

# CLATOPEDIA

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE

## JUNE 2022



## NEWS EVENT

- National Affairs
- International Affairs
- Economic Affairs
- Legal Affairs
- Science & Tech
- Miscellaneous

# CLAT NEW PATTERN

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and many more...

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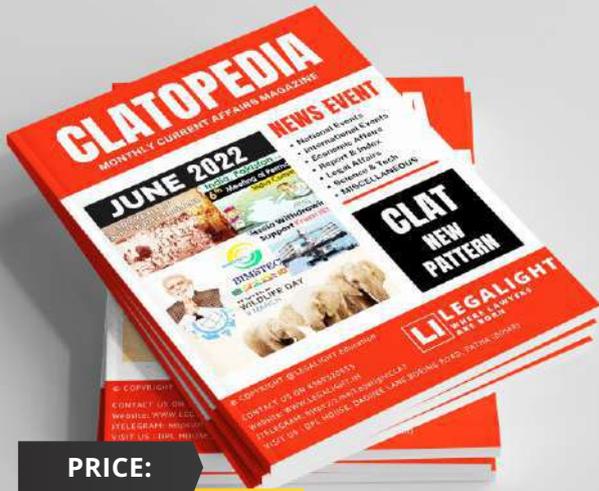
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## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

### #WHAT IS THE AGNIPATH SCHEME FOR RECRUITING SOLDIERS?

Recently, the government has unveiled **Agnipath scheme** for recruiting soldiers across the **three services (Army, Navy and Airforce)**.

#### What is the Agnipath Scheme?

- It allows **patriotic and motivated youth to serve in the Armed Forces for a period of four years.**
- Under this scheme, the **youth joining the army will be called Agniveer.** Youth will be able to be recruited into the army for a short duration.
- Under the new scheme, around 45,000 to 50,000 soldiers will be recruited annually, and most will leave the service in just four years.
- However, after **four years**, only 25% of the batch will be recruited back into their respective services, for a period of 15 years.



#### Who are Agniveers?

- **Agniveer would be a future-ready soldier, India's young protector,** explained Lt Gen Anil Puri. The Lt Gen highlighted that after four years of service with the Army, the agniveer's resume and biodata will be very unique and he will stand out in crowd with his attitude, skills and time.
- **The Agnipath scheme army age limit will be between 18-25 years.**
- The 'Agnipath' scheme opens the way for recruitment of about 45,000 soldiers into Army, Navy and Air Force in the first year but on a short-term contract of four years. After the completion of the contract, 25% of them will be retained and the rest will leave the forces.
- **Our four years of service will mean other jobs will be out of reach after that,** and we will be left behind our peers.
- Those hired under the 'Agnipath' scheme will be **given a one-time lumpsum** of a little more than Rs 11 lakh **when they end their four-year tenure.**

#### Eligibility Criteria:

- It is only for personnel below officer ranks (those who do not join the forces as commissioned officers).
- **Commissioned officers are the army's highest ranked officers.**
- Commissioned officers hold an exclusive rank in the Indian armed forces.
- They often hold a commission under the president's sovereign power and are officially instructed to protect the country.
- Aspirants between the ages of **17.5 years and 21 years will be eligible to apply.**
- **Objectives:** It aims at **providing an opportunity to the patriotic and motivated youth** with the 'Josh' and 'Jazba' to join the Armed Forces.

#### What is Bharat Gaurav Scheme?

First Train under the "Bharat Gaurav Scheme" started from Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) to Shirdi (Maharashtra) by Indian Railways' Southern Railway zone.

The train will cover **several historical destinations on the route while giving the passengers an insight into the cultural heritage** of the country.

- This scheme was launched by Indian Government to tap the **huge potential of Tourism in India.**
- Under it, trains have a third segment for tourism. Before this scheme was launched, Railways had goods segments and passenger segments.
- **These trains are not regular trains, and will run according to timetable.**
- It will run on the lines of Ramayana Express, which is being run by the IRCTC. **Scheme was announced under theme-based tourist circuit trains.**



#### What are the other Related Scheme?

- **Swadesh Darshan Scheme:** Swadesh Darshan, a **Central Sector Scheme**, was launched in 2014 -15 for integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits in the country.

- **PRASHAD Scheme:** The 'National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive' (PRASAD) was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in the year 2014-15 with the **objective of holistic development of identified pilgrimage destinations.**
- **Buddhist Conclave:** Buddhist Conclave is **organised every alternate year with the objective of promoting India as a Buddhist Destination** and major markets around the globe.
- **Dekho Apna Desh' Initiative:** It is an initiative to encourage the citizens to travel widely within the country and explore the wonders of India thus enabling the development of Domestic Tourism tourist facilities and infrastructure in tourism spots in the country.

## What is the State of Tourism in India?

- Tourism in India is important **for the country's economy and is growing rapidly.**
- According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, the travel & tourism industry's contribution to the **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** was USD 121.9 billion in 2020 and this is expected to reach **USD 512 billion by 2028.**
- In India, the industry's direct contribution to the GDP is expected to record an annual growth rate of 10.35% between 2019 and 2028.
- Also, the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019 ranked India 34<sup>th</sup> out of 140 countries overall, showing India's efforts to improve in the field.

### #PURI HERITAGE CORRIDOR CASE

- Residents of Puri had moved the **High Court** alleging that, structural safety of **800-year-old Jagannath Temple** could be in danger, if land surrounding the temple were dug up.
- They also allege that; state government has insulted the devotees by demolishing mutts in order to clear roads to Shri Jagannath temple.
- These roads are closely linked with different rituals of **12th century shrine because of ongoing Srimandir Parikrama Project.**
- Case has also been taken up in the Apex court at times, when **Orissa High Court** is hearing a plea against construction.



## Temple governance

- The **Jagannath Temple** is a centrally protected monument and ASI is its custodian.
- Thus, 100 metre around the perimeter of temple is considered as inviolate, where no construction can be taken in accordance with the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment and validation) Act (AMASR Act), unless National Monuments Authority (NMA) gives nod to it.
- NMA had issued a no objection certificate (NOC) in 2021 for the construction of a shelter pavilion, toilets etc. within prohibited 75-metre zone, **based on the fact that public amenities do not come under definition of construction.**

## What is the controversy?

- The Puri Corridor Project came into controversy when government agencies dug huge pits within 100 m from the boundary of temple, which is categorized as protected zone, without getting permission from Archeological Survey of India (ASI).
- **About National Monuments Authority (NMA)**
- NMA functions under the Union Ministry of Culture. It was set up in 2011 to protect and preserve monuments and sites through management of **prohibited and regulated area across centrally protected monuments.**

### About Srimandir Parikrama Project

- The foundation stone for the **Rs 800 crore Srimandir Parikrama Plan (also called Jagannath Temple corridor project)** was laid by CM of Odisha in November 2021.
- Under this project, area within 75-metre perimeter of **Jagannath Temple was to be transformed into a heritage corridor, in order to attract devotees from world.**
- It has been modelled on the line of Kashi Vishwanath Corridor project of Varanasi. It will have amenities for pilgrims like cloak rooms, reception centre, restrooms, etc.
- **Project was scheduled to be completed by May 2023.**
- Its construction has taken up by **Odisha Bridge and Construction Corporation (OBCC)** of state government, while Tata Projects is running it on ground.
- Its construction also took into consideration a Supreme Court judgement in 2019, that suggested to clear all structure around 75-metre radius for the safety, scrutiny and improvement of the temple.

### #TELANGANA FORMATION DAY OBSERVED ON 2<sup>ND</sup> JUNE

- Telangana’s Governor greeted the people of the state on **Telangana formation day** (2nd June).
- **What are the Key Points about Telangana?**
- **About:**
- On 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2014 the northwestern part of Andhra Pradesh was separated and 29<sup>th</sup> state Telangana was created.
- The Andhra State Act (1953) formed the first linguistic state of India, known as the state of Andhra, by taking out the Telugu speaking areas from the State of Madras (now Tamil Nadu).
- The **States Reorganisation Act (1956)** merged the Telugu-speaking areas of Hyderabad state with the Andhra state to create the enlarged Andhra Pradesh state.
- The **Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act (2014)** bifurcated Andhra Pradesh into two separate states, namely, the **Andhra Pradesh (residuary)** and the **Telangana**.
- **Capital:** Hyderabad
- **Borders:** Telangana is surrounded by Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh in the North, Karnataka in the West and Andhra Pradesh in the South and East directions.



### Four Icons of Telangana:

- **State Bird** - Palapitta (Indian Roller or Blue Jay).
- **State Animal** - Jinka (Deer).
- **State Tree** - Jammi Chettu (Prosopis Cineraria).
- **State Flower** - Tangedu (Tanner’s Cassia).

### Global Recognition:

- **Ramappa Temple**, at Mulugu district presents the distinct style of Kakatiyas. The foundation of this temple is “**sandbox technique**”. It is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.
- Sadarmatt anicut across river Godavari in Nirmal district and Pedda Cheruvu in Kamareddy district are in the **ICID Register of Heritage Irrigation Structures**.

### National Parks:

- Kasu Brahmananda Reddy National Park
- Mahavir Harina Vanasthali National Park
- Mrugavani National Park

### Wild Life Sanctuaries:

- Kinnarsani Wildlife Sanctuary
- Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary
- Kawal Tiger Reserve
- Lanja Madugu Siwaram Wildlife Sanctuary
- Manjeera Crocodile Wildlife Sanctuary
- **Nagarjuna Sagar-Srisailem Wildlife Sanctuary**
- **Pakhal Wildlife Sanctuary**
- **Pocharam Wildlife Sanctuary**
- **Pranahita Wildlife Sanctuary**

## #50% RURAL HOUSEHOLDS COVERED UNDER JJM

Recently, the Centre announced that over **50% of rural households have access to tap water supply**.

### What is Jal Jeevan Mission?

- **Launched in 2019**, it envisages **supply of 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024**.
- JJM looks to create a jan andolan for water, thereby making it everyone’s priority.
- It comes under **Jal Shakti Ministry**.
- The mission ensures **functionality of existing water supply systems and water connections**, water quality monitoring and testing as well as sustainable agriculture.
- JJM focuses on **integrated demand and supply-side management** of water at the local level.



### What is Jal Jeevan Mission(Urban)?

- In the **Budget 2021-22**, **Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban)** has been announced under the **Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry to provide universal coverage of water supply to all households** through functional taps in all statutory towns in accordance with **Sustainable Development Goal- 6**.
- It complements the **Jal Jeevan Mission (Rural)** which envisages supply of 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through **Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024**.

## Steps Taken for Water Conservation

- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act:** Aims to improve groundwater harvesting, build water conservation and storage mechanisms and has enabled the government to introduce water conservation as a project under the Act.
- For example, the **Jal Gram Scheme** under it aimed at developing two model villages in water-starved areas for water conservation and preservation.
- **National Water Mission:** Aims to conserve water minimise wastage and ensure more equitable distribution both across and within states through integrated water resources development and management.
- **NITI Aayog's Composite Water Management Index:** Aims to achieve effective utilization of water.
- **Jal Shakti Ministry:** Jal Shakti Ministry was formed to tackle water issues holistically.
- Jal Jeevan mission aims to provide piped water to all rural households by 2024.
- **Atal Bhujal Yojana:** Central sector scheme for sustainable management of groundwater with community participation through the formation of **Water User Associations**, water budgeting, preparation and implementation of Gram-panchayat-wise water security plans, etc.
- **Jal Shakti Abhiyan:** Launched in July 2019 as a campaign for water conservation and water security in the country.
- **National Water Awards:** Organised by the **Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation**, Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- Focus on the good work and efforts made by individuals and organisations across the country, and the government's vision for the path to **Jal Samridh Bharat**.

### Objectives of Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban):

- Securing tap and sewer connections
- Rejuvenation of water bodies
- creating circular water economy

## RELATED: WORLD WATER DAY

- **World Water Day** is celebrated on **22<sup>nd</sup> March Every Year** to highlight the importance of water.
- On the Occasion of the **World Water Day UN (United Nations)** University's Canadian-based Institute for Water Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) has published an assessment report, showing the **levels of water security in Africa overall are unacceptably low**.
- The World Water Day 2022 theme sets the focus for the **annual World Water Development Report**.
- What is World Water Day?
- **Aim:** The Day aims to **support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6:** water and sanitation for all by 2030.
- **Theme:** Groundwater: making the invisible visible.
- The theme was decided by UN-water at its 30th meeting in Rome. It was proposed by the **International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC)**.

## **#INDIA'S 1<sup>ST</sup> NATIONAL COALITION PLATFORM (NBS)**

- Recently, the **National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) Climate Centre for Cities (NIUA C-Cube)**, **World Resources Institute India (WRI India)** and their partners launched **India's first National Coalition platform for Urban nature-based solutions (NbS)** at the **11<sup>th</sup> World Urban Forum in Poland**.
- NIUA focuses on research, knowledge management, policy, advocacy, and capacity building on **urban development** and management to address and develop **sustainable, inclusive, and productive urban ecosystems in the country**.

## What is the World Urban Forum?

- The World Urban Forum (WUF) is the **premier global conference on sustainable urbanization**.
- The WUF was established in 2001 by the **United Nations to examine rapid urbanization and its impact on communities, cities, economies, climate change and policies**.
- WUF11 is **co-organized by UN-Habitat, Poland's Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy and the Municipal Office of Katowice, Poland**.

## What is the Key Highlights of National Coalition platform for NbS?

- The **India Forum for Nature-based Solutions** aims to create a collective of NbS entrepreneurs, government entities and like-minded organizations, **to help scale urban nature-based solutions through:**
- **Defining a shared language and communicating benefits** that inform actions at the local level including scaling up of existing NbS interventions.
- **Driving investment** and strengthening delivery mechanisms through multi-stakeholder coordination.
- **Mainstreaming urban ecosystem-based services** and nature-based solutions in India through **informing policy, plans and project interventions.**



### What is Local-led Adaptation?

- Local-led adaptation refers to **local communities, local governments acting strongly in taking effective decisions to tackle climate change.**
- Local-led adaptation is often characterised by **indigenous solutions, which are often associated with nature.**
- Given that the most vulnerable populations are the ones that are more dependent on natural resources, it is, therefore, to be expected that coping solutions also often germinate from the same source.

### Recognition:

- **United Nations:** The UN promoted NBS as the **theme for World Water Day 2018** as "Nature for Water". **The UN World Water Development Report was titled "Nature-based Solutions for Water".** The **2019 UN Climate Action Summit** highlighted **Nature-based solutions** as an effective method to combat climate change.
- A **Nature Based Solution Coalition** was created, including dozens of countries, **led by China and New Zealand.**
- **European Union:** Since 2016, the EU has supported a **multi-stakeholder dialogue platform (Think Nature)** to promote the co-design, testing, and deployment of **improved and innovative NBS** in an integrated way.
- **India:** India launched its first **National Coalition platform for Urban nature-based solutions (NbS)** under the **Cities4Forests** initiative.
- **Cities4Forests:** It works **closely with cities around the world to connect with forests,** emphasises the importance of wetlands and their multiple benefits to help **combat climate change and protect biodiversity in cities.**

### PAY ROLL AUTOMATION FOR DISBURSEMENT OF MONTHLY ALLOWANCES

- Recently, the Ministry of Defense inaugurated PayRoll Automation for Disbursement of Monthly Allowances (PADMA), an automated Pay & Allowances module for the **Indian Coast Guard.**

### What are the Key Highlights about PADMA?

- **PADMA** is an **automated platform leveraging latest technology** which will provide seamless and timely disbursal of Pay & Allowances to

### What is Indian Coast Guard?

- It is a **maritime law enforcement and search and rescue agency** of India with **jurisdiction over its territorial waters** including its **contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone.**
- **Contiguous zone:** It is a band of water extending farther from the outer edge of the territorial sea to up to 24 nautical miles from the baseline.
- **Special Economic Zone (SEZ):** It is an area in a country that is subject to different economic regulations than other regions within the same country.
- It comes under the under the **Ministry of Defense.**
- The concept of forming **ICG came into being after the 1971 war.**
- The blueprint for a multidimensional Coast Guard was conceived by the visionary **Rustamji Committee.**

around 15,000 Indian Coast Guard personnel.

- This module has been developed under the aegis of the Defense Accounts Department and will be operated by Pay Accounts Office Coast Guard, Noida.

### **What is a Centralized & Decentralized Payment System?**

- **Centralized Payment Systems** in India are **Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS)** and **National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT)** systems, **both owned and operated by the Reserve Bank.**
- Real time means the processing of instructions at the time they are received and gross settlement implies that settlement of funds transfer instructions occurs individually.
- **NEFT:** It is an electronic fund transfer system in which the transactions received up to a particular time are processed in batches.
- It is generally used for fund transfers of up to Rs. 2 lakh.
- The **decentralised payment systems** will include clearing houses managed by RBI (**Cheque Truncation System (CTS)** centres as well as other banks (**Express Cheque Clearing System (ECCS)** centres and any other system as decided by RBI from time to time.
- **Cheque Truncation:** It is the **process of stopping the flow of the physical cheque issued by a drawer at some point by the presenting bank en-route to the paying bank branch.**
- **Express Cheque Clearing System:** Funds move from one account to another to settle a check payment. The amount is usually credited to the bank account of deposit and an equivalent amount debited at the bank from which it is drawn.

### **#MOHUA LAUNCHED 'NIPUN INITIATIVE'**

- An **Innovative project** called **"National Initiative for Promoting Upskilling of Nirman workers (NIPUN)** was launched on June 20, 2022 by Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Singh Puri.

#### **About NIPUN Initiative**

- The NIPUN Initiative was launched for skill training of 100,000 construction workers.
- It has been launched under the flagship scheme of "Deendayal Antyodaya-Yojana National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM)".
- Under the scheme, construction workers will be trained through fresh **skilling and upskilling programs. This move will provide work opportunities to them in foreign countries also.**
- Which organisation will implement the project?
- The NIPUN Project will be implemented by **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)**, which is the nodal agency under Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE). The agency would be responsible for overall execution of training, candidate tracking and monitoring.

#### **NIPUN Bharat Mission**

The Ministry of Education has launched a **National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat)**, for ensuring that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) by the end of Grade 3, by 2026-27.

It was launched in 2021 as part of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.**

**DAY-NRLM:** DAY-NULM is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**, being implemented since 2014-15.

Its aim is to **reduce poverty and vulnerability of urban poor households** in the country by enabling them to **access self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities.**

**Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM)** was launched by the **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India in 2011.**

**Aim:** The Mission aims at creating efficient and effective institutional platforms of the rural poor enabling them to **increase household income through sustainable livelihood and improved access to financial services.**

### **#BAN ON WHEAT EXPORTS FROM INDIA**

- Recently the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** suspended re-export of wheat and flour from grain originating in **India** is basically an assurance that whatever it imports will be used only for domestic consumption.

- The development comes a month after India banned wheat exports to meet the demand of its domestic market, neighbouring countries and vulnerable nations.
- UAE's Ministry of Economy explained that this decision comes in view of the international developments that have affected trade flows and in appreciation of the solid and strategic relations that bind the UAE and India, especially after the signing of the **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement** between the two countries and the Indian government's approval to **export wheat to the UAE for domestic consumption**.



### What is the Status of Wheat Export of India?

- **India** is the **world's second-biggest wheat producer** after China. But it accounts for less than 1% of the global wheat trade. It keeps a lot of it to provide subsidised food for the poor.
- Its **top export markets** are Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka - as well as the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- **Reasons for Banning of Export of Wheat:**
- India has **suspended the export of wheat effective 13 May 2022**. In a notification published in the government gazette, the **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)** justified the ban by giving reasons that soaring global wheat prices have put pressure on food security, not only in India, but also in neighbouring and vulnerable nations.
- However, export will be allowed on the basis of permission granted by the Government of India to other countries to meet their food security needs and based on the request of their governments.
- The ban was also prompted decrease in wheat production, after its production was affected by a heatwave that swept across the country during March-April, while the **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** was unable to mop up ample stocks for buffer stocks.
- **The rising inflation also prompted this step. The Wholesale Price Index (WPI)** in India has moved up from 2.26 per cent at the start of 2022 to 14.55 now. Retail inflation, too, hit an eight-year high of 7.79 per cent in April, driven by rising food and fuel prices.

### #WHAT IS CRITICAL INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE?

- Recently, the Union Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) has declared IT (Information Technology) resources of **ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and NPCI (National Payments Corporation of India)** as '**critical information infrastructure**'.

### What is Critical Information Infrastructure?

- The **Information Technology Act of 2000** defines **Critical Information Infrastructure** as a computer resource, the incapacitation or **destruction** of which shall **have debilitating impact on national security, economy, public health or safety**.
- The **government**, under the **IT Act of 2000**, has the **power to declare** any data, **database, IT network or communications infrastructure as CII** to protect that digital asset.
- Any person who secures access or attempts to **secure access to a protected system in violation of the law** can be punished with a **jail term of up to 10 years**.

### Case of India:

- In October, 2020 as India battled the **pandemic, the electric grid supply to Mumbai suddenly snapped** hitting the mega city's hospitals, trains and businesses.
- Later, a study by a US firm claimed that this power outage could have been a **cyber-attack, allegedly from a China-linked group**, aimed at **critical infrastructure**. The government, however, was quick to deny any **cyber-attack** in Mumbai.

- But the incident underlined the possibility of hostile state and non-state actors **probing internet-dependent critical systems** in other countries, and the necessity **to fortify such assets**.

### #AMRIT SAROVAR MISSION

- The Union government has asked the Ministry of Railways and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to use the soil/silt excavated from ponds/tanks in all districts across the country under the Amrit Sarovar Mission for their infrastructure projects.

### What is Amrit Sarovar Mission?

- Amrit Sarovar Mission was launched on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2022 with a view to conserve water for the future.
- **Aim:** The Mission is aimed at developing and rejuvenating 75 water bodies in each district of the country as a part of celebration of **Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**.
- In total, it would lead to the creation of **50,000 water bodies** of a size of about an Acre or more.
- The Mission encourages **mobilisation of citizen and non-govt resources** for supplementing these efforts.
- **Ministries Involved:**
- This Mission has been launched with a whole Government Approach with 6 Ministries/Department namely:
  - Department of Rural Development
  - Department of land resources
  - Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation
  - Department of Water resources
  - Ministry of Panchayati Raj
  - Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Changes.

### Countries which Ban Plastic:

- **Bangladesh:** Bangladesh became the **first country to ban thin plastic bags** in 2002.
- **New Zealand:** New Zealand became the latest country to ban plastic bags in July 2019.
- **China:** China issued a ban on plastic bags in 2020 with phased implementation.
- **US:** Eight states in the US have banned single-use plastic bags, beginning with California in 2014. Seattle became the first major US city to ban plastic straws in 2018.
- **European Union:** In July, 2021, the Directive on **Single-Use Plastics** took effect in the European Union (EU).
- The directive bans certain **single-use plastics for which alternatives are available**, single-use plastic plates, cutlery, straws, balloon sticks and cotton buds cannot be placed on the markets of the EU member states.

### What is Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav?

- Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is an **initiative of the Government of India** to celebrate and commemorate **75 years of independence** and the **glorious history of its people, culture and achievements**.
- This Mahotsav is dedicated to the people of India who have not only been instrumental in bringing India thus far in its evolutionary journey but also hold within them the power and potential to enable Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of activating **India 2.0**, fuelled by the spirit of **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**.
- The official journey of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav commenced on **12<sup>th</sup> March 2021** which started a **75-week countdown to our 75th anniversary of independence** and **will end post a year on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

### #BAN ON SINGLE USE PLASTIC

- Recently, the Centre has defined a list of single-use plastic items that will be banned from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022.
- The manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of notified single-use plastic, including polystyrene and expanded polystyrene, commodities shall be prohibited with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2022.

## What is single-use plastic?

- **About:** It refers to plastic items that are used once and discarded.
- **Highest Shares of Plastic Manufactured and Used:**
- **Single-use plastic** has among the **highest shares of plastic manufactured and used** — from packaging of items, to bottles (shampoo, detergents, cosmetics), polythene bags, face masks, coffee cups, cling film, trash bags, food packaging etc.
- **Accounts for a Third of all Plastic Produced Globally:**
- **Contribution to Greenhouse Gas Emissions:**
- On the current trajectory of production, it has been projected that single-use plastic could account for **5-10% of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.**

## Directions Issued:

- Directions have been **issued at national, state and local levels** — for example, to all petrochemical industries — to **not supply raw materials to industries engaged in the banned items.**
- Directions have also been issued to **SPCBs and Pollution Control Committees** to modify or **revoke consent to operate issued under the Air/Water Act** to industries engaged in single-use plastic items.
- **Local authorities** have been directed to issue **fresh commercial licenses** with the condition that **SUP items will not be sold on their premises, and existing commercial licences** will be cancelled if they are found to be selling these items.
- **Penalty:**
- Those found violating the ban can be penalised under the **Environment Protection Act 1986** – which allows for **imprisonment up to 5 years, or a penalty up to Rs 1 lakh, or both.**
- Violators can also be asked to pay Environmental Damage Compensation by the SPCB.
- There are municipal laws on plastic waste, with their own penal codes.

## Countries which Ban Plastic:

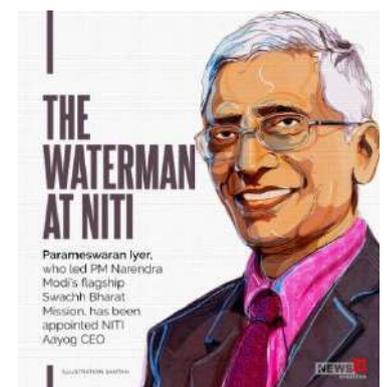
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## #NEW CEO OF NITI AAYOG

- **NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog** CEO Amitabh Kant is set to leave and will be replaced by former Secretary of the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation - **Parameswaran Iyer.**

## What is NITI Aayog?

- **Background:** Planning Commission was replaced by a new institution – **NITI Aayog on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2015** with emphasis on **‘Bottom –Up’ approach to envisage the vision of Maximum Governance, Minimum Government**, echoing the spirit of **‘Cooperative Federalism’.**
- It has two Hubs.



- **Team India Hub** acts as interface **between States and Centre.**
- **Knowledge and Innovation Hub** builds the think-tank acumen of NITI Aayog.

### Composition:

- **Chairperson:** Prime minister
- **Vice-Chairperson:** To be appointed by Prime-Minister
- **Governing Council:** Chief Ministers of all states and Lt. Governors of Union Territories.
- **Regional Council:** To address specific regional issues, Comprising Chief Minister and Lt. Governors Chaired by the Prime Minister or his nominee.
- **Ad-hoc Membership:** Two members in ex-officio capacity from leading Research institutions on a rotational.
- **Ex-Officio membership:** Maximum four from the Union council of ministers to be nominated by the Prime Minister.
- **Chief Executive Officer:** Appointed by the Prime-minister for a fixed tenure, in the rank of Secretary to Government of India.
- **Special Invitees:** Experts, Specialists with domain knowledge nominated by the Prime Minister.

### #BHARAT DRONE MAHOTSAV 2022

- Recently, India's biggest Drone Festival - **Bharat Drone Mahotsav 2022** was inaugurated in **New Delhi** by the Prime Minister.
- A virtual award of drone pilot certificates, panel discussions, product launches, display of a 'Made in India' Drone Taxi prototype, flying demonstrations, among others were the key events.
- **Monitoring:** The drone technology in the **SVAMITVA scheme** launched by the Government of India, within less than a year, has helped about half a million village residents to get their property cards by mapping out the densely-populated areas.
- Drones can be used for real-time surveillance of assets and transmission lines, theft prevention, visual inspection/maintenance, construction planning and management, etc
- They can be used for **anti-poaching actions, monitoring of forests and wildlife, pollution assessment, and evidence gathering.**
- **Law Enforcement:** Drones are also significant for the law enforcement agencies, the fire and emergency services wherever human intervention is not safe and the healthcare services.



### What are the Drone Rules, 2021?

- In 2021, the Ministry notified **liberalized drone rules with the aim to encourage R&D and to make India a drone hub.**
- It abolished several permissions and approvals. The number of forms that need to be filled was reduced from 25 to five and the types of fee brought down from 72 to 4.
- No permission is required for operating drones in green zones and no remote pilot license is necessary for non-commercial use of micro and nano drones.
- Payloads up to 500kg have been allowed so the drones can be used as unmanned flying taxis.
- Further, foreign ownership of companies operating drones has also been permitted.

### What is the PLI Scheme for Drones?

- The government **also approved a Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for Drones** and their components with an allocation of Rs. 120 crore for three financial years.
- The PLI Scheme for the drones and drone components industry addresses the strategic, tactical, and operational uses of this revolutionary technology.

### What is the Drone Shakti Scheme?

- The Union Budget pushed for promotion of drones through startups and skilling at Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).
- Startups will be promoted to facilitate 'Drone Shakti' through varied applications and for Drone-As-A-Service (DrAAS). Courses for skilling will also be started in selected ITIs across all States.
- DrAAS allows enterprises to avail various services from drone companies, removing the need for them to invest in drone hardware or software, pilots, and training programmes.
- Sectors where drones can be employed are endless. These include photography, agriculture, mining, telecom, insurance, telecom, oil & gas, construction, transport, disaster management, geo-spatial mapping, forest and wildlife, defence and law enforcement to name a few.
- Drones will also be promoted for crop assessment, digitisation of land records, spraying of insecticides and nutrients (Kisan Drones).
- The drone services industry is expected to grow to over Rs 30,000 crore in next three years and generate over five lakh jobs.

### #PRADHAN MANTRI AWAS YOJANA

- The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) has a completion rate of 67.72%, whereas the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) scheme that started a year ahead is lagging behind with a 50% completion rate.

