followed by delimitation.
- To enable the redrawing of constituencies sooner, Article 82 has to be amended.
- The women's quota bill will be in force for 15 years after becoming an Act, but its term can be extended.
- The bill says a third of seats in Lok Sabha and assemblies will be reserved for women and filled by direct election. Also, the quota will not apply to Rajya Sabha or state Legislative Councils. Within the quota, a third of the seats will be for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- The bill is similar to the Women's Reservation Bill drafted in 2010 when the Manmohan Singh-led Congress government was in power. Only two amendments to bring in quota for the Anglo-Indian community have been dropped in the new version.
- The Bill also says that subject to the provisions of articles 239A, 330A, and 332A, seats reserved for women in the House of the People, the Legislative Assembly of a State, and the Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi shall continue till such date as the Parliament may by law determine.
- As per the statement of object and reasons of the Bill, the role of women, who constitute half the country's population, is extremely important in realisation of the goal of becoming Vikasit Bharat by 2047.
- The Bill will now be taken up by the Rajya Sabha for passage in the remaining two days of the Special Session of Parliament and might require approval from half of the States. Only two members, the All India Majlis -E -Ittehadul Muslimeen's Asaduddin Owaisi and Syed Imtiyaz Jaleel, opposed the Bill.



## MCQ

1. What is the Rank of the India in Global Gender Gap Report 2023

- a) 135                                      b) 127                                      c) 103                                      d) 48

**Answer: b)**

India ranks 127th out of 146 countries in the report's 2023.

- The country has improved by 1.4% points and eight positions since the last edition.
- 17th edition of the Global Gender Gap Report 2023 released by the World Economic Forum (WEF), evaluating the status of Gender Parity across 146 countries.
- Iceland tops the list

2. The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023, seeks to introduce how many new articles in the Constitution of India.

- a) 3                                      b) 4                                      c) 2                                      d) 1

**Answer: a) 3**

The Bill 2023, likely to introduce 3 new articles and one new clause in the Constitution.

- Art 239AA: Seats shall be reserved for women in the Delhi Legislative Assembly, 1/3rd of the seats reserved for SCs shall be reserved for women, 1/3rd of total number of seats to be filled by direct elections shall be reserved for women through law determined by parliament.
- Art 330A: Reservation for women in Lok Sabha - 1/3rd of seats reserved for SCs and STs shall be reserved for women, 1/3rd of total seats to be filled by direct elections to the Lok Sabha shall be reserved for women.
- Art 332A: Reserved seats for women in every state Legislative Assembly, 1/3rd of seats reserved for SCs and STs shall be reserved for women, 1/3rd of total seats to be filled by direct elections to the LA shall be reserved for women.
- Art 334A: Reservation shall come into effect after the delimitation is undertaken after the relevant figures for the first census have been published. Rotation of seats for women shall take effect after each subsequent exercise of delimitation.

3. How many women MPs are elected in Lok Sabha at present.

- a) 86                                      b) 81                                      c) 82                                      d) 80

**Answer: c) 82**

As per the data shared by the government with Parliament in December 2022, the present Lok Sabha has 82 women members elected which account for less than 15% of the total strength of 543.

In Rajya Sabha too, women's representation is about just 14%.

4. In which country was the first-ever women's quota implemented in a national parliament?

- a) United States                                      b) Sweden                                      c) India                                      d) New Zealand

**Answer: d)** The first country to introduce women's suffrage and allow women to run for and be elected to the national parliament was New Zealand in 1893.

### Hoysala Temples #World Heritage Sites

[Hoysala Temples becomes India's 42nd UNESCO's World Heritage site]

The members of the Bengaluru chapter of the Indian National Trust for Culture and Heritage (INTACH) had spent two years from 2019 working on the nomination dossier for the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas as a UNESCO World Heritage Site at the behest of the Karnataka government's Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage.

Their efforts bore fruit and the INTACH office was filled with cheers when the Hoysala Temples were officially confirmed as a World Heritage Site, India's 42nd on the UNESCO list.

The Hoysala temples at Belur, Halebid, and Somanathapura in Karnataka were declared UNESCO World Heritage Sites on 18.09.2023.

The **Chennakeshava temple at Belur** and the **Hoysaleswara temple at Halebid** — both in Hassan district have been on UNESCO's tentative list since 2014.

The **Keshava temple at Somanathapura** in Mysuru district was appended to the other two monuments under the tentative list and all three were officially nominated by the Centre as India's entry for 2022--23 in February 2022.

An expert from the International Commission on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) concluded the site visits covering all three temples in September 2022 and the monuments were officially inscribed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites during the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

All three temples are protected by the ASI and the nominations were entered as 'The Sacred Ensembles of Hoysalas'.

The Hoysala temples are known for evolving a distinct style that is ornate with temple architecture following a stellate plan built on a raised platform. The material used in temple construction is chlorite schist which is also known as soapstone that is soft and amiable to carving.

A day before the Hoysala Temples featured on the UNESCO list, Rabindranath Tagore's Shantiniketan, the university town in West Bengal, was also included as a World Heritage Site.

The other heritage sites in Karnataka which got into the UNESCO list are Hampi (1986) and Pattadakal (1987).

**Chennakeshava temple at Belur, Hasan, Karnataka:**

- Built: 1117 (Period of King Vishnuvardhana)

- Deity: lord Vishnu
- Chenna means Beautiful and Keshava means Vishnu; i.e, Beautiful Vishnu
- Presents: scenes from vishnu's life, epics and some representations of Shiva

#### Hoysaleswara temple at Halebidu, Hasan, Karnataka:

- Built: 1121 CE
- Deity: lord Shiva (hoysaleswara)
- Presents approx 240 wall sculptures depicting various themes.
- Walled complex with 3 Jain Basadi (temples) and stepped well in Halebid

#### Keshava temple at Somanathapura, Mysuru, Karnataka:

- Built: 1268 CE (during the reign of Narasimha III)
- Deity: lord Krishna (Keshava, Janardhan, Venugopala)
- Present Trikuta Temples dedicated to lord krishna

As of 2023, there are 42 World Heritage Sites located in India. Out of these, 34 are cultural, 7 are natural, and one, the Khangchendzonga National Park, is of mixed type. India has the sixth-largest number of sites in the world.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites are designated areas or landmarks recognized for their exceptional cultural, natural, or mixed (both cultural and natural) significance. These sites are considered to have "outstanding universal value" and are protected and preserved under the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted in 1972.

World Heritage Sites are categorized into three main types:

**Cultural Sites:** These sites typically include historic buildings, cities, monuments, or archaeological sites that have cultural significance. Examples include the Pyramids of Egypt, the Great Wall of China, and the Historic Center of Rome.

**Natural Sites:** These sites are recognized for their outstanding natural features, such as unique ecosystems, landscapes, geological formations, and biodiversity. Examples include the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, Yellowstone National Park in the United States, and Machu Picchu in Peru (which is also considered a mixed site).

**Mixed Sites:** These sites possess both cultural and natural significance, and they are recognized for their dual importance. An example of a mixed site is Mount Athos in Greece, which has cultural and religious significance along with its natural attributes.

1. What was the primary organization responsible for working on the nomination dossier for the Hoysala Temples as a UNESCO World Heritage Site?
  - a) Karnataka government's Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage
  - b) Indian National Trust for Culture and Heritage (INTACH)
  - c) International Commission on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)
  - d) World Heritage Committee

**Answer: B) Indian National Trust for Culture and Heritage (INTACH)**

2. What is the material used in the construction of the Hoysala Temples?
  - a) Marble
  - b) Granite
  - c) Chlorite schist (soapstone)
  - d) Sandstone

**Ans C) Chlorite schist (soapstone)**

3. Which of the following is NOT one of the Hoysala Temples that were declared UNESCO World Heritage Sites?
  - a) Chennakeshava temple at Belur
  - b) Hoysaleswara temple at Halebid
  - c) Keshava temple at Somanathapura
  - d) Khangchendzonga National Park

**Answer D) Khangchendzonga National Park**

4. What type of World Heritage Sites are the Hoysala Temples categorized as?
  - a) Cultural Sites
  - b) Natural Sites
  - c) Mixed Sites
  - d) All of the above

**Answer: A) Cultural Sites**

5. Which Indian university town was also included as a UNESCO World Heritage Site on the same day as the Hoysala Temples?
  - a) Varanasi
  - b) Delhi
  - c) Shantiniketan
  - d) Mumbai

**Answer: C) Shantiniketan**

6. Which deity is the Chennakeshava temple at Belur dedicated to?
  - a) Lord Shiva
  - b) Lord Krishna
  - c) Lord Vishnu
  - d) Lord Rama

**Answer: C) Lord Vishnu**

7. Which of the Hoysala Temples is dedicated to Lord Shiva?

- a) Chennakeshava temple at Belur  
c) Hoysaleswara temple at Halebid  
b) Keshava temple at Somanathapura  
d) None of the above

**Answer: C)** Hoysaleswara temple at Halebid

**8.** Which organization conducted the site visits to the Hoysala Temples in September 2022?

- a) UNESCO  
b) World Heritage Committee  
c) International Commission on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)  
d) Indian National Trust for Culture and Heritage (INTACH)

**Answer: C)** International Commission on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

### **Canada is investigating possible links between the Indian government and the assassination of Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) chief Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada.**

- The Canadian government also said that it has expelled a top Indian diplomat as a consequence.
- **Khalistan Movement:** The Khalistan movement is a longstanding separatist movement seeking to establish a separate Sikh state called Khalistan, primarily in the Indian state of Punjab. It gained prominence in the 1980s but was largely suppressed by the Indian government through military operations such as Operation Blue Star and Operation Black Thunder. The movement remains banned in India, and Sikh diaspora communities, including those in Canada and the United Kingdom, still support it.
- **Sikh Population in Canada:** Canada has a significant Sikh population, with Sikhs accounting for 2.1% of the country's population. After India, Canada has the largest Sikh population in the world.
- **Recent Investigation:** Canada is currently investigating potential links between the Indian government and the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, the chief of the Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF). Nijjar was wanted by the Indian government and was killed in a targeted shooting in Canada. The investigation has led to the expulsion of a top Indian diplomat from Canada.
- **G20 Summit Discussions:** The issue of Khalistani extremism and the investigation into Nijjar's killing was raised on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Delhi. Canadian Prime Minister and Indian Prime Minister Modi discussed the matter, with Canada expressing concerns about foreign interference in the assassination and seeking cooperation from India.
- **Recent Anti-India Activities in Canada:** There have been recent incidents in Canada related to pro-Khalistani sentiments, including a controversial parade float depicting the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. This incident stirred controversy and raised concerns about activities of extremist elements in Canada.

### **The 'special session' of the Parliament that began on September 18**

- A Special session of Parliament is a unique and flexible mechanism for addressing important and time-sensitive matters. The specific agenda and decisions made during this session will determine its significance and impact on India's legislative and governance landscape.
- **Article 85 of the Constitution** deals with prorogation and dissolution of Parliament.
- **Unscheduled Session:** Unlike the regular sessions like the Budget, Monsoon, and Winter sessions that follow a general schedule, a special session is not part of the routine calendar. It is called at a specific time as needed, making it an exceptional event in the legislative process. While there is no fixed schedule, the provisions of the Article specify that the President must summon the Houses to meet at least once within six months. The provision has its roots in the Government of India Act, 1935, according to which not more than 12 months should elapse between two sessions.
- **Government's Agenda:** Special sessions are typically convened to address urgent and critical matters or to pass important legislation that cannot wait until the next scheduled session. In this case, it's essential to understand the specific agenda or purpose behind this special session. The article mentions that the session will be conducted without Question Hour, Zero Hour, or private members' business, which suggests that it may focus on a specific legislative agenda or issue of national significance.
- **Constitutional Basis:** The article explains that while there is no explicit provision in the Constitution for special sessions, they have historical precedence. For example, Article 352, which deals with the proclamation of Emergency, refers to a special sitting of the House. This means that the Constitution allows for flexibility in convening special sessions when required.
- **Historical Context:** The article highlights past instances of special sessions, such as the one held in 2017 to roll out the Goods and Services Tax (GST). It also mentions sessions held to mark significant events in India's history, like the transfer of power in 1947 and the Indo-China war in 1962. These examples demonstrate that special sessions have been used for various purposes, including addressing economic reforms and responding to national crises.
- **Current Government's Decision:** The fact that the current government has convened this special session without specific regular parliamentary activities like Question Hour or Zero Hour suggests that they have a particular focus or agenda in mind. Understanding this agenda and the decisions made during this session will be crucial for assessing its significance and impact on the country's governance.

### **According to the 'Global Crypto Adoption Index', India is the top country in grassroots adoption of crypto.**

- India has topped Chainalysis's fourth 'Global Crypto Adoption Index' ranking 154 countries.
- After India, other countries like Nigeria, Vietnam, United States and Ukraine secured the second, third, fourth and fifth rankings respectively.

- In the Chainalysis index, India has recorded the highest number of crypto transactions in both retail and non-retail decentralized finance (DeFi) transactions. The country also ranks fifth in peer-to-peer exchange trade volume, with Nigeria leading the category.
- The government has introduced stringent taxation rules, including 30% tax on profits and 1% TDS (tax deducted at source) on crypto trades. These measures have adversely affected trade volumes within the country.
- In Chainalysis' Global Crypto Adoption Index for 2022, Vietnam ranked first, followed by the Philippines, Ukraine, India, US, Pakistan, and Brazil.

#### **World Bamboo Day is celebrated across the world on 18 September.**

- World Bamboo Day, observed annually on 18 September, is a global initiative that highlights the incredible importance of bamboo.
- This remarkable plant, often referred to as “green gold”, holds immense potential in sustainable development, poverty alleviation, environmental protection and cultural preservation.
- Bamboo, a fast-growing type of grass, is renowned for its exceptional properties, including strength, flexibility and ecofriendliness.
- World Bamboo Day owes its existence to the dedicated efforts of the World Bamboo Organization (WBO), a non-profit organization founded by Suzanne Lucas and David Knights in 2005. It is currently headquartered in Antwerp, Belgium.
- On 18 September 2009, during the World Bamboo Congress, participants officially declared 18 September as World Bamboo Day.

#### **Indian Oil bags top sponsorship rights of ‘MotoGP Bharat’.**

- Indian Oil has taken over the title sponsorship of the edition of ‘MotoGP Bharat’, the MotoGP race being held for the first time in India, which will be held at the Buddh International Circuit in Greater Noida from 22 to 24 September 2023.
- Organized by Fair Street Sports in association with Dorna Sports, it will be an exciting extravaganza that will see 42 teams and 84 riders competing across the MotoGP, Moto2 and Moto3 categories.
- MotoGP will be the biggest motorsport event in India after the Formula 1 Indian Grand Prix.
- Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) India's largest commercial ISO-9002 certified enterprise, the highest ranked Indian company in the prestigious Fortune 'Global 500' list. IOCL is the 20th largest petroleum company in the world. Established as Indian Oil Company Limited in 1959, Indian Oil Corporation Limited was formed in 1964 with the merger of Indian Refineries Limited (established 1958). It was originally incorporated as IOCL in 1964.

#### **Indian Bank launches 'IB Sathi' to enhance financial inclusion services.**

- Indian Bank has launched a new initiative called 'IB Sathi' (Sustainable Access and Aligning Technology for Holistic Inclusion) to boost its financial inclusion efforts.
- The primary goal of IB Saathi is to provide essential banking services to various stakeholders through the Business Correspondent (BC) channel.
- Under this revised model, Indian Bank is committed to providing basic banking services for at least four hours each day through fixed outlets at all its centres.
- Apart from the designated outlets, BC agents will also deliver their services directly to the customers' doorsteps. The move aims to make financial services more accessible, convenient and inclusive, especially for people in remote or underserved areas.
- 'IB Partner' Indian Bank plans to deploy over 5,000 new BCs by March 2024. At present, it already has 10,750 BCs and 10 Corporate Business Correspondents (CBCs). Indian Bank currently offers 36 different services to customers through its BC channel. However, in the coming years, the bank plans to launch an additional 60 services by FY25.
- Indian Bank was established on March 5, 1907 with an authorized capital of Rs 20 lakh and commenced business on August 15, 1907. Its headquarters is in Chennai

#### **NPCI launches contactless payment wearable ring “OTG”.**

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has introduced India's first wearable ring for unprecedented contactless payments known as '7 Ring'/'OTG Ring' (On the Go Ring). It has been launched in the RuPay version.
- This innovative device has been developed in collaboration with Indian fintech startup Livquick.
- 'OTG Ring' is designed for National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) customers, opening up a world of possibilities for convenient and secure transactions.
- One of the key features of 'OTG Ring' is its compatibility with various open-loop transit programs. This means users can seamlessly access and participate in a wide range of transit services, further enhancing the utility and value of the Ring.
- The ring looks just like a piece of jewelry that you can customize and wear on any finger and tap on any contactless POS to make payments. The ring is made of “high-purity zirconia ceramic” and the company claims it is “scratch resistant.”
- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is an initiative taken by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Indian Banks Association (IBA) to govern retail payment and settlement systems in India. This organization was established in the year 2008 under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007. NPCI is incorporated as a 'Not for Profit' company under Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013. NPCI headquarters is in Mumbai (Maharashtra).

#### **IIT Guwahati researchers convert tea factory waste into pharma products.**

- Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IIT-G) has developed medicine and food products from tea factory waste.



- This is in line with the scope of Waste to Wealth Mission (W2W) of the Government of India. This research will also fulfill the objective of “Act East Policy” of Government of India, “Advantage Assam” and “Biotechnology” Policy of Government of Assam.
- The team led by Mihir Kumar Purkait of the Department of Chemical Engineering has *efficiently utilized the high lignin and low inorganic content in tea industry waste*.
- The result was a range of products for use in the pharmaceutical and food processing industries.
- The range of innovative value-added products developed in his laboratory at IIT Guwahati includes low cost antioxidant rich supplements designed to provide an affordable healthy lifestyle option by harnessing the potential properties of green tea and enhancing the shelf life of vegetable and fruits. Contains biological preservatives.

#### Spanish League “La Liga” will establish a football academy in West Bengal.

- Spanish football league La Liga has signed an agreement with the West Bengal government to set up a football academy in the state to nurture young talent.
- The MoU was signed during a meeting between Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and La Liga president Javier Tebas in Madrid.
- West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee visited the football stadium Santiago Bernabéu Stadium in the Spanish capital Madrid to learn about its infrastructure.
- The Santiago Bernabéu Stadium, home of Real Madrid Football Club, has the second largest seating capacity in Spain.
- La Liga (Campeonato Nacional de Liga de Primera División) is the name of the Spanish football league and has been in existence since 1929. The first division is called the Primera Division (commonly known as La Liga) and the second is called the Segunda Division.

#### Odisha government approves public transport scheme, ‘LAccMI’ on 15 septmber.

- The Odisha Cabinet approved the 'Location Accessible Multi-Modal Initiative' (LAccMI) scheme, which aims to ensure sustainable and affordable transportation.
- For the first three years of bus operation, from 2023-24 to 2025-26, the project is estimated to cost around Rs 3178 crore.
- Under this scheme, bus operations have been planned to connect all the gram panchayats, block headquarters, district headquarters, major cities and economic centers across the state.
- The LAccMI scheme will be implemented in a phased manner. Around 1000 buses will be deployed under the scheme.
- The tenure of the scheme will be for 10 years which can be extended by two years.