### What is PMAY-G Scheme?

- **Launch:** To achieve the objective of "Housing for All" by 2022, the erstwhile rural housing scheme Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) was restructured to Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) w.e.f 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2016.
- **Ministry Involved:** Ministry of Rural development.
- **Aim:** To provide a pucca house with basic amenities to all rural families, who are homeless or living in kutcha or dilapidated houses by the end of March 2022.
- To help rural people Below the Poverty Line (BPL) in construction of dwelling units and upgradation of existing unserviceable kutcha houses by providing assistance in the form of a full grant.
- **Beneficiaries:** People belonging to SCs/STs, freed bonded labourers and non-SC/ST categories, widows or next-of-kin of defence personnel killed in action, ex servicemen and retired members of the paramilitary forces, disabled persons and minorities.



### What is PMAY-U Scheme?

- **Launch:** 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015, intends to provide housing for all in urban areas by year 2022.
- **Implemented by:** Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
- **Features:** Addresses Urban housing shortage among the Urban Poor including the Slum Dwellers by ensuring a pucca house to eligible urban poor.
- The Mission covers the entire urban area consisting of Statutory Towns, Notified Planning Areas, Development Authorities, Special Area Development Authorities, Industrial Development Authorities or any such authority under State legislation which is entrusted with the functions of urban planning & regulations.
- All houses under PMAY (U) have basic amenities like toilet, water supply, electricity and kitchen.

### #BIOTECH STARTUP EXPO – 2022

- Recently, Prime Minister has inaugurated the **Biotech Startup Expo - 2022**.
- It is a **reflection of the expansive growth of the biotech sector** in the country.

### What are the Key Highlights of the Expo?

- **About:** The Biotech Startup Expo 2022 will provide a **common platform to connect investors, entrepreneurs, scientists, researchers, industry leaders, manufacturers, bio-incubators, regulators and government officials**.
- The expo is being organised by the Department of **Biotechnology and Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)** to mark the completion of ten years of BIRAC.
- It will showcase **applications of biotechnology in various fields** including healthcare, agriculture, genomics, clean energy, biopharma, industrial biotechnology and waste-to-value.
- **Theme:** 'Biotech Startup Innovations: Towards AatmaNirbhar Bharat'.



### What is Biotechnology and its Application?

- Biotechnology is **technology that utilizes biological systems**, living organisms or parts of this to develop or create different products.
- Biotechnology deals with **industrial scale production of biopharmaceuticals and biologicals using genetically modified microbes**, fungi, plants and animals.
- The applications of biotechnology include **therapeutics, diagnostics, genetically modified crops for agriculture, processed food, bioremediation, waste treatment, and energy production**.

### What is the Status of Biotech Sector?

- **About:** India is among the top 12 destinations for biotechnology globally and 3rd largest biotechnology destination in the Asia Pacific region.
- The country is **also the world's third-largest producer of recombinant Hepatitis B vaccine** and second-largest producer of **BT cotton** (genetically modified pest resistant plant cotton).
- India's Biotech sector is **categorised into Biopharmaceuticals, BioIndustrial, Bioagriculture, BioIT & BioServices**.
- Within bio-services, **India offers a strong capability in contract manufacturing, research and clinical trials**, and is home to the most US FDA approved plants globally outside of the US.

## **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

## #75 YEARS OF INDIA-RUSSIA DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP

Recently India and Russia celebrated the **75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their diplomatic relations**. This has come amid Russia-Ukraine war.

### **What are the Different Aspects of Indo-Russia Relations?**

#### **Historical Background:**

- The India and Russia ties have been a longstanding relation. Since the signing of the “Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership” in October 2000, India-Russia ties have acquired a qualitatively new character with enhanced levels of cooperation in almost all areas of the bilateral relationship including political, security, defence, trade and economy, science and technology, and culture.
- During the **Cold War**, India and the **Soviet Union** had a strong strategic, military, economic and diplomatic relationship. After the Dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia inherited its close relationship with India which resulted in both nations sharing a Special Strategic Relation.



#### **Political Relations:**

- The Annual Summit meeting between the **Prime Minister of India and the President of the Russian Federation** is the highest institutionalised dialogue mechanism in the strategic partnership between India and Russia.
- In 2019, President Putin signed the Executive Order on awarding PM Narendra Modi **Russia’s highest state decoration – The order of St Andrew the Apostle**.
- The order was presented to PM for his distinguished contribution to the development of a privileged strategic partnership between Russia and India and friendly ties between the Russian and Indian peoples.

#### **About the S-400 Triumf Missile System:**

- The S-400 Triumf is a mobile, surface-to-air missile system (SAM) designed by Russia. It is the most dangerous operationally deployed modern long-range SAM (MLR SAM) in the world, considered much ahead of the **US-developed Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD)**.
- The system **can engage all types of aerial targets** including aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and ballistic and cruise missiles within the range of 400km, at an altitude of up to 30km.
- The system **can track 100 airborne targets and engage six of them simultaneously**.

#### **Defence and Security Relations**

- India-Russia military-technical cooperation has evolved from a buyer-seller framework to one involving joint research, development and production of advanced defence technologies and systems
- Both countries regularly conduct the Tri-Services exercise ‘**INDRA**’.

#### **About the US’ CAATSA:**

- **US Law:** It is a US federal law **enacted in 2017**. The Act **empowers the US President to impose at least five of the 12 listed sanctions on persons engaged in a “significant transaction” with Russian defence and intelligence sectors**.
- Its “ultimate goal”, “is to **prevent revenue from flowing to the Russian Government**.”
- Besides Russia, **CAATSA is aimed at enforcing sanctions against Iran and North Korea**.
- **Types of Sanctions:** The CAATSA contains 12 types of sanctions. There are **only two sanctions that may impact either India-Russia relations or India-US relations**.
- **Prohibition of banking transactions:** The first of these, which is likely to have an impact on India-Russia relations, is the “**Prohibition of Banking transactions**”.
- This would mean difficulties for India in making payments in US Dollars to Russia for the purchase of the S-400 systems.
- **Export Sanction:** The second sanction will have greater consequences for India-US relations.
- This is the “**export sanction**” which has the potential to completely derail the **India-US Strategic and Defence partnership**, as it will deny the license for, and export of, any items controlled by the US.

### About Kamov-226T helicopter:

- **Design:** The Ka-226T is a design of Russia's famed Kamov design bureau.

### INS Vikramaditya

- It is the **Indian Navy's largest aircraft carrier** and warship converted from the **Russian Navy's decommissioned Admiral Gorshkov/Baku**.
- INS Vikramaditya is a modified Kiev-class aircraft carrier that was commissioned into service in November 2013.

### First Indo-Russia 2+2 Dialogue:

- It is the first 2+2 meeting between the foreign and defense ministers of the two countries.
- India has held a 2+2 format of meetings with member nations of the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)** — the US, Japan and Australia.
- **Agreement for Kalashnikov Rifles:** The two sides signed two contracts for the manufacture of nearly **600,000 AK-203 rifles** under a joint venture in **Amethi, Uttar Pradesh**.
- **Agreement for Military Cooperation:** The two countries also signed an agreement for military technology cooperation for the next decade, from **2021 to 2031**.
- India underlined its goal of becoming Russia's defense development and production partner from just a buyer.
- The two sides are now looking at expanding the format of exercises to make them more complex as well as Ideas for **expanding India-Russia cooperation In Central Asia**.
- **Go Ahead With S-400 Air Defense System Deal:** India asserted that it follows an "independent foreign policy", hinting at the US' **Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)**.
- This is referred to in the context of supply of **S-400 air defence missile systems** which began this month and will continue to happen.

### What are Other Important Areas of Relations between India and Russia?

- **Nuclear Relations:**
- Russia is an important partner for India in the area of peaceful use of nuclear energy. It recognizes India as a country with advanced nuclear technology with an impeccable non-proliferation record.
- **Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP)** is being built in India .
- Both India and Russia are implementing **Rooppur Nuclear Power Project in Bangladesh**
- **Space Exploration:**
- Both sides cooperate in the peaceful uses of outer space, including satellite launches, **GLONASS navigation system**, remote sensing and other societal applications of outer space. An MoU ISRO and ROSCOSMOS on Joint Activities in the field of **Human Spaceflight Programme** was signed during the 19<sup>th</sup> Bilateral Summit.

### **#I2U2 GROUPINGS – WEST ASIAN QUAD DIALOGUE**

- The new I2U2 grouping of **India, Israel, UAE, and the US** will hold its first virtual summit in July 2022. **I2U2 group** has been formed as part of the US Government's efforts to re-energize and revitalize American alliances all over the world.
- The first-ever virtual summit of the I2U2 grouping will be held in July 2022 and it will be attended by PM Narendra Modi, US President Joe Biden, PM of Israel Neftali Bennett, and the UAE President Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.
- The **leaders of the four countries** will discuss the food security crisis and the other areas of cooperation.
- The **forum will be launched during Joe Biden's visit to Israel** from July 13 to July 16, 2022.
- Joe Biden is scheduled to visit **West Bank, Saudi Arabia,**
- **This will be his first visit in the region** and most volatile across world.
- It is **expected to reinforce the US's "iron-clad commitment"** to **Israel's security and prosperity** and continue the process of its integration into the region under the Abraham Accords brokered by Trump between Israel on the one hand and the UAE and Bahrain on the other in 2020; an agreement with Morocco followed.
- Biden will also meet with **Palestinian leaders in West Bank, recommitting US** to a two-state solution that had



been somewhat diluted or abandoned under Trump.

## About West Asia Quad Dialogue

- The **West Asia Quad Dialogue will also be called as I2U2**. I2 for India and Israel while U2 for US and the UAE. It will focus on West Asia.
- It was inaugurated in October 2021 by **Secretary of US Antony Blinken**.
- It is an entirely new grouping of partners that will focus on expanding economic and political cooperation in Asia and Middle East through **energy cooperation, trade, coordination on vital shared interests and combating climate change**.

## When will this dialogue launched?

- This initiative will be launched in a virtual call that Joe Biden will hold with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, UAE's President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Israel's Prime Minister Naftali Bennet.
- They will discuss security as well as areas of cooperation across hemispheres, **where Israel and UAE are important innovation hubs**.

### Background

- Joe Biden has launched several multilateral dialogues, after assuming office in January 2021 such as, **AUKUS**- a three-nation group of US, UK and Australia. A Quadrilateral dialogue with **Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan**.
- He has also strengthened and deepened existing platforms like **Quad with India, Japan and Australia as well as North Atlantic Treaty Organization**.

## #TURKEY TO BE NOW CALLED AS 'TURKIYE'

- **Turkey will now be officially known as Turkiye** at the United Nations after it agreed to officially recognise the name change on June 1, 2022 following a request from the Turkish government.
- Turkey had begun its campaign to rebrand itself in December 2021.



## Why has Turkey changed its name?

- One of the key reasons for the image rebrand is the association of Turkey with the Turkey bird traditionally associated with **Christmas, New Year or Thanksgiving**.
- The Cambridge English Dictionary's definition of Turkey is also reportedly one of the reasons as one of the meanings of the word Turkey has been given as "something that fails badly" or "a stupid or silly person".

## When Turkiye was first proposed?

- Turkey had began the move to rebrand itself internationally as Türkiye in December 2021 following the release of an official memorandum by **Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan**, in which he had asked the public to use Türkiye to describe the country in every language.

### List of countries that have changed their names –

- **The Netherlands**- The dutch country officially changed its name from Holland to The Netherlands in January 2020 as a marketing move. The names Holland and Netherlands were interchangeable before that.
- **Czech Republic**- Czech Republic officially **changed its name to Czechia in 2016** in a marketing move, as it is a easier name to attach to products.
- **North Macedonia** - The **Republic of Macedonia** officially became the Republic of North Macedonia in 2019 in a political move, as Macedonia was also an ancient Greek kingdom and the naming dispute had led to instability in the region.
- **Eswatini**- King Mswati III renamed Swaziland to Eswatini in April 2018 to break free from the country's colonial past. Eswatini is the **country's pre-colonial name and it means "land of the Swazis" in their language**.
- **Cabo Verde**- Cape Verde officially requested to **change its name to Cabo Verde in 2013**.
- **Sri Lanka**- Sri Lanka officially changed its name from Ceylon in 1972 when it became independent from the British rule. The country officially removed its old colonial name from government use in 2011.
- **Iran**-The Iranian government requested countries to call Persia as Iran in 1935.
- **Thailand**- **Thailand was known as Siam earlier**. The king who ruled the country in 1939 changed its name after it became a constitutional monarchy.
- **Cambodia**- Cambodia has changed its name several times, as it was earlier known as the Kingdom of Cambodia and then as Khmer Republic till 1975 and then it was referred to as Democratic Kampuchea from 1975 to 1979.

It then became state of Cambodia from 1989-1993 and finally was renamed as Kingdom of Cambodia in 1993.

- **Myanmar**- The ruling military junta changed the name of Burma into Myanmar in 1989.
- **Ireland**- The Irish Free State changed its name to Ireland in 1937 to remove all ties with the United Kingdom.
- **Zimbabwe**- Zimbabwe's colonial name was Rhodesia. The country achieved international recognition as Republic of Zimbabwe in April 1980 after its independence and was renamed as Zimbabwe.

### #TRINCOMALEE PORT OF SRI-LANKA

Sri Lanka plans to develop Trincomalee port into an industrial hub that would spark global interest.

- The proposal is a long-standing plan to monetise land that belongs to the **Sri Lanka Port Authority**, by getting foreign and local investment for a **special economic zone, an industrial park, or an energy hub**.

#### About Trincomalee Port:

- Trincomalee harbour is on the northeastern coast of Sri Lanka. It is situated on a peninsula in Trincomalee Bay—formerly called Koddiyar Bay.
- Trincomalee is the **nearest port to Chennai, India**.



#### Significance of the Port:

- The location of this port in Indian ocean has strategic significance, it has been of interest to several countries, **including India, Japan and the US**.
- Japan commissioned the 2020 ADB (**Asian Development Bank**) study on the development of Trincomalee port.
- There is also a **jetty for bulk cargo such as coal, gypsum and cement**.

#### What does the deal mean for India?

- It offers one of Asia's finest natural harbours which India will benefit from.
- This port will serve as a way to balance China's influence in the Indian Ocean Region. China already has access to **Hambantota Port**, so Trincomalee port is important for India.
- If Indian companies engage in this development, it will enhance Indian maritime trade routes in the region.
- Earlier this year, Lanka Indian Oil Company and Ceylon Petroleum Corporation signed an agreement to develop a massive oil storage tank farm built during British rule at Trincomalee. This agreement will benefit from this deal

### #ARTICLE ON HAMBANTOTA PORT

The **Hambantota Port, also known as the Magampura Mahinda Rajapaksa Port**, is a maritime inland port located in Hambantota, Sri Lanka. It is constructed by the Sri Lankan Port Authority and mostly funded by EXIM bank of China. The construction of the port has serious strategic implications for India, the details of which will be further explained in this article. The construction of the Hambantota Port began on 15 January 2008. Chinese companies, Sinohydro Corporation and China Harbour Engineering Company were involved in the first phase of the construction which cost an estimated \$360 million, excluding \$76.5 million for the bunker terminal. The Chinese government provided 85% of the funding while the Sri Lanka Ports Authority provided the remaining funding. Initially set to open in the first half of 2011, five months ahead of schedule, the first phase of the project was completed by November 2010. The port was inaugurated on 18 November 2010 by Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksha. The first vessel to drop anchor at the port was the navy ship 'Jetliner' which sailed from the Naval Base in Galle. The launch of the second phase of the development of the port commenced on the same day. There is also a move to create this port as a free port due to its commercial inactivity. The first phase of the Port of Hambantota will consist of two 600m general purpose berths, a 310m bunkering berth and a 120m small craft berth. It will also contain a bunkering facility and tank farm which will include 8 tanks for marine fuel, 3 tanks containing aviation fuel and 3 for Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG). Despite high expectations from the opening of the Hambantota Port, it started incurring losses as the years went by. At one point in 2016, the port made US\$11.81 million and incurred expenses of US\$10 million as direct and administrative costs to report an operating profit of just US\$1.81 million. As the losses continued to mount it was decided to lease the port to China for a period of 99-years. The agreement was signed in July 2017. The large Chinese loans, the inability of the Sri Lankan government to service the loans, and subsequent 99-year Chinese lease on the port have led to accusations that China was practising Debt trap diplomacy. The port in itself is considered a crucial element in China's OBOR).

### #INDIA & BANGLADESH JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE (EX SAMPRITI)

A joint military training exercise Ex SAMPRITI-X between India and Bangladesh is being conducted at Jashore Military Station in Bangladesh from 5<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**What are the Key Highlights about the Ex SAMPRITI-X?**

- SAMPRITI is an important bilateral defence cooperation endeavour conducted alternately by both countries which aims to strengthen and widen the aspects of interoperability and cooperation between both the armies.
- **Aim:** To strengthen interoperability between the two armies and to understand each other’s tactical drills and operational techniques.
- **Representation by India:** The Indian contingent of company strength is being represented by a Battalion of the DOGRA Regiment.

**What are the Other Military Exercises by India?**

Exercise Name	Participant Nations
Sampriti	India & Bangladesh
Mitra Shakti	India & Sri Lanka
Maitree Exercise	India & Thailand
Vajra Prahar	India & US
Yudh Abhyas	India & US
Nomadic Elephant	India & Mongolia
Garuda Shakti	India & Indonesia
Shakti Exercise	India & France
Dharma Guardian	India & Japan
Surya Kiran	India & Nepal
Hand in Hand Exercise	India & China
SIMBEX	India & Singapore
Shakti Exercise	India & France
CORPAT	India & Thailand

**UNGA ADOPTED INDIA LED RESOLUTION ON MULTILINGUALISM**

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted an India-led resolution on multilingualism mentioning Hindi language for the first time.
- **This resolution encourages United Nations** to continue disseminating important communications and messages in official and non-official languages, including Hindi.
- UN resolution also mentions Urdu and Bangla for the very first time. UN’s adoption of **Multilingualism and its significance for India**
- Multilingualism is considered as a core value of United Nations. Adoption of



multilingualism is significant for India, because this resolution was adopted by UN with the objective of enhancing public outreach of United Nations in Hindi language.

- It also seeks to spread greater awareness regarding the global issues among Hindi-speaking populations worldwide.

### India's contributions

- India has been coordinating with UN Department of Global Communications (DGC) since 2018 by consolidating news and multimedia content in Hindi languages and providing extra-budgetary contribution to the mainstream.
- India also launched 'Hindi@UN' project in 2018 with the aim of enhancing public outreach of United Nations in Hindi Language, and raise awareness on global issues among millions of Hindi-speaking populations worldwide.

### Latest official languages of UN

- The latest official languages of UN include- **Arabic, English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian and French.**
- English and French are the **working languages of United Nations Secretariat.**

### Significance of Multilingualism for United Nations

- **Multilingualism is significant for United Nations**, because it is factor in harmonious communication among people. It is an enabler of multilateral diplomacy. Multilingualism at this forum ensures effective participation of all in the work of organisation, greater efficiencies and transparency.

### United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

- **UNGA is one among six principal organs of the United Nations (UN).**
- It is the main policymaking and representative organ of the UN. It is responsible for UN budget. **It is the only UN organ, where all the member states have equal representation.**

### **#PARTNERS IN THE BLUE PACIFIC INITIATIVE**

- Recently, **US and its allies- Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the United Kingdom** — have launched a new initiative called 'Partners in the Blue Pacific' for "effective and efficient cooperation" with the region's small island nations.
- Areas where PBP aims to enhance cooperation include "climate crisis, connectivity and transportation, **maritime security** and protection, health, prosperity, and education".

### What is the Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP) initiative?

- The PBP is a **five-nation "informal mechanism"** to support Pacific islands and to boost diplomatic, economic ties in the region.
- It speaks of enhancing "**prosperity and security**" in the Pacific through closer cooperation. It means that through the PBP, these countries together and individually will **direct more resources** towards the Pacific Island Countries.
- The initiative members will "elevate Pacific regionalism", and **forge** stronger ties with the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).

### What are the Highlights of the India-

### What is Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)?

- The Pacific Islands Forum is the region's premier political and economic policy organization. Founded in 1971, it comprises **18 members:** Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.
- **What is being done by the US and its allies to counter China?**
- Before launching the PBP, the US and its partners started the **Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)**, a **trade-boosting play** in the region with **13 nations-**
- Australia, Brunei, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Fiji and Vietnam.
- G7 announced a plan- **Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII)** to rival **China's Belt and Road Initiative** by promising to **raise 600 billion dollars** to fund development projects in low and middle-income countries.

## PICs Relations?

- India's interaction with the PICs is still largely driven by the presence of sizable Indian Diaspora in the region.
- Nearly **40% of Fiji's population is of Indian origin and about 3000 Indians live in Papua New Guinea at present.**
- In terms of institutional engagements, India participates in the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) as one of the key dialogue partners of the Forum.
- The most important development in facilitating India's interaction with the PICs in recent years has been the formation of an action-oriented **Forum for India and Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC).**
- FIPIC, a multinational grouping, was launched in 2014.

## #HIGHLIGHTS OF 48<sup>TH</sup> G7 SUMMIT



- Recently, at the 48<sup>th</sup> G7 Summit, Indian Prime Minister invited the **G7 Nations** to tap into the huge market for **clean energy technologies** emerging in the country.
- **Germany** holds the presidency of the G7 in 2022.
- The German Presidency has invited Argentina, India, Indonesia, Senegal and South Africa to the G7 Summit.

## What is Group of Seven (G7)?

- It is an **intergovernmental organisation** that was **formed in 1975.**
- The bloc meets annually to discuss issues of common interest like **global economic governance, international security and energy policy.**
- The G7 countries are the **UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the US.**
- **All the G7 countries and India are a part of G20.**
- **The G7 does not have a formal charter or a secretariat.** The presidency, which rotates among member countries each year, is in charge of setting the agenda. **Sherpas, ministers and envoys hammer out policy initiatives before the summit.**
- As of 2022, **G7 countries make up 10% of the world's population, 31% of global GDP, and 21% of global carbon dioxide emissions,** according to the Summit website. **China and India, the two most populous countries with among the largest GDP figures in the world, are not part of the grouping.**
- In all G7 countries, annual public sector expenditure exceeded revenue in 2021. Most G7 countries also had a **high level of gross debt,** especially **Japan (263% of GDP), Italy (151%) and the US (133%).**
- The G7 countries are important players in global trade. The US and Germany in particular are major export nations. Both sold goods worth well over a trillion US dollars abroad in 2021.

## What are the Other Highlights of G7 Summit?

- **PGII:** G7 announced the collective mobilization of **600 billion dollars by 2027** under Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) to deliver “game-changing” and “transparent” infrastructure projects to

developing and middle-income countries.

- **LiFE Campaign:** Indian Prime Minister highlighted Global Initiative for LiFE (**Lifestyle for Environment**) campaign.
- The goal of this campaign is to encourage an eco-friendly lifestyle.
- **Stand on Russia-Ukraine Crisis:** Russia-Ukraine crisis has pushed the energy prices to a record high, Indian Prime Minister addressed the need for equal **energy distribution amongst the population of rich and poor nations**.
- On **Russia-Ukraine war**, Prime Minister reiterated his stand that there must be an immediate end to the hostilities and a resolution should be reached by choosing the path of dialogue and diplomacy.

## What is Clean Energy Technology?

- **About:** It refers to **any process, product or service that reduces negative environmental impacts** through significant energy efficiency improvements, **sustainable use of resources** or environmental protection activities.
- Clean energy technologies **also endure economic growth** by enhancing the supply of energy demand and **tackling environmental challenges** and their impacts due to the use of other conventional sources of energy and their impacts due to the **use of other conventional sources of energy**.

## #PAKISTAN CONTINUES TO REMAIN ON FATF GREY LIST

- Recently, Pakistan got a reprieve from the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** as FATF announced that the country could be removed from the grey list. FATF is expected to decide whether to take Pakistan off the 'grey' list at the end of its plenary session in Berlin in October.
- Pakistan has been on the FATF grey list continuously since June 2018.

## Composition in FATF

- The FATF currently comprises 37 member jurisdictions and two regional organizations (**European Commission & GCC**), representing most major financial centers in all parts of the globe.
- **India has been a member of the FATF since 2010.**
- **India** is also a member of its regional partners, the **Asia Pacific Group (APG)** and the **Eurasian Group (EAG)**.
- **Headquarters:**
- Its Secretariat is located at the **OECD** headquarters in Paris.

## Lists under FATF:

- **Grey List:** Countries that are considered safe haven for supporting **terror** funding and money laundering are put in the **FATF grey list**.
- This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.
- **Black List:** Countries known as **Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs)** are put in the **blacklist**. These countries support **terror funding and money laundering activities**.
- The FATF revises the blacklist regularly, adding or deleting entries.
- Currently, **Iran and Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)** are under High-risk Jurisdiction or black list.
- **Sessions:** The **FATF Plenary** is the **decision-making body** of the FATF.
- It meets **three times per year**.

## Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

The FATF is an **inter-governmental body** that sets international standards seeking to prevent **international financial crimes that aid terrorism**.

The FATF was **established** in July 1989 by a **G-7 Summit in Paris**, initially to examine and develop measures to combat money laundering.

**Mandate:** After the 9/11 attacks, the FATF in October 2001 expanded its mandate to incorporate efforts to **combat terrorist financing**.

In April 2012, it added efforts to **counter the financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction**.

The FATF has developed the FATF Recommendations, or FATF Standards, which ensure a **co-ordinated global response to prevent organised crime, corruption and terrorism**.

**Over 200 jurisdictions** around the world have **committed to the FATF Recommendations** through the global network of nine FATF-Style Regional Bodies (FSRBs) and FATF memberships.

## What is the grey list, and why is Pakistan on it?

- **Grey listing** means FATF has placed a country under increased monitoring to check its progress on measures against money laundering and terrorism financing.
- The “grey list” is also known as the “increased monitoring list”.

## Countries in Grey List:

- As of March 2022, there are 23 countries on the FATF’s increased monitoring list — officially referred to as “jurisdictions with strategic deficiencies” — that include **Pakistan, Syria, Turkey, Myanmar, Philippines, South Sudan, Uganda, and Yemen.**
- **Removal from the List:**
- To be pulled out of the grey list, a country has to fulfill the tasks recommended by the FATF, for instance, confiscating properties of individuals associated with terrorist groups.
- If the FATF is satisfied with the progress, it removes the country from the list.
- The FATF most recently took **Zimbabwe**, and before that **Botswana and Mauritius**, off the grey list.

## #WEST SETI HYDROPOWER PROJECT

- India will be taking over **West Seti Hydropower Project** nearly four years after China withdrew from it, ending a six-year engagement between 2012 and 2018.
- Earlier, the Indian **Prime Minister visited Lumbini**, where he celebrated **2566<sup>th</sup> Buddha Jayanti** celebrations, also Nepal invited India to invest in West Seti Hydropower Project.

## What is the West Seti Power Project?

- It is a proposed **750-megawatt Hydropower Project**, which is to be built on the **Seti river in far-western Nepal**, which has remained on the drawing board for the last six decades.
- Lately, the government has **remodeled the project as West Seti and Seti River (SR-6)**, a joint storage project, with the capacity to generate 1,200 megawatts of electricity.
- This storage or reservoir will **fill up during the monsoon season and the water will be drawn to generate power during peak hours** each day in the dry season.
- Its success is expected to **restore India’s image in Nepal and give it weightage in future** considerations for hydropower projects, when competition is bound to be tough. West Seti, therefore, **has the potential to be a defining model for Nepal India’s power relations in future.**

## How have been India-Nepal Power relations?

- Nepal is **rich in power sources with around 6,000 rivers and an estimated potential for 83,000 MW.**
- **Mahakali treaty was signed back in 1996**, to produce 6,480 MW, but India has still not been able to come out with the Detailed project Report.
- The Upper Karnali project, for which the multinational GMR signed the contract, has not made any headway for years.
- **India’s success in executing the 900-MW Arun Three project in eastern Nepal’s Sankhuwa Sabha**, and whose foundation was laid in 2018 and which is set for completion by 2023 has helped build faith in India recently.
- During the Indian PM’s visit to Nepal in 2014, he had said **India must start executing its projects timely.**

## How have been India-Nepal Diplomatic Ties?

- After a standoff between Nepal and India led to the economic blockade of 2015, **equations changed after the new PM Deuba took over Oli**, who visited India recently where he decided to establish Fraternal Ties with India.
- Nepal is an **important neighbour of India and occupies special significance** in its foreign policy because of the geographic, historical, cultural and economic linkages/ties that span centuries.

- The India-Nepal **Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950** forms the bedrock of the special relations that exist between India and Nepal.
- Rivers originating in Nepal feed the perennial river systems of India in terms of ecology and hydropower potential.
- However, the **border issue** erupted in November 2019 when Nepal had released a new political map that claims Kalapani, Limpiyadhura and Lipulekh of Uttarakhand as part of Nepal's territory. The area of Susta (West Champaran district, Bihar) can also be noted in the new map.

## #HIGHLIGHTS OF 14<sup>TH</sup> BRICS SUMMIT

### What is BRICS?

- BRICS is an **acronym** for the grouping of the world's leading emerging economies, namely **Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa**.
- 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 **formalised** 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.
- **Chairmanship:** The **chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually** among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.
- **India is the chair for 2021.**

### Initiatives of the BRICS:

- **New Development Bank:** During the **Sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (Brazil) in 2014**, the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the **New Development Bank (NDB - Shanghai, China)**.
- It has so far approved 70 infrastructure and sustainable development projects worth.

- Recently, Prime Minister of India attended the 14<sup>th</sup> BRICS summit which was virtually hosted by China.

### • **Theme of the 14<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit:**

- Foster High-quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development.

- BRICS Plus virtual conference was also held as part of the main meeting with **ministers from countries, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Argentina, Nigeria, Senegal, and Thailand.**



### What are the Key Highlights of the Summit?

- **Adopting the Beijing Declaration:** It states that **BRICS supports talks between Russia and Ukraine.**
- The grouping is willing to support the United Nations' and the **International Committee of the Red Cross's (ICRC)** efforts to deliver humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

- Countries also expressed concerns about the situation in Taliban-held Afghanistan.
- **Discussions on the Issues:** Concerns over the humanitarian situation in and around Ukraine and expressed **their support to efforts of the UN Secretary-General, UN Agencies and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to provide humanitarian assistance** in accordance with the basic principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality.
- While discussing terrorism and terror cooperation, the BRICS countries said that only the **UN Security Council has the authority for imposing sanctions.**
- On Afghanistan, BRICS countries called for **"Afghanistan authorities to achieve national reconciliation through dialogue and negotiation, and to establish a broad-based and inclusive and representative political structure"**, adding that **Afghan territory must not be used to shelter terrorists or attack any other country.**

## WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO)'S APPELLATE BODY

- There was no discussion to revive the **World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Appellate Body (AB)**, which has been **redundant since 2019**, at the recently concluded **12<sup>th</sup> ministerial conference**.

**What is WTO’s Appellate Body?**

- WTO was established to provide a platform for negotiations for liberating trade and creating rules, as well as to monitor and administer multilateral trades.
- One of the key **objectives was also to address the grievances between its members by acting as a court for global trade.**
- The Appellate Body, set up in 1995, is a **standing committee of seven members with a limited four-year term** that presides over appeals against judgments passed in trade-related disputes brought by WTO members.
- Disputes arise when a **member country observes that another member government is breaching a commitment, or a trade agreement** made at the WTO.

**What are the Disputes Involving India at the WTO?**

- The disputes where India is a **complaining party** are countervailing duty by the US on Indian steel products; measures by America concerning non-immigrant visas; renewable energy programmes of the US; and import duties imposed on steel and aluminium products by America.
- **WTO disputes where** India is a responding party include prohibition by India on import of poultry and poultry products filed by the US, and import duties on certain information and communication technology goods filed by the EU, Japan and Taiwan.

**WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO)**

- The WTO is the successor to the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)**, which was created in 1947. The **Uruguay Round (1986-94)** of the GATT led to the WTO's creation. WTO began operations on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1995.
- The Agreement Establishing the WTO, commonly known as the **“Marrakesh Agreement”**, was signed in Marrakesh, Morocco in 1994.
- WTO is an **international organization** dealing with the rules of trade between nations.
- Main difference between **GATT and WTO** was that **GATT mostly dealt with trade** in goods, the WTO and its agreements could not only cover goods but also trade in services and other intellectual properties like trade creations, designs, and inventions.
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.

**Members:**

- The WTO has **164 members** (including **European Union**) and **23 observer governments** (like Iran, Iraq, Bhutan, Libya etc).
- **India is a founder member** of the 1947 GATT and its successor, the WTO.
- **Governing Structure:**
- **Ministerial Conference:** Structure of the WTO is dominated by its highest authority, the Ministerial Conference, **composed of representatives of all WTO members**, which is required to **meet at least every two years** and which can take decisions on all matters under any of the multilateral trade agreements.
- **General Council:** It is **composed of all WTO members** and is **required to report to the Ministerial**

**#SNAKE ISLAND: RUSSIA UKRAINE CONFLICT**

- **Ukraine** has caused significant losses to the Russian military in airstrikes on Zmiinyi Island, also known as **Snake Island**, in the **Black Sea**.
- The hit on the island is believed to be the second major military success using missiles given to Ukraine by the West.

**Where is Snake Island?**

- **Features:** Zmiinyi Island, also known as **Snake or Serpent Island**, is a small



piece of rock less than 700 metres from end to end, that has been described as being **X-shaped**.

- **Location:** It is located 35 km from the coast in the **Black Sea**, to the east of the mouth of the **Danube** and roughly southwest of the **port city of Odessa**.
- The Danube is the **second longest river in Europe after the Volga**. It rises in the Black Forest mountains of western Germany and flows for some 2,850 km to its mouth on the Black Sea.
- The island is marked on the map by the tiny village of Bile that is located on it, belongs to **Ukraine**.

### Where is the Black Sea?

- Black Sea is bound by **Ukraine to the north and northwest, Russia and Georgia to the east, Turkey to the south, and Bulgaria and Romania to the west**.
- **Straits:** **Black Sea** links to the **Sea of Marmara** through the **Bosphorus** and **then to the Aegean Sea through the Dardanelles**, has traditionally been Russia's warm water gateway to Europe.
- The Black Sea is also connected to the **Sea of Azov** by the **Strait of Kerch**.

### Significance for Russia:

- Domination of the Black Sea region is a **geostrategic imperative for Moscow, both to project Russian power in the Mediterranean and to secure the economic gateway** to key markets in **southern Europe**.
- **Russia** has been making efforts to **gain complete control over the Black Sea since the Crimean crisis of 2014**.
- The domination of the Black Sea has been a major Russian objective of the ongoing war, along with the land bridge to connect Russia and Crimea.
- **Cutting Ukrainian access to the Black Sea** will reduce it to a **landlocked country** and deal a crippling blow to its trade logistics.

### What is Horn of Africa?

- The Horn of Africa is a **peninsula in Northeast Africa**.
- Located on the **easternmost part of the African mainland**, it is the fourth largest peninsula in the world.
- It lies **along the southern boundary of the Red Sea and extends hundreds of kilometres into the Guardafui Channel, Gulf of Aden, and Indian Ocean**.
- The Horn of Africa is equidistant from the equator and the Tropic of Cancer.
- The Horn contains such diverse areas as the **highlands of the Ethiopian Plateau, the Ogaden desert, and the Eritrean and Somalian coasts**.
- The Horn of Africa denotes the region containing the countries of **Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia**.

### **#CHINA'S PRESENCE IN HORN OF AFRICA**

- Recently, first **"China-Horn of Africa Peace, Governance and Development Conference"** was held. This is the first time **China aims "to play a role in the area of security"**.
- The conference held in Ethiopia witnessed the participation of foreign Ministries from the following countries of the Horn: Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda.

### What are the Recent Chinese Projects?

- In January 2022, China asserted its three objectives in Africa: controlling the pandemic, implementing a Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) outcomes, and upholding common interests while fighting hegemonic politics.
- In the 2021 forum, the entire region of the Horn participated, and **four resolutions were adopted:**
- **The Dakar Action Plan:**
- It is an important benchmark for international cooperation with Africa. become the development of relations between China and Africa, and that over the past 21 years since its inception, the Forum has strongly promoted The two sides commend the development of relations between China and Africa, and believe
- **China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035:** It was formulated to determine the directions and objectives of mid- and long-term cooperation and promote a closer community with a shared future for China and Africa.
- **Sino-African Declaration on Climate Change:** It is aimed at enhancing coordination and cooperation in the

multilateral process on climate, and jointly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of China, Africa and other developing countries.

- **Declaration of the Eighth Ministerial Conference of FOCAC:** Community with a Shared Future in the New Era" "Deepen China-Africa Partnership and Promote Sustainable Development to Build a China-Africa Under the theme and committed to the development of FOCAC and to the deepening of the China-Africa comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership, both adopted by consensus the Community with a Shared Future in the New Era" "Deepen China-Africa Partnership and Promote Sustainable Development to Build a China-Africa Under the theme **Dakar Declaration of the Eighth Ministerial Conference of FOCAC.**
- **The FOCAC promotes China's role in the infrastructural and societal development of the Horn.**

### #RIMPAC-22 EXERCISE

- The RIMPAC-22 exercise will be held in and close to the Hawaiian Islands and Southern California from 29<sup>th</sup> June to 4<sup>th</sup> August,
- 27 countries are participating in the current edition of the multi-dimensional exercise.



### What is RIMPAC-22?

- **About:** It's one of the largest biennial multilateral Naval Exercises, which is led by US.
- The RIMPAC **started in 1971 as an annual exercise** by the US, Australia, and Canada. But from 1974, maritime exercise became a biennial event.
- It is aimed at **enhancing interoperability and building trust among Navies** of friendly foreign countries.
- **Theme for 2022:** The theme of RIMPAC 2022 is 'capable, adaptive, partners.'

### India's Participation:

- India **first participated in RIMPAC in 2014** when the indigenously built Shivalik class stealth frigate INS Sahyadri took part in the exercise.
- **INS Sahyadri again represented the country in the 2018 edition** of the event.
- In between, in 2016, INS Satpura joined the maritime exercise. Before 2014, the Indian Navy's presence in the wargames was only as an observer for the 2006, 2010 and 2012 editions.
- In the current edition, Indian Navy's INS Satpura and one **P81 maritime patrol aircraft** are participating in the exercise.

### What are the Features of P81 Maritime Patrol Aircraft?

- P-81 is a long-range, **multi-mission maritime patrol aircraft** being manufactured by Boeing for the Indian Navy.
- It was designed to protect the coastline and territorial waters of India. It can conduct anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare (AsuW), intelligence, maritime patrol, and surveillance and reconnaissance missions.
- What is INS SATPURA?
- INS Satpura is an **indigenously designed** and built 6000-tonne guided missile stealth frigate equipped to seek and destroy adversaries in air, surface and underwater.
- A frontline unit of Eastern Fleet based at Visakhapatnam, INS Satpura is currently on an extended operational deployment in the 75th year of India's Independence.

### #STOCKHOLM PLUS 50

- **Stockholm+50** is being held in **Stockholm, Sweden.**
- It will **commemorate the 50 years since the 1972 United Nations**



(UN) Conference on the Human Environment (also known as the Stockholm Conference).

- The UN General Assembly will be convening this international meeting. This is being held at a time when the world is facing a triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and waste, nature and biodiversity loss, as well as other planetary issues even after 50 years of the Stockholm Declaration.
- A sustainable recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic will also remain as one of agenda points.

### What is Stockholm Conference, 1972?

- **Background:** Climate change was first discussed using emerging scientific evidence in the UN General Assembly in 1968.
- In 1967, a research study provided the actual estimates of global temperature based on CO<sub>2</sub> levels. Also, it was predicted that the doubling of CO<sub>2</sub> from the current level would result in nearly 2°C rise in global temperature.
- The idea of the Stockholm Conference was first proposed by Sweden. That's why it's also termed the "Swedish Initiative".

### About:

- The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm was held from 5<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> June, 1972.
- This was the first global convergence on the planetary environment.
- The theme was 'Only One Earth'.
- 122 countries participated in the conference.

### What is the importance of Stockholm, 1972?

- The first global conference on the environment happened when the environment was not a global concern or a subject of importance for any nation.
- Previously, the UN charter never contained the domain of environment to deal with.
- No country had an environment ministry until 1972.
- Afterwards, countries like Norway and Sweden set up their ministries for the environment.
- In 1985, India set up its ministry of environment and forest.
- After 1972, environmental issues like species extinction and mercury poisoning started making headlines and public consciousness increased.
- The Stockholm conference started the contemporary "environmental era".
- Many of today's conventions on the environmental crises trace their origin to the Stockholm Declaration.
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- 12<sup>TH</sup> MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF WTO
- India will oppose the continuation of a moratorium on Customs Duties on electronic transmission (E-Transmission) at the World Trade Organization's (WTO) 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference (MC12) starting in June 2022 as it favors developed nations only.
- The moratorium was extended at the 11<sup>th</sup> MC in Argentina in 2017 for two years. In the General Council meeting in December 2019, members agreed to maintain the current practice till the 12<sup>th</sup> MC.

### What is the E-transmission Moratorium?

- The WTO members had agreed not to impose customs duties on electronic transmissions since 1998 and the moratorium has been periodically extended at successive Ministerial Conferences (MC), which is the highest decision making body of the 164-member organisation (WTO).
- The moratorium is on digitisable products like photographic films, cinematographic films, printed matter, music, media, software, and video games.



- In 1998, ministers at the Second Ministerial Conference adopted the **Declaration on Global Electronic Commerce**, calling for the **establishment of a work programme on e-commerce**, which was adopted later that year.
- Since **most countries didn't have concrete policies on e-commerce**, which was an emerging area of trade in even developed countries in 1998, they had decided to establish a work programme on it to hold intensive talks and impose a moratorium on customs duties on electronics transmission. In 1998, the General Council of the WTO established the work programme on e-commerce to **comprehensively examine all trade-related issues pertaining to global e-commerce** by considering the economic, financial and development needs of emerging economies.

### What does India seek at the Meeting?

- At the 12<sup>th</sup> MC in June 2022, many WTO members are seeking temporary extension of the moratorium till 13<sup>th</sup> MC but **India does not want this time to continue this further**.
- India and South Africa on several occasions have asked the organization to revisit the issue and have **highlighted the adverse impact of the moratorium on developing countries**.
- India wants the **WTO to intensify the work programme on the e-commerce sector**.
- India has also stated that the Council for Trade in Goods, Council for Trade in Services, Council for **TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights)** and the Committee for Trade and Development **should take up discussions on e-commerce as per their respective mandates** originally set.

## #ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION & ITS FUNCTION

- Recently, the **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)** condemned and denounced the comments on Prophet Muhammed made by two Indians.
- Ministry of External Affairs rejected the OIC comments, adding that the views expressed by the individuals did not reflect the views of the Indian government.
- Earlier, India has **lashed out at the OIC for being "communal minded"** amid the **Karnataka hijab row**.

### What is the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation?

- **About:** The OIC claims to be the **"collective voice of the Muslim world"**.
- It was established at a 1969 summit in Rabat (Morocco) after what it describes as the 'criminal arson' of **Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem**.
- **Members:** It has 57 member Countries. India is not a Member of OIC.
- **Headquarters:** Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

### How does OIC Function?

- **Membership:** U. N. members with a **Muslim majority can join the organisation**.
- The membership is to be **ratified with full consensus** at the OIC's Council of Foreign Ministers.
- The same provisions apply for **acquiring an observer status**.
- **Decision Making:**
- All decision-making in the forum **requires a quorum defined by the presence of two-thirds**

### What is the Status of India's relationship with OIC as an organisation?

- As a country with the world's **second largest Muslim community**, India had been **invited to the founding conference at Rabat in 1969**, but was humiliatingly ejected at Pakistan's behest.
- India **stayed away** because of a multiplicity of reasons:
- It **did not want to join an organisation founded on religion**.
- There was the **risk that improving bilateral relations with individual member states would come under pressure** in a grouping, especially on issues such as Kashmir.
- At the 45<sup>th</sup> session of the Foreign Ministers' Summit in 2018, Bangladesh, the host, suggested that India, where more than 10% of the world's Muslims live, **should be given Observer status, but Pakistan opposed the proposal**.
- In 2019, India made its **maiden appearance at the OIC Foreign Ministers' meeting**, as a "guest of honour".
- This first-time invitation was **seen as a diplomatic victory for India**, especially at a time of heightened tensions with Pakistan following the Pulwama attack.

of the member states and complete consensus.

- In case a consensus cannot be reached, decisions shall be made by a **two-thirds majority of members present and voting.**
- The Council of Foreign Ministers is the **chief decision-making body and meets annually to decide on how to implement the OIC's general policies.**
- They take decisions and resolutions on matters of common interest, review their progress, consider and approve programmes and their budgets, consider specific issues bothering member states and recommend establishing a new organ or committee.
- **Finance:** The OIC is financed by **the member states proportionate to their national incomes.**
- A member's voting rights are **suspended when their arrears equal or exceed the amount of contributions due from them for the preceding two years.**
- The member is **only allowed to vote if the Council of Foreign Ministers is satisfied** that the failure is due to conditions beyond the member's control.

### #WORLD SUMMIT OF INFORMATION SOCIETY 2022

- Minister of Communications attended the opening ceremony of the **World Summit of Information Society (WSIS) 2022** in Geneva, Switzerland, where **India showcased its telecom prowess during multilateral & bilateral engagements.** The participation comes with India contesting the re-election to the **ITU (International Telecommunication Union) Council**, for the term 2023-2026. India has been a member of ITU, since 1869 and has been continuously participating, actively in the works, and activities of the Union.



### What is WSIS?

- The World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2022 represents the world's **largest annual gathering of the 'ICT for development' community.**
- The Forum provides **structured opportunities to network learn and participate in multi-stakeholder discussions and consultations on WSIS implementation.**
- The Agenda and Programme of the Forum will be built on the basis of the submissions received during the Open Consultation Process.
- Furthermore, the 2022 WSIS Forum will **provide an opportunity to serve as a platform to track the achievements of WSIS Action Lines** in collaboration with the UN Agencies involved and provide information and analyses of the implementation of WSIS Action Lines since 2005.

### What is Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)?

- **USOF** ensures that there is universal **non-discriminatory access to quality ICT services** at economically efficient prices to people in rural and remote areas.
- Currently, it is charged at the rate of 5%, while the TSPs demand it to be reduced to 3%.
- It was created under the Department of Telecommunications in **2002.**
- It is a **non-lapsable fund**, i.e., the unspent amount under a targeted financial year does not lapse and is accrued for next years' spending.
- All credits to this fund require **parliamentary approval** and it has a **statutory support** under **Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003.**



### #AUS-INDIA WATER SECURITY INITIATIVE (AIWASI)

- The **Union Cabinet has approved a MoU (Memorandum of**

Understanding) between India and Australia on Technical Cooperation for Australia –India water Security initiative (AIWASI).

### What is AIWASI?

- AIWASI is a project Under **South Asia Water Security Initiative (SAWASI)** of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australia.
- It aims to work towards the **Water Sensitive City vision** which is based on **holistic management of the integrated water cycle**.
- AIWASI will **strengthen India's water governance** and **undertake investments that provide**.
- urban water services,
- support to disadvantaged communities to access reliable, safe water and sanitation services.
- The project will undertake and deliver a **Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) demonstration project**.
- This AIWASI project is also a '**living laboratory**' with **multiple educational, social and environmental benefits** like **water literacy** of students and the community, **creation of green spaces, improved air quality from blue-green infrastructure and rejuvenation of degraded water bodies and aquifers**.

### What are the Related Initiatives?

- Creation of Jal shakti ministry
- National water mission
- Jal shakti abhiyan
- NITI Aayog's Composite Water Management Index
- Namami Gange
- Jal Jeevan Mission

## ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

### #ISRAEL FREE TRADE DEAL WITH UAE

Recently, **Israel** signed a free trade deal with the United Arab Emirates, its first with an Arab country, building on their **US-brokered normalization of relations in 2020**.



- The UAE was the first Gulf country to normalize ties with Israel and only the third Arab nation to do so after Egypt and Jordan.
- The deal shows the durability of a series of diplomatic deals in 2020 known as the Abraham Accords, which normalized relations between **Israel** and four Muslim countries—the **U.A.E., Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan**.
- Israel's relationship with the UAE has **great economic potential** due to the geographic and cultural proximity between the peoples, as well as the UAE's unique characteristics.
- The **UAE** is the second largest economy in the **Arab world (after Saudi Arabia)**, with significant weight placed on technology products and advanced solutions, where Israel holds a relative advantage.

- This agreement, jointly with the **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** signed between India and the UAE, has the potential for **extensive trilateral cooperation and business partnerships**.
- It has also further created opportunities for collaborations in different fields with the US.
- These were made possible by the Abraham Accords, which have been a significant turning point in promoting peace and prosperity for all.
- They are pursuing a constructive agenda focused on the economy, especially **infrastructure projects**.

#### What is a Free Trade Agreement?

- FTAs are arrangements between two or more countries or trading blocs that primarily agree to reduce or eliminate customs tariff and non-tariff barriers on substantial trade between them.
- FTAs normally cover trade in goods (such as agricultural or industrial products) or trade in services (such as banking, construction, trading etc.).
- FTAs can also cover other areas such as intellectual property rights (IPRs), investment, government procurement and competition policy etc.
- **Example:** India has negotiated FTA with many countries e.g. Sri Lanka and various trading blocs as well e.g. **ASEAN**.
- FTAs can be categorised as Preferential Trade Agreement, **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement, Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**

#### RELATED: NEW QUAD GROUP FORMED

- **Foreign Ministers of India, the US, Israel and the UAE** concluded a virtual meeting. The meeting is a strong **manifestation of the changes in West Asian geopolitics** and formation of **another Quad like grouping in the Middle East**.
- **India's involvement** in this new grouping **reflects a shift in its foreign policy**.
- **Factors Responsible for New Grouping:**
- **Abraham Accord:** The new grouping is possible after the resumption of formal diplomatic relations between Israel and the UAE, through the **Abraham Accord**.
- **Tackling Turkey's Regional Dominance:** The new Quad can be termed as a result of converging interests between India, the UAE, and Israel amidst Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan's assertive claims for the leadership of the Islamic world.
- **US Pivot to Asia:** The US is clearly seeking to lessen its footprint in the Middle East as part of its pivot to East Asia to tackle China's rise, which is redrawing West Asia's traditional equations.

#### ABRAHAM ACCORD

- The **Abraham Accord** between **Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain** is mediated by the USA. It is the first Arab-Israeli peace deal in 26 years.
- **Previous Agreements:** There were the **only two peace deals** between Israel and the Arab States in more than a quarter of a century.
- Egypt was the first Arab State to sign a peace deal with Israel in 1979.
- Jordan signed a peace pact in 1994.

### #OECD PROJECTED INDIA'S FY23 GDP GROWTH

- The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has reduced India's growth to 6.9% growth in Financial Year 2023 from 8.1% estimated earlier.
- Growth was also slashed to 6.2 percent in 2023.
- OECD further expects policy rate to increase to 5.3% by the end of 2022 and remain same in 2023. It is below RBI's estimate of a 7.2% rise.
- In 2021-22, India's Gross domestic product (GDP) was 8.7%, which made India the fastest-growing major economy worldwide.
- Recently, RBI increased the repo rate by 50 basis points (bps) to 4.9% to control the soaring inflation in India. It also started monetary policy tightening in May 2022.



### Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

- OECD is an intergovernmental organization, comprising of 38 member countries.
- It was founded in 1961, for stimulating world trade and economic progress. Members of this forum describe themselves as committed to democracy and market economy.
- Member countries: Majority of OECD members are high-income economies that have a very high Human Development Index (HDI). They are regarded as developed countries.
- OECD member countries comprised 62.2% of global nominal GDP and 42.8% of global GDP, as of 2017.
- The Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) was established in 1948, by Robert Marjolin of France. It was established for administering the Marshall Plan (which was rejected by the Soviet Union).
- OEEC was reformed into Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1961.
- Following this, membership was extended to non-European states.
- **Headquarter of OECD:** The OECD is headquartered in Paris, France.
- It is funded by contributions of member countries at varying rates.

### The Agreement:

- As per the agreements, the UAE and Bahrain will establish:
  - Embassies and exchange ambassadors.
  - Working together with Israel across a range of sectors, including tourism, trade, healthcare and security.
- The Abraham Accords also open the door for Muslims around the world to visit the historic sites in Israel and to peacefully pray at Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the **third holiest site in Islam**.
- In the Islamic tradition, the Kaaba in Mecca is considered the holiest site, followed by the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, and Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.
- **Reason:** Bringing Israel, the UAE and Bahrain together reflects their shared concern about Iran's rising influence in the region and development of ballistic missiles. Iran has been critical of both deals.
- **Arab-Israel Relation**
  - Since Israeli independence in 1948, it has fought several wars with Arab neighbouring countries.
  - The persecuted Jews saw Israel as their promised home while Arabs saw it as an occupation.

### #INDIA RANKED 7<sup>TH</sup> IN WORLD INVESTMENT REPORT

- According to United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), India has jumped by one position to 7<sup>th</sup> in year 2021, among the top recipients of foreign direct investment (FDI).
- UNCTAD announced in its latest World Investment Report, which was released on June 9, 2022. As per report, FDI inflows into India reduced to USD 45 billion in 2021 from USD 64 billion in 2020.
- United States with USD 367 billion, remained the top recipient of FDI.
- US is followed by China with USD 181 billion and Hong Kong USD 141 at second and third position.
- Among top 10 economies, only India witnessed a decline in its FDI inflows. Outward FDI from India has increased by 43 per cent to USD 15.5 billion in 2021.



## New International projects

- Though the **FDI flows into India has reduced to USD 45 billion**. But several new international projects were announced. Most of the projects (23 in numbers) were in renewables. Large projects include:
- Construction of steel and cement plant in India for USD 13.5B, which was constructed by ArcelorMittal–Nippon Steel (Japan).
- Construction of a **new car manufacturing facility by Suzuki Motor (Japan)**, at the cost of USD 2.4 billion.

## Global FDI flow

- **Global FDI flows have** recovered to pre-pandemic levels, as per report. It has increased by 64 per cent to USD 1.6 trillion.
- In the year 2022, business and investment climate has changed, amid the war in Ukraine.
- **The war is resulting into a triple crisis of tighter financing, high food and fuel prices.**

## UNCTAD

- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was established in 1964 to promote development-friendly integration of developing countries into the world economy.
- UNCTAD is a **permanent intergovernmental body headquartered at Geneva in Switzerland**.
- Some of the reports published by it are:
  - Trade and Development Report
  - World Investment Report
  - The Least Developed Countries Report
  - Information and Economy Report
  - Technology and Innovation Report
  - Commodities and Development Report

## Foreign Direct Investment

- FDI is an investment made by a firm or individual in one country into business interests located in another country.
- Generally, FDI takes place when an investor establishes foreign business operations or acquires foreign business assets, including establishing ownership or controlling interest in a foreign company.
- It is **different from Foreign Portfolio Investment** where the foreign entity merely buys equity shares of a company. FPI does not provide the investor with control over the business.
- **Routes through which India gets FDI:**
- **Automatic Route:** In this, the foreign entity does not require the prior approval of the government or the RBI.
- **Government route:** In this, the foreign entity has to take the approval of the government.
- The **Foreign Investment Facilitation Portal (FIFP)** facilitates the single window clearance of applications which are through approval route.
- This portal is administered by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

## #ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SELECT DECISIONS OF SC & NGT

- Recently, the **report titled** Economic Impact of Select Decisions of the Supreme Court and National Green Tribunal of India (NGT) has been submitted to the **NITI Aayog**.
- The study was conducted by **CUTS (Consumer Unity and Trust Society)** which was **commissioned and fully funded by the NITI Aayog**.

## What are the Key Highlights of the Study?

- CUTS study the economic impacts of various judicial orders **which includes** five environment-related major orders **of** the Supreme Court and the NGT.
- **The study includes:**
- The Goa Foundation vs M/s Sesa Sterlite Ltd & Ors, 2018
- The Hanuman Laxman Aroskar vs Union of India (Mopa Airport Case), 2019
- The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board vs Sterlite Industries (I) Ltd (Sterlite Copper Plant Case), 2019



- The National Green Tribunal Bar Association vs Ministry of Environment & Forests and Ors (Sand Mining Case), 2013
- The Vardhman Kaushik vs Union of India & Ors (NCR Construction Ban Case), 2016
- **Economic Impacts of Environment Related Five Judicial Orders:**
- The analysis of economic impacts due to five select environment-related court orders **estimates that 75,000 persons were adversely impacted from mid-2018 to mid-2021** due to restrictive orders related to environment.
- The Government of India **lost revenue worth Rs 8,000 crore from mid-2018 to mid-2021.**
- If this revenue had been spent as capital expenditure, the economic returns would have been to the tune of Rs 20,000 crore.
- Of the five verdicts, the study estimated **16,000 persons lost their jobs.**
- The industry lost close to **Rs 15,000 crore in revenues and workers lost around Rs 500 crore of income.**

### Case Study of Ban on Mining in Goa:

- **State Public Debt Increases:** Due to the ban on mining in Goa, **the state public debt increased** at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of **10.06% from 2007 through 2021.**
- The market loans taken by the state increased at a CAGR of **19.93%**, consequently due to mining suspension.
- **Revenue Deficit** in both Centre and State: The central & state revenues cumulatively suffered an estimated **deficit of Rs 668.39 crore in taxes paid by the mining companies** whereas the state revenues exclusively suffered an estimated deficit of Rs 1,821.32 crore.
- **Loss in Mining Companies:** Mining companies are estimated to have lost Rs 6,976.71 crore during 2018-19 and 2020-2021.
- **Loss of Employment:** The **net loss of employment (both direct and indirect)** comes to almost **15,000 jobs** in mining closure case.

### #PAYMENTS VISIONS OF 2025 BY RBI

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has come out with “**Payments Vision 2025**” with an objective to provide every user with **safe, secure, fast, convenient, accessible and affordable e-payment options.**

### What is Payment Vision 2025?

- Payments Vision 2025 has been prepared by considering the guidance from the **Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems of the RBI.**
- It builds on the initiatives of **Payments Vision 2019-21.**
- The Payments Vision 2025 document is presented across the five anchor goalposts of **Integrity, Inclusion, Innovation, Institutionalisation and Internationalisation.**
- **Theme:** E-Payments for Everyone, Everywhere, Everytime (4Es).



### Objectives:

- To elevate the payment systems towards a realm of empowering users with affordable payment options accessible anytime and anywhere with convenience.
- To enable geotagging of digital payment infrastructure and transactions and revisiting guidelines for **Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs)**, including closed system PPIs.
- **Regulation of BigTechs and FinTechs** in the payments space.