#### MCQ

1. Which is the 41st Indian site recently included in the UNESCO World Heritage List?

- a) Kakatiya Rudreshwar Temple    b) Dholavira    c) Jaipur city    d) Shanti Niketan

**Answer: d**

2. Who has recently got the top sponsorship rights of the first 'MotoGP race' to be held in India?

- a) Amul    b) Indian Oil    c) Reliance Jio    d) MasterCard

**Answer: b**

3. When is World Bamboo Day celebrated every year?

- a) 16 September    b) 17 September    c) 18 September    d) 19 September

**Answer: c**

4. Who has topped the ‘Global Crypto Adoption Index-23’?

- a) Vietnam    b) USA    c) India    d) Nigeria

**Answer: d**

5. Who has recently launched 'IB Sathi' initiative to enhance financial inclusion services?

- a) Punjab National Bank    b) Indian Bank    c) Canara Bank    d) Bank of Baroda

**Answer: b**

6. Which state government has recently approved the public transport scheme ‘LAccMI’?

- a) Odisha    b) Kerala    c) Tamil Nadu    d) Goa

**Answer: a**

7. Recently, where has the Spanish league 'La Liga' signed an agreement to set up a football academy?

- a) West Bengal    b) Odisha    c) Assam    d) Maharashtra

**Answer: a**

8. Recently researchers of which IIT have converted tea factory waste into pharma products?

- a) IIT Guwahati    b) IIT Kharagpur    c) IIT Mumbai    d) IIT Kolkata

**Answer: a**

**New Parliament to host a session from tomorrow.**

- More than 3 months after the new Parliament building was inaugurated, MPs will move into it, the second day of a Special Session to be held between September 18 and 22.
- On the first day, the session will be held in the Old Parliament House.
- The Parliament session will start in the new Parliament on September 19 and regular government work will start there from September 20
- On the first day, both Houses will discuss the 75- year journey of Parliament. Fifty- one leaders of 34 parties attended the meeting.
- The government said eight Bills, four already listed, would come up during the session.
- Many parties – even ruling National Democratic Alliance members such as the Ajit Pawar Led Nationalist Congress Party and the National People's Party – demanded that the women's reservation Bill be cleared.

**PM launches Vishwakarma scheme.**

- PM Narendra Modi on Sunday unveiled the ₹13,000- crore Pradhan Mantri **Vishwakarma Yojana** and said the Centre is committed to the uplift of artisans.
- It offers collateral free enterprise development loans at a concessional interest rate in two tranches of ₹1 lakh and ₹2 lakh, respectively.
- Mr. Modi also inaugurated the first phase of the ₹5,400 -crore state -of -the art **India International Convention and Expo Centre**, named **Yashobhoomi**, at Dwarka in New Delhi.
- Mr. Modi also unveiled 18 customised stamp sheets showcasing the 18 traditional trades covered by the scheme, along with a toolkit e--booklet on the occasion.

**Vishwakarma scheme:**

- The Vishwakarma scheme aims to enhance the accessibility and quality of products and services offered by traditional artisans and craftsmen.
- The scheme offers collateral free enterprise development loans of ₹1 lakh (first tranche to be repaid in 18 months) and ₹2 lakh (second tranche to be repaid in 30 months).
- A concessional rate of interest of 5% will be charged from the beneficiary, with interest subvention cap of 8% to be paid by the Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises.
- The credit guarantee fees will be borne by the Union government.

**India International Convention and Expo Centre, named Yashobhoomi:**

- With a total project area of over 8.9 lakh square metres, and built up area of more than 1.8 lakh square metres, Yashobhoomi will find its place among the world's largest **MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions)** facilities.
- Yashobhoomi will also be connected to the Delhi Airport Metro Express line, with the inauguration of a new metro station, the 'Yashobhoomi Dwarka Sector 25'.

**Army likely to induct 114 Dhanush guns by 2026, say officials.**

- The Army, which has ordered 114 Dhanush artillery guns, and has one regiment operational already, is expecting to receive all the guns by 2026, according to defence sources.
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- Santiniketan, a town established by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, made it to the UNESCO's World Heritage List.
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3. How many countries does the G-77 multilateral grouping include?

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4. How many years old is the Men's Asia Cup cricket tournament?

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6. The original name of the Shantiniketan was:

- a) Bridharshttra                      b) Bhubandanga                                      c) Shakuntalam                                      d) Rabindranath giri

**Answer: b.** The area, originally called Bhubandanga, was renamed Santiniketan by Debendranath Tagore due to its conducive environment for meditation.

7. The World Suicide Prevention Day WSPD is observed on:

- a) 10th Aug                                      b) 12th Aug                                      c) 10th May                                      d) 10th Sept

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### **Canada is investigating possible links between the Indian government and the assassination of Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) chief Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada.**

- The Canadian government also said that it has expelled a top Indian diplomat as a consequence.
- **Khalistan Movement:** The Khalistan movement is a longstanding separatist movement seeking to establish a separate Sikh state called Khalistan, primarily in the Indian state of Punjab. It gained prominence in the 1980s but was largely suppressed by the Indian government through military operations such as Operation Blue Star and Operation Black Thunder. The movement remains banned in India, and Sikh diaspora communities, including those in Canada and the United Kingdom, still support it.
- **Sikh Population in Canada:** Canada has a significant Sikh population, with Sikhs accounting for 2.1% of the country's population. After India, Canada has the largest Sikh population in the world.
- **Recent Investigation:** Canada is currently investigating potential links between the Indian government and the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, the chief of the Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF). Nijjar was wanted by the Indian government and was killed in a targeted shooting in Canada. The investigation has led to the expulsion of a top Indian diplomat from Canada.
- **G20 Summit Discussions:** The issue of Khalistani extremism and the investigation into Nijjar's killing was raised on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Delhi. Canadian Prime Minister and Indian Prime Minister Modi discussed the matter, with Canada expressing concerns about foreign interference in the assassination and seeking cooperation from India.
- **Recent Anti-India Activities in Canada:** There have been recent incidents in Canada related to pro-Khalistani sentiments, including a controversial parade float depicting the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. This incident stirred controversy and raised concerns about activities of extremist elements in Canada.

### **The 'special session' of the Parliament that began on September 18**

- A Special session of Parliament is a unique and flexible mechanism for addressing important and time-sensitive matters. The specific agenda and decisions made during this session will determine its significance and impact on India's legislative and governance landscape.
- **Article 85 of the Constitution** deals with prorogation and dissolution of Parliament.
- **Unscheduled Session:** Unlike the regular sessions like the Budget, Monsoon, and Winter sessions that follow a general schedule, a special session is not part of the routine calendar. It is called at a specific time as needed, making it an exceptional event in the legislative process. While there is no fixed schedule, the provisions of the Article specify that the President must summon the Houses to meet at least once within six months. The provision has its roots in the Government of India Act, 1935, according to which not more than 12 months should elapse between two sessions.
- **Government's Agenda:** Special sessions are typically convened to address urgent and critical matters or to pass important legislation that cannot wait until the next scheduled session. In this case, it's essential to understand the specific agenda or purpose behind this special session. The article mentions that the session will be conducted without Question Hour, Zero Hour, or private members' business, which suggests that it may focus on a specific legislative agenda or issue of national significance.
- **Constitutional Basis:** The article explains that while there is no explicit provision in the Constitution for special sessions, they have historical precedence. For example, Article 352, which deals with the proclamation of Emergency, refers to a special sitting of the House. This means that the Constitution allows for flexibility in convening special sessions when required.
- **Historical Context:** The article highlights past instances of special sessions, such as the one held in 2017 to roll out the Goods and Services Tax (GST). It also mentions sessions held to mark significant events in India's history, like the transfer of power in 1947 and the Indo-China war in 1962. These examples demonstrate that special sessions have been used for various purposes, including addressing economic reforms and responding to national crises.



- Current Government's Decision: The fact that the current government has convened this special session without specific regular parliamentary activities like Question Hour or Zero Hour suggests that they have a particular focus or agenda in mind. Understanding this agenda and the decisions made during this session will be crucial for assessing its significance and impact on the country's governance.

#### **According to the 'Global Crypto Adoption Index', India is the top country in grassroots adoption of crypto.**

- India has topped Chainalysis's fourth 'Global Crypto Adoption Index' ranking 154 countries.
- After India, other countries like Nigeria, Vietnam, United States and Ukraine secured the second, third, fourth and fifth rankings respectively.
- In the Chainalysis index, India has recorded the highest number of crypto transactions in both retail and non-retail decentralized finance (DeFi) transactions. The country also ranks fifth in peer-to-peer exchange trade volume, with Nigeria leading the category.
- The government has introduced stringent taxation rules, including 30% tax on profits and 1% TDS (tax deducted at source) on crypto trades. These measures have adversely affected trade volumes within the country.
- In Chainalysis' Global Crypto Adoption Index for 2022, Vietnam ranked first, followed by the Philippines, Ukraine, India, US, Pakistan, and Brazil.

#### **World Bamboo Day is celebrated across the world on 18 September.**

- World Bamboo Day, observed annually on 18 September, is a global initiative that highlights the incredible importance of bamboo.
- This remarkable plant, often referred to as "green gold", holds immense potential in sustainable development, poverty alleviation, environmental protection and cultural preservation.
- Bamboo, a fast-growing type of grass, is renowned for its exceptional properties, including strength, flexibility and ecofriendliness.
- World Bamboo Day owes its existence to the dedicated efforts of the World Bamboo Organization (WBO), a non-profit organization founded by Suzanne Lucas and David Knights in 2005. It is currently headquartered in Antwerp, Belgium.
- On 18 September 2009, during the World Bamboo Congress, participants officially declared 18 September as World Bamboo Day.

#### **Indian Oil bags top sponsorship rights of 'MotoGP Bharat'.**

- Indian Oil has taken over the title sponsorship of the edition of 'MotoGP Bharat', the MotoGP race being held for the first time in India, which will be held at the Buddh International Circuit in Greater Noida from 22 to 24 September 2023.
- Organized by Fair Street Sports in association with Dorna Sports, it will be an exciting extravaganza that will see 42 teams and 84 riders competing across the MotoGP, Moto2 and Moto3 categories.
- MotoGP will be the biggest motorsport event in India after the Formula 1 Indian Grand Prix.
- Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) India's largest commercial ISO-9002 certified enterprise, the highest ranked Indian company in the prestigious Fortune 'Global 500' list. IOCL is the 20th largest petroleum company in the world. Established as Indian Oil Company Limited in 1959, Indian Oil Corporation Limited was formed in 1964 with the merger of Indian Refineries Limited (established 1958). It was originally incorporated as IOCL in 1964.

#### **Indian Bank launches 'IB Sathi' to enhance financial inclusion services.**

- Indian Bank has launched a new initiative called 'IB Sathi' (Sustainable Access and Aligning Technology for Holistic Inclusion) to boost its financial inclusion efforts.
- The primary goal of IB Saathi is to provide essential banking services to various stakeholders through the Business Correspondent (BC) channel.
- Under this revised model, Indian Bank is committed to providing basic banking services for at least four hours each day through fixed outlets at all its centres.
- Apart from the designated outlets, BC agents will also deliver their services directly to the customers' doorsteps. The move aims to make financial services more accessible, convenient and inclusive, especially for people in remote or underserved areas.
- 'IB Partner' Indian Bank plans to deploy over 5,000 new BCs by March 2024. At present, it already has 10,750 BCs and 10 Corporate Business Correspondents (CBCs). Indian Bank currently offers 36 different services to customers through its BC channel. However, in the coming years, the bank plans to launch an additional 60 services by FY25.
- Indian Bank was established on March 5, 1907 with an authorized capital of Rs 20 lakh and commenced business on August 15, 1907. Its headquarters is in Chennai

#### **NPCI launches contactless payment wearable ring "OTG".**

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has introduced India's first wearable ring for unprecedented contactless payments known as '7 Ring'/'OTG Ring' (On the Go Ring). It has been launched in the RuPay version.
- This innovative device has been developed in collaboration with Indian fintech startup Livquick.
- 'OTG Ring' is designed for National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) customers, opening up a world of possibilities for convenient and secure transactions.
- One of the key features of 'OTG Ring' is its compatibility with various open-loop transit programs. This means users can seamlessly access and participate in a wide range of transit services, further enhancing the utility and value of the Ring.

- The ring looks just like a piece of jewelry that you can customize and wear on any finger and tap on any contactless POS to make payments. The ring is made of “high-purity zirconia ceramic” and the company claims it is “scratch resistant.”
- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is an initiative taken by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Indian Banks Association (IBA) to govern retail payment and settlement systems in India. This organization was established in the year 2008 under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007. NPCI is incorporated as a 'Not for Profit' company under Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013. NPCI headquarters is in Mumbai (Maharashtra).

#### **IIT Guwahati researchers convert tea factory waste into pharma products.**

- Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IIT-G) has developed medicine and food products from tea factory waste.
- This is in line with the scope of Waste to Wealth Mission (W2W) of the Government of India. This research will also fulfill the objective of “Act East Policy” of Government of India, “Advantage Assam” and “Biotechnology” Policy of Government of Assam.
- The team led by Mihir Kumar Purkait of the Department of Chemical Engineering has *efficiently utilized the high lignin and low inorganic content in tea industry waste*.
- The result was a range of products for use in the pharmaceutical and food processing industries.
- The range of innovative value-added products developed in his laboratory at IIT Guwahati includes low cost antioxidant rich supplements designed to provide an affordable healthy lifestyle option by harnessing the potential properties of green tea and enhancing the shelf life of vegetable and fruits. Contains biological preservatives.

#### **Spanish League “La Liga” will establish a football academy in West Bengal.**

- Spanish football league La Liga has signed an agreement with the West Bengal government to set up a football academy in the state to nurture young talent.
- The MoU was signed during a meeting between Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and La Liga president Javier Tebas in Madrid.
- West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee visited the football stadium Santiago Bernabéu Stadium in the Spanish capital Madrid to learn about its infrastructure.
- The Santiago Bernabéu Stadium, home of Real Madrid Football Club, has the second largest seating capacity in Spain.
- La Liga (Campeonato Nacional de Liga de Primera División) is the name of the Spanish football league and has been in existence since 1929. The first division is called the Primera Division (commonly known as La Liga) and the second is called the Segunda Division.

#### **Odisha government approves public transport scheme, ‘LAccMI’ on 15 september.**

- The Odisha Cabinet approved the 'Location Accessible Multi-Modal Initiative' (LAccMI) scheme, which aims to ensure sustainable and affordable transportation.
- For the first three years of bus operation, from 2023-24 to 2025-26, the project is estimated to cost around Rs 3178 crore.
- Under this scheme, bus operations have been planned to connect all the gram panchayats, block headquarters, district headquarters, major cities and economic centers across the state.
- The LAccMI scheme will be implemented in a phased manner. Around 1000 buses will be deployed under the scheme.
- The tenure of the scheme will be for 10 years which can be extended by two years.

#### **MCQ**

1. Which is the 41st Indian site recently included in the UNESCO World Heritage List?

- a) Kakatiya Rudreshwar Temple    b) Dholavira    c) Jaipur city    d) Shanti Niketan

**Answer: d**

2. Who has recently got the top sponsorship rights of the first 'MotoGP race' to be held in India?

- a) Amul    b) Indian Oil    c) Reliance Jio    d) MasterCard

**Answer: b**

3. When is World Bamboo Day celebrated every year?

- a) 16 September    b) 17 September    c) 18 September    d) 19 September

**Answer: c**

4. Who has topped the ‘Global Crypto Adoption Index-23’?

- a) Vietnam    b) USA    c) India    d) Nigeria

**Answer: d**

5. Who has recently launched 'IB Sathi' initiative to enhance financial inclusion services?

- a) Punjab National Bank    b) Indian Bank    c) Canara Bank    d) Bank of Baroda

**Answer: b**

6. Which state government has recently approved the public transport scheme ‘LAccMI’?

- a) Odisha    b) Kerala    c) Tamil Nadu    d) Goa

Answer: a

7. Recently, where has the Spanish league 'La Liga' signed an agreement to set up a football academy?

- a) West Bengal                      b) Odisha                      c) Assam                      d) Maharashtra

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8. Recently researchers of which IIT have converted tea factory waste into pharma products?

- a) IIT Guwahati                      b) IIT Kharagpur                      c) IIT Mumbai                      d) IIT Kolkata

Answer: a

#### New Parliament to host a session from tomorrow.

- More than 3 months after the new Parliament building was inaugurated, MPs will move into it, the second day of a Special Session to be held between September 18 and 22.
- On the first day, the session will be held in the Old Parliament House.
- The Parliament session will start in the new Parliament on September 19 and regular government work will start there from September 20
- On the first day, both Houses will discuss the 75- year journey of Parliament. Fifty- one leaders of 34 parties attended the meeting.
- The government said eight Bills, four already listed, would come up during the session.
- Many parties — even ruling National Democratic Alliance members such as the Ajit Pawar Led Nationalist Congress Party and the National People's Party — demanded that the women's reservation Bill be cleared.

#### PM launches Vishwakarma scheme.

- PM Narendra Modi on Sunday unveiled the ₹13,000- crore Pradhan Mantri **Vishwakarma Yojana** and said the Centre is committed to the uplift of artisans.
- It offers collateral free enterprise development loans at a concessional interest rate in two tranches of ₹1 lakh and ₹2 lakh, respectively.
- Mr. Modi also inaugurated the first phase of the ₹5,400 -crore state -of -the art **India International Convention and Expo Centre**, named **Yashobhoomi**, at Dwarka in New Delhi.
- Mr. Modi also unveiled 18 customised stamp sheets showcasing the 18 traditional trades covered by the scheme, along with a toolkit e--booklet on the occasion.

##### Vishwakarma scheme:

- The Vishwakarma scheme aims to enhance the accessibility and quality of products and services offered by traditional artisans and craftsmen.
- The scheme offers collateral free enterprise development loans of ₹1 lakh (first tranche to be repaid in 18 months) and ₹2 lakh (second tranche to be repaid in 30 months).
- A concessional rate of interest of 5% will be charged from the beneficiary, with interest subvention cap of 8% to be paid by the Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises.
- The credit guarantee fees will be borne by the Union government.

##### India International Convention and Expo Centre, named Yashobhoomi:

- With a total project area of over 8.9 lakh square metres, and built up area of more than 1.8 lakh square metres, Yashobhoomi will find its place among the world's largest **MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions)** facilities.
- Yashobhoomi will also be connected to the Delhi Airport Metro Express line, with the inauguration of a new metro station, the 'Yashobhoomi Dwarka Sector 25'.

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**India--MiddleEast-EU corridor**

The India-MiddleEast-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) is a proposed infrastructure project that aims to create a transportation and trade corridor connecting India with the Middle East and Europe.

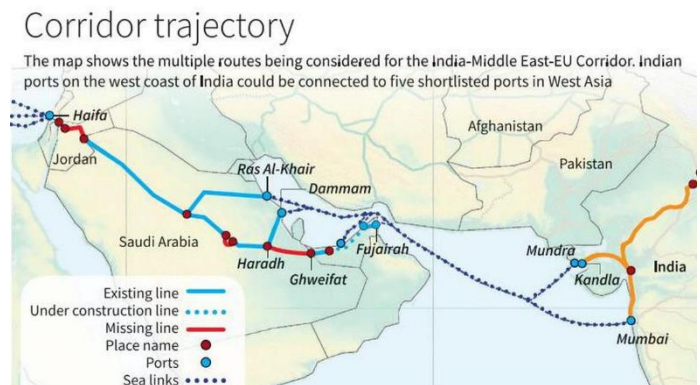
- Biden, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced the project during the annual Group of 20 summit of the world's top economies. The project is part of an initiative called the Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII) and India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor programme at Bharat Mandapam.
- Ursula von der Leyen, European Commission President.
- The plans to build a rail and shipping corridor linking India with the Middle East and Europe is an ambitious project aimed at fostering economic growth and political cooperation.
- The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) will comprise two separate corridors: The East corridor connecting India to the Arabian Gulf and the Northern corridor connecting the Arabian Gulf to Europe.