### #NITI AAYOG REPORT RELATED TO GIG ECONOMY

- NITI Aayog today launched a report titled 'India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy'.
- According to the report, **India's gig workforce is expected to expand to 2.35 crore by 2029-30.**
- The report estimates that in 2020–21, 77 lakh (7.7 million) workers were engaged in the **gig economy.**
- They constituted 2.6% of the non-agricultural workforce or 1.5% of the total workforce in India.
- NITI Aayog recommended extending social security measures for such workers and their families in partnership mode as envisaged in the **Code on Social Security.**

### What is the Gig Economy?

- A Gig economy is a **free market system in which temporary positions are common and organizations contract with independent workers** for short-term engagements.
- **Gig Worker:** A person who performs work or participates in a work arrangement and earns from such activities outside of traditional employer-employee relationship.
- According to a report by Boston Consulting Group, India's gig workforce comprises 15 million workers employed across industries such as software, shared services and professional services.
- According to a 2019 report by the India Staffing Federation, **India is the fifth largest in flexi-staffing globally, after the US, China, Brazil and Japan.**

### What is the Potential of India's Gig Sector?

- An estimated **56% of new employment in India is being generated by the gig economy** companies across both the blue-collar and white-collar workforce.
- While the gig economy is prevalent among blue-collar jobs in India, the demand for gig workers in white-collar jobs such as project-specific consultants, salespeople, web designers, content writers and software developers are also emerging.
- The gig economy **can serve up to 90 million jobs in the non-farm sectors in India** with a **potential to add 1.25% to the GDP over the "long term".**
- As India moves towards its stated goal of becoming a **USD 5 trillion economy by 2025**, the gig economy will be a major building block in bridging the income and unemployment gap.

## #WORLD BANK LOAN TO SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR ROAD SAFETY

- The **World Bank** has approved a USD 250 million loan for **India State Support Program for Road Safety** for seven States under which a single accident reporting number will be set up to better manage post-crash events.

### Key Highlights of the Program?

- **About:**
- The project will establish a national harmonised crash database system in order to analyse accidents and use that to construct better and safer roads.
- The USD 250 million variable spread loan from the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** has a maturity of 18 years including a grace period of 5.5 years.
- **It will be implemented** in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West

### What is World Bank?

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

### Major Reports:

- **Human Capital Index.**
- **World Development Report.**
- **Its Five Development Institutions:**
- International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
- International Development Association (IDA)
- International Finance Corporation (IFC).
- Multilateral Guarantee Agency (MIGA)
- International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)
- India is not a member of this

Bengal.

### What are the Initiatives for Road Safety?

- **Third High Level Global Conference on Road Safety for Achieving Global Goals 2030'**: MoRTH (Ministry of Road Transport and Highways) participated in a conference in Sweden in 2020 — the **Third High Level Global Conference on Road Safety for Achieving Global Goals 2030'** — where it was conceptualised to have zero road fatalities in India by 2030.
- **Brasilia declaration**: India signed the **Brasilia declaration** and committed to reduction in fatalities.
- The declaration was signed at the Second Global High-Level conference on Road Safety held in Brazil.
- **Motor Vehicles (MV) (Amendment) Act, 2019**: It **hiked the penalties for traffic violations**, defective vehicles, juvenile driving, etc.
- It provides for a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund, which would provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in India for certain types of accidents.

### #PARTNERSHIP FOR GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE & INVESTMENT

- Recently, at the 48<sup>th</sup> G-7 Summit, the U.S. along with G7 allies unveiled the ambitious Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII).

### What is the Background?

- The U.S. along with its allies had announced the launch of the **Build Back Better World (B3W)** in 2021 with the aim of narrowing the 40 trillion dollar infrastructure gap in the developing world.
- **Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment is therefore a relaunch of the B3W plan.**
- The **PGII is being seen as the G7's counter to China's multi-trillion dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** to build connectivity, infrastructure, and trade projects in **Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America.**

### What is Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment?

- PGII is a **"values-driven, high-impact, and transparent infrastructure partnership** to meet the enormous infrastructure needs of low and middle-income countries
- And support the **United States and its allies** economic and national security interests. Under the PGII, G7 will mobilize 600 billion dollars by 2027 to **deliver "game-changing" and "transparent" infrastructure projects** to developing and middle-income countries.
- **U.S. President** announced the country's pledge to channel **200 billion USD in grants**, public financing, and private capital over the next five years for the PGII.
- **The European Commission President** declared Europe's pledge of mobilizing **300 billion euros for the partnership** over the same period.

### What is the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI)?

- Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) is an ambitious project that focuses on **connectivity and cooperation** among multiple countries spread across the continents of **Asia, Africa, and Europe. BRI spans about 150 countries (China's Claim).**
- Initially announced in the year 2013, the project involves building networks of roadways, railways, maritime ports, power grids, oil and gas pipelines, and associated infrastructure projects.
- The project covers two parts.
- **Silk Road Economic Belt**: It is land-based and is **expected to connect China with Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe.**
- **21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road**: It is sea-based and is **expected to connect China's southern coast to the Mediterranean, Africa, South-East Asia, and Central Asia.**

## Why has India not joined BRI?

- **China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** is one of the flagship projects of BRI which is seen by India as **infringing its sovereignty**.
- CPEC can aid Pakistan's legitimacy in the Kashmir dispute.
- China is building roads and infrastructure in the **disputed territory of Gilgit-Baltistan, which is under Pakistan's control** but which **India claims as a part of Jammu and Kashmir**.
- If the CPEC project gets implemented successfully, this would **hamper India's strategic interests in the South Asian region**. It will serve Beijing's strategic ambition to encircle India.
- China's increasing footprints in the South Asian region is detrimental to India's strategic hold e.g., construction of the **Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka** provided China with a critical strategic location in the Indian Ocean.

## #MINIMUM SUPPORT PRICE

- Recently, the Centre has approved the **Minimum Support Prices (MSP)** for the **Khari season 2022-23**, stating that the rates are at least 1.5 times of the weighted average cost of production.
- The rates for 14 Kharif crops have been increased, the hikes ranging from 4% to 8%.

## What is Kharif Season?

- Crops are **sown from June to July** and **Harvesting is done in between September-October**.
- **Crops are:** Rice, maize, jowar, bajra, tur, moong, urad, cotton, jute, groundnut, soyabean etc.
- **States are:** Assam, West Bengal, coastal regions of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Maharashtra.

## What is MSP?

- **About:** The MSP is the rate **at which the government purchases crops from farmers**, and is based on a calculation of at least one-and-a-half times the cost of production incurred by the farmers.
- MSP is a "minimum price" for any crop that the government considers as remunerative for farmers and hence deserving of "support".
- **Crops under MSP:** The Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) recommends MSPs for **22 mandated crops and fair and remunerative price (FRP)** for sugarcane.
- CACP is an attached office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- The mandated crops include 14 crops of the kharif season, **6 rabi crops** and 2 other commercial crops.
- In addition, the MSPs of toria and de-husked coconut are fixed on the basis of the MSPs of rapeseed/mustard and copra, respectively.

## Three Kinds of Production Cost:

- The CACP projects three kinds of production cost for every crop, both at state and all-India average levels.
- **'A2':** Covers all paid-out costs directly incurred by the farmer in cash and kind on seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, hired labour, leased-in land, fuel, irrigation, etc.
- **'A2+FL':** Includes A2 plus an imputed value of unpaid family labour.
- **'C2':** It is a more comprehensive cost that factors in rentals and interest forgone on owned land and fixed capital assets, on top of A2+FL.

## #WHAT IS STAGFLATION?

- Central banks across the World are trying to formulate policies to ensure that **Inflation**, in some advanced

economies including the U.S., is cooled without triggering a **Recession**, since some of the experts are seeing **Stagflation** in the near future.

### What is Stagflation?

- **About:** Stagflation means a situation characterized by simultaneous increase in prices and stagnation of economic growth.
- The term Stagflation was coined by **Iain Macleod, a Conservative Party MP in the United Kingdom**, in November 1965.
- It is described as a situation in the economy where the growth rate slows down, the level of unemployment remains steadily high and yet the inflation or price level remains high at the same time.
- It is Dangerous for the economy.
- In a usually low growth situation, central banks and governments try to **stimulate the economy through higher public spending and low interest rates** to create demand.
- These measures **also tend to elevate prices and cause inflation**. So, these tools cannot be adopted **when inflation is already running high**, which makes it difficult to break out of the low growth-high inflation trap.



### Case of Stagflation:

- In the early and mid-1970s when **OPEC (The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries)**, which works like a cartel, decided to cut supply and sent oil prices soaring across the world.
- On the one hand, the rise in oil prices constrained the productive capacity of most western economies that heavily depended on oil, thus hampering economic growth. On the other hand, the oil price spike also led to inflation and commodities became more costly.
- For instance, in 1974, the oil prices went up by almost 70% and it leads to a consequent rise in inflation.

### #WHAT IS BAD BANK

- Recently, the Ministry of Finance has announced that the **National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARCL)** along with the India Debt Resolution Company (IDRCL) will take over the first set of bad loans from banks and try to resolve them.
- The health of the balance sheets of Indian banks has improved significantly over the last few years with their Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) ratio declining from a peak of 11.2% in FY18 to 6.9% in Q2FY22.
- NARCL has been set up by banks to aggregate and consolidate stressed assets for their subsequent resolution. PSBs will maintain 51% ownership in NARCL.



### What is a Bad Bank?

- A bad bank is a financial entity set up to buy **Non-Performing Assets (NPAs)**, or Bad Loans, from banks.
- The aim of setting up a bad bank is **to help ease the burden on banks by taking bad loans off their balance sheets** and get them to lend again to customers without constraints.
- After the purchase of a bad loan from a bank, the **bad bank may later try to restructure and sell the NPA to investors who might be interested in purchasing it.**
- A bad bank **makes a profit in its operations** if it manages to sell the loan at a price higher than what it paid to **acquire the loan** from a commercial bank.
- However, **generating profits is usually not the primary purpose of a bad bank** — the objective is **to ease the burden on banks, of holding a large pile of stressed assets**, and to get them to lend more actively.

## LEGAL AFFAIRS

### #THAILAND LEGALIZED MARIJUANA

Recently, Thailand has legalized cultivating and possessing Marijuana but recreational use (Such as smoking) is still banned, even though advocates say the **easing effectively decriminalises Marijuana**.

- The nation is the first to advance such a move in **South-East Asia**, a region known for its stringent drug laws.
- Thailand, with its **year-round tropical climate**, has long had a history with Cannabis which many locals commonly used in traditional medicines.

#### What is Marijuana?

- Marijuana is a **psychoactive drug from the Cannabis plant** used for medical, recreational & religious purposes.
- Cannabis can be used for **smoking, vaporization, within food, or as an extract**. It creates mental and physical effects, such as a "high" or "stoned" feeling, a general change in perception, and an increase in appetite.

#### Regulation in India:

- Cannabis was regulated by the state excise departments and legally sold till 1985.
- In 1985 The **Narcotic Drugs and Psychoactive Substances (NDPS) Act** has been enacted central level commercial cultivation of cannabis by production, possession, sale/purchase, transportation, interstate import/export or any other forms is punishable. The Act has been amended three times – in 1988, 2001, and



- most recently in 2014.
- While CBD oil manufacturing is licenced under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 can be legally used and sold. Some Indian websites do sell. But to purchase it one needs a prescription and many even facilitate it.
- Similarly, Bhang, ganja and charas are enlisted in the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 for use in Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani.

#### The 1985 Narcotic Drugs and Psychoactive Substances Act

- The NDPS Act 1985 **bans commercial cultivation of cannabis**.
- The **bar does not apply to an edible preparation called bhang**, which is allowed in some States.

#### 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs

- The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 is an international treaty to prohibit production and supply of specific (nominally narcotic) drugs and of drugs with similar effects except under licence for specific purposes, such as medical treatment and research.
- The Single Convention refers to drug addiction as **“a serious evil for the individual [that] is fraught with social and economic danger to mankind”**.

## #GOVERNOR'S POWER TO CALL FOR A FLOOR TEST

- In Maharashtra's political crisis, the Governor's decision to call for the floor test has been in the spotlight once again.

### Constitutional Provisions related to the Governor in calling for a Floor Test

- **Article 174** of the Constitution authorizes the Governor to summon, dissolve and prorogue the state legislative assembly.
- **Article 174(2)(b)** of the Constitution gives powers to the Governor to dissolve the Assembly on the aid and advice of the cabinet. However, the Governor can apply his mind when the advice comes from a Chief Minister whose majority could be in doubt.
- According to **Article 175(2)**, the Governor can summon the House and call for a floor test to prove whether the government has the numbers.
- However, the Governor can exercise the above only as per **Article 163** of the Constitution which says that the **Governor acts on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers** headed by the Chief Minister.
- **When the House is in session, it is the Speaker who can call for a floor test.** But when the Assembly is not in session, the Governor's residuary powers under Article 163 allow him to call for a floor test.

#### What is Anti Defection Law?

The anti-defection law **punishes individual Members of Parliament (MPs)/MLAs for leaving one party for another.**

Parliament added it to the Constitution as the **Tenth Schedule in 1985.** Its purpose was to bring stability to governments by **discouraging legislators from changing parties.**

**The Tenth Schedule** - popularly known as the Anti-Defection Act - was included in the Constitution via the **52<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Act, 1985.**

It sets the provisions for disqualification of elected members on the grounds of defection to another political party.

It was a **response to the toppling of multiple state governments** by party-hopping MLAs after the **general elections of 1967.**

As per the **1985 Act**, a 'defection' by one-third of the **elected members** of a political party was considered a 'merger'.

But the **91<sup>st</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003**, changed this and now at **least two-thirds of the members of a party must be in Favour of a "merger"** for it to have validity in the eyes of the law.

### Governor's Discretionary Power:

- Article 163 (1) essentially limits any discretionary power of the Governor only to cases where the Constitution expressly **specifies** that the Governor must act on his own and apply an independent mind.
- The Governor can exercise his discretionary power under Article 174, **when the chief minister has lost the support of the House** and his strength is debatable.
- Generally, when doubts are cast on the chief minister that he has lost the majority, the opposition and the Governor would rally for a **floor test.**
- On numerous occasions, the courts have also clarified that when the majority of the ruling party is in question, a floor test must be conducted at the earliest available opportunity.
- **What is the Supreme Court's View on the Governor's Power in Calling the Floor Test?**
- In 2016, the **Supreme Court in Nabam Rebia and Bamang Felix vs Deputy Speaker case (the Arunachal Pradesh Assembly case)** said that the power to summon the House is **not solely vested in the Governor** and should be exercised with aid and advice of Council of Ministers and not at his own.
- The Court highlighted the facts that the **Governor is not an elected authority and is a mere nominee of the President**, such a **nominee cannot have an overriding authority over the representatives of the people**, who constitute the House or Houses of the State Legislature.
- Allowing the Governor to overrule the State Legislature or the State executive **would not harmoniously augur with the strong democratic principles** enshrined in the provisions of the Constitution. Specially so, because the Constitution is founded on the principle of **ministerial responsibility.**
- In 2020, the Supreme Court, in **Shivraj Singh Chouhan & Ors versus Speaker, Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly & Ors**, upheld the powers of the Speaker to call for a floor test if there is a prima facie view that the government has lost its majority.

### What is a Floor Test?

- It is a **term used for the test of the majority**. If there are **doubts against the Chief Minister (CM)** of a State, he/she can be **asked to prove the majority in the House**.
- In case of a **coalition government**, the **CM may be asked to move a vote of confidence and win a majority**.
- In the **absence of a clear majority**, when there is more than one individual staking claim to form the government, the **Governor may call for a special session** to see who has the majority to form the government.
- Some legislators may be absent or choose not to vote. The numbers are then considered based only on those MLAs who were present to vote.

### #JUVENILE JUSTICES ACT, JJ ACT 2015

- Crimes against children which are mentioned in the chapter "Other Offences Against Children" of the JJ Act, 2015 that allow an imprisonment between three and seven years will be deemed "non-cognisable".
- **Adoption:** The amendment provides strength to the provision of protection and adoption of children. There are many adoption cases pending before the court and **to make proceedings of the court faster now the power is transferred to the district magistrate**.
- Amendment provides that the **district magistrate has the authority to issue such adoption orders**.

### What are the Highlights about of Juvenile Justice Act, 2015?

- Parliament introduced and passed the **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act in 2015 to replace the Juvenile Delinquency Law and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children Act) 2000**.
  - The Act **offered provisions to allow trials of juveniles in the age group of 16-18 years** as an adult who were found to be in conflict with the law, especially heinous crimes.
  - The Act also **offered provisions regarding adoption**. The Act replaced the **Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act (1956)** and Guardians of the ward Act (**1890**) with more universally accessible adoption law.
  - The Act enabled smooth functioning of **adoption procedures for orphans, surrendered, and abandoned children** while making the **Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)** the statutory body for adoption-related matters.
- Child Care Institutions (CCI):** All Child Care Institutions, whether run by the State Government or by voluntary or non-governmental organisations are to be mandatorily registered under the Act within 6 months from the date of commencement of the Act.

### #NEW NORMS FOR SENTENCE REMISSION

- The **Ministry of Home Affairs** has issued a set of guidelines to the States and the Union Territories **on the grant of special remission to prisoners** to commemorate the **75<sup>th</sup> year of Independence**.

### What are the Guidelines for Special Remission?

- **Special Remission:** As part of the **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav** celebrations, **special remission would be granted to a certain category of prisoners**. These prisoners would be released in three phases.
- **Prisoners Eligible for Special Remission:**
- **Women and transgender convicts of**

### What is Remission?

- **About:** Remission is **the complete ending of a sentence at a reduced point**. Remission is distinct from both furlough and parole in that it is a reduction in sentence as opposed to a break from prison life.
- In remission, the **nature of the sentence remains untouched, while the duration is reduced i.e.,** the rest of the sentence need not be undergone.
- The effect of the remission is that the prisoner is given a certain date on which he shall be released and in the eyes of the law he would be a free man.
- However, in case of breach of any of the conditions of remission, it will be cancelled, and the offender has to serve the entire term for which he was originally sentenced.
- The Remission system **has been defined under the Prison Act, 1894** to be a set of rules formulated for the time being in force regulating the award of marks to, and the consequent shortening of sentence of, prisoners in Jail. It was observed in the **Kehar Singh vs. Union of India (1989)** case that Courts **cannot deny to a prisoner the benefit to be considered for remission** of sentence.

ages 50 and above and male convicts of 60 and above.

- These convicts **must have completed 50% of their total sentence period** without counting the period of general remission earned.
- Physically challenged or **disabled convicts with 70% disability** and more who have completed 50% of their total sentence period,
- Terminally ill convicted prisoners who have completed two-thirds (66%) of their total sentence and
- Poor or indigent prisoners who have completed their sentence but are still in jail due to **non-payment of fine imposed on them by waiving off the fine.**
- Persons who committed an offence at a young age (18-21) and with no other criminal involvement or case against them and who have completed 50% of their sentence period would also be eligible.

### Prisoners Excluded from the Scheme:

- Persons convicted with **death sentence or where death sentence has been commuted to life imprisonment or persons convicted for an offence for which punishment of death has been specified** as one of the punishments.
- Persons convicted with **sentence of life imprisonment.**
- Convicts involved in terrorist activities or **persons convicted under - Terrorist and Disruptive (Prevention) Act, 1985, Prevention of Terrorist Act, 2002, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, Explosives Act, 1908, National Security Act, 1982, Official Secrets Act, 1923, and Anti-Hijacking Act, 2016.**
- Persons **convicted for dowry death, counterfeiting currency notes, offence of rape & human trafficking,** offences under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, Immoral Trafficking Act, 1956, Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, etc., offences against the State (Chapter-VI of IPC) and any other law which the State governments or the Union Territory administrations consider appropriate to exclude would not qualify for the special remission.

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- It was observed in the **Kehar Singh vs. Union of India (1989)** case that Courts **cannot deny to a prisoner the benefit to be considered for remission of sentence.**

### Constitutional Provisions:

- Both the **President and the Governor have been vested with sovereign power of pardon by the Constitution.**
- Under **Article 72,** the **President can grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person.**
- This can be done **for any person convicted of any offence** in all cases where:
  - The **punishment or sentence is by a court-martial,** in all cases where the punishment or
  - The sentence is for an offence **under any law relating to the Union government's executive power,** and in all cases of death sentences.
- Under **Article 161,** a Governor **can grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment,** or suspend, remit or commute the sentence.
- This can be done for anyone convicted under any law on a matter which comes under the State's executive

power.

- The scope of the pardoning power of the President under Article 72 is wider than the pardoning power of the Governor under Article 161.

## #INFORMATION & TECHNOLOGY RULES, 2021

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) issued a draft proposal for public comment on a set of proposed amendments to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.
- The draft document was **however withdrawn the same day**.
- The **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021** (IT Rules, 2021) was notified in February 2021.



### What is the Law?

- **Mandates Social Media to Exercise Greater Diligence:** Broadly, the IT Rules (2021) mandate social media platforms to exercise greater diligence with respect to the content on their platforms.
- **Establish a Grievance Officer:** They are required to establish a grievance redressal mechanism and remove unlawful and unfitting content within stipulated time frames.
- The grievance officer of the platform's redressal mechanism is responsible for receiving and resolving complaints of the users.
- **She/he is expected to acknowledge receipt of the complaint** within 24 hours and dispose of the same in an appropriate manner within 15 days.
- Its access and spread by any other means on the platform should also be disabled.
- The privacy policies of the social media platforms must ensure that users are educated about not circulating copyrighted material and anything that can be construed as defamatory, racially or ethnically objectionable, paedophilic, threatening the unity, integrity, defence, security or sovereignty of India or friendly relations with foreign states, or violative of any contemporary law.

### What were the Changes Proposed in the Withdrawn Draft?

- **Grievance Appellate Committee:** It proposed an additional level of oversight, namely, the 'Grievance Appellate Committee', functioning over and above the intermediary's grievance redressal officer.
- Broadly, in case a user is not satisfied with the resolution provided by the intermediary, she/he can appeal against the decision at the appellate rather than going directly to court.
- However, this did not take away the user's right to appeal in any other court.
- **All Orders of the Appellate must be Compiled:**
- The draft stipulated that all orders of this appellate must be complied with.
- The suggested question on 'oversight' stemmed from the fact that the appellate was to be constituted by the Central Govt empowered to appoint the Chairperson and other members.

## #LAW AGAINST DEMOLITION DRIVES

- The nation has been witnessing a frenzy of demolition drives for the past few weeks. Article 300A of the Indian Constitution categorically states "No person shall be deprived of his property save by the authority of law".
- This idea of serving 'justice', quick and cold, through bulldozers emanated in Uttar Pradesh. In the wake of protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 the Uttar Pradesh government passed orders to recover damages from those who were allegedly involved in destroying public property.
- The State government claims that these demolitions are in response to illegal encroachments.
- However, the fact that these arbitrary demolitions are being carried out against the alleged rioters of one particular community and in the immediate aftermath of the riots shows that their purpose seems to be to impose collective punishment.



### International Human Rights Law Framework:

- It is also a **well-documented right under the international human rights law framework**, which is binding on India.
- For instance, **Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** states that “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care’.
- Besides, **international law also prohibits arbitrary interference** in an individual’s right to property.
- For instance, **Article 12 of the UDHR states that “no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation”.**
- Article 12 also stipulates that “**everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks”.**

### ICCPR:

- Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) also **provides that everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others** and that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.
- Thus, **arbitrary interference** with an individual’s property is a **gross violation of the ICCPR.**

### What are the Related Supreme Court Judgements?

- **Olga Tellis & Ors. v. Bombay Municipal Corporation & Ors (1985):** In this Judgement, the **Supreme Court ruled that eviction of pavement dwellers using unreasonable force, without giving them a chance to explain, is unconstitutional.**
- It is a violation of their **right to livelihood.**
- **Maneka Gandhi vs Union of India (1978):** In this Case, the **Supreme Court, while interpreting the scope of Article 21** of the Constitution, stated that the “**due process of law**” is an **integral part of “procedure established by law”**, explaining that such procedure must be fair, just and reasonable.
- If the procedure prescribed by law is fanciful, oppressive and arbitrary in nature then it **should not be considered procedure at all** and thus not all the requirements of Article 21 would be satisfied.
- **Municipal Corpn., Ludhiana v. Inderjit Singh (2008):** In this case, the apex court **categorically stated that if the requirement of giving notice is provided under a municipal legislation, then this requirement must be necessarily complied with.**
- The Apex Court of the country has made it **unambiguously clear that no authority can directly proceed with demolitions, even of illegal constructions, without providing notice and an opportunity of being heard to the**

occupant.

**Other Important Judgements:**

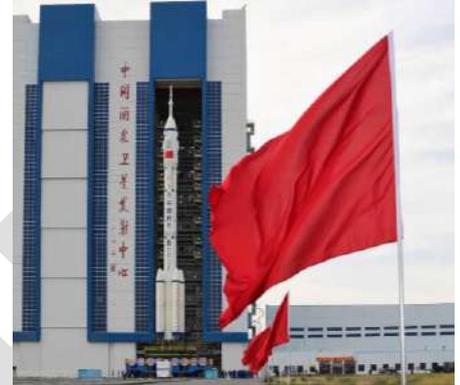
- The **Supreme Court** in cases like **Bachan Singh vs State of Punjab (1980)** , **Vishaka vs State of Rajasthan (1997)**, and recently in the famous **Puttaswamy vs Union of India (2017)** has laid down the principle that the **fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution must be read and interpreted in a manner** which would enhance their conformity with international human rights law.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### #CHINA'S 3<sup>RD</sup> CREWED MISSION TO NEW SS

China's strategically significant space station project entered the final phase as 3 **astronauts** entered the orbiting module of the **Tiangong Space Station**.

- They were launched into the designated orbit by the **Shenzhou-14 spacecraft**.
- **Shenzhou-1 to 4** space flights was unmanned spaceflight missions.
- **Shenzhou-5 to 14** spaceflights are manned spaceflight missions.



### What is the Tiangong Space Station?

- The **Tiangong space station** is a Chinese space station being built in **low Earth orbit** between **340 and 450 kilometers above the earth**.
- It is part of **China Manned Space Program** and is the country's **first long-term space station**.
- China is going to operationalize its new **Tiangong multi-module space station** for at least ten years.
- China launched an unmanned module named "Tianhe", or "Harmony of the Heavens" for its permanent space station in 2021 that it plans to complete by the end of 2022.
- **Tianhe core module** is the **first module** to launch the **Tiangong space station module**.

### What is the China Manned Space Programme?

- The **Chinese government** decided to launch a **human space programme** using a "**three-step**" method in **1992** which is known as the **China Manned Space Program**.
- **The 1<sup>st</sup> step:** To launch manned spaceships to master basic human space technologies.
- **The 2<sup>nd</sup> step:** To launch Space Labs to make technological breakthrough in R&D, and accommodation of long-term man-tended utilization on a modest scale
- **The 3<sup>rd</sup> step:** To construct China's Space Station to accommodate long-term man-tended utilization on a large scale
- It is **managed** by the **China Manned Space Agency**.
- China is **only the third country** in history to have put both astronauts into space and to build a space station, after the Russia and the US.
- The China Space Station (CSS) is also expected to be a competitor to the **International Space Stations**.
- The **International Space Station (ISS)** is a collaborative project of several countries.
- The ISS is the most complex international scientific and engineering project in history and the largest structure humans have ever put into space.

### Other Missions of China:

- **Chang'e-5 (Moon)**
- **Tianwen-1 (Mars)**

### What are India's Space Station Programmes?

- India is planning to **launch its own space station by 2030**, joining the league of US, Russia, and China to an elite space club.
- Preliminary plan for the space station is to accommodate astronauts for up to **20 days** in space, and the project will be an **extension of the Gaganyaan mission**.
- It will orbit Earth at an **altitude of around 400 km**.
- **ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization)** is working on a space docking experiment (Spandex), a technology that is crucial for making the space station functional.
- Space docking is a technology that allows transferring humans from one spacecraft to another.
- Gaganyaan is a mission by the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**.
- **Under the Gaganyaan schedule:**
- Three flights will be sent into orbit.
- There will be two unmanned flights and one human spaceflight.
- The Gaganyaan system module, called the **Orbital Module will have three Indian astronauts, including a woman**.
- It will circle Earth at a **low-earth-orbit** at an altitude of 300-400 km from earth for 5-7 days.

- **Payloads:**
- The payload will consist of:
- **Crew module** - spacecraft carrying human beings.
- **Service module** - powered by two liquid propellant engines.
- It will be equipped with emergency escape and emergency mission abort.
- **Launch: GSLV Mk III**, also called the **LVM-3 (Launch Vehicle Mark-3)**, the three-stage heavy lift launch vehicle, will be used to launch Gaganyaan as it has the necessary payload capability.

### India's Other Upcoming Projects:

- **Chandrayaan-3 Mission:** India has planned a new moon mission named **Chandrayaan-3**. It is likely to be launched in early 2021.
- **Shukrayaan Mission:** The ISRO is also planning a mission to **Venus**, tentatively called Shukrayaan.

### International Space Station (ISS)

- ISS is a habitable artificial satellite - the single largest man-made structure in low earth orbit. Its first component was launched into orbit in 1998.
- It circles the Earth in roughly 92 minutes and completes 15.5 orbits per day.
- The ISS programme is a joint project between **five** participating space agencies: **NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), JAXA (Japan), ESA (Europe), and CSA (Canada)** but its ownership and use has been established by intergovernmental treaties and agreements.
- It serves as a microgravity and space environment research laboratory in which crew members conduct experiments in biology, human biology, physics, astronomy, meteorology, and other fields.
- Continuous presence at ISS has resulted in the longest continuous human presence in the low earth orbit.
- It is expected to operate **until 2030**.

### ARTICLE ON INDIA'S PLANS ON OWN SPACE STATION

- India plans to have its own space station, and modalities for it will be worked out after the first manned mission, Gaganyaan, scheduled for August 2022. K. Sivan, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). "We want to have a separate space station. We will launch a small module for microgravity experiments... that is our ambition," he said, addressing the media. A detailed report would be submitted to the government after the Gaganyaan mission. Dr. Sivan said the proposed space station is envisaged to weigh 20 tonnes and serve as a facility where astronauts can stay for 15-20 days, and it would be placed in an orbit 400 km above earth. The time frame for launch is 5-7 years after Gaganyaan, he added. The ISRO would also join the international space community for a manned mission to moon and beyond, Dr. Sivan said.
- **Gaganyaan on track**
- Speaking on the progress of Gaganyaan, Jitendra Singh, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, said the project was on track to be realised by the 75th Independence Day or even earlier. "Cost approved by the Union Cabinet just before the Model Code of Conduct came into force was ₹10,000 crore," Dr. Singh said. A Gaganyaan National Advisory Council has been created with members from different institutions and industries to oversee and advise on the mission. Selection of 2-3 crew members for Gaganyaan would be done in six months, Dr. Singh said and added that they would then undergo training for 1-1.5 years after that. The initial phase of training would be in India and the advanced stage would be done abroad as the requisite facilities did not exist here and the project was on a short timeline, Dr. Sivan said. A GSLV Mk-III launch vehicle would be used to launch the Gaganyaan. Prior to that, two unmanned missions would be undertaken, one in December next year and the second, six months after that. The Gaganyaan mission aims to send a 2-3 person crew to space for a period of seven days. The spacecraft would be placed in a low earth orbit of 300-400 km. ISRO had already signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Air Force for selection and training of pilots for the manned mission. Talks were underway with the Navy and Coast Guard for the recovery of the crew module once it lands in water after re-entry into the earth's atmosphere, Dr. Sivan said. After Chandrayaan-2, ISRO has set its sights on two interplanetary missions. Mission Aditya-L1 is scheduled for next year to study the Sun's corona, which affects climate on earth, and another mission to study Venus in 2-3 years.

### **#INDIA SUCCESSFULLY TEST-FIRED PRITHVI-II MISSILE**

Recently, India successfully conducted the night trial of **surface-to-surface nuclear-capable short-range ballistic missile Prithvi-II**.

- Earlier, Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile **Agni-IV** was tested which can travel as far as 4,000 km.

### What are the Key Highlights about Prithvi-II Missile?

- Prithvi-II is an indigenously developed Surface-to-Surface Missile Short-Range Ballistic Missile (SRBM), which has a **range of around 250 km-350km and can carry a one tonne payload.**
- Prithvi II class is a **single-stage liquid-fueled missile** that has warhead mounting capability of 500 kg-1000kg.
- The missile is a proven system and is capable of striking targets with a very **high degree of precision.**
- The state-of-the-art missile uses an **advanced inertial guidance system** with manoeuvring trajectory to hit its target.
- It was initially **developed for the Indian Air Force** as its primary user and was **later inducted into the Indian Army as well.**
- While the missile was inducted into India's Strategic Forces Command for the first time in 2003, it was the first missile developed under the IGMDP.
- Developed by: Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) of India under its Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP).



### What are the Prithvi Missiles?

- The Prithvi missile comprises various tactical **Surface-to-Surfaces Short-Range Ballistic Missiles (SRBM).**
- Its development began in 1983, and it was India's first indigenous ballistic missile.
- It was first test-fired in 1988, from **Sriharikota, SHAR Centre.** It has a range of from 150 to 300 km.
- The **naval variant of Prithvi I and Prithvi III class missiles** have the code-name **Dhanush.**
- The propulsion technology was likely based on the **Soviet SA-2 surface-to-air missile.**

#### **Soviet SA-2 Surface-to-Air Missile:**

- Developed in the mid-1950s, the **Soviet SA-2 surface-to-air missile** was the first effective Soviet Union surface-to-air missile.
- Developed as a missile for the battlefield, it could carry a nuclear warhead in its role as a tactical nuclear weapon.

### What is Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP)?

- IGMDP was an Indian Ministry of Defence programme to **research and develop a comprehensive range of missiles.**
- The project started in 1982–1983 under the leadership of **Dr APJ Abdul Kalam.**
- This Programme made **Dr APJ Abdul Kalam the missile man of India.** The integrated guided missile programme was complete in, 2008.

#### **Five Missiles Developed under the IGMDP:**

- **PRITHVI** (Short range surface-to-surface ballistic missile)
- **AGNI** (Medium to intercontinental surface-to-surface missile)
- **TRISHUL** (Short range low-level surface-to-air missile)
- **AKASH** (Surface-to-air missile having a range of up to 25 Km and multi-target handling system)
- **NAG** (Third generation “fire & forget”, “top attack” anti-tank missile)

### **#WHAT IS WEB 5.0?**

- Former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey recently announced his vision for a new decentralized web platform that is being called **Web 5.0** and is being built with an aim to return “ownership of data and identity” to individuals. It's being developed by former Twitter CEO Bitcoin business unit, **The Block Head.**
- The World Wide Web (WWW) is the primary tool used by billions of people to interact with other people and also read and write information.
- Web is the largest transformable-information construct that its idea was introduced by Tim Berners-Lee in 1989 at first. Much progress has been made about the web and related technologies in the past two decades.



### What are the Key Highlights of Various Web Versions?

- **Web 1.0** is the **first generation** of the global digital communications network. It is often referred to as the “read-

only” Internet made of **static web pages that only allow for passive engagement.**

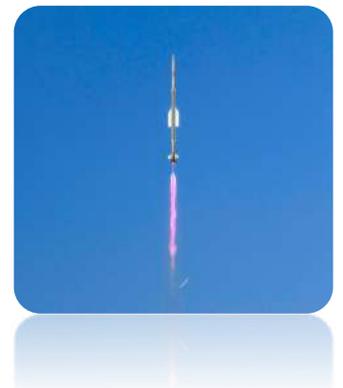
- **Web 2.0**, The next stage in the evolution of the web was the “**read and write**” Internet. Users could now **communicate with servers and other users leading to the creation of the social web.** This is the World Wide Web that **we use today.**
- **Web 3.0**, is an **evolving term** that is used to refer to the **next generation of the Internet** – a “**read-write-execute**” web – with **decentralization as its bedrock.**
- It speaks about a digital world, built by **leveraging blockchain technology**, where people are able to interact with each other **without the need for an intermediary.**
- It will be **driven by Artificial Intelligence and machine learning** where **machines can interpret information like humans.**

### Web 5.0:

- It's in an early nascent stage as being developed by Dorsey’s Bitcoin business unit, **The Block Head (TBH).** Web 5.0 is aimed at “**building an extra decentralized web that puts one in control of ones’s data and identity**”.
- Web 5.0 is **Web 2.0 plus Web 3.0** that will **allow users to ‘own their identity on the Internet and ‘control their data’.**

### #VL-SRSAM SUCCESSFULLY TEST-FLIGHTED

- Recently, Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM) was successfully flight-tested by Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) **and the Indian Navy** from an Indian Naval Ship at **Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur** off the coast of Odisha.
- **VL-SRSAM** has been designed and developed jointly by three facilities of the **Defence Research and Development Organisation** for **deployment of Indian Naval warships.**
- The missile has the **capability of neutralizing various aerial threats** at close ranges including sea-skimming targets.
- **Sea skimming** is a technique many anti-ship missiles and some fighter or strike aircraft use **to avoid radar and infrared detection.**



### Naval Warfare

- **It is a combat in and on the sea, the ocean,** or any other battlespace involving a major body of water such as a large lake or wide river.
- **Defence Mechanism:**
- **Chaffs:**
- It is a **countermeasure technology** used worldwide to protect naval ships from enemy’s radar and **Radio Frequency (RF) missile seekers.**
- **Missiles to counter Anti-Ship missiles:**
- These systems have to have a swift detection mechanism and quick response to warships.

### #CHINA’S TIANGONG SPACE STATION

- **Recently, China’s strategically significant space station project** entered the final phase as **three astronauts** entered the orbiting module of the Tiangong Space Station.
- They were launched into the designated orbit by the **Shenzhou-14 spacecraft.**
- **Shenzhou-1 to 4** space flights were unmanned spaceflight missions.
- **Shenzhou-5 to 14** spaceflights are manned spaceflight missions.
- A **space station** is a **spacecraft capable** of supporting **crew members**, designed to remain in space for an extended period of time and for other **spacecraft to dock.**



## What is the Tiangong Space Station?

- The **Tiangong space station** is a Chinese space station being built in **low Earth orbit** between **340 and 450 kilometers** above the earth.
- It is part of **China Manned Space Program** and is the country's **first long-term space station**.
- China is going to operationalize its new **Tiangong multi-module space station** for at least ten years.
- **China launched an unmanned module** named "**Tianhe**", or "**Harmony of the Heavens**" for its permanent space station in 2021 that it plans to complete by the end of 2022.
- **Tianhe core module** is the **first module** to launch the **Tiangong space station module**.

## What are India's Space Station Programmes?

- **About:** India is planning to **launch its own space station by 2030**, joining the league of US, Russia, and China to an elite space club.
- The Indian space station will be much smaller (**mass of 20 tonnes**) than the International Space Station and will be used for carrying out microgravity experiments (not for space tourism).
- Preliminary plan for the space station is to accommodate astronauts for up to **20 days** in space, and the project will be an **extension of the Gaganyaan mission**.
- It will orbit Earth at an **altitude of around 400 km**.
- **ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization)** is working on a space docking experiment (Spandex), a technology that is crucial for making the space station functional.
- Space docking is a technology that allows transferring humans from one spacecraft to another.

### #WORLD'S 1<sup>ST</sup> LIQUID MIRROR TELESCOPE

- Recently, **Devasthal Observatory campus** owned by **Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES)**, Nainital in Uttarakhand has set-up the **International Liquid-Mirror Telescope (ILMT)**.

## What are the Key Highlights about ILMT?

- It has become the **world's first Liquid-Mirror Telescope (LMT)** to be commissioned for astronomy and also one of its kind to be operational anywhere in the world.
- Asteroids, supernovae, space debris and all other celestial objects will be observed using ILMT from an altitude of **2,450 metres in the Himalayas**.
- Previously built telescopes either tracked **satellites** or were deployed for military purposes.
- ILMT will be the **third telescope facility to come up at Devasthal**.
- Devasthal is **one of the world's original sites** for obtaining astronomical observations.
- **Devasthal Optical Telescope (DOT)** and **Devasthal Fast Optical Telescope (DFOT)** are the other two telescope facilities at Devasthal.
- In **October 2022**, **full-scale scientific operations** of ILMT will be started.
- It will be working along with **India's largest operating Devasthal Optical Telescope (DOT)**.
- The countries involved in ILMT's development are **India, Belgium, Canada, Poland and Uzbekistan**.

### #NEW INDIA SPACE LTD (NSIL)

- Recently, the government has **approved the transfer of 10 in-orbit communication satellites from the Government of India to NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL)**.
- The **entire GSAT series, except GSAT-7 and 7A, will go to NSIL**, and thereby to companies intending to develop downstream satcom businesses. The new CMS (communication satellite) series is already operated by NSIL.

- Increasing the authorised share capital of NSIL from Rs 1,000 crore to Rs 7,500 crore was also approved.

### Four Pillars of Space Reforms



- **Allowing the private sector** freedom of innovation.
- **Government playing the enabler's role.**
- **Formation of Indian Space Association (ISpA):** It aspires to be a collective voice of Indian Sapce Industry.
- **Preparing youngsters** for the future.
- Recently, **ATL Space Challenge 2021** has been launched. This is to ensure that students of classes 6 to 12 are given an open platform where they can innovate and enable themselves to solve digital age space technology problems.
- **Treating the space sector as a resource** for the progress of the common man.
- Development projects are being monitored by satellite imaging, space technology is being used in settlement of **Fasal Bima Yojna claims** and disaster management planning, and the **NAVIC system** is helping fishermen.

### What is NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL)?

- **About:** NSIL is a **Central Public Sector Enterprise** of the Government of India.
- It was established in 2019 under the administrative control of the **Department of Space.**
- NSIL is the commercial arm of **(ISRO)** with the primary responsibility of enabling Indian industries to take up high technology space related activities.
- Headquarters: Bengaluru

## MISCELLANEOUS

### #US REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Recently, 2021 Report on **International Religious Freedom (IRF)** was released by the US Department of State.

- The document is distinct from the IRF report released by the **US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)**.
- USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan federal government entity while the IRF is part of the US State Department. The former's report holds a statutory obligation.



### What is the US Office of International Religious Freedom?

- **History:** In 1998, the then-US President **Bill Clinton** signed the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA, 1998) into law.
- The Act led to the creation of the Office of International Religious Freedom headed by an Ambassador-at-Large within the State Department of the US government, and the establishment of a **US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)**.

### What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **World:** **Vietnam and Nigeria have been cited as countries** where religious expression was being curtailed.
- Another set of examples of countries with religious freedom restrictions cited include US ally Saudi Arabia, as well as China, Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- China continues its genocide and repression of predominantly **Muslim Uyghurs** and other religious minority groups.
- In Pakistan, many persons have been accused of **blasphemy**, or sentenced to death by courts in 2021.

### What is the State of Freedom of Religion in India?

- Freedom of religion in India is a **fundamental right guaranteed by Article 25-28** of the Constitution of India.
- **Article 25** (Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion).
- **Article 26** (Freedom to manage religious affairs).
- **Article 27** (Freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any religion).
- **Article 28** (Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions).
- Further, **Article 29 and 30 of the Constitution** deal with the protection of interests of minorities.

### #RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT BY USCIRF

- Recently, the **US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)** has recommended for the **second year in the row to put India on a list (Countries of Particular Concern or CPCs)** for the worst violations of religious freedoms in 2021.
- Earlier, the US State Department released a **strong and critical report on human rights in India in 2021**.

### What is USCIRF?

- USCIRF is an **independent, bipartisan US federal government commission**, dedicated to defending the universal right to freedom of religion or belief abroad.
- It is an **advisory body to the US Congress**.
- It is **headquartered in Washington DC**.
- Established by the US government in 1998 after the inaction of the International Religious Freedom Act, **recommendations of USCIRF are non-binding on the state department**.
- Traditionally, India does not recognize the view of USCIRF.

### What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- The Report's primary focus is on **two groups of countries**:
- **Country of Particular Concern (CPC):** It is a designation by the **US Secretary of State of a nation engaged in severe violations** of religious freedom under IRFA (**International Religious Freedom Act of 1998**).

- **Special Watch List:** A “Special Watch List” country is one that is deemed not to meet all the CPC criteria but engages in or tolerates severe violations of **religious freedom**.

## What are the Latest Recommendations of USCIRF?

- **For the CPC List:**
- Other than India, countries recommended for the CPC designation are **Afghanistan, Nigeria, Syria, and Vietnam**.
- Countries recommended for redesignating include Myanmar, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan as CPCs.
- **For A Special Watch List:**
- Algeria, Cuba, and Nicaragua were **placed in 2021**.
- **Others include** Azerbaijan, CAR, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Turkey, and Uzbekistan.

## #WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY OBSERVED ON 5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE

World Environment Day is celebrated on **5<sup>th</sup> June every year** to encourage awareness and environmental protection.

- On the Occasion, India launched ‘Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE) Movement’.
- What are the Key Highlights about World Environment Day?

### About:

- The **United Nations Assembly** established World Environment Day in 1972, which was the **first day of the Stockholm Conference on the human environment**.
- The celebration of world environment day every year is **done according to a specific theme** and slogan which addresses the major environmental concern of the time.
- It is **hosted by a different country each year**.
- For example, **India hosted the 45<sup>th</sup> celebration of World Environment Day** under the theme ‘**Beat Plastic Pollution**’.
- **World Environment Day** celebration last year also kicked off the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) which is a global mission to revive billions of hectares, from forests to farmlands, from the top of mountains to the depth of the seas.



### Theme for 2022: Only One Earth:

- It mirrors the theme of the **first World Environment Day in 1973**.

### What is LiFE Movement?

- The idea of LiFE was introduced by India during the **26<sup>th</sup> United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26)** in Glasgow in 2021.
- The **idea promotes an environmentally conscious lifestyle** that focuses on ‘mindful and deliberate utilisation’ instead of ‘mindless and wasteful consumption’.
- With the launch of the Mission, the prevalent “**use-and-dispose**” **economy-governed by mindless** and destructive consumption-will be replaced by a **circular economy**, defined by conscious and deliberate consumption.
- **Objective:** The Movement **aims to utilise the power of collective action** and nudge individuals across the world to undertake simple climate-friendly actions in their daily lives.
- It also **seeks to leverage the strength of social networks to influence social norms** surrounding climate.
- The Mission plans to create and nurture a global network of individuals, namely ‘**Pro-Planet People**’ (P3).

### What are the Other Related Initiatives?

- **National Afforestation Programme (NAP):** It focuses on the **rehabilitation of degraded forests** and afforestation around forests.
- **National Mission for a Green India (GIM):** It is under the **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)** and aimed at improving and increasing tree cover as a climate adaptation and mitigation strategy.
- **National Biodiversity Action Plan:** It has been **launched to implement strategies for the reduction in rates of degradation**, fragmentation and loss of natural habitats.

**#RELATED: INDIA JOINED FIRST MOVERS COALITION**

- India recently joined a global public-private partnership initiative called the **First Movers Coalition**.
- The initiative was launched by **President of the USA Joe Biden and the World Economic Forum (WEF) at COP26**.
- It was joined by 50 new corporate members with a collective market capitalization of USD 8.5 trillion.
- The **First Movers Coalition** aims to decarbonize the most carbon-intensive sectors such as the heavy industry and long-distance transport sectors, which are responsible for 30% of global emissions.
- It is expected that emissions from these sectors will increase to around 50% by mid-century unless urgent actions are taken on clean technology innovation. The targeted sectors of the **First Movers Coalition include aluminum, aviation, chemicals, concrete, shipping, steel, and trucking**.

**Which countries joined the coalition and what are their commitments?**

- Apart from **India, Denmark, Italy, Japan, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, and the UK** joined the First Movers Coalition as government partners. India, Japan, and Sweden also joined the steering board of the First Movers Coalition.
- The member countries pledged to create early markets **for clean technologies through appropriate policies and engagements with the private sector**.
- They also committed to purchasing a certain percentage from suppliers using zero-carbon solutions, even at a premium cost. If purchases from public and private sectors increase in this decade it will ensure affordability of clean technologies and also ensures long-term transformation.

**World Economic Forum**

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) is a **Swiss nonprofit foundation established in 1971**, based in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Recognized by the Swiss authorities as the international institution for public-private cooperation.
- **Mission:** Committed to **improving the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic, and other leaders of society** to shape global, regional, and industry agendas.
- **Founder and Executive Chairman:** Klaus Schwab.
- **Some major reports published by WEF are:**
- **Energy Transition Index.**
- **Global Competitiveness Report.**
- **Global IT Report**
- WEF along with INSEAD and Cornell University publishes this report.
- **Global Gender Gap Report.**
- **Global Risk Report.**
- **Global Travel and Tourism Report.**

**#4<sup>TH</sup> STATE FOOD SAFETY INDEX: FSSAI**

On the occasion of **World Food Safety Day**, the Union Health Minister released **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)**'s 4<sup>th</sup> **State Food Safety Index (SFSI)** to measure the performance of States across five parameters of food safety.

### What is State Food Safety Index (SFSI)?

- **About:** SFSI was started from **2018-19** with the aim of creating a competitive and positive change in the food safety ecosystem in the country.
- The index is developed by **FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India)** to measure the performance of states on five significant parameters of Food Safety.
- The parameters include **Human Resources and Institutional Data, Compliance, Food Testing – Infrastructure and Surveillance, Training & Capacity Building and Consumer Empowerment.**
- The Index is a **dynamic quantitative and qualitative benchmarking model** that provides an objective framework for evaluating food safety across all States/UTs.
- The **first State Food Safety Index for the year 2018-19** was announced on the first-ever **World Food Safety Day** on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2019.



### How did the States Perform?

- **Overall:** **Tamil Nadu** topped the State Food Safety Index followed by **Gujarat and Maharashtra.**
- **Among Smaller States:** Goa stood first, followed by Manipur and Sikkim.
- **Among UTs:** Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi and Chandigarh secured first, second and third ranks.

### What is Food Safety Day?

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** and the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)** jointly facilitate the observance of World Food Safety Day, in collaboration with Member States and other relevant organizations.
- It was **first celebrated in 2019**, to strengthen the commitment to scale up food safety made by the Addis Ababa Conference and the Geneva Forum in 2019 under the umbrella of **“The Future of Food Safety”**.
- The theme for 2022 was Safer Food, Better Health.

## #WORLD FOOD SAFETY DAY: 7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE

Every Year, 7<sup>th</sup> June is observed as **World Food Safety Day**.

### What are the Key Highlights of World Food Safety Day?

- **About:** The **World Health Organization (WHO)** and the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)** jointly facilitate the observance of World Food Safety Day, in collaboration with Member States and other relevant organizations.
- It was **first celebrated in 2019**, to strengthen the commitment to scale up food safety made by the Addis Ababa Conference and the Geneva Forum in 2019 under the umbrella of **“The Future of Food Safety”**.
- **2022 Theme:** Safer Food, Better Health



### What are the Related Initiatives?

- **Global:** The **Codex Alimentarius**, or "Food Code" is a collection of standards, guidelines and codes of practice adopted by the **Codex Alimentarius Commission.**
- The **Codex Alimentarius Commission** is a **joint intergovernmental body** of the Food and Agriculture Organization and World Health Organization.
- Currently, it has **189 members and India is a member.**

### State Food Safety Index:

- FSSAI has developed the **State Food Safety Index (SFSI)** to measure the performance of States on five parameters of food safety.

- The **parameters include** Human Resources and Institutional Arrangements, Compliance, Food Testing-Infrastructure and Surveillance, Training and Capacity Building and Consumer Empowerment.
- **Eat Right India Movement:** It is an initiative of the Government of India and Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to transform the country's food system in order to ensure safe, healthy and sustainable food for all Indians.
- Eat Right India is aligned to the **National Health Policy 2017** with its focus on preventive and promotive healthcare and flagship programmes like **Ayushman Bharat, POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anemia Mukt Bharat and Swachh Bharat Mission.**
- **Eat Right Awards:** FSSAI has instituted the 'Eat Right Awards' to recognize the contribution of food companies and individuals to empower citizens to choose safe and healthy food options, which would help improve their health and well-being.
- **Eat Right Mela:** Organised by FSSAI, it is an **outreach activity for citizens to nudge them towards eating right.** It is organised to make citizens aware of the health and nutrition benefits of different types of food.

## Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

- The Food and Agriculture Organization is an **agency of the United Nations** that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
- FAO is also a source of knowledge and information and helps developing countries and countries in transition modernize and improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices, ensuring good nutrition and food security for all.
- **Formation: 16 October 1945, in Quebec City, Canada**
- **Headquarters: Rome, Italy**
- Every year, **World Food Day (Theme for 2018- Zero Hunger) is celebrated on October 16** to commemorate the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of United Nations in the year 1945.
- The **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG-2) also aims to "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture" by 2030.**

### REALTED: WORLD FOOD DAY

- **World Food Day** is celebrated every year on **October 16<sup>th</sup>** to commemorate the date of the founding of the **United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organisation** in 1945.
- **FAO is a specialised agency of the UN** that leads international efforts to **defeat hunger.**
- In **2021**, the UN Secretary-General also convened the very **first Food Systems Summit** to discuss ways to transform the production and consumption of food.
- **About:** It is observed annually to **address the problem of global hunger.**
- The day is also observed by organisations like **World Food Programme (Was awarded nobel peace prize 2020)** and **International Fund for Agricultural Development.**
- It emphasises on the **Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) i.e. Zero Hunger.**

## FAO's Contribution in India:

- It has closely watched India's fight against **malnutrition** in the past decades but its scope had many constraints.
- Due to reasons such as pregnancy at a young age, lack of education and information, inadequate access to drinking water, lack of cleanliness, etc. **India is lagging behind in achieving the expected results of "malnutrition free India" by 2022**, envisaged under the National Nutrition Mission (**POSHAN Abhiyaan**).
- FAO supported India's proposal to declare 2023 as the **International Year of Millets.**
- The move will **encourage intake of nutritious food, increase their availability further and benefit small and medium farmers** who mostly grow coarse grains on their land where there is a problem of water and the land is not so fertile.
- **FAO's Hunger Index, India's Opposition and Farmers Protest:**
- India has slipped to 101<sup>st</sup> position in the **Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021.**
- However, the Indian government has questioned the poll-based assessment and methodology used by the FAO.

### #2022 ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDEX (EPI)

- **Environmental Performance Index (EPI) was released recently, ranking 180 countries** on 40 performance indicators in 11 issue categories of climate change performance, ecosystem vitality and environmental health.
- In the index, **India has been ranked at 180<sup>th</sup> position, bottom of the 2022 Index.**
- India has **scored lowest among 180 countries.** The index measured the environmental performance of all the 180 countries.



## India's score

- In the Index, India scored 18.9 and has been ranked last. In last decade, performance of India has decreased by 0.6 scores.
- Three primary categories in which countries were given scores are ecosystem vitality, **environmental health and climate change performance. India scored 19.3 on the ecosystem vitality of the index.**
- It scored 12.5 on health, which means poor air quality, poor drinking water and poor sanitation. India's waste management with respect to solid wastes, ocean plastics, and recycling is also poor.

## Rank of other countries

- Neighbouring countries of India have scored slightly better. **Pakistan has been ranked at 176<sup>th</sup> position while Bangladesh at 177.**

## How was the report prepared?

- **According to the report**, the countries are scored and ranked in the 2022 Index based on environmental performance. It **made use of available data from recent year.**
- The scores are calculated for observing how countries have improved or changed as compared to previous years. Analysis of the environmental performance of these countries for the Index is being done by the researchers at **Columbia University and Earth Institute of Yale.**

### Top 5 Countries

- In the Index 2022, Denmark has been ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with EPI score of 77.90. It is followed by United Kingdom with score of 77.70. Finland is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>, followed by Malta and Sweden.

## **RELATED: WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY: 5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

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- World Environment Day celebration last year also kicked off the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) which is a global mission to revive billions of hectares, from forests to farmlands, from the top of mountains to the depth of the seas.
- **Theme for 2022: OnlyOneEarth:**
- It mirrors the theme of the **first World Environment Day in 1973.**

## **#QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2023**

Recently, QS World University Ranking 2023 was released.

## What is QS World University Rankings?

- **Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)** a leading global career and education network for ambitious professionals looking to further their personal and professional development.
- QS Develops and successfully implements methods of comparative data collection and analysis used to highlight institutions' strengths.
- The 'QS World University Rankings' is an **annual publication** of university rankings which comprises the global overall and subject rankings.
- **Six parameters** and their weightage for the evaluation:
  - Academic Reputation (40%)
  - Employer Reputation (10%)



- Faculty/Student Ratio (20%)
- Citations per faculty (20%)
- International Faculty Ratio (5%)
- International Student Ratio (5%)

## What are Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Global Rankings:**
- **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)** of the US is the top university for the **11<sup>th</sup> consecutive year**.
- The second place went to the **University of Cambridge**, followed by **Stanford University**

## Indian Institutions:

- The Indian Institute Science (IISc) was ranked highest followed by IIT Bombay and IIT Delhi. The total number of Indian institutes among the top 1,000 globally has **risen to 27 from 22**.
- **IISc Bengaluru** is the **world's top research university**, achieving a perfect score of 100/100 for this metric.
- Furthermore, IISc Bengaluru is the fastest rising South Asian university among the QS World University Rankings top-200.
- Overall, Indian education institutes, **41 of which made it to the rankings, have performed poorly across many key metrics**.
- For instance, 30 out of 41 ranked universities have suffered declines in the Faculty Student Ratio (FSR) indicator, with only four recording improvements.
- The report shows that India's presence in the top 500 category is also IIT-driven like other IITs around the world.
- Apart from IISc, eight IITs (Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Roorkee, Guwahati, Indore) are ranked among the top 500 globally.
- No other Indian university, public or private, has found a place in the top 500 category globally, since the launch of the Institute of Eminence scheme.

## What are the Related Indian Initiatives?

- **Institutions of Eminence (IoE) Scheme:**
- It is a government's scheme to provide the **regulatory architecture for setting up or upgrading of 20 Institutions** (10 from public sector and 10 from the private sector) as world-class teaching and research institutions called 'Institutions of Eminence'.
- **National Education Policy, 2020:**
- It aims to introduce several changes in the Indian education system - from the school to college level and **make India a global knowledge superpower**.
- **Impacting Research Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT):**
- It is a first-of-its-kind Pan-IIT and IISc joint initiative to develop a new education policy and a roadmap for research to solve major engineering and technology challenges that India must address and champion to enable, empower and embolden the nation for inclusive growth and self-reliance.
- **Uchhatar Avishkar Yojana (UAY):**
- It was announced with a view to promote innovation of a higher order that directly impacts the needs of the Industry and thereby improves the competitive edge of Indian manufacturing.

## #CLIMATE FINANCE FOR MSME

- According to a report by the **Centre for Study of Science, Technology & Policy (CSTEP)** published in 2018, **Micro, Small and Medium Scale (MSME)** generates around 110 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. India's MSMEs must pare emissions and **climate finance** maybe the nudge they need.
- The MSME sector contributes 30% to India's gross domestic product and **employs around 120 million people**.



## Why are MSMEs needed to curb emissions?

- **India's Commitment to CoP 26:** India committed to attain **net zero carbon emissions by 2070** during the **26<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (CoP26)** to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** at Glasgow, Scotland in 2021.