**Ports to be Connected:**

- India: Mundra (Gujarat), Kandla (Gujarat), and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (Navi Mumbai).
- Middle East: Fujairah, Jebel Ali, and Abu Dhabi in the UAE as well as Dammam and Ras Al Khair ports in Saudi Arabia.
- Railway line will connect Fujairah port (UAE) to Haifa port (Israel) via: Saudi Arabia (Ghuwaifat and Haradh) and Jordan.
- Israel: Haifa port.
- Europe: Piraeus port in Greece, Messina in South Italy, and Marseille in France.
- Participating Countries: The initiative involves several countries, including India, the United States, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the European Union (EU), Italy, France, and Germany. These countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support the project.
- Objective: The primary goal of the IMEC is to establish a comprehensive transportation network that includes ports, railways, and other infrastructure to facilitate trade and economic cooperation between India, the Middle East, and Europe.
- Route Options: The project is still in the planning stage, and multiple route options are being considered. The proposed routes may include ports such as Haifa in Israel and Piraeus in Greece.
- Key Ports in India: Ports on the west coast of India that could be connected to the corridor include Mundra and Kandla in Gujarat and the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust in Navi Mumbai.
- Key Ports in the Middle East: In West Asia, several ports have been shortlisted for connection to Indian ports, including Fujairah, Jebel Ali, and Abu Dhabi in the UAE, as well as Dammam and Ras Al Khair ports in Saudi Arabia.

- **Public and Private Ports:** Some of the ports, such as Mundra in India and Haifa in Israel, are privately controlled by the Adani Group and have been highlighted in the proposal documents.
- **Railway Connectivity:** The corridor will require a mix of existing brownfield projects and new greenfield projects to connect the missing rail links. There are existing and under-construction railway lines in West Asia, but additional construction is needed to complete the corridor.
- **Routes to Europe:** From Haifa in Israel, the corridor is expected to extend to landing destinations in Europe, including the Piraeus port in Greece, Messina in southern Italy, and Marseille in France.
- **Cost Estimates:** Initial estimates suggest that developing each IMEC route could cost anywhere between \$3 billion to \$8 billion, but the final costs are yet to be determined.
- **Challenges:** The project aims to provide an alternative to the sea route that passes through the Suez Canal. However, there are challenges such as handling costs and potential objections from countries like Egypt, which may lose revenue if the Suez Canal is bypassed.
- **Chinese Presence:** Despite efforts to counter the Belt and Road Initiative of China, Chinese companies have been involved in some aspects of the project, and the Chinese presence, particularly in the Piraeus port, remains a factor to consider.
- **Technical Standardization:** To achieve seamless transportation, technical standards such as railway gauge, container dimensions, and technology for engines will need to be standardized across the participating countries.
- **Complexity:** The IMEC is a complex program that requires coordination among multiple countries and technical standardization to ensure its success.
- **In summary,** the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor is a significant infrastructure project aimed at enhancing trade and connectivity between India, the Middle East, and Europe. However, it is still in the planning stage, and many details are being worked out before it becomes a reality.

#### MCQ



**Q1.** Regarding the International North-South Transport Corridor, consider the following statements:

1. It is an extension of China's Belt & Road Initiative.
2. It connects China with African countries.
3. Iran is part of this project.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only      b) 2 only      c) 3 only      d) 1, 2 and 3 only

**Answer: C.** It is a 7,200-km-long multi-mode network of ship, rail, and road routes for moving freight. Regions involved: India, Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe.

**Q2.** What is the primary objective of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)?

- a) To promote political cooperation between India, the Middle East, and Europe.
- b) To establish a comprehensive transportation network for trade and economic cooperation.
- c) To provide an alternative route for the Suez Canal.
- d) To connect India with China via a railway corridor.

**Answer: B.** To establish a comprehensive transportation network for trade and economic cooperation.

**Q3.** Which countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support the IMEC project?

- a) India, China, Russia, and Brazil.
- b) India, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.
- c) India, China, Japan, and South Korea.
- d) India, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France.

**Answer: B.** India, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

**Q4.** What are the two separate corridors that make up the IMEC?

- a) North corridor and South corridor.
- b) East corridor and West corridor.
- c) Arabian Gulf corridor and Mediterranean corridor.
- d) Northern corridor and Southern corridor.

**Answer: B.** East corridor and Northern corridor.

**Q5.** Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a key port in India that could be connected to the IMEC?

- a) Mundra (Gujarat).
- b) Kandla (Gujarat).
- c) Kolkata (West Bengal).
- d) Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (Navi Mumbai).

**Answer: C.** Kolkata (West Bengal).

**Q6.** What is one of the challenges mentioned in the passage regarding the IMEC project?

- a) The lack of interest from countries in the Middle East.
- b) The absence of private companies' involvement in the project.
- c) Handling costs and potential objections from countries like Egypt.
- d) The project's focus on technical standardization.

**Answer: C.** Handling costs and potential objections from countries like Egypt.

**Q7.** What is the estimated cost range for developing each IMEC route mentioned in the passage?

- a) \$1 billion to \$3 billion. b) \$5 billion to \$10 billion. c) \$3 billion to \$8 billion. d) \$10 billion to \$15 billion.

**Answer: C.** \$3 billion to \$8 billion.

**Q8.** Despite efforts to counter the Belt and Road Initiative of China, which aspect of the IMEC project still involves Chinese companies?

- a) The development of railway lines in India. b) The construction of ports in the Middle East.
- c) Technical standardization across participating countries. d) The presence of Chinese companies in the Piraeus port.

**Answer: D.** The presence of Chinese companies in the Piraeus port.

**Q9.** What does IMEC stand for?

- a) Indian Middle East Economic Cooperation. b) International Middle East Energy Consortium.
- c) India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor. d) Indo-Middle East Export Corporation.

**Answer: C.** India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.

### **Project Cheetah 1 year: MP's Kuno National Park Cheetahs released into the wild in winter with collars on**

- Cheetahs in Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh, were initially introduced as part of Project Cheetah. However, there have been challenges and some deaths among the cheetah population since their arrival.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi released 8 African cheetahs, imported from Namibia, into enclosures at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh. Later, an additional 12 cheetahs from South Africa joined them.
- Challenges and Deaths: Within a year of their arrival, 6 out of the 20 cheetahs had died. Some of these deaths were attributed to issues related to adapting to Indian conditions and other ailments.
- Concerns About Collars: 2 cheetahs reportedly died due to parasitic infections from untreated wounds around their necks. However, the head of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), S.P. Yadav, dismissed suggestions that the collars were responsible for these infections.
- Collar Monitoring: Yadav mentioned that all the cheetahs had been checked, treated, and some still wear collars. The collars are essential for monitoring the cheetahs when they are released into the wild.
- The project has faced difficulties in successfully reintroducing cheetahs into the wild in Kuno National Park, with a significant number of cheetahs dying within a short period after their arrival. Monitoring through collars is considered crucial for tracking their progress once they are released into the wild.
- Mortality: Unfortunately, there have been several deaths among the cheetahs since their arrival in Kuno National Park. Six out of the 20 cheetahs introduced had died. Additionally, three out of four cubs from the first litter born in the park also died due to heat-related issues.
- Animals were initially released into the wild of MP's Kuno national park but later quarantined after 3 died of septicemia.
- Forest officials in Madhya Pradesh have released 9 of 14 cheetahs from their quarantine bomas (enclosure) into bigger and soft enclosures with radio collars re-attached around their necks.
- This was done after all the cheetahs were seen shedding their winter coat, a response to their circadian rhythm.
- The animals were originally translocated from Africa to Kuno as part of Project Cheetah launched last year and had spent the last month in quarantine for necessary treatment and infection monitoring.
- The officials are preparing to eventually re-release the 14 Cheetahs into the wilderness of Kuno National Park.
- The cheetahs had been released in the park upon their arrival in India, but were recaptured and quarantined after three of them died of septicemia. Initially, the radio collars were thought to be responsible for causing lacerations around their necks and exposing their skin to parasites, but the deaths were later linked to the animals' winter coats which had become infested with flies and maggots as they roamed the jungles of Kuno during the hot and humid monsoon period.

#### **What are Radio Collars:**

- Radio collars are used to track and monitor animals in the wild for various research and conservation purposes.
- Radio Transmitters: Radio collars are equipped with small radio transmitters that emit signals at specific frequencies. These signals can be received by researchers using specialized tracking equipment.
- Data Collection: Radio collars are valuable tools for collecting data on animal behavior, movements, habitat use, and population dynamics. Researchers can use this information to study migration patterns, feeding habits, reproduction, and more.
- Additional Technologies: In addition to radio transmitters, collars can also incorporate other technologies like GPS (Global Positioning System) or accelerometers. GPS-equipped collars provide precise location data, allowing researchers to track animals' movements in real-time. Accelerometers can record the animal's activity levels and posture, providing insights into behavior.

- Animal Comfort: It's essential to design radio collars that are lightweight and comfortable for animals to wear. Researchers and conservationists work to minimize the impact of collars on an animal's daily activities and overall well-being. Collar size, material, and attachment methods are carefully chosen to reduce any potential discomfort.
- Risk Management: There are potential risks associated with using radio collars. These include the risk of injury, irritation, or infection at the collar site. Researchers and veterinarians take steps to minimize these risks, including regular health checks on collared animals and, when necessary, adjusting or removing the collars.
- Ethical Considerations: The use of radio collars on wildlife raises ethical considerations. Researchers must ensure that the benefits of the research outweigh any potential harm to the animals. Ethical guidelines and permits are often required to conduct research involving collared animals, and studies are subject to ethical review.
- Conservation and Management: Radio collar data can be crucial for wildlife conservation and management efforts. It can help identify critical habitats, migration corridors, and areas where conservation efforts are needed. This information is particularly valuable for endangered species.
- Project Cheetah, an intercontinental cheetah translocation programme, was launched on 17 September, 2022, with the objective of restoring the population of cheetahs, which were declared extinct in the country in 1952. 20 radio-collared cheetahs were translocated from South Africa (12 cheetahs) and Namibia (8 cheetahs) to Kuno National Park.
- In March 2023, India announced the birth of 4 cubs to one of the eight cheetahs that were relocated from Namibia.

#### MCQ

**Q1.** Which of the following are naturally found in India:

1. Black-necked crane
2. Cheetah
3. Flying squirrel
4. Snow leopard

- a) 1, 3 and 4 only                      b) 1, 2 and 3 only                      c) 2 and 4 only                      d) All of the above

**Answer: A.** 1, 3 and 4 only

**Q2.** What is the scientific name of Cheetah?

- a) Panthera Leo                      b) Panthera Tigris                      c) Felis Catus                      d) Acinonyx jubatus

**Answer: D.**

**Q3.** IUCN's Red list Recognizes Cheetah under which of the following category:

- a) Endangered                      b) Vulnerable                      c) Extinct                      d) Near Threatened

**Answer: B.**

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classified the cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) as "Vulnerable" on its Red List of Threatened Species.

### Google on trial in the United States

#### [Google and the U.S. The Department of Justice (DoJ)]

- Charge Against Google: The primary charge against Google is that it used illegal tactics to maintain a monopoly in online search. The U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) filed the charges on October 20, 2020, arguing that Google engaged in **anticompetitive behavior**. Specifically, the key allegation is related to Google's "arrangements" with companies, including Apple, to be the default search engine on their devices.

#### The DoJ argues:

- Throttled Competition: Google's default search position on various devices limited options available to consumers and reduced competition from other search engines.
- Harm to Consumers: The DoJ contends that Google's actions have harmed consumers by limiting choice and stifling competition.
- Monopoly Building: The case targets Google for alleged monopolistic behavior, focusing on its control of the search market.
- Google's Defence: Google argues that its dominance in the search market, which currently stands at 91% of the global search market, is **not due to anticompetitive practices but rather the result of providing superior search services**. Google maintains that consumers have the option to change their default search engine, and its agreements with device manufacturers like Apple are legitimate business deals.

#### Deal Between Apple and Google:

- While the details of their cooperation have not been publicly disclosed, reports suggest that Google pays Apple a substantial amount to remain the default search engine on Apple devices. This payment, estimated to be between \$8 billion and \$12 billion annually, is a significant source of revenue for Apple. It also prevents Apple from developing its own rival search engine.

#### Antitrust Cases and 'Techlash':

- Antitrust cases against major tech companies have become increasingly common globally, with Google facing fines and investigations from the European Union as well. The United States, historically slow to take action against tech giants, has seen a growing "techlash" in recent years. This refers to public and political concerns over the immense power and influence held by large technology companies, encompassing issues like privacy, small business competition, and more.

#### Impact of Antitrust Cases:



- Antitrust cases have the potential to reshape entire sectors of the economy. They can influence how tech companies operate, the services they offer, and their competitive landscape. The outcome of the case against Google could set legal precedents and influence how antitrust laws are applied in the modern era of technology and digital markets.

**MCQ**

**Q1.** What is the name of Google's parent company, formed in 2015?

- a) Google Corporation      b) Alphabet Inc.      c) Google Holdings d) Alphabet Corporation

**Answer: D.** Alphabet Corporation

**Q2.** Which co-founders started Google as a research project while they were Ph.D. students at Stanford University?

- a) Mark Zuckerberg and Eduardo Saverin      b) Larry Page and Sergey Brin  
c) Jeff Bezos and Steve Jobs      d) Elon Musk and Peter Thiel

**Answer: B.** Larry Page and Sergey Brin

**Q3.** What is the primary function of Google's search engine?

- a) Social networking      b) Online shopping      c) Information retrieval      d) Video streaming

**Answer: C.** Information retrieval

**Q4.** Recently the Competition of India has imposed Penalty of the sum of Rs.\_\_\_\_\_ on Google.

- a) 1000 crores      b) 936 crores      c) 846 crores      d) 746 crores

**Answer b)**

In October 2022, Competition Commission of India (CCI) imposed a penalty of Rs. 936.44 crores on Alphabet-owned Google for "abusing its dominant position" in markets related to the Android mobile device ecosystem.

**Nipah virus**  
**One Health approach**

A zoonotic disease that jumped from animals to humans, NiV underlines the fact that anthropogenic causes are driving the new pandemics of the world.

- The Nipah virus outbreak in Kerala in 2018 and subsequent outbreaks have been significant events that highlighted the threat of emerging zoonotic diseases and the need for a holistic approach to healthcare.
- The Nipah virus (NiV) has caused several outbreaks in Kerala, with cases reported in 2018, 2019, 2021, and 2023. These outbreaks have been characterized by a high mortality rate.

**Zoonotic Origin:** Nipah virus is a zoonotic disease, meaning it jumped from animals to humans. In this case, fruit bats and pigs have been identified as potential vectors or reservoirs of the virus.

**Anthropogenic Causes:** The text emphasizes that anthropogenic (human-caused) factors, such as deforestation, habitat destruction, and changes in agricultural practices, contribute to the emergence of zoonotic diseases like NiV.

**No Licensed Treatment:** Currently, there is no licensed treatment for Nipah virus infection. Medical care primarily involves supportive measures like rest, hydration, and symptom management. Some experimental treatments, like Favipiravir and monoclonal antibodies, are under development and evaluation.

**Public Health Response:** The Kerala outbreak in 2018 prompted an effective public health response, including patient isolation, contact tracing, quarantine measures, and infection control protocols. These measures are crucial in containing the spread of infectious diseases.

**Human-to-Human Transmission:** Nipah virus can be transmitted from person to person, as demonstrated by cases of human-to-human transmission. This mode of transmission increases the risk to healthcare workers and necessitates strict infection control measures.

**Comprehensive Approach Needed:** Comprehensive approach to healthcare and disease prevention addressing the root causes of emerging diseases, such as changes in ecosystems and climate change, is essential.

**One Health Approach:** The "One Health" approach is advocated as a way to address these challenges. One Health seeks to balance and optimize the health of people, animals, and the environment. It involves collaboration across multiple sectors, including public health, veterinary medicine, and environmental science, to prevent, predict, detect, and respond to health threats like zoonoses.

Nipah virus outbreaks in Kerala serve as a stark reminder of the ongoing threat posed by emerging infectious diseases and the need for a multidisciplinary and collaborative approach to address these challenges. The One Health approach is recommended to address the complex factors contributing to the emergence and spread of such diseases.

**Nipah virus**

- The organism which causes Nipah Virus encephalitis is an RNA or Ribonucleic acid virus of the family Paramyxoviridae, genus Henipavirus, and is closely related to Hendra virus. Hendra virus (HeV) infection is a rare emerging zoonosis that causes severe and often fatal disease in both infected horses and humans.
- It first broke out in Malaysia and Singapore in 1998 and 1999.
- It first appeared in domestic pigs and has been found among several species of domestic animals including dogs, cats, goats, horses and sheep.
- The disease spreads through fruit bats or 'flying foxes,' of the genus Pteropus, who are natural reservoir hosts of the Nipah and Hendra viruses.

- The human infection presents as an encephalitic syndrome marked by fever, headache, drowsiness, disorientation, mental confusion, coma, and potentially death.

## MCQ

**Q1.** In April, 2022 Scientists detected the presence of \_\_\_\_\_ antibodies against Nipah virus infection (NiV) in 51 bats that were captured from Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

- a) IgG                                      b) IgM                                      c) IgA                                      d) IgE

**Answers: A. IgG**

Antibody/Immunoglobulin, is a protective protein produced by the immune system in response to the presence of a foreign substance, called an antigen.

**IgG (Immunoglobulin G):**

- Found in the blood and body fluids.
- Effective against bacteria and toxins.
- Can cross the placenta, providing passive immunity to newborns.

**IgM (Immunoglobulin M):**

- Composed of five Y-shaped units.
- Produced rapidly by B cells in response to pathogens.
- Important in the initial defense against infections.

**IgA (Immunoglobulin A):**

- Exists as monomers in the blood and forms dimers in secretions like mucus, saliva, and breast milk.
- Plays a vital role in protecting mucous membranes from bacterial invasion.
- Provides immune protection to the gastrointestinal tract of newborns.

**IgD (Immunoglobulin D):**

- Present on the surface of B cells.
- Believed to be involved in regulating antibody production and preventing respiratory tract infections.

**IgE (Immunoglobulin E):**

- Initially associated with immunity against parasites.
- Binds to mast cells and is implicated in allergic reactions like pollen allergies (pollinosis).

**Q2.** Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. In tropical regions, Zika virus disease is transmitted by the same mosquito that transmits dengue.
  2. Sexual transmission of Zika virus disease is possible.
- a) 1 only                                      b) 2 only                                      c) Both 1 and 2                                      d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: C. Both 1 and 2**

**Zika Virus:**

- Zika virus is a flavivirus 1st discovered in monkeys in 1947 and in humans in Uganda in 1952.
- Symptoms include fever, skin rashes, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, malaise, and headache.
- It is transmitted primarily by Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus mosquitoes, which are also vectors for Dengue.
- Modes of transmission include mosquito bites, vertical transmission from mother to child during pregnancy (which can cause microcephaly and other severe fetal brain defects), and sexual transmission from an infected partner.
- Zika virus has been found in breast milk, which is another potential mode of transmission.
- Zika virus can have serious consequences for pregnant women and their unborn children.

**31 Benches of the GST Appellate Tribunal have been notified by the Union Finance Ministry**

- The Finance Ministry's notification regarding the constitution of 31 Appellate Tribunals for the Goods and Services Tax (GST) across 28 States and eight Union Territories is a significant development in the resolution of taxpayer disputes with the Revenue Department. This move was anticipated and has been awaited by industry players.
- The establishment of these Appellate Tribunals was initially planned when the GST regime was implemented on July 1, 2017. However, it received formal clearance from the GST Council in July, and the notification has now been issued.
- The creation of these tribunals is crucial as it will provide a structured and legal framework for taxpayers to appeal decisions and disputes related to GST. As of June 30, there were over 14,000 pending appeals from taxpayers concerning Central GST levies. These Appellate Tribunals will play a vital role in resolving these pending cases and addressing future disputes, contributing to a more efficient and transparent tax administration under the GST regime.
- The first set of GST tribunals is expected to become operational sometime between November and January 2024.
- Uttar Pradesh will have the highest number of GST tribunal Benches, with 3 proposed in different cities
- Karnataka and Rajasthan will each have 2 GST tribunal Benches
- Maharashtra and Goa will have 3 GST tribunal Benches collectively.
- Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, as well as Gujarat and the Union Territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu, will each have 2 GST tribunal Benches.
- Disputes in West Bengal, Sikkim, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands will be addressed by 2 Benches of the tribunal in Kolkata.