- India would supply **50% of its energy needs through renewable sources by 2030.**
- The CSTEP report highlighted that **the MSME sector used 13% of the total coal/lignite, 7% of petroleum products and 8% of the natural gas** supplied in India in 2015-16.
- The MSME sector needs a push to **adopt new technologies** that quickly minimise its carbon footprints and **make it less vulnerable to climate change and risk.**
- The sector can achieve this transformation with **the aid of climate finance.**
- **Traditional funds alone cannot help** the sector to become **decarbonised.**

### What is Climate Finance?

- **Climate finance is money paid by developed countries** (which are responsible for most of the historic emissions) **to developing countries to help them pay for emissions reduction measures and adaptation.**
- Climate finance will open doors and enable **the transfer of technology and expertise from developed to developing nations**, which require these resources and capacity to combat climate change at the rate that the world currently demands.

### #2022 GLOBAL TRENDS REPORT BY UNHRC

- Recently, the 2022 annual Global Trends Report was published by **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).** **June 20 is designated as World Refugee Day** by the **United Nations.** The **theme for World Refugee Day 2022 is whoever, whatever, whenever. Everyone has got a right to seek safety.**



### What is Global Trends Report?

- It presents key statistical trends and the latest numbers of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced and stateless persons worldwide as well as numbers of people who have returned to their countries or areas of origin.
- The report is **published once a year** and reflects on the previous year.
- The **figures are based on data reported by governments, non-governmental organizations and UNHCR.**

### What are the Highlights of the Report?

- **Global Overview:** The **largest displacements** in the context of disasters in 2021 occurred in **China (6.0 million), the Philippines (5.7 million), and India (4.9 million).**
- **India:** **Nearly five million people in India were internally displaced** due to climate change and disasters in 2021.

### What is UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)?

The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was **created in 1950**, during the aftermath of the Second World War, to **help millions of Europeans who had fled or lost their homes.**

**In 1954, UNHCR won the Nobel Peace Prize** for its ground breaking work in Europe. But it was not long before we faced our next major emergency.

During the 1960s, the decolonization of Africa produced the first of that continent's numerous refugee crises. It helped uprooted people in Asia and Latin America over the following two decades.

**In 1981, it received a second Nobel Peace Prize** for what had become worldwide assistance to refugees.

**The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol:**

They are the key legal documents that form the basis of its work. With 149 State parties to either or both, they define the term 'refugee' and outlines the rights of refugees, as well as the legal obligations of States to protect them.

The **core principle is non-refoulement**, which asserts that a **refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom.** This is now considered a rule of customary international law.

UNHCR serves as the 'guardian' of the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol. According to the legislation, States are expected to cooperate with us in ensuring that the rights of refugees are respected and protected.

## #WEST NILE VIRUS

- Recently, a 47-year-old man in Thrissur, Kerala died due to **West Nile Virus (WNV)**. This has caused the Kerala health department to be on alert.
- Malappuram's 6-year-old boy also died of the same infection, earlier in 2019.
- WNV was **first reported in the state of Alappuzha in 2006**. Later in 2011, it was also reported in Ernakulam, Kerala.



### What is WNV?

- **About:** The West Nile Virus is a **flavivirus related to the viruses** that are also responsible for causing **St. Louis encephalitis, Japanese encephalitis, and yellow fever**.
- It is a **mosquito-borne, single-stranded RNA virus**.

### Global Prevalence:

- **Along all major bird migratory routes**, WNV outbreak sites are found.
- **Africa, Europe, the Middle East, North America, and West Asia** are the regions where the virus is commonly found.
- Usually, WNV infections **peak during the period when mosquito vectors are most active and the ambient temperature is high** enough for virus multiplication for most of the countries.
- **Origin:** WNV was first isolated in a woman in the **West Nile district of Uganda in 1937**.
- It was **identified in birds** in the Nile delta region in **1953**. Before 1997, WNV was not considered pathogenic for birds.
- **Human infections** attributable to WNV have been **reported in many countries for over 50 years**.

## #CULLING OF VERMIN

- The Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021 was introduced in the Parliament to amend the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** in December 2021.
- The basic motive of the amendment is to align the act according to changes in circumstances and trying to emulate a proper solution as per culling of vermin are concerned.

### What are Vermin?

- **Vermins** are basically a **problematic animal** or a **nuisance creature** because they threaten **humans, crops, livestock, or property**.
- Species which have been classified as the **Vermin** placed in **schedule V** of the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.
- Example: common crows, fruit bats, rats and mice, which may be hunted freely.
- The act does not define the word **Vermin**. The **62<sup>nd</sup> section** of the **Wildlife Protection Act** grants the central government the power to declare any wild animal as vermin.



### What is the Wildlife protection Act, 1972?

- **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972** provides a **legal framework** for the protection of various species of wild animals and plants, the management of their habitats, and the regulation and control of trade in wild animals, plants and products made from them.
- The Act also lists **schedules of plants and animals** that are afforded various degrees of protection and monitoring by the government. The **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972** currently has **six schedules** that assign **varying degrees of protection** to animals and plants.
- The Listed breeds and types of animals in Schedule I and part II of Schedule II get supreme protection. For

example, Himalayan Brown Bear, Indian Elephant, Golden Geckos, Andaman Teal, Hornbills, Black Coral, Amara Brucei and many more. Offences under these are prescribed the highest penalties.

- The Listed breeds and types of animals in **Schedule III and Schedule IV** are also secured, but the penalties are comparatively much lower. For example, barking Deer, Falcons, Kingfisher, Tortoise etc.
- **Schedule V** includes the animals which can be hunted. For example, Common Crow, Mice, Rats, Fruit Bats etc. The plants, trees and crops mentioned in **Schedule VI** are banned from Cultivation and Planting. For example, Kuth, Red Vanda, Pitcher Plant etc.

## #CHEETAH RELOCATION IN INDIA

- India will be soon releasing cheetahs from South Africa and Namibia into the wild at **Kuno Palpur** in Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh. It will initiate India's ambitious plan of transcontinental relocation of cheetahs.
- The **country's last spotted cheetah died in Chhattisgarh in 1947** and it was declared extinct in the country in 1952.
- The **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)** some years back prepared a cheetah reintroduction project.

### What are the Key Points Related to Cheetahs?

- **About:** The cheetah is one of the oldest of the big cat species, with ancestors that can be traced back more than five million years to the Miocene era.
- The cheetah is also the world's fastest land mammal that lives in Africa and Asia.

### What are the Indian Conservation Efforts?

- The Wildlife Institute of India had prepared a Rs 260-crore cheetah **Re-introduction project** seven years ago.
- This could be the world's first inter-continental cheetah translocation project.
- The Ministry of Environment had in the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** released an **"Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in India"**.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has decided to bring 50 African Cheetah from Namibia within the next 5 years.

### What are the Key Points of Kuno National Park?

- Kuno National Park of Madhya Pradesh is **one the most unique destinations** for all wildlife lovers and enthusiasts.
- It has a **healthy population of chital, sambar, nilgai, wild pig, chinkara and cattle.**
- Currently, the leopard and striped hyena are the only larger carnivores within the National Park, with the lone tiger having returned to Ranthambore earlier this year.

#### African Cheetah:

- **Scientific Name:** Acinonyx Jubatus
- **Characteristics:** They have slightly brownish and golden skin which is thicker than the Asiatic Cheetahs.

#### Asiatic Cheetah:

- **Scientific Name:** Acinonyx Jubatus Venaticus
- **Characteristic:** Slightly smaller than the African Cheetahs.
- They have pale yellowish fawn coloured skin with more fur under their body, specifically on the belly. Inserting image...

## #38<sup>TH</sup> INDIA-INDONESIA CORPAT

- The **38<sup>th</sup> India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT)** is being conducted in the **Andaman Sea and Straits of Malacca.**

### What are the Key Highlights?

- **About:** The two Navies have been carrying out **CORPAT along their International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) since 2002.**
- It highlights the mutual trust, synergy and cooperation between the two friendly Navies.
- India and Indonesia have enjoyed especially close relations, covering a wide spectrum of activities and interactions which have strengthened over the years.
- **Aim:** It is aimed at keeping the **Indian Ocean Region** safe and

### Other Exercises between India and Indonesia:

- **Samudra Shakti:** A bilateral maritime exercise.
- **Garuda Shakti:** A joint military exercise.

### #BIODIVERSITY PARK AT SIRUMALAI HILLS

- The Government of Tamil Nadu is developing a biodiversity park in the **Sirumalai Hill Range** in Dindigul district.
- The main aim is to create awareness for the sustainable management of the ecologically sensitive area.

### What are the Key Points of this Park?

- This park is a **nature reserve that harbours the natural heritage of the area and has conservation, education and cultural values** and will enhance the quality of the environment.
- Various biodiversity components such as mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, etc, have been showcased here.
- Different types of **flowering plants have been planted all around the park and necessary irrigation facilities have been provided.**
- Assemblage of nectar plants to attract butterflies and host plants has also been planned.



### What is a Biodiversity Park?

- **About:** The Biodiversity Park is a **unique landscape of wilderness** where ecological assemblages of native plant and animal species in the form of biological communities are recreated in a region.
- The underlying principle of the park is **to recreate self-sustaining ecosystems with native flora and fauna** which are characteristics of the area.

### What are the Key Points Related to Sirumalai Hill Range?

- **About:** The Sirumalai Hills are **spread over 60,000 acres** in Dindigul District of Tamil Nadu.
- They are considered to be the **spur of the Eastern Ghats**. They are located about 25 kilometres from Dindigul town, at an altitude of 400 to 1,650 metres from mean sea level.
- The hills act as a repository of several rare and endemic plants.

### #RAJASTHAN'S MENAR BIRD VILLAGE TO BECOME NEW WETLAND

- Recognised as the **"bird village"** following community-driven conservation efforts, **Menar in Udaipur district is set to be notified as Rajasthan's new wetland.** This will pave the way for getting the Ramsar site status for this rural heartland of the Mewar region.

### What is a Wetland and its Significance?



- **Wetlands:** Wetlands are ecosystems saturated with water, either seasonally or permanently. They include mangroves, marshes, rivers, lakes, deltas, floodplains and flooded forests, rice-fields, coral reefs, marine areas no deeper than 6 meters at low tide, as well as human-made wetlands such as waste-water treatment ponds and reservoirs.

### What are the Key Highlights of Menar Wetland?

- The two lakes in the Menar village – the Brahma and Dhandh play host to a large number of **migratory birds** every year.
- The Forest Department has initiated the process for notification of Menar as a wetland, which will recognise its role in the storage of sediment and nutrients and **enable the local authorities to maintain the respective lakes.**
- With the status of wetlands, the two lakes will be strengthened for **increasing the vegetation of aquatic plants and protecting biodiversity.**

### Other Ramsar Sites:

- At present, Rajasthan has **two wetlands recognised as Ramsar sites** –
- **Keoladeo Ghana** in Bharatpur district
- **Sambhar Salt Lake** in Jaipur district.

### What is the Significance of Ramsar Listing?

- It is like an **International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification.** They can take it off the list as well if it doesn't meet their standards continuously. It's a **feather in the cap** but there is a cost to it and that cost can be paid only if there is brand value.
- **Ramsar tag makes it incumbent upon authority to strengthen the protection regime** there and creates defenses against encroachment.
- A number of species of birds prefer to **avoid the Himalaya and instead choose the route passing through Afghanistan and Pakistan** to enter the Indian sub-continent via Gujarat and Rajasthan. Thus, **Gujarat becomes the first landing point of many international migratory species** of ducks, waders, plovers, terns, gulls etc and shorebirds as well as birds of prey.
- Wetlands in India **act as foraging and resting grounds for the migratory birds** during winter.
- According to **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)**, CAF (Central Asian Flyway), which includes 30 countries, covers at least 279 populations of 182 migratory waterbird species, including 29 globally threatened and near-threatened species, which breed, migrate and winter within the region.

### **#WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY: 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

- On the eve of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD – 15<sup>th</sup> June), the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry has released a report on the state of Elderly People in India.
- The report was **based on a survey conducted by a Non-Governmental Organisation** across 22 cities.

### What is Elder Abuse?

- Elder abuse can be **defined as “a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person”.**
- It is a global social issue which affects the Health and Human Rights of millions of older persons around the world, and an issue which deserves the attention of the international community.



## What are the Key Highlights about the WEAAD?

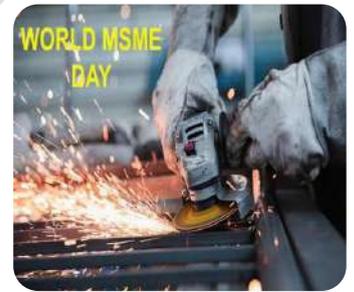
- **About:** WEAAD occurs every year on 15<sup>th</sup> June.
- It was officially recognized by the **United Nations General Assembly** in its **resolution 66/127** in 2011.
- **Theme for 2022:**
- Digital Equity for All Ages.

## What are the Related Initiatives?

- **Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP)**
- **Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY)**
- **Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY)**
- **Vayoshreshtha Samman**
- **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (MWPC) Act, 2007**
- **Elder Line, the first Pan-India toll-free helpline number (14567)**
- **SAGE (Seniorcare Aging Growth Engine) initiative**

### #WORLD MSME DAY OBSERVED ON JUNE 27<sup>TH</sup>

- **World MSME Day** is observed every year on June 27 all over the world to highlight the significance of MSMEs and how they play a crucial role in being the backbone of the country's economy.
- Micro-Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises are the organizations that do not usually employ more than 250 employees, however, are responsible for creating more than two-thirds of all jobs globally.
- **World MSME Day 2022 recognizes the potential of MSMEs** and their role in strengthening the economies globally. World MSME Day 2022 also aims to raise public awareness regarding the contribution of MSMEs to global economic growth and sustainable development.



## World MSME Day 2022 theme

- The theme of World MSME Day 2022 announced by the United Nations is- **Resilience and Rebuilding: MSMEs for Sustainable Development.**

## World MSME Day 2022

- World MSME Day was first marked by the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** in its **74th Plenary** on April 6, 2017. The decision of observing World MSME Day came after the International Council for Small Business (ICSB) 2016 **World Conference declaration** on the urgent need to recognize the MSMEs role in the global development.
- Later, June 27 was designated by the United Nations as the Micro-Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Day.

### #PERFORMANCE GRADING INDEX (PGI)

- Recently, the Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSE&L), Ministry of Education (MoE) released the **Centre's first-ever Performance Grading Index for Districts (PGI-D)** for 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- In June, 2021, the Union Education Minister has approved the release of Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2019-20 for States and Union Territories.

## What is the Index All About?

- PGI-D assesses the performance of the school education system at the **district level**



by creating an index for comprehensive analysis.

- The PGI-D assessed district-level performance in school education based on the data collected from various sources, including **Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE +), National Achievement Survey (NAS), 2017** and data provided by respective districts.
- **Assessment Grades:** The PGI-D grades the districts into 10 grades. **The highest achievable grade is 'Daksh'**, which is for districts scoring more than 90% of the total points in that category or overall.
- It is followed by **'Utkarsh'** (81% to 90%), **'Ati Uttam'** (71% to 80%), **'Uttam'** (61% to 70%), **'Prachesta-1'** (51% to 60%) and **'Prachesta-2'** (41% to 50%).
- The lowest grade in PGI-D is **'Akanshi-3'** which is for scores upto 10% of the total points.
- None of the districts figured in the highest 'Daksh' grade in both these years.

### What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Best Performers:**
- Three districts from Rajasthan performed the best in the assessment.
- According to the report, the three districts — **Sikar, Jhunjhunu, and Jaipur** figured in **'Utkarsh'** grade in 2019-20 in contrast to a year before when no district featured in that category.
- Rajasthan has the highest 24 districts in this grade, followed by Punjab (14), Gujarat (13), and Kerala (13).
- **Lowest Performers:**
- The districts with the lowest scores (1 out of 50) in this category were:
- South Salmara-Mankachar (Assam), Alirajpur (Madhya Pradesh), North Garo Hills and South Garo Hills in Meghalaya, and Khowai (Tripura) in 2019-20.
- The 12 states/ UTs which **don't have a single district in the Ati-Uttam and Uttam** are:
- Bihar, Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttarakhand.

### What are the Key Points of Loktak Lake?

- Loktak Lake is the **largest freshwater lake in Northeast India** and is famous for the phumdis floating over it.
- Phumdis are the **heterogeneous mass of vegetation**, soil and organic matter at various stages of decomposition.
- This ancient lake plays an important role in the economy of Manipur. It serves as a source of water for irrigation, drinking water supply, hydropower generation.
- Loktak lake was initially designated as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention in 1990.
- Later it was listed under the **Montreux Record** in 1993.
- Human activity has led to severe pressure on the lake ecosystem.

### What are the Other Government Initiatives in this Direction?

- **National Education Policy, 2020:** It aims at making **"India a global knowledge superpower"** by introducing several changes from the school to college level in the Indian education system.
- **Samagra Shiksha:** It is an integrated **scheme for school education extending from pre-school to class XII** to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education.
- **Mid Day Meal Scheme:** It provides that every child within the **age group of six to fourteen years studying in classes I to VIII** who enrolls and attends the school, shall be provided hot cooked nutritional meals, free of charge every day except on school holidays.
- **Eklavya Model School and Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship Scheme (RGNF):** these aims to **encourage the students belonging to Scheduled Tribes (ST) community** to pursue higher education.

### **#KEIBUL LAMJAO NATIONAL PARK (KLNP)**

- Manipur's Keibul Lamjao National Park (KLNP) residents oppose the site's relocation.
- People argue that the proposed site has **no connection with efforts to save the endangered deer**. On the other hand, the people in surrounding villages have been doing everything possible to protect the deer.

## What are the Important Facts about Keibul Lamjao National Park?

- It is the only **floating National Park in the world**, the Keibul Lamjao National Park located on the **Loktak Lake** is the last natural habitat of the 'Sangai' (Rucervus eldii eldii), the dancing deer of Manipur.
- This is the **last natural habitat of the brow-antlered deer (Sangai)** the dancing deer of Manipur.
- In the 1950s, it was believed that the brow-antlered deer (Rucervus eldii eldii) had become extinct in the country. However, it was subsequently re-discovered in Manipur.
- Hog Deer, Otter, a host of water fowls and **migratory birds** are found here.

## #PD1 THERAPY FOR CANCER

- In a medical trial in the USA, 12 patients were **completely cured of rectal cancer without requiring any surgery or chemotherapy**.
- The trial used a **monoclonal antibody dostarlimab** every three weeks for six months for the treatment of a particular kind of **stage two or three rectal cancer**.
- The study was done by doctors from the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre in New York.

## What are Findings of the trial?

- The trial showed that **immunotherapy** alone – without any chemotherapy, radiotherapy, or surgery that have been staples of cancer treatment – could completely cure the patients with a particular kind of rectal cancer called 'mismatch repair deficient' cancer. '**Mismatch repair deficient**' cancer is **most common** among colorectal, gastrointestinal, and endometrial cancers. Patients suffering from this condition **lack the genes to correct typos in the DNA** that occur naturally while cells make copies.
- Immunotherapy is a treatment that uses a person's own immune system to fight cancer. Immunotherapy can boost or change how the immune system works so it can find and attack cancer cells.
- Immunotherapy **belongs to a category called PD1 blockades** that are now recommended for the treatment of such cancers rather than chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

## What is PD1 Therapy?

- **PD1** is a **type of protein** that regulates certain functions of the immune system, including by **suppressing T cell activity**, and PD1 blockade therapy looks to release the **T cells** from this suppression.
- T-cells are the White Blood cells (WBCs). They are critical for developing immunity towards common pathogens or antigens.
- Earlier, this therapy was used post-surgery, but the study has shown that **surgery may not be required**.
- Although the therapy is usually used for cancers that have **metastasised** (spread to locations other than where the cancer formed), it is now **recommended for all mismatch repair deficient cancers** as they result in quicker improvement and lesser toxicity as compared to traditional chemo and radiotherapy.
- Eliminating other treatments can **improve a patient's quality of life** by preserving fertility, sexual health, and bladder and bowel functions.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS IN SHORT

### 18TH PERMANENT INDUS COMMISSION

- The **Permanent Indus Commission** conference, which is held yearly **under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) 1960**, began with India and Pakistan.
- The Indus discussions have survived the tie-freeze since **both countries regard it as a requirement of the IWT**.
- The **most recent summit, held in New Delhi on March 23-24, 2021**, focused on the exchange of hydrological and flood data.
- In **March, India and Pakistan** reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the Indus Waters Treaty in its entirety, and expressed the hope that the Permanent Indus Commission's next meeting will be conducted in India soon.



### CHINA'S BUILDING 2ND BRIDGE ON PANGONG TSO

- Recently, the Ministry of External Affairs has confirmed that China is building a **second bridge on the Pangong Tso lake**.
- The site of the bridge is around 20 km east of Finger 8 on the lake's north bank – where the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** passes.
- However, the **actual distance by road is more than 35 km between the bridge site and Finger 8**.
- The construction site is just east of Khurnak Fort, where China has major frontier defence bases. China calls it Rutong Country.
- It has a frontier defence company at the Khurnak Fort, and further east, a **water squadron deployed at Banmozhang**.
- The **bridges are at one of the narrowest points on the lake, close to the LAC**.
- These constructions will connect both sides of the lake, which would significantly cut down time for the **People's Liberation Army (PLA)** to move troops and armored vehicles.
- **Pangong Tso is a 135-km long landlocked lake** located at an altitude of over 14,000 feet i.e., 4350 m above sea level.
- **India and China have around one-third and two-thirds of Pangong Tso Lake** respectively.



### PROJECT VARTAK OF BORDER ROADS ORGANISATION (BRO)

- **Border Road Organisation (BRO)** has completed the excavation work of the **Nechiphu Tunnel, in Arunachal Pradesh** on 20th May 2022.
- **This tunnel is being built by BRO under Project Vartak**. The tunnel's foundation stone was laid by Rajnath Singh on 12th October 2020.
- The Nechiphu Tunnel is located at an altitude of 5,700 feet. This is a 500-metre-long tunnel that is **"D-shaped"** and will have a **single tube double lane on the Balipara-Chariduar-Tawang (BCT) Road, West Kameng District, and Arunachal Pradesh**.



### WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY: MAY 31ST

- World No Tobacco Day is observed every year on May 31 to raise awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco usage.
- **World No Tobacco Day 2022** highlights the negative impacts of tobacco and its industry on human health and the environment.
- It also alerts people about the steps that can be taken to **keep themselves and their surroundings safe from tobacco**.
- **World No Tobacco Day 2022** promoted by the **World Health Organisation** also promotes the governments around the world to put policies into action that can help reduce smoking as well as the use of other tobacco products. As per **the global health body, tobacco kills** more than 8 million people around the world every year.
- The **Indian Government also came up with various initiatives** to control tobacco consumption in the country. On **World No Tobacco Day 2022**, learn more about the COTPA Act and how it affected tobacco consumption in the country.
- **World No Tobacco Day** was created by the member states of the **World Health Organisation in 1987**. The same year, a resolution was also passed by the World Health Assembly for the creation of a World No Smoking Day.



### WHO AWARDED JHARKHAND FOR TOBACCO CONTROL

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has chosen Jharkhand for the **World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) Award-2022**, in recognition of the state's efforts to reduce tobacco usage.
- According to the **Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS)-1 report**, the **NTCP** was begun in Jharkhand in 2012, when the state's tobacco prevalence rate was 51.1 percent, with 48 percent of smokers.
- According to the **GATS-2 study**, **tobacco users in the state decreased to 38.9%**, with 35.4 percent of those using smokeless tobacco.
- **Why Jharkhand was granted the WHO Award for Tobacco Control by the World Health Organization?**
- The effective programmes and reach-out helplines for individuals who wished to stop tobacco are the reason for the decline of tobacco in Jharkhand.



### HAR GHAR DASTAK CAMPAIGN 2.0

- **On 1st June 2022**, the **Har Ghar Dastak 2.0 campaign** began across the nation to ensure that all eligible beneficiaries receive complete Covid-19 vaccination.
- This campaign gives special focus on the vaccination of those **aged between 12 to 14 and precaution doses for those above the age of 60**.
- In November 2021, the **first Har Ghar Dastak campaign** was conducted. So far, across the nation, 193.6 crore doses of vaccines have been administered.
- The aim of this campaign is to vaccinate all the **eligible population groups across the country for the first, second, and precaution doses** via door-to-door campaigns.

### KARNATAKA GOVT. LAUNCHED AAYU APP

- **Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai** has launched a **new health and wellness app AAYU** to address and help heal chronic diseases and lifestyle disorders through yoga.
- **Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana (S-VYASA)** collaborated to develop the App with RESET TECH, an AI-driven integrated health-tech platform that aims to deal with chronic diseases and lifestyle conditions through yoga and meditation.
- **About the App:** The App would provide users with personalized wellness solutions and offer doctor consultations based on an individual's personal history and monitor its progress enabling them to accelerate healing and recovery.
- The **app would provide users with custom wellness solutions** and doctor consultations based on their specific histories, as well as track their progress, allowing them to heal and recover faster.

### WORLD MILK DAY OBSERVED ON JUNE 1ST

- The **Food and Agriculture Organization** of the United Nations adopted June 1 as **World Milk Day**. The day is marked to recognise milk as global food and to celebrate the dairy industry.
- The day is intended to provide an opportunity to bring attention to activities that are **connected with the dairy sector**. The day has been observed on June 1 each year since 2001.
- **The theme of World Milk Day 2022:**
- The **theme of World Milk Day 2022** is to bring attention to the climate change crisis and how the dairy sector can reduce its impact on the planet.
- The **aim is to achieve 'Dairy Net Zero' by reducing greenhouse gas emissions** over the next 30 years and improving waste management in order to make the dairy sector sustainable.

### STOCKHOLM+50 BEING HELD IN SWEDEN

- **Stockholm+50 is being held in Stockholm, Sweden**. It will commemorate the 50 years since the 1972 **United Nations (UN) Conference on the Human Environment** (also known as the Stockholm Conference).
- The **UN General Assembly** will be convening this international meeting. This is being held at a time when the world is facing a triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and waste, nature and biodiversity loss, as well as other planetary issues even after 50 years of the Stockholm Declaration.
- **What is the Stockholm Conference, 1972?**
- **Background:** Climate change was first discussed using emerging scientific evidence in the **UN General Assembly in 1968**.
- In 1967, a research study provided the **actual estimates of global temperature based on CO2 levels**. Also, it was predicted that the doubling of CO2 from the current level would result in nearly 2°C rise in global temperature.
- The idea of the **Stockholm Conference was first proposed by Sweden**. That's why it's also termed the "Swedish Initiative".



### NATIONAL EDUCATION MINISTERS' MEETING IN GUJARAT

- Gujarat will host the **two-day National Education Ministers' Conference**.

- The meeting will be attended by **Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan**, as well as other union ministers and state and union territory education ministers.
- It will concentrate on the implementation of the **National Education Policy 2020**, school skilling, and digital projects such as the National Digital Education Architecture and the **National Educational Technology Forum, among others**.
- The state education ministers will also pay visits to Vidya Samiksha Kendra, BISAG (Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geoinformatics), **NFSU (National Forensic Science University)**, and the International Automobile Centre of Excellence.
- Union Minister Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Electronics and Information Technology, Dharmendra Pradhan was accompanied by Rajiv Chandrasekhar, Annapurna Devi, and Minister of State for Education Dr. Subhash Sarkar, and **senior officials from the Ministry of Education**.

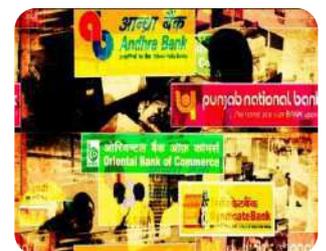
### WHAT IS ASTRA MARK-1 MISSILE?

- Recently, the **Ministry of Defence** has signed a contract with the Hyderabad-based **public-sector Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL) for supply of the Astra Mark-1**.
- Contract was signed at a cost of Rs 2,971 crore, for **deployment on fighter jets of the Indian Air Force and Indian Navy**.
- **What are the Astra Missile and its Variants?**
- The **Astra project** was officially launched in the early 2000s with defined parameters and proposed future variants.
- Around 2017, the development phase of the **Mk-1 version was complete**. Several successful tests have been conducted since 2017 from Sukhoi-30 MKIs.
- **What are the Key Highlights of the Astra Mk-1 Missile?**
- About: The Astra Mk-1 is a Beyond Visual Range (BVR), **Air-to-Air Missile (AAM)**. BVM missiles are capable of engaging beyond the range of 20 nautical miles or 37 kilometers. AAMs are fired from an **airborne asset to destroy an airborne target**.



### PRIVATISATION OF PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS

- The **government** is in the process of taking '**advanced action**' to expedite the privatisation of public sector banks.
- **What is Privatisation?**
- The **transfer of ownership, property or business** from the government to the private sector is termed privatisation. The government ceases to be the owner of the entity or business.
- **India went for privatisation in the historic reforms budget of 1991**, also known as 'New Economic Policy or LPG policy'.
- **What is the Background?**
- The **government decided to nationalise the 14 largest private banks in 1969**. The idea was to align the banking sector with the socialistic approach of the then government. **State Bank of India (SBI)** had been nationalised in 1955 itself, and the insurance sector in 1956.
- Various governments in the last 20 years were for and **against privatisation of Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) banks**. In 2015, the government had suggested privatisation but the then **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor** did not favour the idea.



- The Centre had announced the privatisation of **two public sector banks in the Budget for 2021-22** but is yet to amend the relevant banking laws to enable the sale of its majority stake in them.