- For the seven northeastern States, one tribunal Bench is proposed in Guwahati, with circuit Benches in Aizawl, Agartala, and Kohima that will be established based on the number of appeals filed in each respective State.

### The latest data on India's foreign trade in August shows some concerning trends

- Goods Exports:** Goods exports have been declining for the 7th consecutive month, but the rate of decline eased in August. The decline was 6.86%, and the total value of goods exports in August was \$34.5 billion, which is a three-month high.
- Services Exports:** Services exports, which had been growing at a robust rate in the previous fiscal year, were estimated to have shrunk by 0.4% in August. The total services exports for August stood at \$26.39 billion. This decline in services exports raises concerns about a widening current account deficit.
- Goods Trade Deficit:** The goods trade deficit reached a 10-month high in August. The merchandise import bill for the month dropped by 5.23% year-on-year to \$58.64 billion. However, it was significantly higher than the import tally for July, leading to a goods trade deficit of \$24.16 billion for August. This deficit is just 2.8% below the figures for August 2022 and almost 17% higher than the deficit in July 2023.
- This could have implications for India's overall trade balance and the current account deficit for the current quarter.
- These trends in foreign trade reflect the complex economic situation and may require close monitoring by policymakers to address the challenges posed by declining exports and a widening trade deficit.

### 'Kalaigal Magalir Urimai Thogai Thittam' scheme launched by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin

- The scheme was launched on the birth anniversary of DMK founder C.N. Annadurai in Kancheepuram.
- Beneficiaries:** The scheme aims to benefit **1.06 crore women heads of family in the State of Tamil Nadu**.
- Monthly Grant:** Under this scheme, ₹1,000 will be provided as a monthly rights' grant to the eligible women.
- ATM Cards Distribution:** ATM cards were also distributed to the beneficiaries as part of the scheme launch.
- Financial Position:** The scheme could not be implemented immediately after Mr. Stalin assumed office in 2021 due to the State's financial situation. It appears that the government waited until they were in a more stable financial position to roll out the program.
- Acknowledgment of Support:** Chief Minister M.K. Stalin expressed gratitude to the people for voting for the DMK and its allies, which enabled the implementation of such welfare measures.
- Recognition of Homemakers:** The scheme is designed to recognize the contributions of homemakers and women's roles in society.
- Criticism of Social Issues:** Mr. Stalin also criticized those who oppose women's education and advocate child marriage, emphasizing the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in society.

### The controversy surrounding the use of the term "President of Bharat" in the official invitation for the G-20 summit in New Delhi raises several important constitutional and practical considerations.

#### Constitutional Aspect:

- Article 52 of the Indian Constitution states that there shall be a President of India, not 'Bharat'.
- Article 1 of the Constitution mentions, "India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States." The phrase 'that is' is clarificatory and serves to explain that 'Bharat' is another name for 'India'.
- The word 'Bharat' is used mainly in the Hindi version of the Constitution, and it doesn't stand as an independent word in the original Constitution.
- Article 394A(2) reinforces that the word 'Bharat' is a translation of 'India' in the Constitution.

#### Confusion in Official Communication:

- The use of 'Bharat' interchangeably with 'India' in official communication can lead to confusion, especially in international relations.
- The official name of the country in dealings with foreign countries and international organizations is the 'Republic of India.' Changing this name could confuse foreign governments and international bodies.
- A country should have only one official name, and it cannot be both 'India' and 'Bharat.'

#### Historical Context:

- The debates of the Constituent Assembly show that the original draft of Article 1 simply stated, "India shall be a union of states."
- The addition of 'that is Bharat' was a compromise and was not intended to suggest interchangeability.

#### Changing the Name as a Political Agenda:

- Changing the name of a country should not be a political party's agenda. It requires consensus and should connect emotionally with people from all regions.
- A sudden change can lead to a sense of alienation among certain sections of society.
- The idea of distancing from India's colonial past should be applied consistently across all symbols and structures associated with that period, which may not be practical or desirable.
- Conflict with 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'**
- 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' is a Sanskrit phrase that means "the world is one family." It was the motto of the G-20 summit under India's presidency.

- The newfound emphasis on anti-colonialism and changing the name of the country might be seen as conflicting with the idea of a united global family.

### **The Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud made several key statements and observations regarding the Editors Guild of India (EGI) and the FIRs (First Information Reports) filed against senior journalists and members of the EGI in response to their report on “partisan media coverage” of the Manipur violence**

- Right to Free Speech: CJI Chandrachud emphasized that while the EGI's report may be subject to debate and may be right or wrong, they have the **right to free speech to express their views in print**. He defended the EGI's freedom to present their perspective.
- Lack of Evidence in Complaints: The CJI noted that the complaints that led to the registration of FIRs against the EGI members and journalists did not contain any substantial evidence or allegations related to the offences claimed. He mentioned that there was no mention of the offences alleged against them in the complaints.
- The Bench gave the complainants a two-week deadline to provide an affidavit explaining why the FIRs against EGI President Seema Mustafa and senior journalists Seema Guha, Bharat Bhushan, and Sanjay Kapoor should not be quashed by the top court.
- Chief Justice Chandrachud questioned the complainants about how the offences mentioned, such as Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code (promoting enmity between different groups) and Section 200 IPC (giving false declaration to a court), were relevant to the EGI's report. He pressed the complainants to demonstrate how these offences were connected to the report.
- The Chief Justice defended the EGI's role in sending a team of senior journalists to Manipur to investigate and intervene based on allegations of partisan reporting. He stated that the EGI had the right to express their views, and the essence of free speech involves the possibility of being right or wrong.
- The complainants initially suggested that they would withdraw their complaints if the EGI withdrew its report. However, they later agreed to file an affidavit in response to the court's request.
- Senior advocate Shyam Divan, representing the EGI and the journalists, mentioned that counterviews to the report had been published on the same web page of the editors' body along with the report.
- The EGI and journalists' counsel requested that the case be transferred to Delhi from Manipur. The Solicitor-General representing the Manipur government objected to this, but at one point, he suggested that the case could be transferred to the Delhi High Court rather than pursuing the option of quashing the FIRs.

### **Progress and challenges related to the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), scheme aimed at providing piped water to every rural household by 2024.**

- Mahoba district in Uttar Pradesh reported significant progress in providing tap connections to households. In 2019, only 1,612 households had tap connections, but by 2023, approximately 98% of rural homes in the district were reported to have tap connections.
- Despite the reported progress, there are discrepancies between the official data and the reality on the ground. Many households that are officially certified as “connected” do not actually have functioning taps or access to water through them.
- Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC): According to the scheme's definitions, a household with an FHTC should receive at least 55 liters of potable water per person per day.
- The official dashboard of the JJM reports that all 385 villages in Mahoba district have “100% household tap connections,” while local officials acknowledge that only 100 out of the 398 villages have eligible tap connections with running water supply.
- Many villages face challenges related to water supply, including the need for submersible pumps, unreliable groundwater sources, and infrastructure issues. Some villages continue to rely on hand pumps for drinking water.
- The Mahoba administration is commissioning water treatment plants to treat water from reservoirs and supply it as piped water to households. These treatment plants aim to ensure the purity of water.
- Commissioning pipes over undulating terrain is a major challenge, as even a small crack or leak can disrupt water supply. The state has set a deadline to address these challenges and achieve “full water supply” by 2024.
- Historically, Mahoba has relied on groundwater sources, but the JJM aims to reduce this dependence and transition to a more reliable and sustainable piped water supply system.

### **Iconic double-decker buses of Mumbai retire after 8 decades of service**

- **Mumbai's iconic red double-decker buses retired from service after 86 years of operation.**
- The double-decker buses, in operation since 1937, have been an integral part of Mumbai's public transportation system, becoming synonymous with the city itself and featuring in movies.
- The Brihanmumbai Electricity Supply and Transport (BEST) authorities decided to phase out these diesel-run buses as part of modernization and cost-cutting measures.
- BEST has started replacing these iconic buses with leased battery-run red and black double-decker buses, with about 25 of them introduced so far.

### **Srinivasan K. Swamy elected Chairman of Audit Bureau of Circulations for 2023--24**

**Srinivasan K. Swamy:**

Executive Chairman of R.K. Swamy Hansa Group.

Unanimously elected Chairman of ABC for 2023-2024.

Currently serves as Chairman of the Asian Federation of Advertising Associations.



Previously held leadership positions in various advertising and business associations, including the International Advertising Association (IAA) and Advertising Standards Council of India.

#### **Riyad Mathew:**

Chief Associate Editor and Director of Malayala Manorama.  
Unanimously elected Deputy Chairman of ABC for 2023-2024.  
Represents publisher members on the council.

#### **Mohit Jain:**

Executive Director of Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd.  
Unanimously elected Secretary of ABC for 2023-2024.  
Represents publisher members on the council.

#### **Vikram Sakhuja:**

Partner & Group CEO Media & OOH of Madison Communications Private Ltd.  
Unanimously re-elected Treasurer of ABC for 2023-2024.  
Represents advertising agencies' members on the council.

#### **Other Members on the Bureau's Council of Management:**

- Advertising Agencies' Representatives: Prasanth Kumar (Group M Media India Private Ltd.), Vaishali Verma (Initiative Media India Private Ltd.).
- Publishers' Representatives: Pratap G. Pawar (Sakal Papers), Shailesh Gupta (Jagran Prakashan), Praveen Someshwar (HT Media), Dhruva Mukherjee (ABP Private Ltd.), Karan Darda (Lokmat Media), Girish Agarwal (DB Corp Ltd.).
- Advertiser Representatives: Karunesh Bajaj (ITC Ltd.), Aniruddha Halder (TVS Motor Company Ltd.), Shashank Srivastava (Maruti Suzuki India Ltd.).
- Hormuzd Masani: Serves as the Secretary General of ABC

#### **USCIRF held hearing on religious freedom**

- The U.S. Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) held a hearing on religious freedom in India on September 20.
- India has previously rejected USCIRF reports that alleged violations of religious freedom in the country.
- Coming on the heels of two successful bilateral meetings, USCIRF in its announcement of the meeting said the Congressional hearing is on how the U.S. government can work with the Indian government to address violations.
- The **United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)** is an independent, bipartisan federal government commission in the United States.
- USCIRF is dedicated to defending the universal right to freedom of religion or belief abroad. Its mission is to monitor and report on religious freedom conditions in countries around the world.
- It serves as an advisory body to the U.S. Congress, the President, and the Secretary of State. USCIRF provides recommendations and analysis on matters related to religious freedom.
- Headquarters: USCIRF is headquartered in Washington, D.C.
- It was established by the U.S. government following the enactment of the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) in 1998. IRFA was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bill Clinton.
- While USCIRF provides recommendations, its recommendations are non-binding on the U.S. State Department or the U.S. government. However, these recommendations often carry significant moral and political weight and can influence U.S. foreign policy decisions.
- The International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) makes it U.S. policy to condemn violations of religious freedom and to promote and protect this right around the world. It established USCIRF as one of the mechanisms for implementing this policy.
- It is true that some countries, including India, have been critical of USCIRF's reports and findings. India, in particular, has traditionally not recognized or accepted the views and recommendations of USCIRF, often viewing them as interference in its internal affairs.

#### **2030 global renewable energy Target**

The proposal to triple global renewable energy (RE) capacity by 2030, a target that has been promoted by the presidency of the 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

- In 2021, the global installed capacity of renewable energy sources (RES) for electricity generation was 3026 GigaWatts (GW), accounting for 39% of the total capacity from all sources. However, in total electricity generation, the contribution by RES was only 28%.
- Tripling RE capacity by 2030 would mean reaching approximately 9000 GW, which is more than the total installed capacity from all sources in 2021, requiring the addition of about 6000 GW of RE capacity between 2022 and 2030.
- The concerns about the feasibility of achieving this target, especially given the time required for the construction and operationalization of new hydro plants. Most of the additional capacity is expected to come from solar and wind, but this would still imply generating about 13,000 TWh of electricity from RES alone, which would account for 38% of total global electricity production.

- Electricity demand varies significantly across countries and regions. Developing countries, such as China and India, have much higher rates of electricity demand growth compared to developed regions like the European Union and the United States. This means that achieving the target would require different efforts from different countries.
- The article emphasizes the need for developed countries, such as the U.S. and the EU, to take more significant steps in phasing out fossil fuel-based electricity generation. Without this commitment, developing countries would bear a disproportionate burden in achieving the RE capacity target.
- The origin of the global RE target proposed by COP28 lacks transparency. It is based on a report from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), which the article suggests follows a scenario that may not be equitable.
- The article argues that absolute projections of installed capacity, divorced from growth in energy demand, may not be the most effective approach. It suggests that relative targets are less risky and not as dependent on demand growth matching expectations.
- The article highlights that some of the major proponents of the global RE target, like India, have announced ambitious domestic targets, while others, like the U.S. and the EU, have not committed to absolute targets but rely on market signals.
- The article concludes by suggesting that developing countries, especially India, should consider the tripling global RE capacity target only if developed countries commit to absolute and equitable targets domestically under the Paris Agreement.

#### MCQ

**Q1.** What is the proposed target by COP28 regarding global renewable energy (RE) capacity by 2030?

- a) Double the current RE capacity
- b) Triple the current RE capacity
- c) Quadruple the current RE capacity
- d) Maintain the current RE capacity

**Answer: B.** Triple the current RE capacity

**Q2.** In 2021, what percentage of the total electricity generation was contributed by renewable energy sources (RES)?

- a) 28%
- b) 39%
- c) 50%
- d) 75%

**Answer: A.** 28%

**Q3.** What is the main concern raised in the article regarding the feasibility of achieving the tripling of RE capacity target by 2030?

- a) Lack of technological advancements
- b) Lack of political will
- c) Time required for building hydro plants
- d) Insufficient financial resources

**Answer: C.** Time required for building hydro plants

**Q4.** Which energy sources are expected to contribute the most to the additional RE capacity needed to achieve the target?

- a) Nuclear and geothermal
- b) Hydro and biomass
- c) Solar and wind
- d) Natural gas and coal

**Answer: C.** Solar and wind

**Q5.** Why is it emphasized that achieving the target would require different efforts from different countries?

- a) Because some countries have more resources
- b) Because electricity demand varies across countries
- c) Because some countries have better technology
- d) Because some countries have stricter regulations

**Answer: B.** Because electricity demand varies across countries

**Q6.** What is the main point made regarding developed countries like the U.S. and the EU?

- a) They have already achieved the target
- b) They have no role to play in achieving the target
- c) They need to phase out fossil fuel-based electricity generation
- d) They should focus on reducing energy consumption

**Answer: C.** They need to phase out fossil fuel-based electricity generation

**Q7.** What is the source of the proposed global RE target by COP28?

- a) The UNFCCC report
- b) The IRENA report
- c) The World Bank report
- d) The IPCC report

**Answer: B.** The IRENA report

**Q8.** What is the main difference in approach between countries like India and the U.S./EU regarding renewable energy targets?

- a) India has no targets, while the U.S./EU have absolute targets
- b) India relies on market signals, while the U.S./EU have absolute targets
- c) India has ambitious domestic targets, while the U.S./EU have relative targets
- d) India and the U.S./EU both have the same targets

**Answer: C.** India has ambitious domestic targets, while the U.S./EU have relative targets

**Q9.** What condition does the article suggest for developing countries to consider the global RE capacity target proposed by COP28?

- a) Developing countries should reduce their energy consumption
- b) Developed countries should phase out all fossil fuel-based electricity generation
- c) Developing countries should increase their energy consumption

- d) Developed countries should provide financial aid

**Answer: B.** Developed countries should phase out all fossil fuel-based electricity generation

### IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw introduces Post Office Bill, 2023 in Rajya Sabha

The Post Office will have the exclusive privilege of issuing postage stamps and the Director General will make regulations relating to the supply and sale of postage stamps and postal stationery. The Bill states that the Central Government will have the power to give effect to the arrangements made with any foreign country or territory.

- The new **Post Office Bill 2023** introduced in the **Rajya Sabha aims to replace the Indian Post Office Act (1898)** and modernize the functioning of post offices to adapt to changing times and roles.
- The 1898 Act primarily focused on traditional mail services. However, the new Bill recognizes that post offices now serve as a platform for delivering a wide range of citizen-centric services. This includes activities beyond traditional mail, and it empowers the **Director General of Postal Services** to create regulations for these services and set charges for them.
- One significant change is that parliamentary approval will no longer be required for **revising charges** for any service offered by post offices, including traditional mail services. This flexibility allows the postal department to adjust prices in response to market demands in a competitive industry.
- The new Bill grants the central government the authority to intercept, open, or detain postal items in the interest of national security, public order, or safety, or in the case of contraventions of the law. This provision aims to prevent smuggling and unlawful transmission of items, such as drugs, through postal parcels.
- The Bill also introduces provisions for setting standards for addressing items, address identifiers, and the usage of postcodes. This paves the way for the adoption of digital addressing methods, potentially using geo-spatial coordinates. Digital addressing can improve sorting efficiency and enable accurate delivery, possibly even via drone delivery.
- The new Bill eliminates the provision that granted the central government the “exclusive privilege” of conveying letters and providing associated services. This provision had lost relevance with the emergence of courier services in the 1980s. The distinction between “letters” and “documents” has been a point of legal debate, and the new Bill aims to address this issue.
- The definition of ‘letter’ was not spelt out anywhere in the Act or in subsequent Indian Post Office Rules, 1933. With this new bill, all these legal debates as to what constituted a letter and what did not, will sort out.
- The bill seeks to replace three existing acts, namely the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, Indian Post Office Act of 1898, the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933, and the Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1950.

#### MCQ

**Q1.** Which iconic building in Mumbai is associated with the postal system in India?

- a) Victoria Memorial      b) Gateway of India      c) CST (Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus)      d) Taj Mahal Palace Hotel

**Answer: C)** CST (Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus)

**Q2.** In India, which postal service is known for providing financial services like savings accounts and recurring deposit accounts?

- a) Express Parcel Post      b) Speed Post      c) India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)      d) Registered Post

**Answer: C.** India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)

**Q3.** What is the maximum weight limit for a standard letter to be sent via India Post's regular mail service?

- a) 100 grams      b) 500 grams      c) 1 kilogram      d) 2 kilograms

**Answer: B.** 500 grams

**Q4.** Which of the following is an international express courier service offered by India Post?

- a) Videsh Dak      b) EMS (Express Mail Service)      c) Speed Post      d) Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana

**Answer: B.** EMS (Express Mail Service)

**Q5.** What is the largest postal network in the world?

- a) India Post      b) USPS (United States Postal Service)      c) Royal Mail (United Kingdom)      d) Canada Post

**Answer: A.** India Post

**Q6.** India's First State-of-the-art 3D Post Office Opens:

- a) Bengaluru      b) Kochi      c) Mcleodganj      d) Dimapur

**Answer: A.** Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw inaugurated India's first 3D-printed post office building in Bengaluru. The 3D-printed post office building at Cambridge Layout in the city with a built-up area of 1,021 square feet.

- Construction of this post office building was carried out by construction company Larsen & Toubro Limited while IIT Madras provided technical guidance.

**For the first time 3 women to become assistant priests at T.N. temples.**

- S. Krishnaveni, S. Ramya, and Ranjitha have broken gender barriers by becoming assistant priests at Sri Vaishnava temples in Tamil Nadu. They are pioneers as the first three women to undergo training and study at the Archakar Training School run by the Sri Ranganathar Temple in Srirangam.
- S. Ramya, who is a postgraduate, joined the school with the aspiration of serving the Lord and becoming an archaka. Her dedication to this path is evident in her statement about breaking the male bastion and her hope to be placed at major temples.
- S. Krishnaveni, who holds a B.Sc. in Mathematics, also comes from a family with a tradition of temple service, with her father and grandfather serving at the Mariamman temple in their village. It's heartening to see that these women are not concerned about the pay but are driven by their devotion and commitment to their roles as assistant priests.
- Their achievements reflect progress in breaking gender stereotypes and promoting inclusivity in religious roles.

### Challenges and considerations related to biofuels and their role in India's decarbonization efforts

- Biofuels vs. Electric Vehicles (EVs): In the past, biofuels faced challenges in justifying their use when compared to the rapid adoption of electric vehicles (EVs). While EV adoption has increased, it's acknowledged that no decarbonization strategy is without trade-offs.
- Transitioning to EVs requires replacing existing internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and infrastructure, which is capital-intensive. It also involves importing batteries and critical minerals, raising environmental concerns about mining and resource extraction.
- Benefits of Biofuels: Biofuels can be used in existing ICE engines and infrastructure with minimal modifications, offering import independence. However, it's important to distinguish between sustainable and unsustainable biofuels.

**Challenges in India:** In India, biofuels are often associated with first-generation (1G) ethanol, primarily sourced from food crops like sugarcane and foodgrains. Achieving blending targets with 1G ethanol poses challenges related to groundwater depletion, food security, and emissions from agriculture.

**Sustainable Biofuels:** Sustainable biofuels, such as second-generation (2G) ethanol made from crop residues and waste, have a *lower environmental footprint*. However, scaling up production and managing feedstock supply chains are challenges.

- India's commitment to sustainable biofuels and climate action is demonstrated through its participation in the Global Biofuels Alliance, which promotes sustainable biofuel development and ethanol uptake.
- The Energy Transitions Commission recommends prioritizing biomass use in sectors where low-carbon alternatives are limited, such as long-haul aviation and road freight. However, balancing economies of scale with biomass collection and transport is a major challenge.

**Net-Zero Emissions:** To achieve global net-zero emissions by 2050, sustainable biofuel production *must triple by 2030*, particularly for modes of transportation with few other mitigation options.

- World Biofuel Day is observed on 10th August every year.
- This day is observed in honour of Sir Rudolf Diesel. He was the inventor of the diesel engine and was the first to predict the possibility of vegetable oil replacing fossil fuels.
- Any hydrocarbon fuel that is produced from an organic matter (living or once living material) in a short period of time (days, weeks, or even months) is considered a biofuel. Examples of Biofuel include ethanol, biodiesel, green diesel and biogas.
  - Biofuels may be solid, liquid or gaseous in nature.
    - Solid: Wood, dried plant material, and manure
    - Liquid: Bioethanol and Biodiesel
    - Gaseous: Biogas
- Blending of biofuels: Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme, Administrative price mechanism for ethanol, Simplifying the procurement procedures by Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), amending the provisions of Industries (Development & Regulation) Act, 1951 etc are some of the initiatives taken to promote blending of biofuels.

**Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN Yojana, 2019:** To create an ecosystem for setting up commercial projects and to boost Research and Development in 2G Ethanol sector

**GOBAR (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources) DHAN scheme:** It focuses on managing and converting cattle dung and solid waste in farms to useful compost, biogas and bio-CNG, thus keeping villages clean and increasing the income of rural households.

**National Policy on Biofuels, 2018:** It expands the scope of raw material for ethanol production by allowing use of sugarcane juice, sugar containing materials like sugar beet, sweet sorghum, starch containing materials like corn, cassava, damaged food grains like wheat, broken rice, rotten potatoes, unfit for human consumption for ethanol production.

### First-Generation Biofuels:

- These biofuels are primarily produced from food crops and are among the earliest biofuels developed. They include:
- Bioethanol: Made from the fermentation of sugars or starches found in crops like corn, sugarcane, and wheat.
- Biodiesel: Produced from vegetable oils (e.g., soybean, canola, palm oil) or animal fats through a process called transesterification.

### Second-Generation Biofuels:

- These biofuels are derived from non-food crops, lignocellulosic feedstocks, and agricultural residues. They include:
- Cellulosic Ethanol: Made from cellulose-rich materials like switchgrass, corn stover, and wood chips. It's considered more sustainable than first-generation ethanol.
- Biomass-to-Liquid (BTL): These fuels are produced through gasification and synthesis processes using various biomass feedstocks.

### Third-Generation Biofuels:

- These biofuels are primarily sourced from algae and other microorganisms. They offer high lipid content and can be grown in non-arable land. Examples include:



- Algal Biodiesel: Produced from algae rich in oil content.
- Algal Bioethanol: Produced from the fermentation of algal carbohydrates.

#### Fourth-Generation Biofuels:

- This is a newer concept, often considered an extension of third-generation biofuels. Fourth-generation biofuels aim to maximize resource efficiency and sustainability while minimizing environmental impacts. They focus on advanced genetic engineering and synthetic biology techniques to enhance biofuel production.

#### Biogas:

- Biogas is a renewable natural gas produced through the anaerobic digestion of organic materials such as sewage, agricultural waste, and food scraps. It primarily consists of methane and carbon dioxide.

#### Hydrogen from Biomass:

- Biomass can be used to produce hydrogen gas through processes like gasification and pyrolysis. This hydrogen can be used as a clean fuel source in fuel cells and other applications.

#### Biohydrogen:

- Biohydrogen is produced by certain microorganisms using biological processes such as fermentation or photosynthesis.

#### Syngas (Synthetic Gas):

- Syngas is a mixture of hydrogen and carbon monoxide produced from biomass gasification. It can be used as a precursor for various fuels, including hydrogen and synthetic hydrocarbons.

#### Drop-in Biofuels:

- These are biofuels designed to be compatible with existing infrastructure and engines, requiring minimal modifications. They aim to replace conventional fossil fuels directly and include renewable diesel and renewable jet fuel.

### The “global stocktake” report

This global stocktake is expected to occur once every 5 years, as agreed upon in the Paris Agreement of 2015.

- Synthesis report of the first Global Stocktake released by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) ahead of the 18th G-20 summit in New Delhi.
- first-ever stocktake scheduled to conclude at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) at the end of 2023.
- The purpose of the stocktake is to periodically review and assess the progress made by individual countries in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement, which include limiting global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius by the end of the century and striving to keep it “as far as possible” below 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- The **“global stocktake” report** summarizes the progress made by countries in their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, transition to renewable energy sources, and address climate change in line with the Paris Agreement.
- The report's findings are expected to significantly influence discussions at important climate events, such as the UN climate Conference of Parties (COP). It provides a basis for discussions among country representatives about their commitments and ambitions regarding climate action.

**Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):** While countries have submitted their NDCs outlining their climate commitments, the global stocktake encourages countries to increase their ambitions every 5 years. This process aims to push countries to set higher targets for reducing emissions before the next round of NDCs is published.

**Key Findings:** The report presents **17 key findings** that highlight various aspects of the climate crisis. These findings **include** the **need for rapid transitions away from fossil fuels**, the **importance of equitable economic transitions**, the **necessity of scaling up renewable energy**, and the **urgency of halting deforestation and land degradation**.

- The report emphasizes the significant **Emissions gap** between current pledges by countries and what is required to align with the Paris Agreement's targets. It notes that the current pledges, even if fully implemented, would fall short of the necessary emissions reductions.
- The report also addresses adaptation and loss and damage, emphasizing the need for comprehensive risk management, support for impacted communities, and increased funding for these purposes.
- The report underscores the need for substantial financial commitments to support climate action. It highlights the importance of unlocking and redirecting trillions of dollars to support low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.

**Impact on G20 Leaders Declaration:** The global stocktake report's findings resonated in the G20 Leaders Declaration, a significant outcome of the G20 summit. The declaration formally acknowledges the massive financial requirements for transitioning to a renewable energy economy, calling for substantial funding in the pre-2030 period and for clean energy technologies to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

- It noted the need for USD 5.8-5.9 trillion in the pre-2030 period for developing countries and USD 4 trillion per year for clean energy technologies by 2030 to achieve Net-Zero emissions by 2050.

### MCQ

**Q.1** The term ‘Intended Nationally Determined Contributions’ is sometimes seen in the news in the context of (2016)

- Pledges made by the European countries to rehabilitate refugees from the war-affected Middle East
- Plan of action outlined by the countries of the world to combat climate change
- Capital contributed by the member countries in the establishment of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
- Plan of action outlined by the countries of the world regarding Sustainable Development Goals

**Ans: B.** The term Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) is associated with the plan of action outlined by the countries of the world to combat climate change. These contributions are essentially pledges made by countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change in the context of the Paris Agreement, which was adopted in 2015.

**Q2.** With reference to the Agreement at the UNFCCC Meeting in Paris in 2015, which of the following statements is/are correct? (2016)

1. The Agreement was signed by all the member countries of the UN and it will go into effect in 2017.
2. The Agreement aims to limit greenhouse gas emissions so that the rise in average global temperature by the end of this century does not exceed 2°C or even 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
3. Developed countries acknowledged their historical responsibility in global warming and committed to donate \$ 1000 billion a year from 2020 to help developing countries to cope with climate change.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 3 only      b) 2 only      c) 2 and 3 only      d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: B.** The correct answer is B.

- While the **Paris Agreement was signed** by a large number of countries, it did not go into effect in 2017. It went into effect on **November 4, 2016**, just a few days before the 22nd Conference of the Parties (COP 22) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in **Marrakech**.
- The Agreement aims to limit greenhouse gas emissions so that the rise in average global temperature by the end of this century **does not exceed 2°C or even 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels**.
- While there is an acknowledgment of historical responsibility in the Paris Agreement, there is **No specific commitment by developed countries to donate \$1000 billion a year from 2020**. The agreement does include provisions for financial support to help developing countries address climate change, but the specific financial commitments are not mentioned in this manner.

### IAF chief takes delivery of first C-295 transport aircraft in Spain

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has received its first C-295MW transport aircraft from Airbus, marking a significant upgrade to its transport fleet.

- The IAF Chief, Air Chief Marshal V.R. Chaudhari, received the symbolic keys to the aircraft at the Airbus facility in Seville, Spain. These **C-295 aircraft will replace** the aging **Avro aircraft** in the IAF's inventory.
- Under the contract, **16 C-295 aircraft will be delivered in a fly-away condition from Seville**, while the **remaining 40 will be manufactured by Airbus in partnership with Tata Advanced Systems Ltd. (TASL)**.
- A **final assembly line (FAL) for these aircraft is being set up in Vadodara, Gujarat**, and the **first aircraft manufactured in India is expected to be delivered in September 2026**.
- The C-295 aircraft is equipped with an Indian electronic warfare suite and will enhance the IAF's transport capabilities. The aircraft is capable of a variety of missions, including troop transport, paratrooper drops, cargo airdrops, medical evacuation, and operations from short and unpaved runways.
- The deal for 56 C-295 MW transport aircraft is valued at around **\$2.5 billion**.
- C-295 aircraft features **indigenous radar warning receiver and missile approach warning systems made by Bharat Electronics Ltd. (BEL)** and a **countermeasure dispensing system made by Bharat Dynamics Ltd. (BDL)**.

### President launches Ayushman Bhav health campaign

President Droupadi Murmu virtually launched an Ayushman Bhav campaign and portal from the **Raj Bhavan in Gandhinagar**.

- This launch is considered a significant step toward achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and ensuring healthcare for all, particularly for underserved populations.
- She praised Ayushman Bhav campaign, emphasizing its goal of delivering healthcare services to the most remote areas of India.
- President Murmu highlighted the philosophy of “antyodaya” which stands for good health for all and leaving no one behind. She commended the involvement and support of local governance in this initiative and mentioned that gram panchayats that successfully achieve their healthcare goals will be recognized as Ayushman gram panchayats.
- She also praised the **Seva Pakhwada initiative**, which runs from **September 17 to October 2**, and aims to ensure that every individual receives essential health services.
- President applauded the goals of the Ayushman Bhav campaign, which include facilitating access to Ayushman cards, generating ABHA IDs, and raising awareness about various health schemes and diseases, such as non-communicable diseases, tuberculosis, and sickle cell disease.

### Aditya- L1 mission pursues the enigma of space weather

Aditya-L1 satellite mission by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), and the importance of studying the sun's activities for both scientific understanding and practical applications.

- Quebec Power Grid Outage: power grid outage in Quebec, Canada, in 1989, caused by space weather. This event disrupted various systems and even led to beautiful auroras visible as far south as Texas.
- SpaceX Starlink Satellite Incident: In 2022, a batch of SpaceX Starlink communication satellites unexpectedly fell out of their orbit. This incident is attributed to space weather.

- Aditya-L1 Mission: ISRO launched the Aditya-L1 satellite in 2023. This mission aims to explore the sun's activities and monitor space weather. The satellite will be positioned at **Lagrange point L1**, providing *early warnings of space weather events*.
- The corona's temperature rises to a million degrees Celsius, which is higher than expected based on thermodynamics.
- Coronal Heating: various processes responsible for heating the sun's corona, including magnetic loops, plasma jets, and magnetic reconnection. These processes result in phenomena like sunspots and solar flares.
- Solar Storms: Solar flares and coronal mass ejections (CMEs) are described as the most violent solar events, releasing immense energy and sometimes affecting Earth's space environment.
- Impact of Space Weather: Severe space weather events can disrupt power grids, communication networks, air traffic, and satellite electronics. They have the potential for a significant adverse economic impact.
- Aditya-L1 is expected to contribute to space weather monitoring and predictions.
- Aditya-L1 was initially a scientific mission but later incorporated features for space weather monitoring. The mission involved collaboration with numerous scientists, engineers, and academic organizations.
- The launch was conducted using the **PSLV-C57 rocket**. The PSLV's fourth stage was fired twice, a first in ISRO's history, to precisely insert the spacecraft into its elliptical orbit.
- Aditya-L1 to study the Sun from a substantial distance of **1.5 million kilometers**. It will take approximately 125 days to reach the L1 point.
- Aditya-L1 is also ISRO's second astronomy observatory-class mission after AstroSat (2015).
- The mission aims to provide valuable insights into the solar corona, photosphere, chromosphere, and solar wind.
- The primary objective of Aditya-L1 is to gain a deeper understanding of the Sun's behavior, including its radiation, heat, particle flow, and magnetic fields, and how they impact Earth.
- **Lagrange points** are special positions in space where the *gravitational forces of two large orbiting bodies, such as the Sun and the Earth, balance each other out*. There are **5 Lagrange Points**, each with distinct characteristics. These points **enable a small mass to orbit in a stable pattern amid two larger masses**.

## MCQ

**Q1.** Aditya-L1 is ISRO's second astronomy observatory-class mission after which previous mission?

- a) Chandrayaan-2      b) Mars Orbiter Mission (Mangalyaan)      c) AstroSat      d) GSAT-6A

**Answer: C.** AstroSat

**Q2.** What rocket was used for the launch of the Aditya-L1 satellite mission?

- a) Falcon 9      b) GSLV Mk III      c) PSLV-C57      d) H-IIA

**Answer: D.** PSLV-C57

**Q3.** How long is the estimated travel time for Aditya-L1 to reach its designated Lagrange point?

- a) 1 day      b) 30 days      c) 125 days      d) 365 days

**Answer: C.** 125 days

**Q4.** Besides scientific research, Aditya-L1 was also designed to monitor and predict:

- a) Earthquakes      b) Climate change      c) Space weather events      d) Asteroid impacts

**Answer: C.** Space weather events

**Q5.** What is the primary purpose of studying the Sun's behavior and space weather?

- a) Entertainment      b) Scientific curiosity  
c) Economic impact assessment      d) Practical applications and protecting technology on Earth

**Answer: D.** Practical applications and protecting technology on Earth

### Nagaland Assembly seeks exemption from UCC ambit

Nagaland CM Neiphiu Rio introduced a government resolution and the Assembly has unanimously adopted a resolution requesting the state to be completely exempted from the proposed Uniform Civil Code (UCC).

- The reasons cited for opposing the UCC in Nagaland include the belief that it would pose a threat to the customary laws, social practices, and religious practices of the Naga people, potentially leading to encroachment if the UCC were imposed.
- The UCC aims to establish a single law for personal matters such as marriage, divorce, custody, guardianship, adoption, maintenance, succession, and inheritance.
- Nagaland's government had previously conveyed its opposition to the 22nd Law Commission on July 4, based on the unique history of Nagaland since the pre-Independence British era, the assurance of non-interference policies carried forward from pre-Independence times, and the constitutional guarantees provided under Article 371A.
- The **22nd Law Commission** was established by the Government of India on **February 21, 2020**, and its **term was extended until August 31, 2024**. The **Commission issued a public notice on June 14, 2023, inviting views and ideas from all stakeholders regarding the implementation of a UCC throughout India**.
- Nagaland Assembly Speaker Sharingain Longkumer.
- The **Uniform Civil Code** is mentioned in Article 44 of the Indian Constitution, which is part of the Directive Principles of State Policy.

- The only state in India that has a UCC is Goa, which retained its common family law known as the Goa Civil Code after it was liberated from Portuguese rule in 1961.
- The rest of India follows different personal laws based on their religious or community identity.
- *Shah Bano Begum v. Mohammad Ahmed Khan* (1985): The Supreme Court upheld the right of a Muslim woman to claim maintenance from her husband under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code, even after the expiry of the Iddat period. It also observed that a UCC would help in removing contradictions based on ideologies.
- *Sarla Mudgal v. Union of India* (1995): The Supreme Court held that a Hindu husband cannot convert to Islam and marry another woman without dissolving his first marriage. It also stated that a UCC would prevent such fraudulent conversions and bigamous marriages.
- *Shayara Bano v. Union of India* (2017): The Supreme Court declared the practice of triple talaq as unconstitutional and violative of the dignity and equality of Muslim women. It also recommended that the Parliament should enact a law to regulate Muslim marriages and divorces.

#### MCQ

**Q1.** A legislation that confers on the executive or administrative authority an unguided and uncontrolled discretionary power in the matter of the application of law violates which one of the following Articles of the Constitution of India?

- a) Article 14                                      b) Article 28                                      c) Article 32                                      d) Article 44

**Ans: A.**

Unguided and uncontrolled discretionary power on the executive or administrative authority, violates Article 14 of the Constitution of India. Article 14 of the Indian Constitution guarantees the right to equality before the law and the equal protection of laws to all citizens. It prohibits discrimination and arbitrariness in the application of laws. ***“When a law grants excessive discretionary power to an authority without any guidelines or controls, it can lead to arbitrariness and violate the principles of equality enshrined in Article 14.”***

**Q2.** Consider the following provisions under the Directive Principles of State Policy as enshrined in the Constitution of India:

1. Securing for citizens of India a uniform civil code
2. Organizing village Panchayats
3. Promoting cottage industries in rural areas
4. Securing for all the workers reasonable leisure and cultural opportunities

Which of the above are the Gandhian Principles that are reflected in the Directive Principles of State Policy?

- a) 1, 2 and 4 only                                      b) 2 and 3 only                                      c) 1, 3 and 4 only                                      d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Ans: B.**

The Gandhian Principles reflected in the Directive Principles of State Policy are:

Organizing village Panchayats: Mahatma Gandhi emphasized the importance of decentralized self-governance through local village Panchayats.

Promoting cottage industries in rural areas: Mahatma Gandhi advocated for the development of small-scale cottage industries in rural areas as a means of economic empowerment and self-sufficiency.

2 and 3 only, which corresponds to option B.

### Public Servants Lose Immunity In Pre-2014 Corruption Cases; Supreme Court Clarifies That Striking Down Of Sec 6A DSPE Act Has Retrospective Effect

**[Prior approval requirement for initiating corruption probes is not desirable]**

**CBI v. RR Kishore**

The Supreme Court ruled that its 2014 judgment in *Subramanian Swamy vs Director CBI*, which struck down Section 6A of the 1946 Delhi Special Police Establishment Act (DSPE Act), would have a **retrospective effect**.

A five judge Bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul said the provision in question, Section 6A of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, the statute that governs the CBI, was void from the very day of its insertion on September 11, 2003.