### ISRAEL SIGNED FREE TRADE DEAL WITH UAE

- Recently, **Israel signed a free trade deal with the United Arab Emirates**, its first with an Arab country, building on their US-brokered normalization of relations in 2020.
- The **UAE was the first Gulf country** to normalize ties with Israel and only the **third Arab nation to do so after Egypt and Jordan**.
- **Significance of the Free Trade Deal:**
- **Builds on the US-brokered Normalisation of Relations:** The deal shows the durability of a series of diplomatic deals in 2020 known as the Abraham Accords, which normalized relations between Israel and four Muslim countries—the **U.A.E., Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan**.
- **Great Economic Potential:** Israel's relationship with the UAE has great economic potential due to the geographic and cultural proximity between the peoples, **as well as the UAE's unique characteristics**.



### 'YOGA FOR HUMANITY' AS THEME OF INT. YOGA DAY

- **'Yoga for Humanity'** has been chosen as the theme of the **eighth International Day of Yoga** to be organised in India and across the globe on June 21.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the theme in his **"Maan Ki Baat" broadcast**.
- The main event of **International Day of Yoga** this year will be held in **Mysuru, Karnataka**.
- **Focusing on the theme of 'yoga for humanity'**, special programmes have been designed this year for specially-abled people, the transgender population, women and children.

### WORLD BICYCLE DAY OBSERVED ON 3RD JUNE

- **Anurag Thakur, Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports has launched a nationwide 'Fit India Freedom Rider Cycle Rally'** on 3rd June 2022 from Major Dhyan Chand Stadium, Delhi.
- This day is observed on 3rd June across the world. This day is observed to spread awareness regarding the benefits of using a bicycle. **This day highlights the longevity, uniqueness, and versatility of the bicycle.**
- This day has been observed since 2018 after a resolution was passed by the United Nations, during the UNGA's 72nd Regular Session.
- **What is the aim of this day?**
- This day highlights the benefits of using the bicycle which is an affordable, simple, environmentally fit, clean, and sustainable means of transportation.



### INDIA'S 1ST LIQUID MIRROR TELESCOPE

- India's first liquid mirror telescope first came to light in early 2022. **This telescope will observe asteroid, space debris, supernovae, and all other celestial objects from an altitude of 2,450 metres in Uttarakhand.**



- It is the world's first liquid-mirror telescope that was commissioned for astronomy. Other liquid-telescopes were previously built either to track satellites or were used for military purposes.
- International Liquid-Mirror Telescope (ILMT) was set up at the Devasthal Observatory campus, which is owned by Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), Nainital in Uttarakhand.
- ILMT will be the third telescope facility at Devasthal, which has become the world's pristine sites for obtaining astronomical observations.
- **How is ILMT different?**
- **Liquid-mirror telescopes are stationary telescopes which are used to image a strip of the sky at a given point of time** at night as opposed to the conventional telescope which is steered to point towards celestial sources of interest in the sky for observations.

### OPERATION MAHILA SURAKSHA BY RPF

- **The Railway Protection Force (RPF) under Operation Mahila Suraksha has rescued 150 women and girls from falling into the trap of human trafficking syndicates.**
- This month-long operation which began on 3rd May and concluded on 31st May was conducted with the aim of rescuing women and girls from human trafficking.
- **What is the Meri Saheli initiative?**
- **This initiative is being run by the railways with the aim of providing security to women while they travel on trains.** This initiative has the objective of providing enhanced security and safety to the lady passengers who are travelling by train for their entire journey.
- This is a pan India initiative. 283 teams of trained Mahila personnel and officers covering 223 stations were also deployed with an average of 1125 lady RPF personnel deployed per day.

### TATA PROJECTS WINS BID TO BUILD JEWAR AIRPORT

- **Tata Projects will build the national capital region's new airport at Jewar, after outbidding the Shapoorji Pallonji Group and Larsen & Toubro for the contract. While the deal size has not been disclosed, sources pegged it at over Rs 6,000 crore.**
- Tata Projects, the infrastructure and construction arm of the Tata group, will construct the terminal, runway, airside infrastructure, roads, utilities, landside facilities and other ancillary buildings at the Noida International Airport.
- **About the contract:**
- **The new airport is expected to be functional by 2024.** With the closure of the EPC contract, the first phase of the airport is on track to be delivered within three years of the commencement of the concession period.
- **According to the contract terms for the Jewar airport, a fine of Rs 10 lakh per day will be levied on the developer of the upcoming Noida International Airport in case of a project delay.**



### CHINA LAUNCHED 3RD CREWED MISSION TO NEW SS

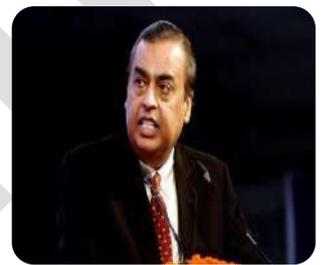
- On June 5, 2022 China successfully launched the **3rd Crewed Mission to its New Space Station.**
- Three Astronauts will continue the construction work for six months. Astronauts were lifted off on Shenzhou-14 spacecraft.



- It was launched by a **Long March 2F rocket from Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center**, located in the Gobi Desert of Inner Mongolia.
- **3rd Crewed Mission in Space**
- This is **China's third crewed mission** during construction of its space station. China has planned to have a fully crewed and operational space station by December 2022.
- The first **crewed mission was completed in September 2021**, when astronauts stayed for three-months. The second mission was **Shenzhou-13**, in which three astronauts spent six months for the first time.
- Overall, **China has planned six space missions before the end of 2022**, including another crewed mission, two cargo missions and two laboratory modules.

### MUKESH AMBANI AGAIN BECOMES RICHEST IN INDIA

- **Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) Chairman and Managing Director, Mukesh Ambani has regained the position of India** as well as Asia's richest man, replacing Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani.
- **According to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index**, Ambani who has a net worth of \$99.7 billion added \$9.69 billion in 2022.
- **Mr Ambani is followed by Gautam Adani** on the global billionaire list. Adani is ranked ninth with Net worth \$98.7 billion in the Bloomberg Billionaire index.
- **Bloomberg Billionaires Index: Globally**
  - Tesla **CEO Elon Musk** remains the world's richest person with a net fortune of \$227 billion.
  - **Amazon's Jeff Bezos** is the second richest man with a \$149 billion net worth, as per the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.
  - **LVMH's Bernard Arnault with \$138 billion net worth is the third richest person** in the world followed by Microsoft co-founder **Bill Gates with \$124 billion** net fortune in the fourth position and legendary investor **Warren Buffett in the fifth position with a net worth of \$114 billion**.



### RAFAEL NADAL WON FRENCH OPEN TOURNAMENT

- On June 5, 2022, **Rafael Nadal won the 14th French Open**. With this win, his record extended to 22nd Grand Slam title. He became the oldest male champion at Roland Garros.
- Rafael Nadal is a Spanish professional tennis player. The **Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) has ranked him world no. 4**.
- Earlier, he was ranked world No. 1 for 209 weeks. **He has even finished as year-end No. 1 five times**. Till date, he has won 22 Grand Slam men's singles titles, including a record of 14 French Open titles.
- **The French Open**: French Open is also known as **Roland-Garros**. It is a major tennis tournament, which is held for two weeks at Stade Roland Garros in Paris, France. It starts in late May, every year.
- **The Grand Slam**: Grand Slam is an achievement of winning four major championships in one discipline in a calendar year. It is also called the "**Calendar-year Grand Slam**" or "**Calendar Slam**".



### NATO CONDUCTED NAVAL EXERCISE IN BALTIC SEA

- **U.S.-led naval exercise in the Baltic Sea**, more than 7,000 sailors, airmen, and marines from 16 nations, including two aspiring NATO members, **Finland and Sweden, began nearly two-week.**
- **BALTOPS**, an annual naval exercise that began in 1972, is **not performed in response to any specific danger.**
- However, NATO stated that “with both Sweden and Finland participating, NATO is embracing the opportunity in an unpredictable world to increase its combined force resilience and strength” in collaboration **with two Nordic aspirant countries.**
- **About the U.S-led naval exercise in the Baltic Sea:**
- **Both Finland and Sweden** had a lengthy tradition of military non-alignment before their **governments choose to apply to join NATO in May**, in response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on February 24.
- Moscow has **frequently cautioned Helsinki and Stockholm** not to join the Western military alliance, threatening harsh measures if they do so
- **Turkey, a NATO member** with strong relations with Russia, has expressed opposition to Finland and Sweden joining the military alliance, citing their suspected backing for a **Kurdish militia that Turkey considers a terrorist organization.**

### RAJASTHAN LAUNCHED RAJIV GANDHI KHEL RATNA AWARD

- Rajasthan Chief Minister (CM) Ashok Gehlot has announced that the state government is set to introduce the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award to the State’s sportspersons.
- He made the announcement while addressing the inauguration and player award ceremony at Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur, Rajasthan.
- **He also informed that Rajiv Gandhi Rural Olympics will commence on 29th August 2022** in which more than 27 lakh players of all ages can participate. He also released the torch of the Rural Olympic during the event.



### 2022 ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDEX

- **The 2022 Environmental Performance Index (EPI)** was released recently, ranking 180 countries on 40 performance indicators in 11 issue categories of climate change performance, ecosystem vitality and environmental health.
- In the index, **India has been ranked at 180th position, bottom of the 2022 Index.** India has scored lowest among 180 countries.
- The index measured the environmental performance of all the 180 countries.
- **India’s score**
- In the Index, India scored 18.9 and has been ranked last. In the last decade, performance of India has decreased by 0.6 scores.
- **It scored 12.5 on health, which means poor air quality, poor drinking water and poor sanitation.** India’s waste management with respect to solid wastes, ocean plastics, and recycling is also poor.
- **The Rankings of other countries:** Neighbouring countries of India have scored slightly better. Pakistan has been ranked at 176th position while Bangladesh at 177.



### NASA SET TO LAUNCH 'DAVINCI MISSION'

- NASA is set to launch a mission called “DAVINCI Mission”. DAVINCI stands for “**Deep Atmosphere Venus Investigation of Noble gases, Chemistry and Imaging Mission**”.
- The mission will fly by Venus and explore its harsh atmosphere in 2029. **It will be the first mission to study Venus by means of both flybys and descent.**
- Spacecraft is likely to explore the layered Venusian atmosphere. **It will reach the Venusian surface by June 2031.** The mission would capture data about Venus that scientists have been trying to measure since the early 1980s.
- **Which missions have visited earlier?**
- Before this mission, only two NASA missions have visited earlier, namely, **Pioneer in 1978 and Magellan in early '90s.**



### INDIA'S FY23 GDP FORECAST BY WORLD BANK

- On June 7, 2021, the **World Bank reduced its real gross domestic product (GDP) growth forecast for year 2022-23 for India from 8 per cent to 7.5 per cent in the “Global Economic Prospects Report”.**
- This forecast was reduced after considering the supply-chain pressure, inflationary pressures, and geopolitical tensions because of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.
- In the report, **World Bank also decreased its global growth forecast for year 2022 from 4.1 percent to 2.9 percent.**
- Growth is likely to slow down further to 7.1 percent in 2023-24.
- **World Bank on growth**
- According to the World Bank, growth in **India will be supported by fixed investment undertaken by government and private sector.** Government has already introduced incentives and reforms to improve the business climate.
- Background: **The World Bank has revised its GDP growth forecast in FY23 for India, for the second time.** In April 2022, the forecast was lowered from 8.7 percent to 8 percent.
- Apart from the World Bank, Rating agency S&P and the International Monetary Fund also cut their FY23 forecast for India. **The World Bank’s forecast (7.5%) is still more bullish than the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI’s) forecast of 7.2%.**



### OECD PROJECTS INDIA'S GDP GROWTH IN FY23

- The **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** has reduced India’s growth to 6.9% growth in Financial Year 2023 from 8.1% estimated earlier.
- Growth was also slashed to 6.2 percent in 2023. **OECD further expects the policy rate to increase to 5.3%** by the end of 2022 and remain the same in 2023.
- **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**
- OECD is an **intergovernmental organization**, comprising 38 member countries. It was founded in 1961, for stimulating world trade and economic progress.
- **Member countries:** Majority of OECD members are high-income economies that have a **very high Human Development Index (HDI).** They are regarded as developed countries.



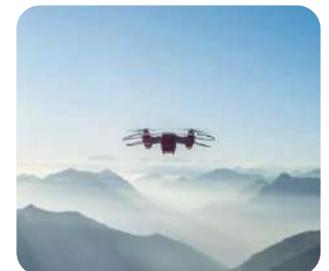
## CRICKETER MITHALI RAJ ANNOUNCED RETIREMENT

- **Indian women's cricket team captain, Mithali Raj** (39 years old), hailing from Jodhpur, Rajasthan, announced her retirement from all forms of International cricket.
- Previously in September 2019, she retired from **twenty 20 International (T20Is) but continued to play One Day Internationals (ODIs) and Test cricket.**
- **Career overview:**
- **Mithali Raj** made her International debut in the **ODI against Ireland at Milton Keynes in 1999.**
- She has **represented India in around 232 ODI matches** and scored 7805 runs (50.68 on average). She is the only female cricketer to reach the 7,000-run mark. She holds the record for most runs in Women's ODI.
- She has scored a tally of 10,868 runs across all three formats and became the **"leading run-scorer of all-time in women's international cricket"**.
- **Awards & honours:**
- The **government of India(GoI) honoured her with the Arjuna Award** in 2003 for her outstanding achievement in cricket and the **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award in 2021.** GoI honoured her with Padma Shri in 2015 for her contribution to sports



## 1ST STATE TO APPROVE DRONE POLICY

- The **Himachal Pradesh government** gave nod to a **drone policy** as it seeks to enable the use of drones and similar technology for different public services in the hill state.
- The policy envisions creating a holistic drone ecosystem built upon the foundation of **Governance and Reforms Using Drones (GARUD).**
- With this new drone policy, Himachal Pradesh has become the first state in the country to **formally acknowledge the public use of drones.**
- **About the "Himachal Pradesh Drone Policy 2022":**
- **Himachal's drone policy** mainly focuses on creating drone-enabled technology, creation of manpower through the **establishment of training schools, startup and innovation schemes, and more.**



## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT BAN ON PETROL & DIESEL CARS

- **Members of the European Parliament** recently voted to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2035.
- This voting was held on an amendment that would have allowed some auto emissions through new vehicles after 2035. This **amendment was rejected by Members of Parliament.**
- The **European Union assembly voted in Strasbourg, France** to require the automakers to cut 100 percent carbon-dioxide emissions by the middle of next decade.
- Europe seeks to ban the sale with the aim of stepping up the fight against climate change by faster development of electric vehicles.



- **Carbon Emission Goals**
- **EU lawmakers have also endorsed a reduction in CO2 by 55 %**, from automobiles in 2030 compared with 2021. This move deepens an existing obligation on the car industry to decrease **CO2 emission by 37.5 % on an average by the end of this decade.**

### 5 NATIONS ELECTED TO UN SECURITY COUNCIL

- **Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, and Switzerland** were elected to the United Nations Security Council as non-permanent members for the 2023-2024 term, and took over the horseshoe table from **India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, and Norway** on January 1, 2023. India has been at the vanguard of the 15-nation Council's reform efforts for years.
- **India's two-year stint as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council** will finish in December 2022, when it will simultaneously hold the Presidency of the powerful UN body.
- India has been at the vanguard of the **15-nation Council's reform efforts** for years, claiming that it is entitled to a permanent seat on the body, which in its current configuration does not reflect the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century.
- On the question of "**categories of membership**," the **G4 nations of Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan** have stated that the Council's decisions can only reflect the interests of the entire membership if permanent seats are enlarged.

### 2ND EDITION OF AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN DSDP

- In New Delhi, the **2nd edition of the Awards for Excellence in District Skill Development Planning, DSDP**, was held, with the top 30 districts in the area being recognised for their unique best practices in skill development.
- The top three districts in the competition were **Rajkot in Gujarat, Cachar in Assam, and Satara in Maharashtra.**
- District Collectors, District Magistrates, and other officials from 30 states attended the award ceremony to share their views and experiences, as well as to exhibit the skill development work that respective districts had done at the grassroots level.

### WORLD'S MOST DETAILED MAP ON MOON BY CHINA

- A **new comprehensive Geological map of the Moon** was released by China. It is the most detailed map till date.
- The Geological Map is likely to make a significant contribution to scientific research, exploration and landing site selection on the Moon.
- Chinese scientists have created a high-resolution topographic map on the basis of data from a **Chinese lunar exploration project called "Chang'e project"**.
- About the Map: The new map is to a scale of 1:2,500,000. It includes 12,341 impact craters, 17 rock types, 81 impact basins, and 14 types of structures.
- Thus, it **provides abundant information regarding the geology** of the moon and its evolution. It will make a significant contribution to exploration, scientific research, and landing site selection on the moon..



## PM MODI INAUGURATED IN-SPACE IN AHMEDABAD

- The **Indian National Center for Space Promotion and Authorization (IN-SPACE)** was established in Ahmedabad by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- **Amit Shah, the Union Home Minister**, was also present at the ceremony. After inaugurating the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACE) in Ahmedabad, Prime Minister Narendra Modi reviewed its headquarters.
- They have emphasised a holistic approach to improve the **country's health system for the past eight years**.
- **Prior to becoming Prime Minister in 2014**, PM Modi held the title of Gujarat's longest-serving Chief Minister, holding the position from October 2001 to May 2014.
- **Prime Minister Modi lay the foundation stone for a number of development projects in Gujarat** totaling Rs 3,050 crores.



## INDIA'S 1ST COVID-19 VACCINE FOR ANIMALS

- On June 13, 2022, the **Ministry of Agriculture unveiled India's first Covid-19 vaccine "Anocovax" for animals**.
- Vaccine has been developed by Hisar-based **National Research Centre on Equines**. It can protect animals against **Delta and Omicron variants of coronavirus**. The vaccine can be used in dogs, leopards, mice, lions, and rabbits.
- It is an inactivated vaccine that has been developed using an infectious part of the Delta variant.
- Apart from that, the **vaccine uses Alhydrogel as an adjuvant to boost immune response**. This is the first Covid-19 vaccine developed in India, for animals.
- Vaccine has been developed with the aim of protecting endangered animals like lions and tigers. **India reported some 9 Covid infections in Asiatic lions in Chennai-zoo in 2021**.



## 12TH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF WTO

- The 12th Ministerial Conference of World Trade Organization (**WTO**) started on June 12, 2022. It is being held at **WTO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland**. It was due to take place in 2021 but got postponed due to covid-19 pandemic.
- **Agenda of the conference**
- Chief of World Trade Organization, **Nguzi Okonjo-Iweala**, expressed optimism that over 100 trade ministers would be achieving one or two global deals this week.
- **Saving Fish Stock**- Apart from that, ministers would also take up the issue of the fisheries sector, where there is **anti-development text in fisheries subsidies**.
- **Which countries are taking part?**
- Around 50 civil society from 22 **countries are representing in person at MC12** namely Indonesia, India, Philippines, Pakistan, Ghana, Pacific Islands, Morocco, Malawi, Uganda, South Africa, Argentina, Zimbabwe, USA, Brazil, Uruguay, France, Belgium, Norway, Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, and the UK.

## OIC CONDEMNED COMMENTS ON PROPHET MUHAMMAD

- Recently, the **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)** condemned and denounced the comments on **Prophet Muhammed made by two Indians.**
- **Ministry of External Affairs** rejected the OIC comments, adding that the views expressed by the individuals did not reflect the views of the Indian government.
- Earlier, India has lashed out at the OIC for being "**communal minded**" amid the **Karnataka hijab row.**
- **What is the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation?**
- **About:** The OIC claims to be the "collective voice of the Muslim world". **It was established at a 1969 summit in Rabat (Morocco)** after what it describes as the 'criminal arson' of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.
- **Members:** It has **57 member Countries.** India is not a Member of OIC.

## WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

- 12 June marks the World Day against Child Labour under the theme "**Universal Social Protection to End Child Labour.**"
- On this day, the ILO, together with its constituents and partners, is calling for increased investment in social protection systems and schemes to establish solid social protection floors and protect children from child labour.
- According to the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, there are about 152 million children globally who are engaged in child labour, 72 million of whom are in hazardous work.
- **World Day Against Child Labour 2022:**
- **Theme:** The 2022 theme of the world day calls for increased investment in social protection systems and schemes to establish solid social protection floors and protect children from child labour. 2022
- Theme: "**Universal Social Protection to End Child Labour**".
- **World Day Against Child Labour: History**
- The **International Labour Organization (ILO)** launched the **World Day Against Child Labour in 2002** to focus attention on the worldwide extent of kid labour and therefore the action and efforts needed to eliminate it.



## INDIA'S DEMAND AT WTO MC12

- The 12th ministerial conference of the **(WTO)** started from June 16, 2022.
- The conference looks forward to reaching a consensus on several issues **like regulating fisheries subsidies, food security and intellectual property waiver** for covid-19 vaccines.
- This conference usually takes place once every two years. However, this year ministers are meeting after four years, because of covid-19 pandemic.
- **India's priority:** India's priority is to safeguard long-term interests of farmers and fishermen. **WTO seeks to build a consensus on an agreement** that aims to eliminate subsidies for illegal, unregulated fishing, and promote sustainable fishing.
- **TRIPS issue:** Some other important issues that India seeks to address include, WTO's response to covid-19 pandemic including the **Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) issue, WTO reforms,** agriculture issues, including public



stockholding for food security, and e-commerce.

- India is of the view that distribution, trade facilitation, export restrictions, and improved transparency in medical supply chains should be discussed.

### INDIA TO HAVE 5G SERVICES BY MARCH 2023

- **Union Communications Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw** announced at the Viva Technology 2022 event that **India will have full-fledged 5G services by March 2023.**
- Vaishnaw said that the **5G spectrum auction** will be concluded by the end of July, adding that Telecom is the key source of digital consumption, and it is very vital to introduce trusted solutions in telecom.
- **India has its own 4G infrastructure**, including radios, equipment, and handsets. In March 2023, 4G will be ready for deployment in the field, **while 5G will be ready in the lab.**
- India should develop the technology and core **network for 5G services; this would be a significant achievement for the country.**
- The **Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has finally approved the Department of Telecommunications' (5G) spectrum auction**, in which bidders would be assigned spectrum to provide 5G services to the general public and businesses.

### INDUSTRIAL DECARBONIZATION SUMMIT 2022

- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, inaugurated the "Industrial Decarbonization Summit 2022"- road map for carbon neutrality by 2070 on June 16, 2022.
- The '**Industrial Decarbonization Summit 2022**' was inaugurated to overcome power shortage because it is necessary to develop alternative fuels.
- According to him, the **government's priority is green hydrogen.** Government is of the view that productivity of Biomass can be increased by using **Biotechnology and Bio-ethanol, Bio-CNG and Bio-LNG can be made using Biomass.**
- **What is the Industrial Decarbonization Summit?**
- The **Industrial Decarbonization Summit** was inaugurated and organised on June 16 at Le' Meridien Hotel in New Delhi.
- It focused on a variety of research topics related to decarbonization, **Policy issues, sustainability, Climate Change including their management, etc.**



### 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF BIMSTEC

- The Secretariat of the **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)** in Dhaka celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the regional organisation on BIMSTEC Day.
- The **evolution of BIMSTEC** over the last 25 years from the signing of the Bangkok Declaration on June 6 in 1996, and highlighted milestones such as the establishment of the Secretariat in Dhaka in 2014 and the signature of the BIMSTEC Charter during the **Fifth Summit in Colombo on March 30, 2022.**
- **About the BIMSTEC:** It is an international organization of South Asia and Southeast Asian countries.
- **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand** are members of BIMSTEC. It was formed on 6 June 1997 and its headquarters is located in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

### NINTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS 2022

- The Ninth Summit of the Americas 2022 was held from June 6 to June 10, 2022. It is an **international conference and was held in Los Angeles, United States.**
- Summit of the Americas 2022 was held under the theme of **“Building a Sustainable, Resilient, and Equitable Future”.**
- **Host of the summit:** In January 2022, the White House had announced that Los Angeles would serve as the host city.
- The **United States selects the site of this summit as a host and its attendees.** For this year’s summit, the United States did not invite Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela because these countries are accused of having undemocratically elected leaders.
- **Countries that boycott the summit**
- **Summit of the Americas 2022 was skipped by the President of Mexico, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador.** The president of Honduras, Xiomara Castro, also boycotted the summit.
- Similarly, the President of Bolivia, President of Guatemala, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent did not attend the summit.



## WEST ASIAN QUAD DIALOGUE - I2U2 GROUPINGS

- The **United States** is set to launch a new four-nation dialogue **“West Asia Quad Dialogue”** with India, United Arab Emirates and Israel, during the visit of President Joe Biden to the region.
- The forum will be launched **during Joe Biden’s visit to Israel** from July 13 to July 16, 2022. Joe Biden is scheduled to visit the West Bank, Saudi Arabia.
- **About West Asia Quad Dialogue**
- The **West Asia Quad Dialogue will also be called I2U2.** I2 for India and Israel while U2 for US and the UAE. It will focus on West Asia.
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## 38TH INDIA INDONESIA CO-ORDINATED PATROL

- The **38th India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT)** between the Indian Navy Units of Andaman & Nicobar Command (ANC) and Indonesian Navy is being conducted from June 13 to 24 2022 in the Andaman Sea and Straits of Malacca.
- The 38th CORPAT is the first post pandemic Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) between the two countries.
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- As part of **Government of India’s vision of SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region),** Naval Component under the aegis of HQ ANC undertakes coordinated patrols with other littoral countries of the Andaman Sea along respective **Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ)** towards enhancing regional maritime security.
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- **Institute for Management Development** recently compiled and released the annual World Competitive Index on June 15, 2022. India **witnessed the sharpest rise among Asian countries.**

- India witnessed a **six-position rise from 43rd to 37th rank**, due to gains in economic performance.
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- It is followed by Singapore at third position, which was ranked at fifth position.

**Others countries in top 10 include:**

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- **Norway** at ninth position and
- **USA** at 10th position

**GLOBAL WIND DAY OBSERVED ON 15TH JUNE**

- On 15th June, **Global Wind Day** is celebrated across the world, annually and it is marked as a day of discovering the possibilities of wind power.
- It is a day for discovering wind, its power and the **possibilities it holds to reshape our energy systems.**
- This day is dedicated to learn about wind energy and its **potential to reshape energy systems, decarbonizing economies and boosting employment** as well as growth. The purpose of this day is to increase public knowledge of wind energy and its uses.
- **Global Wind Day 2022** is based on the theme is celebrate to enjoy the benefits of Wind energy and providing education to the individuals about the power and potential of wind energy to change the world.



**WHAT IS AGNIPATH SCHEME OF UNION GOVT?**

- On June 14, 2022, **Central Government launched a new scheme called “Agnipath Scheme”**, to recruit soldiers across three services. The scheme will be implemented in immediate effect. Recruited Soldiers will be called “Agniveers”.
- **About Agnipath Scheme:** The Agnipath Scheme has been launched for the recruitment of **soldiers across three services.**
- Under it, **about 45,000 to 50,000 soldiers will be recruited annually.** Most of them will be recruited for just four years.
- Out of total annual recruits, **around 25 per cent will be allowed to continue the service for another 15 years under permanent commission.**



**D. MURMU AS NDA PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE**

- **Droupadi Murmu, an Odisha-based Santhal,** as its nominee for the highest constitutional position, India may ultimately elect its first tribal president.
- After the legislative board of the party endorsed what is widely seen as Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s pick for Rashtrapati Bhavan, **BJP leader JP Nadda announced Murmu’s candidacy.**
- If elected, **Murmu will become the second woman to hold the office** of President following UPA supporter Pratibha Patil (2007–12).
- Murmu is the front-runner to succeed **incumbent Ramnath Kovind,** a Dalit from UP, in Rashtrapati Bhavan after the July 18 elections, as the BJP-led NDA is confident in making up the shortfall with the **help of regional players like BJD’s Naveen Patnaik and YSRCP’s Jagan Mohan Reddy** — the chief ministers of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, respectively.



## EU LEADERS GRANTED UKRAINE CANDIDATE STATUS

- The European Union leaders granted Ukraine and Moldova candidate status for EU membership during a European Council meeting in Brussels on June 23, 2022.
- The EU leaders had gathered in Brussels to formally grant Ukraine candidate status to join the European Union just as Russian forces continue to advance in Eastern Ukraine.
- **When will Ukraine formally join the EU?**
- It would take a long time for Ukraine to formally obtain membership of the European Union.
- Being granted candidate status is the first official step toward EU membership. As per observers, even with candidate status, it may take years, if not decades, for Ukraine to obtain EU membership.
- The Western Balkan countries of Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia have been candidate countries for years or even decades. In fact, Bosnia and Herzegovina had applied for candidacy in 2016 but has still not officially joined the bloc.



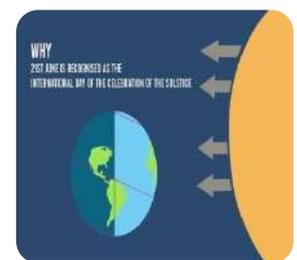
## INDIA: 3RD IN RENEWABLE POWER CAPACITY ADDITIONS

- India ranked third globally for total renewable power capacity additions in 2021 with 15.4 GW, behind only China (136 GW) and the US (43 GW).
- According to a report, despite the Covid-19 pandemic's promise of a global green recovery, this historic opportunity has been lost.
- The world is unlikely to be able to achieve important climate goals this decade, according to REN21's Renewables 2022 Global Status Report (GSR 2022). This is because the global clean energy transition is not taking place.
- The largest energy crisis in modern history started in the second half of 2021, and it was made worse by the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine in early 2022 and an unprecedented global commodities shock.
- The research states that India increased its hydroelectric capacity by 843 MW in 2021, bringing the total to 45.3 GW.
- India was the third-largest market globally and the second-largest market in Asia for new solar PV capacity (13 GW of additions in 2021).
- In terms of overall installations, it came in at number four (60.4 GW), passing Germany (59.2 GW) for the first time. India was in third place overall for installed wind power (40.1 GW), trailing only China, the US, and Germany.
- In the energy industry, historic increases in generation (7,793 terawatt hours) and capacity (314.5 gigawatts, up 17% from 2020) were unable to keep up with the six percent growth in global electricity demand.