- A Constitution Bench held that a Supreme Court judgment of 2014 which declared invalid a legal provision mandating the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to take prior permission before investigating corruption cases against senior government officials has a retrospective effect.
- SC held that Section 6A violated fundamental rights, and “once a law is declared to be unconstitutional, being violative of Part-III (fundamental rights) of the Constitution, then it would be held to be *void ab initio*, still born, unenforceable and non est”. This means that senior government officials involved in corruption cases even before the date of the Supreme Court judgment invalidating the need for prior sanction would no longer be able to avail the protection of prior approval.
- Section 6A required Central government approval before the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) could initiate investigations into corruption charges against officials of the rank of Joint Secretary and above. This provision was introduced to reinstate the Centre’s ‘Single Directive,’ a set of instructions to the CBI on how to conduct inquiries.
- In the **Vineet Narain case in 1997**, the Supreme Court had previously **struck down** the ‘Single Directive,’ arguing that a statutory investigation should not be hindered by administrative instructions.
- However, Section 6A was later introduced in 2003 to reinstate the requirement for prior approval from the Central government.



- In 2014, the Supreme Court again invalidated Section 6A, stating that it violated the principle of equality by offering protection only to a specific class of public servants and not to everyone.
- **The recent judgment from the Supreme Court rejects arguments from individuals under investigation who sought the protection of Section 6A because they were charged with offences dating back to the period before the 2014 judgment invalidated the provision. The Court reaffirms the position that post-Constitution laws cannot be inconsistent with the Constitution, and when they are declared unconstitutional by a court, the invalidation applies retroactively from their inception.**
- However, the impact of this judgment is limited to allegations that date back to the period between 2003 and 2014. The legal landscape has changed since then. **In 2018, an amendment to the Prevention of Corruption Act introduced Section 17A, making government approval mandatory before initiating any probe into decisions or recommendations made by a public servant. This requirement is in place even before the trial court takes cognizance of the charge sheet.** While some level of safeguard is necessary to filter out frivolous inquiries against public servants making important and genuine decisions, it is also essential to ensure that such provisions do not shield unscrupulous individuals and block the truth from emerging in corruption cases.

### Various infrastructure projects inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in different parts of India

#### Nyoma Airfield:

The Defence Minister laid the foundation stone for the Nyoma airfield in **eastern Ladakh near the Line of Actual Control (LAC)**. The airfield is expected to be developed at a cost of approximately **₹200 crore** and will significantly enhance air infrastructure in Ladakh. It is anticipated to become one of the world's highest airfields and will greatly contribute to the Indian Air Force's capabilities along the northern border. Once completed in about 2 years, the Nyoma airfield will be able to accommodate all types of fighter jets.

**Nechiphu Tunnel:** Rajnath Singh also inaugurated the Nechiphu tunnel, which is located on the axis to **Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh**. This tunnel is crucial for connectivity and transportation in the region.

**Infrastructure Projects by BRO:** In total, the Defence Minister inaugurated **90 infrastructure projects undertaken by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO)**. These projects had a combined cost of over **₹2,900 crore** and were distributed across **11 states and Union Territories in India**.

Distribution of Projects: The projects were distributed as follows:

36 projects in Arunachal Pradesh

26 projects in Ladakh

11 projects in Jammu & Kashmir

5 projects in Mizoram

3 projects in Himachal Pradesh

2 projects each in Sikkim, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal

1 project each in Nagaland, Rajasthan, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

- Besides the Nyoma airfield and Nechiphu tunnel, the projects included the revamping of airfields in **Bagdogra and Barrackpore in West Bengal**, construction of helipads, building 22 roads, and constructing 63 bridges.

### Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Supreme Court of India and Singapore for judicial cooperation

- During an official visit to Singapore, Chief Justice of India Dr. DY Chandrachud met Chief Justice of Singapore Sundaresh Menon and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by both the countries in the field of judicial cooperation.
- Earlier, Justice Menon had visited India and even sat on the bench of the Supreme Court of India on 3 February 2023. Justice Menon, who has been serving as the fourth Chief Justice of Singapore since 2012, had attended a ceremony to mark the 73rd anniversary of the founding of Singapore.
- The National Judicial Academy of India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Singapore Judicial College to pursue cooperation in judicial education and research.

### India in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization inaugurated the first global symposium on farmers' rights in New Delhi.

- The President of India, Smt. Draupadi Murmu inaugurated the first Global Seminar on Farmers' Rights in New Delhi on September 12, 2023. Speaking on the occasion, the President said that the world's farming community is its foremost custodian and they are the true custodians of crop diversity.
- This symposium is being organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Rome, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources) and the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- Other institutions are Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPVFR) Authority, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), and ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR).
- The Food and Agriculture Organization was established in the year 1945 under the United Nations Organization, it is a specialized agency of the United Nations. World Food Day is celebrated every year on 16 October across the world. This day is celebrated to commemorate the anniversary of the establishment of FAO.

**India and Britain launch 'Infrastructure Financing Bridge'.**

- India and the United Kingdom have jointly announced the launch of the 'UK India Infrastructure Financing Bridge' (UKIIFB) during the 12th Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD). This collaborative initiative reflects the continued commitment of both countries to work together to unlock substantial infrastructure investment opportunities in India.
- A joint statement issued by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt outlined the primary objectives of this partnership. The formal launch of UKIIFB under the joint leadership of NITI Aayog (a policy think tank in India) and the City of London is the centerpiece of this collaboration.
- The statement highlights that the UK has significant expertise in finance and project management, making it a valuable partner for India in infrastructure development.
- Recognizing India's position as an investment powerhouse in technology, fintech and green transition, the collaboration aims to leverage India's critical role in driving global economic growth.
- UKIIFB's primary objective is to unlock infrastructure investment opportunities and utilize the City of London's expertise in structuring and phasing major infrastructure projects.

**Madhya Pradesh approves "Mob Lynching Victim Compensation Scheme".**

- The decision to approve 'Mob Lynching Victim Compensation Scheme' was taken in the cabinet meeting held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. The Cabinet also approved the proposal to change the name of Chief Minister Antyodaya Awas Yojana.
- Officials said that under the scheme, compensation for the victim's family in case of death will be Rs 10 lakh, and for injured victims there will be a provision of Rs 4-6 lakh.
- Victim of any act or series of acts of violence by mob, involving five or more persons, who causes harm to any person or persons on grounds of religion, race, sex, place of birth, language, food preferences, sexual preferences or Hurt.
- On July 17, 2018, the Supreme Court had issued comprehensive guidelines to deal with lynching and mob violence. In its judgment in *Tehseen S Poonawalla v/s Union of India and Others*, the court had directed that "State Governments shall formulate a Lynching/Mob Violence Victim Compensation Scheme".
- It had also directed that the compensation scheme should have a provision for payment of interim relief to the victim or the next of kin of the victim within 30 days of the incident.

**The Indian Coast Guard participated in the meeting of heads of Asian coast guard agencies in Istanbul, Turkey.**

- Indian Coast Guard participated in the 19th Asian Heads of Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM) at Istanbul, Turkey on 05-08 September 2023. A four-member ICG delegation led by Indian Coast Guard Director General Rakesh Pal participated in the annual event.
- This multilateral forum is a part of the Japanese initiative to promote cooperation among regional coast guards following the capture of the pirate ship MV Alondra Rainbow by the Indian Coast Guard in November 1999.
- During the three-day high-level meeting, which was attended by the Chiefs of Coast Guards of all member states, a number of important issues including maritime law enforcement, safety and security of life at sea, marine environment protection, illicit trafficking of drugs, and weapons were discussed.
- HACGAM primarily focuses on promoting cooperation among coast guards members.
- The Indian Coast Guard is the Chairman of the Search and Rescue (SAR) Working Group and is an active member of other working groups including environmental protection, controlling illegal acts at sea and information sharing. The last edition of HACGAM was held in New Delhi in 2022.

**IISc develops novel approach to detect, kill cancer cells**

The scientists at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have developed a promising approach for the detection and treatment of cancer, particularly solid tumor masses, using hybrid nanoparticles made of gold and copper sulphide.

These hybrid nanoparticles have several properties that make them effective in battling cancer:

- **Photothermal Properties:** When exposed to light, these nanoparticles absorb the energy and generate heat. This heat can be used to kill cancer cells.
- **Oxidative Stress:** The nanoparticles produce singlet oxygen atoms when activated, which are toxic to cancer cells, contributing to their destruction.
- **Photoacoustic Properties:** These nanoparticles can also be used for cancer detection. They absorb light and generate ultrasound waves, which can be employed to identify cancer cells with high contrast. Ultrasound waves are less prone to scattering through tissues compared to light, resulting in more accurate image resolution. This can enhance the clarity of images and help measure oxygen saturation in tumors, aiding in their detection.

The hybrid nanoparticles offer the potential for integration into existing cancer detection and treatment systems. For example, they can be activated by shining light on them using an endoscope commonly used for cancer screening. This approach could lead to more targeted and efficient cancer diagnosis and treatment.

To address concerns about safety and effectiveness, the researchers have reduced the size of the nanoparticles to less than 8 nm. This small size is expected to allow them to travel more easily within tissues and reach tumors. However, further extensive studies are required to determine their safety and whether they can be naturally eliminated from the human body.

In initial laboratory tests, the nanoparticles were tested on lung cancer and cervical cancer cell lines, showing promise. The researchers now plan to move forward with clinical development, which could potentially lead to a novel and effective approach for both cancer detection and treatment. Early detection and treatment are critical in the fight against cancer, and this research represents a significant step in that direction.

### After a year's delay, CSIR's Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar awards for 2022 announced

The Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB) awards for 2022 were delayed for nearly a year and were considered prestigious prizes for science in India.

The 2022 SSB awardees consisted of 12 scientists who were all below the age of 45.

- Ashwani Kumar - CSIR-Institute of Microbial Technology
- Maddika Subba Reddy - Centre for DNA Fingerprinting Diagnostics, Hyderabad (Biological Sciences)
- Akkattu Biju - Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru
- Debabrata Maiti - Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (Chemical Sciences)
- Vimal Mishra - Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar (Earth and Atmospheric Sciences)
- Dipti Ranjan Sahoo - Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi
- Rajnish Kumar - Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (Engineering Sciences)
- Apoorva Khare - Indian Institute of Science
- Neeraj Kayal - Microsoft Research Lab India (Mathematical Science)
- Dipyaman Ganguly - Indian Institute of Chemical Biology, Kolkata (Medical Sciences)
- Anindya Das - Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru
- Basudeb Dasgupta - Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (Physical Sciences)

The Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize is named in memory of the first Director-General of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). The awards are typically announced on September 26, which is the foundation day of the institution.

### Morocco quake toll rises above 2,100, Al-Haouz province suffered most deaths

Tragic event that has caused a significant loss of life and destruction.

- The earthquake struck Morocco, with a magnitude of 6.8, making it the **strongest-ever recorded quake in the North African country**.
- The **epicenter** of the earthquake was in **Al-Haouz province**, located 72 kilometers southwest of the tourist hub of Marrakech, Marrakech, a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- The earthquake resulted in the deaths of at least 2,122 people and left over 2,400 people injured. It also caused **extensive damage to villages in the Atlas mountain range**.
- This **earthquake was the deadliest in Morocco since a 1960 earthquake that destroyed Agadir** and claimed the lives of more than 12,000 people.
- The International Federation for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has released over \$1 million from its emergency disaster fund to support the Moroccan Red Crescent's work on the ground.
- Moroccan media reported that parts of the Tinmel Mosque had collapsed.
- The 12th-century mosque was built where the Almohad dynasty established its first capital in a remote Atlas valley before going on to seize Marrakech, proclaim its leader Caliph, and march on across the region propelled by religious zeal.

### Regulation of unfair online trade practices

The efforts by the Indian government to regulate dark patterns in e-commerce trade practices are indeed a welcome step, and many consider them long overdue.

- Dark patterns are manipulative design tactics used by online platforms to influence users into making choices that may not be in their best interests. These practices often prioritize the platform's profits over user well-being.
- The consultation process involving sector stakeholders and consumer advocacy groups is a positive development, as it allows for a broader perspective and input into the regulations.
- Seeking public comments on the draft guidelines is a crucial step to ensure transparency and gather feedback from the general public, who are the ultimate users impacted by these practices.
- The term **"dark patterns"** was coined by **Harry Brignull in 2010**, and since then, the digital landscape has evolved significantly.
- Tech giants like Google (now Alphabet) and Facebook (now Meta) have grown in influence, and dark patterns have become more widespread. However, consumer awareness about the consequences of these practices, such as privacy infringements and the expenditure of time, energy, and money, has often been lacking.
- Examples of dark patterns, such as **auto-selecting travel insurance** or **requiring email and phone number input**, highlight how users can be nudged into making choices they may not have intended to make. Such practices erode user trust and can lead to negative experiences in the online shopping environment.

- European authorities and the United States' Federal Trade Commission have issued guidelines and warnings about these manipulative practices. The Indian guidelines aim to address various dark patterns, such as false urgency, basket sneaking, confirm shaming, forced actions, and subscription traps.
- The statistic that over 50% of e-commerce sites in India use dark patterns to sell products underscores the significance of the issue. The emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, characterized by the extensive collection of user behavioral data by technology giants, highlights the need for robust regulation in this sector.
- *Previously, India's efforts in regulating the e-commerce sector were focused on preventing tax evasion and protecting the interests of traditional brick-and-mortar merchants. However, the new emphasis on consumer protection and privacy in relation to personal data on e-commerce sites and social media platforms represents a shift toward a more holistic approach.*

## SECTION 69 OF THE PROPOSED BHARTIYA SANHITA

### [SEXUAL INTERCOURSE ON FALSE PROMISE OF MARRIAGE]

This violation encompasses situations where a person employs deceitful means, such as:

1. Making false promises of employment, promotion, or
  2. Marriage to induce another person into a sexual relationship.
- This violation specifically deals with cases where a man makes a promise to marry a woman with the intention of breaking that promise after obtaining her consent for sexual relations.
  - Both offenses carry a penalty of up to ten years of imprisonment.

Cases involving false promises to marry handled by a joint Sections 375 and 90 of the IPC.

- Section 375 defines Rape and provides a definition of consent, including various forms of non-consent, such as consent obtained through fear or deception.
- Section 90 further clarifies that consent given under "fear of injury" or "misconception of fact" cannot be considered valid consent.
- However, the use of Section 90 to interpret consent in such cases has been questioned, as Section 375 already defines consent.

### "False promise" and a "Breach of promise"

A 'false promise' refers to a promise made with the **intention of breaking it**, while a 'breach of promise' refers to a **promise made in good faith but not fulfilled later due to unforeseen circumstances**.

- *Consensual sexual relations on a genuine promise of marriage are **not** considered **rape**.* The determination of whether the man intended to marry the woman at the time of engaging in sexual relations is crucial in these cases.

The focus on false promise cases can divert attention from the broader issues of harm and abuse that women face.

- For example, it can encourage endogamy (marrying within one's own caste) and may not address the underlying social context in which these cases occur. Critics suggest that a feminist interpretation of the law may involve moving beyond criminal law and considering civil remedies to address the harm experienced by women.

## Main Features of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita Bill, 2023

- The **bill defines terrorism** and offences such as **separatism, armed rebellion against the government, challenging the sovereignty of the country**, which were earlier mentioned under different provisions of law.
- It **repeals the offence of sedition**, which was widely criticized as a colonial relic that curbed free speech and dissent.
- It **prescribes capital punishment as the maximum sentence for mob lynching**, which has been a menace in recent years.
- It proposes **10 years imprisonment for sexual intercourse with women on false promise of marriage**, which is a common form of deception and exploitation.
- The bill **introduces community service as a form of punishment for specific crimes**, which can help in reforming offenders and reducing overcrowding in prisons.
- The bill **fixes a maximum limit of 180 days to file a charge sheet**, which can speed up the trial process and prevent indefinite delays.

### MCQ

Q1. The Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita Bill, 2023 made which of the followings a compulsory act:

- a) Video-recording of statement of survivors of sexual violence.
- b) Police consult the victim before withdrawing a case punishable by 6 years or more.
- c) Expert opinion as a form of evidence such as medical opinion, handwriting analysis etc.
- d) None of these

**Answer: A.** The Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita Bill, 2023, makes video-recording of statement of survivors of sexual violence compulsory, which can help in preserving evidence and preventing coercion or manipulation.

Q2. As per Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita Bill, 2023, Mercy petitions in death sentence cases to be filed within:

- a) 30 days to the Governor and within 60 days to the President.
- b) 60 days to the Governor and within 30 days to the President.
- c) 45 days to the Governor and within 60 days to the President
- d) 30 days to the Governor and within 30 days to the President.

**Answer: A.** Mercy petitions in death sentence cases to be filed within 30 days to the Governor and within 60 days to the President. No appeal shall lie against the President's decision in any court.



**Yorgos Lanthimos and Emma Stone's Poor Things wins top prize at Venice****[2023 Venice Film Festival]**

- The Golden Lion Winner: "Poor Things," a reimagining of Frankenstein, starring Emma Stone as a reanimated corpse created by a mad scientist played by Willem Dafoe.
- "Poor Things" Directed by Greek director Yorgos Lanthimos was labeled an "instant classic" by critics.
- Volpi Cup for Best Actress: Cailee Spaeny won the Volpi Cup for her portrayal of Elvis Presley's wife, Priscilla.
- Best Actor: Peter Sarsgaard received the award for Best Actor film "Memory."
- Jury and Leadership: The winners were selected by a jury led by director Damien Chazelle, known for "La La Land."

**West Bengal unveils Education Policy, stresses on 3 language formula**

- The West Bengal government has introduced a State Education Policy in 2023, The policy recommends implementing a 3-language formula for Classes V to VIII.
- The first language (mother tongue) will be the medium of instruction in schools. For example, Nepali will be the medium in Nepali-medium schools, Santhali in Santhali-medium schools, and so on.
- Bangla is recommended to be introduced as a subject from Classes I to X for students in other mediums of instruction, apart from Bangla medium.
- The policy rejects changing the existing school structure, which follows a 5+4+2+2 pattern. It proposes that the same structure should continue in the State, as opposed to the 5+3+3+4 system suggested in the NEP.
- The policy recommends introducing a semester system from Class VIII in a phased manner over the next three years.
- The policy recommends earmarking 6% of the GDP for education and urges the Central government to assist State governments in allocating a relative share of the State GDP for education, as education falls under the concurrent list of the Constitution.
- The State's education policy is envisaged for the next 13 years.

**67 species of reptiles, 59 amphibians recorded in Wayanad forest survey**

- The 1st herpetofaunal survey conducted in the South Wayanad Forest Division in Kerala revealed several interesting findings about the reptiles and amphibians in the region.
- The survey identified a total of 67 species of reptiles and 59 species of amphibians in the South Wayanad Forest Division. This highlights the rich biodiversity of this region, four amphibian species and three reptile species were spotted for the first time in the forest division.
- Out of the 126 species identified, 48 amphibians and 21 reptiles are endemic to the Western Ghats. This underscores the importance of the Western Ghats as a hotspot for unique and specialized biodiversity.
- Key Discoveries: Notable amphibian species recorded during the survey include the Starry Night Frog, Miniature Night Frog (the tiniest frog in the country), and endangered species like the Malabar Torrent Toad and Red Stream Toad. The Naked Dancing Frog, previously associated only with areas in the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, was also spotted.
- Reptile Discoveries: Among the reptiles, species like the Wayanad Dravid Gecko, Nilgiri Spiny Lizard, Nilgiri Forest Lizard, and Shieldtail snake were observed.
- The 5-day survey was jointly organized by the Forest department, South Wayanad Forest Development Agency, and Aranyakam Nature Foundation.

**Delhi may turn venue for dialogue on reviving the Black Sea Grain Initiative**

- United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' efforts to revive the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI or BSI) during the G-20 Summit in Delhi.
- The Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI or BSI) was initially established to facilitate the export of grain from Russia and Ukraine. It was created to prevent massive shortages of wheat, sunflower oil, and other commodities due to the conflict in Ukraine.
- The BSI agreement lapsed on July 17. Russia refused to renew the deal, citing "unkept promises" by Western countries.
- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is working to revive the BSI during talks on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit in Delhi. The goal is to find a compromise that will give assurances to Russia and allow grain exports from blockaded Ukrainian ports to restart as soon as possible.
- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) officials have stated that they are unaware of any meetings on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit but have underlined India's support for the BSI.
- The proposed compromise would involve giving Russia more access to financial markets, despite EU and U.S. sanctions, in exchange for guarantees that Russia will not threaten or bomb Ukrainian ships or ports involved in exporting grain.
- These negotiations aim to address the economic and geopolitical challenges related to grain exports from the Black Sea region, with a focus on resolving the issues between Russia and Ukraine while considering the interests of various stakeholders involved.

**[In Re: Article 370 of the Constitution]**

SC Bench reserves verdict in Article 370 abrogation challenge

[5 judges Bench: Chief Justice of India, DY Chandrachud, and Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Sanjiv Khanna, BR Gavai, and Surya Kant]

SC reserved its judgment on petitions challenging the abrogation of special status given to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Constitution.

- The hearings spanned 16 days. The government argued that the abrogation was necessary to completely integrate Jammu and Kashmir into the Union of India. The government said the Valley had prospered after the repeal of Article 370. It said elections were due in J&K, which would revert to full Statehood again once the situation on the ground returned to normal. Govt said Jammu and Kashmir became a Union Territory in an “extraordinarily extreme situation”, said terrorism, infiltration, stone throwing and casualties among security personnel had reduced by 45.2%, 90.2%, 97.2% and 65.9%, respectively, post the abrogation.
- The petitioners, represented by a battery of senior lawyers including Kapil Sibal, said the Union used brute majority in Parliament and issued a series of executive orders through the President to divide a full fledged State into the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. They called it an attack on federalism and a fraud played on the Constitution. The petitioners had argued that Article 370 had assumed a permanent character as soon as the J&K Constituent Assembly dissolved in 1957 after the framing of the State Constitution.
- Mr. Sibal said Article 368 (Parliament’s power to amend the Constitution) did not apply to Article 370.
- The series of events which the Bench would look into would start with the dissolution of the Jammu and Kashmir State Legislative Assembly by the Governor under Section 53(2) of the J&K Constitution on November 21, 2018.



### The implications of the expansion of BRICS

- 15th BRICS summit that took place in Johannesburg, South Africa on 24 August and conveyed expansion of the BRICS grouping by inviting six new members: *Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, Ethiopia, and Argentina*.
- Theme: *“BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Multilateralism”*.
- Full membership will take effect on January 1, 2024.
- The BRICS grouping, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, announced the invitation of 6 new members. This expansion aimed to increase the group’s diversity and global influence.
- BRICS members have been dissatisfied with the Western-dominated international institutions and have sought to challenge the existing world order. They advocate for reforms that better accommodate the interests of emerging economies.
- The inclusion of new members would significantly increase the collective economic clout of BRICS. This expansion would result in BRICS representing 46% of the world’s population and a substantial share of global GDP, exports, and imports.
- The energy sector would see a major impact due to the inclusion of new BRICS members. These nations are significant players in the global oil production and supply chain.
- BRICS members, including India, reject the idea of a new cold war or binary divide and emphasize their desire for strategic autonomy in a multipolar world.
- In 2001, the British Economist Jim O’Neill coined the term BRIC to describe the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China.
- The grouping was formalized during the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers in 2006.
- South Africa was invited to join BRIC in December 2010, after which the group adopted the acronym BRICS.
- The BRICS brings together five of the largest developing countries of the world, representing 41% of the global population, 24% of the global GDP and 16 % of the global trade.
- The chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.
- India hosted the chair for the 2021 BRICS Summit.

### MCQ

**Q1.** In which BRICS Summit, the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the New Development Bank (NDB - Shanghai, China)

- a) 2015                                      b) 2016                                      c) 2014                                      d) 2018

**Answer: C.** During the 6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (Brazil) in 2014, the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the New Development Bank (NDB - Shanghai, China).

**Q2.** What is the main purpose of the BRICS grouping?

- a) To promote military alliances among member nations  
b) To establish a common currency for member nations  
c) To foster economic and political cooperation among emerging economies  
d) To create a defense pact against NATO countries

**Answer: C.** To foster economic and political cooperation among emerging economies

**Q3.** In which year was the first BRICS summit held?

- a) 2001                                      b) 2005                                      c) 2011                                      d) 2009

**Answer: D.** 2009

**Q4.** What is the name of the development bank established by BRICS member countries?

- a) New Development Bank (NDB)
- b) World Bank
- c) International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- d) Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Answer: A. New Development Bank (NDB)

**India's 1st Gorilla Glass manufacturing facility will be established in Telangana.**

- American company Corning Inc. will set up its Gorilla Glass manufacturing facility in Telangana, the first investment of its kind in the country.
- The Gorilla Glass inventor will set up a Gorilla Glass manufacturing facility for various brands of smartphones in Telangana at an investment of Rs 934 crore through a joint venture with its Indian partner Optimus Infracore Ltd.
- Earlier a new glass tubing facility has been set up by SGD Pharma at Vemula, Mahabubnagar to manufacture vials using its proprietary Velocity Vial Glass.
- Headquartered in New York, Corning Inc. is a Fortune 500 company with a rich heritage spanning more than 172 years.

**The new Covid variant 'Pirola' spread concerns in many countries.**

- A new version called "Pirola", amid the revival of Covid-19 cases in the United States, United Kingdom and China, has worried experts. According to the New York Times, this variant is also called BA.2.86.
- The variant was identified in China in February 2023 and then it was first detected in the US in April. For the first time on July 24, a patient in Denmark was identified as a virus with serious illness.
- The spike protein of this variant has more than 30 mutations that allow it to enter and infect human cells.
- According to the US Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Pirola version has been found in Israel, Canada, Denmark, UK, South Africa, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland and Thailand.
- The corona virus enters human cells due to spike protein. Once a virus enters the human body, its genetic material - RNA or DNA - enters the cells and starts making its copies that can infect other cells. Whenever there is an error during this copy process, it triggers a mutation.

**Japanese scientists discovered microplastic in clouds for the first time.**

- This discovery, which causes concern about the environmental impact of these small plastic particles on both climate and human health.
- This discovery serves as the first documentary confirmation of the presence of microplastics in the clouds.
- A research group led by Professor Hiroshi Okochi and others of Waseda University examined 44 samples of water taken from clouds on the summit of Mount Fuji and the top of Mount Tanja-Oyama to the west of the foothills and Yokohama.
- Analyzing samples, the group finds a total of 70 microplastic particles, which can be sorted in nine types. Microplastics are small plastic particles of less than 5 millimeters. The presence of microplastic in clouds has the ability to affect climate and pose health risks for humans.

**India built the world's first portable hospital 'Arogya Maitri Cube'.**

- India has created the world's first disaster/ portable hospital 'Arogya Maitri Cube', which can be packed in 72 cubes and airlifted. 'Arogya Maitri Cube' Project Bhishma (launched in February 2022)-Under the India Health Initiative Project has been made. The cost of making 72 cube boxes is less than Rs 2.5 crore. This completely indigenous hospital can be established anywhere in the country in just 8 minutes.
- The project was publicly launched in August 2023 at the Medtech Expo in Gandhinagar, Gujarat with a meeting of G20 Health Ministers.
- India has already donated two Arogya Maitri Cube to Myanmar as goodwill, one is being prepared to donate to Sri Lanka. HLL Life Care is the nodal agency of the government for sourcing Arogya Maitri Cube.

**Typhoon 'Haikui' wreaks havoc in Taiwan.**

- In view of Typhoon Haikui in Taiwan, approximately three thousand people have been evacuated to safe places on September 2, 2023. Haikui is expected to bring very heavy rainfall, strong winds and typhoons throughout Taiwan and the Batanes Islands (the northernmost region of the Philippines) during September 2-4.
- According to the weather bureau it had sustained winds of 155 kilometers per hour (96 mph) and gusts to 190 kilometers per hour (120 mph) and was moving west at 7 kilometers (4 mph).
- Typhoon Haikui made landfall in Taitung and Dongge, a mountainous region in the far south-eastern part of Taiwan.

**Indian-origin economist Tharman Shanmugaratna became the 9th President of Singapore.**

- Indian-origin economist and former senior minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam of People's Action Party (PAP) has won a landslide victory in the 9th presidential election of Singapore.
- The 6-year term of current President Halimah Yacob ends on 13 September.
- Tharman Shanmugaratnam served as the Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore from 2011 to 2019.
- Tharman Shanmugaratna became the 3rd Indian-origin person to lead Singapore for the next 6 years. Earlier, Sellapan Ramanathan and Chengara Veetil Devan Nair of Indian origin have also become the President.

**RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das becomes top central banker globally.**

- Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das has been ranked as the top central banker globally by the US-based Global Finance magazine. Das has been given an 'A+' rating in the Global Finance Central Banker Report Card 2023.
- Das was honored with the 'Governor of the Year' award at the Central Banking Awards 2023 in London in June. Das has topped the list of three central bank governors who have been given an A+ rating. There are two other governors –Thomas J. Jordan and Nguyen Thi of Vietnam. Hong.
- Grades are based on a scale of A to F for success in inflation control, economic growth goals, currency stability and interest rate management, according to a statement by Global Finance magazine.

#### **Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Limited got Navratna.**

- The Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) granted the 14th 'Navratna Status' to Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers (RCF) in the last week of August 2023. Earlier the company had received 'Miniratna Status' from the Department of Public Enterprises.
- Navratnas constitute a group of public sector companies that have the financial freedom to invest up to Rs 1000 crore without the need for approval from the central government.
- Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Limited (RCF) is an Indian government-owned enterprise headquartered in Mumbai, primarily engaged in the production of chemicals and fertilizers. RCF formed in 1978 after the reorganization of the Fertilizer Corporation of India.
- The company manufactures urea, complex fertilizers, bio-fertilizers, micronutrients, water soluble fertilizers, soil conditioners and a variety of industrial chemicals. It is the fourth largest urea producer in India, behind IFFCO, NFL and KRIBHCO.

##### **List of Navratna companies in India:**

1. Bharat Electronics Limited
2. Container Corporation of India Limited
3. Engineers India Limited
4. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
5. Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited
6. National Aluminum Company Limited
7. National Building Construction Corporation Limited
8. Neyveli Lignite Corporation Limited
9. NMDC Limited
10. Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited
11. Shipping Corporation of India Limited
12. Rail Vikas Nigam Limited
13. ONGC Videsh Limited

#### **Shantha Thottam receives 'World Innovation Award' at BRICS Innovation Forum.**

- Telangana's Chief Innovation Officer (CIO) Shantha Thottam has been awarded the 'World Innovation Award' at the 1st BRICS Innovation Forum held in Moscow, Russia. There were representatives of more than 30 countries on this forum.
- The award is given for outstanding contribution to Sustainable Development Goal-4 that ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong opportunities for all.
- The other two nominees in this category were Fernando Padula Noves, Minister of Municipal Education in São Paulo, Brazil, and Saif Al-Hidabi, Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation in Oman.
- Shantha Thottam completes 7 years of service to the innovation ecosystem of Telangana, starting from the role of Vice President at THub, then Officer on Special Duty (OSD) for the State Handlooms and Textiles Department and currently serving as the first woman CIO.

#### **The Indian men's and women's hockey team won the first edition of 'Hockey 5s Asia Cup-2023'.**

- India defeated Pakistan in the penalty shootout in the final of 'Men's Hockey 5s Asia Cup 2023' on 2 September 2023 in Salalah, Oman.
- The win also served as Asia's qualifying tournament for the FIH Men's Hockey 5s World Cup Oman 2024.
- The Indian team secured their place in the semi-finals after an impressive 10-4 win over Malaysia.
- For India, Mohammed Raheel (19th and 26th), Jugraj Singh (7th) and Maninder Singh (10th) were the scorers during regulation time, while Gurjot Singh and Maninder Singh managed to score in the shootout.
- The first edition of the Men's Hockey 5s Asia Cup-2023 was held from 29 August-2 September 2023 in Salalah, Oman featuring a total of 11 teams.
- Pakistan won the silver medal and Malaysia won the bronze medal.
- The Indian team scored the most goals (87) and the highest goalscorer was Pakistan's Rana Abdul (27), while India's Maninder Singh was at second place with 22 goals.
- The inaugural edition of the FIH Hockey 5s World Cup 2024 will be played in Muscat, Oman from 24-31 January 2024, with 16 teams competing in both the men's and women's tournaments.

#### **Arunachal Pradesh bans rodents catching glue traps.**

- The Arunachal Pradesh government has prohibited the State-wide manufacture, sale, and use of glue traps for catching rats following an appeal from the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India.



- An August 24 notification from Bidol Tayeng, Commissioner for the State's Animal Husbandry Department, cited advisories issued by the Animal Welfare Board of India to impose the ban on glue traps.
- The notification also said that the use of glue traps violates the provisions of The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, as they increase the suffering of small animals that get trapped on sticky boards.

#### India's first solar observatory mission to be launched today.

- India's 1st solar observatory mission, named Aditya -L1, will be launched on board the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.
- Approximately sixty three minutes after lift off, the satellite separation is expected to take place as the PSLV will launch the Aditya-L1 spacecraft into a highly eccentric earthbound orbit.
- This PSLV-C57/Aditya-L1 mission can be counted as one of the longest missions involving ISRO's workhorse launch vehicle.
- However, the longest of the PSLV missions is still the 2016 PSLV-C35 mission which was completed two hours, 15 minutes and 33 seconds after lift off. Following the launch, Aditya-L1 will stay in earthbound orbits for 16 days, during which it will undergo five manoeuvres to gain the necessary velocity for its journey.
- Long journey "Subsequently, Aditya-L1 undergoes a Trans-Lagrangian<sub>1</sub> insertion manoeuvre, marking the beginning of its 110- day trajectory to the destination," ISRO said.
- Aditya-L1 will stay approximately 1.5 million km away from the earth, directed towards the sun; this is about 1% of the distance between the earth and the sun.
- The Aditya L-1 payloads are expected to provide crucial information to understand the problem of coronal heating, coronal mass ejection, pre-flare and flare activities and their characteristics, dynamics of space weather, propagation of particles and fields etc. The satellite placed in the halo orbit can continuously view the sun without any occultation or eclipse.
- The European Space Agency (ESA) which had provided crucial support to ISRO to monitor the Chandrayaan 3's health, will also be supporting Aditya-L1, providing deep space communication services to the mission.
- ESA provides support from its 35 -metre deep space antennas over Australia, Spain and Argentina.

#### Indian Navy's stealth frigate Mahendragiri launched.

- The 7th and last stealth frigate of Project 17A, **Mahendragiri**, was launched by Sudesh Dhankhar, wife of Vice- President Jagdeep Dhankhar, at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. (MDL) in Mumbai.
- Following the launch, Mahendragiri will join its three sister ships at the Wet Basins of MDL, for remaining outfitting activities and equipment trials.
- **Mahendragiri**, Named after a mountain peak in the Eastern Ghats of Odisha.

#### Actor Madhavan to head Film & Television Institute of India.

- Actor R Madhavan is nominated as the new President of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune, and chairman of the governing council.
- The nomination of R Madhavan comes as recently his film 'Rocketry: The Nambi Effect', won a National Award.
- During the 69th National Film Awards 'Rocketry: The Nambi Effect' won the Best Feature Film award. The film is about the life of a former ISRO scientist S Nambi Narayanan and his contributions to India's space agency. Notably, the national award for 'Rocketry' came on 24 August, a day after ISRO created history as Chandrayaan-3 landed on the South Pole of the lunar surface.

#### Children from void marriages entitled to parents' share in property, says SC

- The Hon'ble Supreme Court held that a child born of a void or voidable marriage can inherit their parents' share in a joint Hindu family property governed by the Mitakshara law.
- A 3-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, however, clarified that such a child would not be entitled to rights in or to the property of any other person in the family.
- A voidable marriage is one that is made invalid by the husband or wife through a decree. A void marriage is invalid at its very inception.
- The Mitakshara law of succession governing Hindu undivided families applies to the whole of India, except West Bengal and Assam.
- Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud said that the first step to inheritance for a child from a void or voidable marriage would be to ascertain their parent's exact share in the ancestral property.
- This could be done by means of conducting a "notional partition" of the ancestral property and calculating how much of the property the parent would have got immediately before their death. "For the purpose of ascertaining the interest of a deceased Hindu Mitakshara coparcener [that is, a person who acquires a legal right to his ancestral property through birth in a Hindu Undivided Family], the law mandates the assumption of a state of affairs immediately prior to the death of the coparcener, namely, a partition of the coparcenary property between the deceased and the other members of the coparcenary," Chief Justice, who authored the judgment, observed.
- The Chief Justice said that Section 16 of the Hindu Marriage Act has statutorily conferred legitimacy to children born out of void or voidable marriages. He also pointed out that Section 16(3) of the Act stipulates that children from void and voidable marriages would have a right to their parents' property.
- Children from void or voidable marriages come within the ambit of "legitimate kinship", and cannot be regarded as illegitimate by the Hindu Succession Act when it comes to inheritance.

- It also noted that after the enactment of the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005, the share of a deceased person in a joint Hindu family governed by Mitakshara law can be devolved to his heirs by testamentary or intestate succession. Prior to the amendment, the devolution was only through survivorship. Besides, the amendment gave equal rights of succession to women as well as men.

#### **CCI approves Vistara's merger with Air India.**

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved the merger of Vistara with Air India (AI) and also allowed Singapore Airlines to acquire 25.1% stake in the erstwhile national carrier.
- The CCI nod marks a major regulatory step in enabling AI to become a company comprising four airlines including AirAsia India and Air India Express apart from Vistara.
- Singapore Airlines, which is a co-owner of Vistara alongside Tata Sons, will get a 25.1% stake in AI and make an investment of ₹2,059 crore in the Tata Owned airline as part of a pact last year to merge their joint venture with AI.
- Vistara will be integrated with AI to form the airline's full -service business, while AirAsia India will be merged with Air India Express to form the company's low -cost carrier arm.

#### **Tamil Nadu CM to launch 'Speaking for India' podcasts.**

- As part of his campaign against the BJP-led Union government, DMK president and Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has decided to launch a series of podcasts titled "Speaking for India".
- Translation of these podcasts in English and other Indian languages will also be available, said a DMK press release.
- In a message posted on the micro-blogging website 'X' (formerly Twitter), Mr. Stalin said, "Awakening India's Tomorrow, A Southern Voice Speaks for #INDIA!". He was referring to the Opposition Led Indian National Democratic, Inclusive Alliance bloc of which the DMK is a key constituent.

#### **Justice Jayant Nath assumed charge as DERC chairperson.**

- Retd. Justice Jayant Nath took charge as the pro tem chairperson of the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC).
- The Supreme Court had on August 4 nominated Justice Nath, a retired judge of Delhi High Court, as the pro tem chairperson after the Delhi government and the L G failed to reach a consensus on a name. The post of the DERC chairperson fell vacant after Justice (retd.) Shabihul Hasnain demitted office on January 9.

#### **New Press, Registration of Books Act notified.**

- The Union government has issued a notification for the implementation of the amendments to the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, from September 1.
- The changes substantially decriminalise and do away with imprisonment provisions for certain offences.
- Recently, the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023, has replaced or amended some sections in the Press and Registration of Books Act.
- Earlier, there was no direct role of the Press Registrar to regulate irregular/ defunct newspapers. New provisions have now been added for suspension and cancellation of certificate of registration by the Press Registrar (Section 12) on the grounds of irregularity, ceasing of publication, not furnishing annual statement, or false statement, etc.
- In Section 12, as opposed to six month imprisonment and fine up to ₹2,000 for violation of Section 3 (printing with incorrect particulars), now there is only penalty by the Press Registrar up to ₹10,000.
- Also, Under Section 8C of the Act, the jurisdiction of the Press and Registration Appellate Board (PRAB) included District Magistrate only. It will now include orders by the Press Registrar also regarding imposition of penalty, and suspension/cancellation of registration by the Press Registrar.