## INTERNATIONAL DAY TO CELEBRATE SUMMER SOLSTICE

- On June 21, 2022, over 6,000 people gathered at Stonehenge in Britain's Wiltshire to celebrate the summer solstice, which is the longest day of the year in the northern hemisphere.
- **Summer Solstice**
- The summer solstice is also known as midsummer or festival solstice. It occurs when one of the poles of Earth has its maximum tilt toward the Sun.
- This phenomenon happens twice in a year, once in each Northern hemisphere Southern hemisphere. For the northern hemisphere, summer solstice happens when the sun reaches its highest position in the sky. It is the day with the longest period of daylight.
- During the summer solstice, there is continuous daylight within the Arctic circle (for the northern



hemisphere) or the Antarctic circle (for southern hemisphere). Earth's maximum axial tilt towards the Sun is 23.44 degree, on summer solstice.

## GLOBAL SKILLS REPORT (GSR) 2022 BY COURSERA

- The **Global Skills Report (GSR) 2022** by Coursera states that India's proficiency in data science has reduced from 38% in 2021 to 26% in 2022, leading to a 12-rank drop.
- In terms of overall skills proficiency, India has **slipped 4 places to be ranked 68th globally and 19th in Asia**. However, the report reveals that India has improved its technology proficiency levels from 38 percent to 46 percent, improving its position by six spots.
- **About the report:** The report is based on the data collected from over 100 million Coursera users from more than 100 countries **who learned a new skill during the past year**.
- The **report benchmarks three of the most in-demand skill areas** driving employment in the digital economy – business, technology, and data science.
- West Bengal leads the Indian states in terms of skills proficiency with the state showing the highest levels of digital skills proficiency in the country. **Andhra Pradesh is among the top three performing states with high proficiency in business and technology skills**.
- For the second year in a row, **Switzerland** had the highest-skilled learners **followed by Denmark, Indonesia, and Belgium**.



## POLICIES TO ENCOURAGE CARBON CAPTURE FACILITIES

- India is **proposing a number of policies to encourage the establishment of carbon capture facilities** by high carbon emission industries like steel, cement, and thermal plants.
- **Production-linked incentive programmes**, viability gap funding, or carbon credits could all be used to offer incentives. The government might issue carbon credits that can be exchanged on carbon exchanges or a **PLI programme that would tie incentives to how much carbon is gathered and used**.
- According to a government official, Niti Aayog, the **nation's policy think-tank, would shortly release a policy prescription for carbon capture** and utilisation of carbon dioxide released by industry as part of the **aim to reach Net Zero by 2070**.
- These industries account for 6–10% of all carbon dioxide emissions. Different strategies are **being examined to encourage polluting businesses to build carbon capture facilities** so that the carbon dioxide they emit can be captured, utilised, and stored for a variety of industrial uses.
- While the government will support these industries with research and development to build carbon capture plants, alternatives for financial support are also being looked at.



## PM MODI INAUGURATED 'VANIJYA BHAWAN'

- On June 23, 2022 **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated the new “Vanijya Bhawan”.
- While inaugurating the **Vanijya Bhawan**, he asked the **industry and exporters to fix long-term export targets** for themselves as well as suggest ways for the government for achieve those goals.
- He highlighted the critical role played by exports in the transition of India from developing nation to developed nation.

- **Where does India stand in global export?**
- In fiscal year 2020-21, **India's exports were at a total (goods and services) of USD 670 billion**. In 2021-22, India's merchandise exports crossed USD 418 billion as opposed to the target of USD 400 billion.
- Considering the success, the government has now increased its export targets and has doubled efforts to achieve them.
- **NIRYAT Portal**
- On the occasion, Prime Minister Modi also launched the NIRYAT Portal, which stands for "**National Import-Export Record for Yearly Analysis of Trade Portal**".
- The portal has been developed as a one-stop platform for stakeholders, where they would get all necessary information related to foreign trade in India.
- It will **provide real time data to all stakeholders**. NIRYAT portal was launched with the aim of facilitating further strengthening of the financial sector of India in line with **3Ts namely Trade, Tourism and Technology**.

### **WORLD GOLD COUNCIL REPORT: INDIA RANKED 4TH**

- According to the **World Gold Council Report**, India has emerged as the 4th largest recycler in the world and the country **has recycled 75 tonnes in 2021**.
- According to the **WGC report titled 'Gold refining and recycling'**, China topped the global gold recycling chart as it recycled 168 tonnes of the yellow metal, followed by Italy in the second position with 80 tonnes and the **US in the third rank with 78 tonnes in 2021**.
- According to the **WGC report titled 'Gold refining and recycling'** from 300 tonnes in 2013, India's gold refining capacity increased by 1,500 tonnes (500 per cent) in 2021.
- The report further noted that the gold refining landscape in the country has changed over the last decade, **with the number of formal operations increasing from less than five in 2013 to 33 in 2021**.



### **COUNTRY'S 1ST EVER 'BALIKA PANCHAYAT'**

- The **country's first-ever, 'Balika Panchayat'**, has started in five villages of Gujarat's Kutch district. The initiative aims to promote the social and political development of the girls and ensure their active participation in politics.
- The **Panchayat has started in Kunaria, Maska, Motagua, and Vadsar villages of the Kutch district**. This initiative has been taken by the Women and Child Development Welfare Department of the Gujarat Government under the '**Beti Bachao Beti Padhao**' campaign.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development is also planning to begin the girl panchayat across the country.
- **About the "Balika Panchayat"**: "Balika Panchayat" is managed by people in the 11-21 age group and its main objective is to promote the **social and political development of the girl child** and to remove the evil practices from the society such as child marriage, and the dowry system.
- The main objective of the panchayat is that the **girls should move forward in politics**. In Balika panchayat, the member is nominated just like Gram panchayat.



## PM MODI ATTENDED G7 SUMMIT IN GERMANY

- On June 27, 2022 **Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the G7 Summit** in Germany and asked the Group of Seven (G7) countries to consider investing in and promoting the emerging market for clean energy technologies in India.
- **German Chancellor Olaf Scholz** invited PM Modi to attend the G7 Summit 2022 as a partner country. Apart from **India, Argentina, Indonesia, Senegal and South Africa** also took part in the summit, as partner countries.
- **Impact of Russia-Ukraine War**
- PM Modi further noted, **Russia-Ukraine** war has pushed up energy prices worldwide. Main focus of the summit was on obtaining energy since the world has been reeling **under a fuel crisis amid the Russia-Ukraine war.**
- **Group of Seven (G7)**
- G7 is an inter-governmental political forum, comprising **Canada, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, the United States and the United Kingdom.** Furthermore, the European Union is a 'non-enumerated member'.



## INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE

- The **International Day against Drug Abuse and Illegal Trafficking** is observed on June 26, 2022 every year.
- The day is observed with the aim of spreading awareness regarding the physical and psychological impact of drug overdose deaths, substance abuse and drugs-related problems worldwide. **Drug abuse is one of the biggest threats to health and society.**
- **According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC),** this day will help in addressing the issue of transnational drug challenges.
- **Theme of the day:** The International day against drug abuse and illegal trafficking 2022 was observed under the theme- "Addressing drug challenges in health and humanitarian crises." This theme addresses different challenges faced by the world.

## UNITED NATIONS OCEAN CONFERENCE 2022

- The **United Nations Ocean Conference 2022** was started from June 27, 2022 and will conclude on July 1, 2022.
- Leaders from **across the world have arrived in Capital of Portugal, Lisbon,** as the world is suffering from the impact of global warming and climate change.
- During the conference, world leaders will find an international agreement for protecting the world's ocean.
- **Host of the conference:** The Ocean Conference is being co-hosted by the Governments of **Kenya and Portugal.**
- **PARAMESWARAN IYER AS NEW CEO OF NITI AAYOG**
- On June 24, 2022, **retired IAS officer Parameswaran Iyer** was appointed as the new CEO of NITI Aayog, by the Union Government.
- **Parameswaran Iyer is a 1981-batch IAS officer from UP cadre.** He will replace Amitabh Kant and become the third chief executive officer of the public policy think tank of the government.



- Parameshwaran Iyer was born in Srinagar. He went to Doon School in Dehradun. Later, went to St. Stephen's College in Delhi.
- **The NITI Aayog:** It is the apex public policy think tank of Government of India. **It is the nodal agency that catalyses economic development**, and fosters cooperative federalism by involving State Governments in the economic policy-making process.
- It uses a bottom-up approach. Some of the initiatives by **NITI Aayog include-15-year road map, AMRUT, Atal Innovation Mission, Digital India**, Indices Measuring Performance of States in Health, Education and Water Management, etc.
- It was established in 2015, after replacing the Planning Commission. The planning commission used a top-down model.

### 'PARTNERS IN THE BLUE PACIFIC' INITIATIVE

- The United States and allied countries namely **Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the United Kingdom** have launched a new initiative called '**Partners in the Blue Pacific**'.
- This initiative was launched amid **China's aggressive push of increasing its influence in the Pacific**. Under the new initiative, countries will be involved in "effective and efficient cooperation" with small island nations of the region.
- **About Partners in the Blue Pacific initiative**
- The **Partners in the Blue Pacific Initiative is a five-nation "informal mechanism"**, launched for supporting Pacific islands and for boosting economic and diplomatic ties in the region. This initiative was announced on June 24, 2022.
- It seeks to **enhance "prosperity, resilience, and security"** in the Pacific by closer cooperation among the member nations. Member countries would cooperate in areas including climate crisis, transportation, connectivity, health, maritime security & protection, prosperity and education.
- **Pacific Islands Forum**
- Members of the new initiative have also declared to **"elevate Pacific regionalism"**, as well to establish stronger ties with the Pacific Islands Forum. Countries announced that this forum will **remain open to cooperate with additional partners**.



### PM MODI INAUGURATED RAMP SCHEME

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** on June 30, 2022, inaugurated the '**Raising & Accelerating MSME Performance**' scheme at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi.
- Along with the **Raising & Accelerating MSME Performance Scheme**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also inaugurated the 'Capacity Building of First-Time MSME Exporters' scheme and the new features of '**Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme**'.
- On the occasion, the Prime Minister digitally transferred the assistance to the beneficiaries of **PMEGP for 2022-23**.
- The **Raising & Accelerating MSME Performance Scheme (RAMP)** aims to scale up the capacity and the coverage of the **Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises (MSME)** in the states, with an impact on the enhancement of existing MSME schemes.



## NASA LAUNCHED CAPSTONE SPACECRAFT TO MOON

- The **NASA researchers successfully launched CAPSTONE spacecraft** to the moon from New Zealand. The launch took place on Rocket Lab's Electron rocket.
- Mission CAPSTONE stands for **Cislunar Autonomous Positioning System Technology Operations and Navigation Experiment**.
- With a price tag just shy of **\$30 million, NASA hopes** the mission will verify that a specific type of moon orbit is suitable for the lunar Gateway space station that the agency aims to launch later this decade.
- **About the CAPSTONE:** CAPSTONE is a microwave oven-sized spacecraft with the aim to study a specific type of moon orbit that will be suitable for the lunar Gateway space station that **NASA aims to launch later this decade**.
- The **Lunar Gateway space station** will be a small space station for astronauts in orbits where they can stop before and after going to the moon's surface.
  - NASA administrator: **Bill Nelson**.
  - Headquarters of NASA: **Washington D.C., United States**.
  - NASA Founded: **1 October 1958**



## DISCOVERY OF NEW SPYWARE 'HERMIT'

- A cloud-based security company, Lookout, recently discovered a **new spyware called "Hermit"**.
- As per **TechCrunch report, Lookout's security researchers** have informed that national governments have used the android version of **Hermit spyware in "targeted attacks", with victims in Kazakhstan, Italy and Italy.**
- **About Hermit spyware**
- **Hermit is a commercial spyware** and it is known to be used by governments with victims in **northern Syria, Kazakhstan and Italy**.
- It was **first detected in Kazakhstan**, in April 2022, after the government violently suppressed protests against its policies. It was also deployed in **north-eastern Kurdish region of Syria and by Italian authorities** for an anti-corruption investigation.



## **#WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION & DROUGHT**

- World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is observed every year on 17<sup>th</sup> of June.
- On this day, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) organized **Desertification and Drought Day**.
- The Union Minister released **Forest Stewardship Council's Forest Stewardship Standard for India (FSC FSI)**.
- FSC is a globally recognized certification system which sets criteria for audit of companies associated with timber related products.

## What are the Key Highlights of World Day to Combat Desertification and Droughts?

- It is a unique moment to remind everyone that land degradation neutrality is achievable through problem-

solving, strong community involvement and cooperation at all levels.

- **This Year's Theme: Rising up from drought together.**
- It emphasizes the need for early action to avoid disastrous consequences for humanity and the planetary ecosystems.

### **What is United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)?**

- **Established in 1994**, it is sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management.
- It addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the drylands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found.
- The **Convention's 197 parties** work together to improve the living conditions for people in drylands, to maintain and restore land and soil productivity, and to mitigate the effects of drought.
- It is particularly committed to a bottom-up approach, encouraging the participation of local people in combating desertification and land degradation.
- The UNCCD **secretariat facilitates cooperation between developed and developing countries**, particularly around knowledge and technology transfer for sustainable land management.

### **#UNESCO'S KING HAMAD BIN ISA AL-KHALIFA AWARD**

- **Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET)** wins **UNESCO's King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize** for the year 2021.
- CIET is a constituent unit of **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)** under Department of School Education & Literacy.
- CIET has been awarded by **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** for use of ICT in Education under a comprehensive initiative called **PM eVIDYA**.

### **What is PM eVIDYA?**

- The **PM eVIDYA** has been initiated as part of **Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan** by the Ministry of Education on 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2020.
- It **unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education** to enable multi-mode access for imparting education by using technology to minimise learning losses.

### **What is UNESCO's King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize?**

- It is **established in 2005** with the support of the **Kingdom of Bahrain**.
- This award **"recognizes innovative approaches** in leveraging new technologies to **expand educational and lifelong learning opportunities for all**, in line with the 2030 Agenda for **Sustainable Development** and its **Goal 4 on Education**.
- The Prize rewards individuals and organizations that are implementing outstanding projects and promoting the creative use of technologies to enhance learning, teaching and overall educational performance in the digital age.
- **Awards:** An international Jury selects two best projects annually.
- Each prizewinner receives **USD 25,000, a medal and a diploma** during the ceremony at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

### **What are the other Initiatives related to Education?**

- **National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning**

- Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)
- Prime Minister's Research Fellowship (PMRF)
- Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC)
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
- NEAT
- PRAGYATA
- Mid Day Meal Scheme
- Right To Education (RTE) Act, 2009
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

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- **USA** at 10th position

## GLOBAL WIND DAY OBSERVED ON 15TH JUNE

- On 15th June, **Global Wind Day** is celebrated across the world, annually and it is marked as a day of discovering the possibilities of wind power.
- It is a day for discovering wind, its power and the **possibilities it holds to reshape our energy systems**.
- This day is dedicated to learn about wind energy and its **potential to reshape energy systems, decarbonizing economies and boosting employment** as well as growth. The purpose of this day is to increase public knowledge of wind energy and its uses.
- **Global Wind Day 2022** is based on the theme is celebrate to enjoy the benefits of Wind energy and providing education to the individuals about the power and potential of wind energy to change the world.



## WHAT IS AGNIPATH SCHEME OF UNION GOVT?

- On June 14, 2022, **Central Government** launched a new scheme called “**Agnipath Scheme**”, to recruit soldiers across three services. The scheme will be implemented in immediate effect. Recruited Soldiers will be called “**Agniveers**”.
- **About Agnipath Scheme:** The Agnipath Scheme has been launched for the recruitment of **soldiers across three services**.
- Under it, **about 45,000 to 50,000 soldiers will be recruited annually**. Most of them will be recruited for just four years.
- Out of total annual recruits, **around 25 per cent will be allowed to continue the service for another 15 years under permanent commission**.



## D. MURMU AS NDA PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

- **Droupadi Murmu, an Odisha-based Santhal**, as its nominee for the highest constitutional position, India may ultimately elect its first tribal president.
- After the legislative board of the party endorsed what is widely seen as Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s pick for Rashtrapati Bhavan, **BJP leader JP Nadda announced Murmu’s candidacy**.
- If elected, **Murmu will become the second woman to hold the office** of President following UPA supporter Pratibha Patil (2007–12).
- Murmu is the front-runner to succeed **incumbent Ramnath Kovind**, a Dalit from UP, in Rashtrapati Bhavan after the July 18 elections, as the BJP-led NDA is confident in making up the shortfall with the **help of regional players like BJD’s Naveen Patnaik and YSRCP’s Jagan Mohan Reddy** — the chief ministers of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, respectively.



## EU LEADERS GRANTED UKRAINE CANDIDATE STATUS

- The **European Union leaders granted Ukraine and Moldova candidate** status for EU membership during a European Council meeting in Brussels on June 23, 2022.
- The **EU leaders had gathered in Brussels to formally grant Ukraine** candidate status to join the European Union just as Russian forces continue to advance in Eastern Ukraine.
- **When will Ukraine formally join the EU?**



- It would take a long time for Ukraine to formally **obtain membership of the European Union**.
- Being granted **candidate status is the first official step toward EU membership**. As per observers, even with candidate status, it may take years, if not decades, for Ukraine to obtain EU membership.
- The **Western Balkan countries of Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia** have been candidate countries for years or even decades. In fact, Bosnia and Herzegovina had applied for candidacy in 2016 but has still not officially joined the bloc.

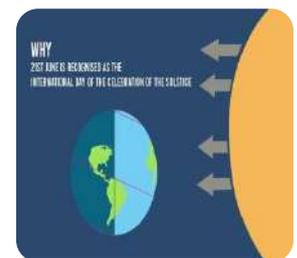
## INDIA: 3RD IN RENEWABLE POWER CAPACITY ADDITIONS

- India ranked **third globally for total renewable power capacity additions** in 2021 with 15.4 GW, behind only China (136 GW) and the US (43 GW).
- According to a report, despite the Covid-19 pandemic's promise of a global green recovery, this historic opportunity has been lost.
- The world is unlikely to be able to achieve important climate goals this decade, according to **REN21's Renewables 2022 Global Status Report (GSR 2022)**. This is because the global clean energy transition is not taking place.
- The largest energy crisis in modern history started in the second half of 2021, **and it was made worse by the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine** in early 2022 and an unprecedented global commodities shock.
- The research states that India increased its hydroelectric capacity by 843 MW in 2021, bringing the total to 45.3 GW.
- India was the third-largest market globally and the second-largest market in Asia for **new solar PV capacity (13 GW of additions in 2021)**.
- In terms of overall installations, **it came in at number four (60.4 GW)**, passing Germany (59.2 GW) for the first time. India was in third place overall for installed wind power (40.1 GW), trailing only China, the US, and Germany.
- In the **energy industry, historic increases in generation (7,793 terawatt hours)** and capacity (314.5 gigawatts, up 17% from 2020) were unable to keep up with the six percent growth in global electricity demand.



## INTERNATIONAL DAY TO CELEBRATE SUMMER SOLSTICE

- On June 21, 2022, **over 6,000 people gathered at Stonehenge in Britain's Wiltshire** to celebrate the summer solstice, which is the longest day of the year in the northern hemisphere.
- **Summer Solstice**
- The **summer solstice is also known as midsummer or festival solstice**. It occurs when one of the poles of Earth has its maximum tilt toward the Sun.
- This phenomenon happens twice in a year, once in **each Northern hemisphere Southern hemisphere**. For the northern hemisphere, summer solstice happens when the sun reaches its highest position in the sky. It is the day with the longest period of daylight.
- During the **summer solstice, there is continuous daylight within the Arctic circle (for the northern hemisphere)** or the Antarctic circle (for southern hemisphere). Earth's maximum axial tilt towards the Sun is 23.44 degree, on summer solstice.



## GLOBAL SKILLS REPORT (GSR) 2022 BY COURSERA

- The **Global Skills Report (GSR) 2022** by Coursera states that India's proficiency in data science has reduced from 38% in 2021 to 26% in 2022, leading to a 12-rank drop.
- In terms of overall skills proficiency, India has **slipped 4 places to be ranked 68th globally and 19th in Asia**. However, the report reveals that India has improved its



technology proficiency levels from 38 percent to 46 percent, improving its position by six spots.

- **About the report:** The report is based on the data collected from over 100 million Coursera users from more than 100 countries **who learned a new skill during the past year.**
- The **report benchmarks three of the most in-demand skill areas** driving employment in the digital economy – business, technology, and data science.
- West Bengal leads the Indian states in terms of skills proficiency with the state showing the highest levels of digital skills proficiency in the country. **Andhra Pradesh is among the top three performing states with high proficiency in business and technology skills.**
- For the second year in a row, **Switzerland** had the highest-skilled learners **followed by Denmark, Indonesia, and Belgium.**

## POLICIES TO ENCOURAGE CARBON CAPTURE FACILITIES

- India is **proposing a number of policies to encourage the establishment of carbon capture facilities** by high carbon emission industries like steel, cement, and thermal plants.
- **Production-linked incentive programmes**, viability gap funding, or carbon credits could all be used to offer incentives. The government might issue carbon credits that can be exchanged on carbon exchanges or a **PLI programme that would tie incentives to how much carbon is gathered and used.**
- According to a government official, Niti Aayog, the **nation's policy think-tank, would shortly release a policy prescription for carbon capture** and utilisation of carbon dioxide released by industry as part of the **aim to reach Net Zero by 2070.**
- These industries account for 6–10% of all carbon dioxide emissions. Different strategies are **being examined to encourage polluting businesses to build carbon capture facilities** so that the carbon dioxide they emit can be captured, utilised, and stored for a variety of industrial uses.
- While the government will support these industries with research and development to build carbon capture plants, alternatives for financial support are also being looked at.



## PM MODI INAUGURATED 'VANIJYA BHAWAN'

- On June 23, 2022 **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated the new “Vanijya Bhawan”.
- While inaugurating the **Vanijya Bhawan**, he **asked the industry and exporters to fix long-term export targets** for themselves as well as suggest ways for the government for achieve those goals.
- He highlighted the critical role played by exports in the transition of India from developing nation to developed nation.
- **Where does India stand in global export?**
- In fiscal year 2020-21, **India's exports were at a total (goods and services)** of USD 670 billion. In 2021-22, India's merchandise exports crossed USD 418 billion as opposed to the target of USD 400 billion.
- Considering the success, the government has now increased its export targets and has doubled efforts to achieve them.
- **NIRYAT Portal**
- On the occasion, Prime Minister Modi also launched the NIRYAT Portal, which stands for “**National Import-Export Record for Yearly Analysis of Trade Portal**”.

- The portal has been developed as a one-stop platform for stakeholders, where they would get all necessary information related to foreign trade in India.
- It will **provide real time data to all stakeholders**. **NIRYAT portal** was launched with the aim of facilitating further strengthening of the financial sector of India in line with **3Ts namely Trade, Tourism and Technology**.

### **WORLD GOLD COUNCIL REPORT: INDIA RANKED 4TH**

- According to the **World Gold Council Report**, India has emerged as the 4th largest recycler in the world and the country **has recycled 75 tonnes in 2021**.
- According to the **WGC report titled 'Gold refining and recycling'**, China topped the global gold recycling chart as it recycled 168 tonnes of the yellow metal, followed by Italy in the second position with 80 tonnes and the **US in the third rank with 78 tonnes in 2021**.
- According to the **WGC report titled 'Gold refining and recycling'** from 300 tonnes in 2013, India's gold refining capacity increased by 1,500 tonnes (500 per cent) in 2021.
- The report further noted that the gold refining landscape in the country has changed over the last decade, **with the number of formal operations increasing from less than five in 2013 to 33 in 2021**.



### **COUNTRY'S 1ST EVER 'BALIKA PANCHAYAT'**

- The **country's first-ever, 'Balika Panchayat'**, has started in five villages of Gujarat's Kutch district. The initiative aims to promote the social and political development of the girls and ensure their active participation in politics.
- The **Panchayat has started in Kunaria, Maska, Motagua, and Vadsar villages of the Kutch district**. This initiative has been taken by the Women and Child Development Welfare Department of the Gujarat Government under the **'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' campaign**.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development is also planning to begin the girl panchayat across the country.
- **About the "Balika Panchayat"**: "Balika Panchayat" is managed by people in the 11-21 age group and its main objective is to promote the **social and political development of the girl child** and to remove the evil practices from the society such as child marriage, and the dowry system.
- The main objective of the panchayat is that the **girls should move forward in politics**. In Balika panchayat, the member is nominated just like Gram panchayat.



### **PM MODI ATTENDED G7 SUMMIT IN GERMANY**

- On June 27, 2022 **Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the G7 Summit** in Germany and asked the Group of Seven (G7) countries to consider investing in and promoting the emerging market for clean energy technologies in India.
- **German Chancellor Olaf Scholz** invited PM Modi to attend the G7 Summit 2022 as a partner country. Apart from **India, Argentina, Indonesia, Senegal and South Africa also took part in the summit, as partner countries**.
- **Impact of Russia-Ukraine War**
- PM Modi further noted, **Russia-Ukraine war** has pushed up energy prices worldwide. Main focus of the summit



was on obtaining energy since the world has been reeling **under a fuel crisis amid the Russia-Ukraine war.**

- **Group of Seven (G7)**
- G7 is an inter-governmental political forum, comprising **Canada, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, the United States and the United Kingdom.** Furthermore, the European Union is a 'non-enumerated member'.

## INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE

- The **International Day against Drug Abuse and Illegal Trafficking** is observed on June 26, 2022 every year.
- The day is observed with the aim of spreading awareness regarding the physical and psychological impact of drug overdose deaths, substance abuse and drugs-related problems worldwide. **Drug abuse is one of the biggest threats to health and society.**
- **According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC),** this day will help in addressing the issue of transnational drug challenges.
- **Theme of the day:** The International day against drug abuse and illegal trafficking 2022 was observed under the theme- "Addressing drug challenges in health and humanitarian crises." This theme addresses different challenges faced by the world.

## UNITED NATIONS OCEAN CONFERENCE 2022

- The **United Nations Ocean Conference 2022** was started from June 27, 2022 and will conclude on July 1, 2022.
- Leaders from **across the world have arrived in Capital of Portugal, Lisbon,** as the world is suffering from the impact of global warming and climate change.
- During the conference, world leaders will find an international agreement for protecting the world's ocean.
- **Host of the conference:** The Ocean Conference is being co-hosted by the Governments of **Kenya and Portugal.**
- PARAMESWARAN IYER AS NEW CEO OF NITI AAYOG
- On June 24, 2022, **retired IAS officer Parameswaran Iyer** was appointed as the new CEO of NITI Aayog, by the Union Government.
- **Parameshwaran Iyer is a 1981-batch IAS officer from UP cadre.** He will replace Amitabh Kant and become the third chief executive officer of the public policy think tank of the government.
- Parameshwaran Iyer was born in Srinagar. He went to Doon School in Dehradun. Later, went to St. Stephen's College in Delhi.
- **The NITI Aayog:** It is the apex public policy think tank of Government of India. **It is the nodal agency that catalyses economic development,** and fosters cooperative federalism by involving State Governments in the economic policy-making process.
- It uses a bottom-up approach. Some of the initiatives by **NITI Aayog include-15-year road map, AMRUT, Atal Innovation Mission, Digital India,** Indices Measuring Performance of States in Health, Education and Water Management, etc.
- It was established in 2015, after replacing the Planning Commission. The planning



commission used a top-down model.

## 'PARTNERS IN THE BLUE PACIFIC' INITIATIVE

- The United States and allied countries namely **Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the United Kingdom** have launched a new initiative called '**Partners in the Blue Pacific**'.
- This initiative was launched amid **China's aggressive push of increasing its influence in the Pacific**. Under the new initiative, countries will be involved in "effective and efficient cooperation" with small island nations of the region.
- ***About Partners in the Blue Pacific initiative***
- The **Partners in the Blue Pacific Initiative is a five-nation "informal mechanism"**, launched for supporting Pacific islands and for boosting economic and diplomatic ties in the region. This initiative was announced on June 24, 2022.
- It seeks to **enhance "prosperity, resilience, and security"** in the Pacific by closer cooperation among the member nations. Member countries would cooperate in areas including climate crisis, transportation, connectivity, health, maritime security & protection, prosperity and education.
- ***Pacific Islands Forum***
- Members of the new initiative have also declared to "**elevate Pacific regionalism**", as well to establish stronger ties with the Pacific Islands Forum. Countries announced that this forum will **remain open to cooperate with additional partners**.



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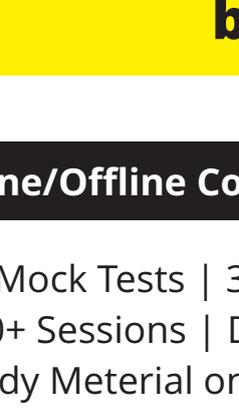
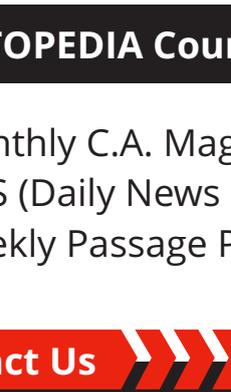
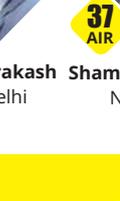
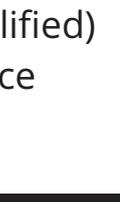
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