#### **Jaya Verma becomes the first woman to head the Railway Board .**

- Central Govt. appointed Jaya Verma Sinha Chairperson of the Railway Board, the top decision making body of the Railway Ministry.
- She replaces Anil Kumar Lahoti.
- Ms. Sinha becomes the first woman to head the Board in its 118 -year history. Her tenure will be till August 31, 2024.
- Prior to the new appointment, Ms. Sinha was Member (Operations and Business Development) of the Board. She was at the forefront in handling the aftermath of the Balasore train accident which killed 291 people.

#### **Chandrayaan probe finds sparse plasma on moon.**

- A payload on board Chandrayaan 3 lander, Vikram, has completed the first in situ measurements of the surface- bound lunar plasma environment over the south polar region.
- The Radio Anatomy of Moon Bound Hypersensitive Ionosphere and Atmosphere -Langmuir Probe (RAMBHA-LP), named after American chemist Irving Langmuir, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, is a device used for characterising plasma.
- "The initial assessment indicates that the plasma encompassing the lunar surface is relatively sparse, characterised by a number density ranging from approximately 5 to 30 million electrons per cubic metre.

#### **Assam-based oncologist Ravi Kannan wins 2023 Ramon Magsaysay award.**

- Surgical oncologist R. Ravi Kannan, Director of the Cachar Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (CCHRC) in Assam, is **one of the Ramon Magsaysay award winners for 2023**.
- He is credited with revolutionising cancer treatment in Assam through people centric and pro poor healthcare.
- Dr. Kannan hails from Chennai, where he earlier worked at the Cancer Institute, Adyar, before moving to Silchar in 2007. He became the Director of the CCHRC that year. The citation on the website of the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation says that under Dr. Kannan's leadership, the CCHRC became a full-fledged comprehensive cancer hospital and research centre. From having limited facilities, the hospital now has 28 departments covering oncology, pathology, radiology, microbiology, epidemiology, tumour registry, and palliative care.
- The hospital introduced pro poor initiatives such as free treatment, food and lodging, ad hoc employment for caregivers, and a home-care programme as patients could not continue their treatment due to difficulty in travelling long distances, and cost, with the underlying reason being poverty.
- Hospital team members travelled long distances to train family members in pain management and palliative care, and provided free medicines. The patient compliance rate in treatment rose from 28% to 70%.

#### Other recipient of the award 2023

- EUGENIO LEMOS
- MIRIAM CORONEL- FERRER
- KORVI RAKSHAND
- RAMAN MAGSAYSAY:
- Born on: 31st aug 1907
- 7th president of Philippines (1953-1957)
- Well known for his service and good governance
- RAMAN MAGSAYSAY AWARD:
- 1957-set up by trustees of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Philippine government.
- Vision-carry forward Magsaysay's legacy of service to the people & good governance.
- 1958 - Given for the first time.
- Announced annually on Aug 31 - Magsaysay's birth anniversary.
- Presented in formal ceremonies in Manila, Philippines.
- Awardees are selected by the board of trustees of Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation.
- Conceived to honour the greatness of spirit shown in service to the peoples of Asia regardless of race, gender, or religion.

#### China must show its neighbours the sensitivity that it demands of them.

- India and China trust - all time low.
- Troops are built up along the border.
- Reason - India has been assertive about Aksai Chin since 2019.
- Solution Relationship based on greater mutual sensitivity.
- Areas of cooperation
- Political relations
- 1 April, 1950 - India became the first non socialist bloc country to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China.
- 1962 Indo-China war.
- 1988 - Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China.
- 1993 - Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace & Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control on the India-China Border Areas.
- 2014 - Closer developmental partnership.
- 2018 - 1st Informal Summit in Wuhan:
- Using established mechanisms to bring down tensions along the border.
- 2019 - 2nd informal summit held in Chennai:
- Deepen India-China bilateral interaction to reflect the growing role of both countries on the global stage.
- High-level interactions on the sidelines of multilateral forums like BRICS, SCO and G20.
- Trade relations:
- China - India's 2nd largest trade partner.
- India - China's 12th largest trade partner.
- MNCs from both countries have invested in other countries.
- Mechanism established:
- Joint Economic Group (JEG) led by the Commerce Ministers of both sides.
- Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED) led by the VC of NITI Aayog and the Chairman of NDRC of China.
- Cultural relations:
- 1500-1000 B.C - Linguistic exchanges between the Shang-Zhou civilization and the Vedic civilization.
- Buddhist pilgrims and scholars traveled to China through the "silk route".
- Visit of Chinese pilgrims to India - Fa-Hien and Hsuan-tsang.
- India constructed a Buddhist temple in Luoyang, Henan Province.
- Influence of Bollywood movies and yoga.

### INSHORTs

**India has retained the 40th position with a score of 38.1 among the economies of 132 countries included in the 16th edition of the Global Innovation Index of the World Intellectual Property Organization.**

- India's rank was 81st in 2015 which will become 40th in 2023.
- For the 13th consecutive year, Switzerland is the most innovative economy in 2023, followed by Sweden, the United States, the United Kingdom and Singapore.

**The Indian men's team has won the gold medal in the 10 meter air pistol event in the Hangzhou Asian Games-2023; defeated the Chinese.**

**The University of Oxford has topped the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2024 for the 8th consecutive year.**

- 20th edition.
- It includes 1,904 universities from 108 countries and regions.
- Stanford University has moved up to second place.
- The US is the most represented country, with 56 and 169 institutions out of the top 200 overall. With 91 institutions, India is now the fourth most represented country, surpassing China (86).

1. World Heart Day 2023 celebrated on 29 September
2. Sir Michael Gambon, who played the role of Professor Dumbledore in Harry Potter has passed away at the age of 82.
3. 'World Rabies Day' is celebrated on 28th September.
4. Switzerland has topped the recently released Global Innovation Index (GII) 2023.
5. According to the recent report of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the elderly population in India will increase to 20% by the year 2050.
6. 'Shailesh Gupta', whole-time director of Jagran Prakashan Limited, has been appointed as the chairman of 'Media Research Users Council India'.
7. 'Gokul Subramaniam' has been appointed as the President of Intel India.
8. Senior nuclear scientist 'Vivek Bhasin' has been appointed the director of 'Bhabha Atomic Research Centre'.
9. HP has collaborated with 'Google' to manufacture Chromebook in India.
10. 'International Literacy Day' will be celebrated on 08 September.
11. September 03 has been declared as 'Sanatan Gharm Divas' in the city of Louisville in the state of Kentucky, USA.
12. G20 India mobile application will provide G20-related information in '10 languages'.
13. In the Asian Table Tennis Championship 2023, the Indian team won the 'Bronze Medal'.
14. 'International Police Cooperation Day' was celebrated on 07 September.
15. 'INS Sumedha' participated in Exercise Bright Star-23 in Egypt.
16. Indian-American cancer doctor and researcher 'Dr. Siddhartha Mukherjee' has been included in the longlist of Britain's top non-fiction awards.
17. Prayagraj city police of Uttar Pradesh state has started the 'Savera Scheme' for senior citizens.
18. Recently, researchers from the country 'Israel' have prepared a model exactly like a human embryo from stem cells.
19. Fashion brand 'W' has made actress Anushka Sharma its brand ambassador.
20. Udhampur Railway Station will be renamed as 'Shaheed Captain Tushar Mahajan Railway Station'.
21. 'Street Child Cricket World Cup 2023' will be organized in Chennai.
22. 'Bank of Baroda' has started UPI ATM facility.
23. Advait Jind has been honored with 'Lakshmi Kumari Chundawat Children's Literature Award'.
24. UIDAI has organized 'Global Fintech Fest 2023' in Mumbai.
25. 'World Physiotherapy Day' was celebrated on 08 September.
26. A MoU has been signed for judicial cooperation between the Supreme Court of India and the country of 'Singapore'.
27. Delhi University has appointed 'Professor Vindhyavasini Pandey' as the Director of the Central Center for Himalayan Studies.
28. 'Adeeb Ahmed' has been honored with the 'Leading Fintech Personality of the Year Award'.
29. Book 'IDOLS' written by Bhavana Roy and Amish Tripathi has been published.
30. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the 'Global Biofuel Alliance'.
31. 'African Union' got permanent membership in the G20 conference.
32. Recently, the country 'Switzerland' has won the title of the best country in the world for the second consecutive time.
33. Udhampur Railway Station will be renamed as 'Shaheed Captain Tushar Mahajan Railway Station'.
34. 'North East India Festival' will be organized in Italy.
35. Bhutan has launched 'Self Sovereign National Digital ID' for all its citizens.
36. The 78th meeting of the 'United Nations General Assembly' (UNGA) was held in September 2023.
37. Tamil actor and director G Marimuthu passed away at the age of 56.
38. India has won a total of 11 medals in the 'World Arm Wrestling Championship 2023'.



39. September 03 has been declared 'Sanatan Graham Diwas' in Louisville city of Kentucky state of America.
40. India has launched 'Hello UPI' for interactive payments.
41. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched 'Global Biofuel Alliance'.
42. 'International Olympiad for Informatics' has been organized in Hungary.
43. 'World Suicide Prevention Day' has been celebrated on 10th September.
44. Uttar Pradesh State Government has constituted a committee to implement 'Nand Baba Milk Mission'.
45. India and America have resolved the trade dispute in the World Trade Organization (WTO) on 'poultry products'.
46. National Payments Corporation) NPCI has signed a MoU with the Bank of Bangladesh' for digital payments.
47. The 37th National Games to be held in the state of 'Goa' will be held in October 2023.
48. 'Millet International Conference' will be organized in the state of Odisha.
49. 'Novak Djokovic' has won the US Open 2023 title.
50. The world's highest fighter airfield will be constructed in 'Nyoma' of Ladakh.
51. 'Coco Gauff' has won the US Open women's singles title.
52. The first 'Divyang Park' will be constructed in the Loni area of East Delhi.
53. 'World Archery Championship 2023' will be organized in Mexico in September 2023.
54. In September 2023, 'Motoji Race' was organized for the first time at Buddh International Formula One Circuit in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.
55. Vice Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia and prestigious Padma Shri recipient 'Professor Najma Akhtar' has been honored with the 'Lifetime Achievement Award' in the academic field.
56. 'Australia' has topped the ICC Men's ODI Rankings.
57. National General Secretary of Youth Congress 'Raksha Ramaiah' has been appointed the President of Karnataka Table Tennis Association.
58. India and 'Saudi Arabia' have signed a cooperation agreement in the energy sector.
59. India has handed over the presidency of G20 to the country 'Brazil'.
60. India and Britain have inaugurated the 'Infrastructure Financing Bridge'.
61. Bangladesh has signed an agreement with France to buy 10 Airbus aircraft.
62. 'World Wrestling Championship 2023' will be organized in Belgrade, Serbia.
63. 'Germany' has won the title of FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023.
64. Software developer Dennis Austin, who created PowerPoint, has passed away at the age of 76.
65. 'Transgender Pride Walk' has been organized for the first time in Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh.
66. 'Vijayawada Railway Station' has been awarded the Green Railway Station Certificate by the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC).
67. President Draupadi Murmu ji has inaugurated the first 'Global Seminar' on farmers' rights in New Delhi.
68. 'National Hindi Day' is being celebrated on 14th September.
69. International cricketer Shubman Gill has been ranked second in the ICC ODI rankings.
70. Airbus Defence and Space Company has handed over the first 'Aircraft C-295' to the Indian Air Force.
71. President Draupadi Murmu ji has launched the nationwide health care scheme 'Ayushman Bhava Abhiyan'.
72. Patna Municipal Corporation has started the 'Cash for Waste Scheme'.
73. The fourth 'G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group' meeting has started in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
74. Famous actor comedian 'Satinder Kumar Khosla' has passed away at the age of 84.
75. Recently, Ian Wilmut, the scientist who created the famous Dolly sheep, has passed away at the age of 79.
76. The state of 'Maharashtra' has won the title of 'National Wheelchair Rugby Championship 2023' for the 5th time.
77. President Draupadi Murmu ji has inaugurated the 'Digital House' of Gujarat State Assembly.
78. Punjab State Government has launched 'Mission Indradhanush 5.0' campaign.
79. Union Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has launched 'Skill India Digital Portal'.
80. President Draupadi Murmu ji has launched the nationwide health care scheme 'Ayushman Bhava Abhiyan'.
81. Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria has unveiled 'Sarpanch Samvad Mobile App'.
82. 'Madan Lal Regar' has been appointed as the new Ambassador of India to the Republic of Congo.
83. Recently, this time on 04 December, Navy Day will be celebrated at 'Sindhudurg Fort' located on the Konkan coast of Maharashtra.
84. Researchers of 'IIT Guwahati' have developed pharmaceutical and food products.
85. The Indian cricket team has won the title of 'Asia Cup 2023'.
86. Udhampur railway station of Jammu and Kashmir has been renamed after martyr 'Captain Tushar Mahajan'.
87. Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra stood second in 'Diamond League 2023' with a throw of 83.80 meters.
88. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has recognized 'Santiniketan University' as a World Heritage.
89. Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar has honored 84 artists with 'Sangeet Natak Akademi Amrit Puraskar'.
90. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the expansion of 'Delhi Airport Metro Express Line'.
91. ICCR has organized 'Vaishali Festival of Democracy' in the state of Bihar.
92. Madhya Pradesh State Government has launched 'Mukhyamantri Ladli Behna Awas Yojana'.
93. Famous writer 'Geeta Mehta' has passed away at the age of 80.

94. 'Integrated Electricity Consumer Portal' has been launched in Shimla.
95. IIT Kanpur in India has partnered with 'ICICI Bank' to promote the startup ecosystem.
96. Madhya Pradesh Governor 'Mangubhai Patel' has been honored with the International Excellence Award in London.
97. Telangana State Government has announced 'Chief Minister Breakfast Scheme' for students.
98. 'Srinivasan K Swamy' has taken over as the Chairman of 'Audit Bureau of Circulation' (ABC).
99. The Government of India has decided to purchase '12 Sukhoi SU-30 MKI'.
100. Air India has started 'Project Abhinandan' at 16 airports.
101. IRS officer 'Rahul Naveen' has been appointed as the acting director of the Enforcement Directorate (ED).
102. Recently a 108 feet tall statue of Adi Shankaracharya was unveiled in the state of 'Madhya Pradesh' .
103. 'Ashok Leyland' has entered into an agreement with the Uttar Pradesh state government to set up a bus plant.
104. Kerala' state government has declared a high alert in the state due to the spread of Nipah virus.
105. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has given the status of World Heritage to the 'Hoysala Temple' of Karnataka.
106. Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has inaugurated the newly constructed 'Udaan Bhawan' and the pilot project of Bharatkosh Advance Deposit (e-Wallet) facility.
107. India's first transgender outpatient department i.e. OPD has been started in 'Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital', Delhi.
108. Assam State Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has been awarded Singapore's top fellowship ' Lee Kuan Yew Exchange Fellowship'.
109. 'Carlos Sainz' has won the title of Singapore Grand Prix 2023.
110. 'Maha Kumbh of Persons with Disabilities' has been organized for the first time in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
111. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has recognized 'Santiniketan University' as a World Heritage.
112. Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh state Pema Khandu has announced 'Mukhyamantri Shramik Kalyan Yojana' .
113. 'Major Payal Chhabra' has become the first Indian woman to become a Para Commando.
114. Paralympic athlete 'Mark Dhamoi' has won the gold medal in the 'World Dwarf Games 2023'.
115. 'Mohammed Siraj' has become the top bowler in ICC's ODI rankings.
116. The Uttar Pradesh state government has declared June 29 as 'Businessman Welfare Day' .
117. The government of the country 'Peru' has declared a state of emergency for 60 days in 544 districts.
118. International company 'Adidas' has prepared the jersey of Team India for the upcoming ICC World Cup 2023.
119. Cricketer Deepak Chahar has launched his new sports brand D Night.
120. Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh State Government, Shivraj Singh Chauhan has started 'Mukhyamantri Krishak Mitra Yojana' .
121. India has won a total of 2 medals in the ISSF World Cup 2023 Rio de Janeiro.
122. '78th session' of the United Nations General Assembly is being organized in New York, America.
123. 'Nuakhai Juhar festival' has been celebrated in the state of Odisha.
124. President Draupadi Murmu ji has inaugurated the 'International Trend Show' in Greater Noida.
125. 'India' will host the 'International Congress on Chemistry of Cement' in the year 2027.
126. The annual naval maritime bilateral exercise 'SIMBEX' has started between India and Singapore.
127. The Assam State Government has launched 'Chief Minister Self-reliant Assam Campaign' .
128. Kota, Rajasthan has become India's first 'traffic light free city' .
129. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has invited US President 'Joe Biden' to be the chief guest on Republic Day.
130. Multiplex Association of India has announced to celebrate ' National Cinema Day' on 13 October.
131. 'International Peace Day' is celebrated on 21st September.
132. Harmanpreet Singh and Lovlina Borgohain have become the flag bearers of the Indian team in 'Asian Games 2023' .
133. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 'International Lawyers Conference 2023' in New Delhi.
134. The Multiplex Association of India has announced the celebration of National Cinema Day' on 13 October.
135. A meeting was held in 'Vienna' between India and Pakistan on the Indus water dispute.
136. 'World Rhino Day' is celebrated on 22 September.
137. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan has inaugurated the 108 feet high statue of 'Adi Shankaracharya', the largest in the world.
138. Actor 'Akhil Mishra' passed away at the age of 58.
139. The 4th edition of 'Nadi Utsav' has started in New Delhi.
140. 'Babar Azam' and 'Arlene Kelly' have become ICC Players of the Month for August 2023.
141. 'Dr. Swati Nayak' will be honored with the prestigious Norman Borlaug Field Award.
142. Italian racer Marco Bezzecchi won India's first Indian Grand Prix 2023 title.
143. 'Mata Amritanandamayi Devi' has been honored with the 'World Leader for Peace and Security Award 2023'.
144. 'International Rivers Day' is celebrated on 24th September.
145. 'Indian cricket team' has become the number 1 team in all three formats of ICC.
146. 'Indo-Pacific Army Chiefs Conference' will be organized in New Delhi.
147. Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel has inaugurated the 'Gujarat Conference 2023'.
148. BCCI has chosen 'SBI Life' as the official partner for the domestic and international seasons.

149. Bollywood writer Prayag Raj' passed away at the age of 88.
150. 'Zagorohoria', located on Mount Pindos in Epirus, Greece, has been included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.
151. The Himachal Pradesh state government has launched the Mobile Van Program to promote Natural Farming Khushal Kisan Yojana (PK3Y).
152. First 'Lighthouse Ustav' has started in the state of Goa.
153. Actor 'Suresh Gopi' has been named as the Chairman of the Governing Council of 'Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute'.
154. Recently 'Lucknow' is hosting the 20th National Book Fair.
155. Axis Bank has launched 'Neo for Business' platform for MSMEs.
156. Indian female wrestler Antim Panghal has won the bronze medal in the World Wrestling Championship 2023.
157. The 1st 'ASEAN Joint Military Exercise ASEX-01N' will be organized in Indonesia.
158. 'Mithun' Animal has got the tag of food animal.
159. 'G77+China' summit was organized in Cuba.
160. Palak Sharma has been honored with the prestigious 'Eklavya Award'.
161. Multiplex Association of India has announced to celebrate 'National Cinema Day' on 13 October.
162. The world's largest Hindu temple BAPS Swaminarayan Akshardham will be inaugurated in New Jersey, America.
163. 'Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve' has become the newest tiger reserve of Madhya Pradesh state.
164. In the '19th Asian Games 2023', the Indian women's cricket team won the gold medal by defeating Sri Lanka.
165. India has declared 75 percent villages as 'ODF Plus' .
166. France has recalled its ambassador and soldiers from the country 'Niger' .
167. 'World Pharmacist Day' has been celebrated on 25 September.
168. 'India Energy Summit 2023' has been inaugurated in New Delhi.
169. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated the 'India Drone Shakti 2023' exhibition in Ghaziabad.
170. 'Karma Puja festival' has been celebrated in the state of Jharkhand.
171. Book 'Nation Calling: Holistic Approach to UPSC Civil Services Examination' written by IAS officer Sonal Goyal has been released.