

# CLATOPEDIA

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE

## MARCH 2022

100 Years of  
Jallianwala Bagh Incident



India, Pakistan Ho  
6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Permo



Russia Withdrawin  
Support From ISS



WORLD  
WILDLIFE DAY  
3 MARCH



## NEWS EVENT

- National Events
- International Events
- Economic Affairs
- Report & Index
- Legal Affairs
- Science & Tech
- MISCELLANEOUS

# CLAT NEW PATTERN

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WHERE LAWYERS  
ARE BORN

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## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

### #PAR-TAPI-NARMADA RIVER LINKING PROJECT

Recently, some tribals have intensified their protest against the **Par-Tapi-Narmada river** linking project after it was mentioned in the **budget speech (2022-23)** of the finance minister.



- These projects had been **sanctioned in 2010**, when a **tripartite agreement** was signed between the Union government, Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- The Finance Minister in her **Budget Speech** said that **five river linking projects will be taken up** after consensus among states.
- The projects are **Damanganga-Pinjal, Par-Tapi-Narmada, Godavari-Krishna, Krishna-Pennar and Pennar-Cauveri**.
- The **Ken-Betwa is the first project** under the government's National Perspective Plan for river inter-linking.
- The **National River Linking Project (NRLP)** formally known as the National Perspective Plan, envisages the transfer of water from water 'surplus' basins where there is flooding, to water 'deficit' basins where there is drought/scarcity, through inter-basin water transfer projects.

### What is the Par-Tapi-Narmada River Linking Project?

- Par Tapi Narmada Link proposes to **transfer water from the water surplus regions of Western Ghats to the water deficit regions of Saurashtra and Kutch (Gujarat)**.
- The link project includes seven reservoirs **proposed in north Maharashtra and south Gujarat**.
- The water from the **seven proposed reservoirs would be taken through a 395 km long canal** to take over a part of the command of the on-going SardarSarovar Project (on Narmada), while irrigating small enroute areas.
- The **seven dams proposed in the scheme are** Jheri, Mohankavchali, Paikhed, Chasmandva, Chikkar, Dabdar and Kelwan.
- This would save **SardarSarovar water** which will be used to extend irrigation in Saurashtra and Kutch region.
- The link mainly **envisages construction of seven dams, three diversion weirs, two tunnels, 395 km long canal, 6 power houses and a number of cross-drainage works**.
- Besides providing **irrigation benefits to the enroute command** and Narmada command, the link will **generate hydropower** of the order of 93.00 Mkw through the power houses installed at four dam sites.
- The reservoirs will **also provide flood relief to the people** residing in downstream areas.

### What do we know about Narmada River?

- Narmada is the **largest west flowing river of the peninsular region** flowing through a rift valley between the Vindhya Range on the north and the Satpura Range on the south.
- It rises from **Maikala range near Amarkantak** in Madhya Pradesh.

- It drains a **large area in Madhya Pradesh** besides some areas in the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat.
- The river near **Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh)** forms the Dhuandhar Falls.
- There are several islands in the estuary of the Narmada of which Aliabet is the largest.
- **Major Tributaries:** Hiran, Orsang, the Barna and the Kolar.
- The major Hydro Power Projects in the basin are Indira Sagar, Sardar Sarovar etc.

### What do we know about the Tapi River?

- Another important westward flowing river **originates from the Betul district of Madhya Pradesh in the Satpura ranges.**
- It flows in a rift valley parallel to the Narmada but is much shorter in length.
- Its **basin covers parts of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra.**
- What do we know about the Par River?
- Par River is **a river in Gujarat with its source near wadpada village in Nashik Maharashtra.**
- It flows **into the Arabian Sea.**

### Ken Betwa Link Project (KBLP):

- The **Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP)** is the River interlinking project that **aims to transfer surplus water from the Ken river in MP to Betwa in UP to irrigate the drought-prone Bundelkhand region.**
- The region spread across the districts of two states mainly Jhansi, Banda, Lalitpur and Mahoba districts of UP and Tikamgarh, Panna and Chhatarpur districts of MP.
- The project involves building a 77-metre tall and a 2-km wide **Dhaudhan dam and a 230-km canal.**
- Ken-Betwa is **one of the 30 river interlinking projects** conceived across the country.
- The project has been **delayed due to political and environmental issues.**

### Advantage of Interlining of Rivers:

- **Reducing Drought:** River linking will be a solution to recurring droughts in Bundelkhand region.
- **Farmers' Benefit:** It will curb the rate of farmers suicide and will ensure them stable livelihood by providing sustainable means of irrigation and reducing excessive dependence on groundwater.
- **Electricity Production:** It will not only **accelerate the water conservation** by construction of a multipurpose dam but will also **produce 103 MW of hydropower** and will **supply drinking water to 62 lakh people.**
- **Rejuvenate Biodiversity:** Few are of the view that the introduction of dams inside the water scarce regions of **panna tiger reserve (MP)**, will rejuvenate the forests of the reserve that in turn will pave the way for Rich Biodiversity in the region.

## #NATIONAL DIGITAL TOURISM MISSION

- The draft report for setting up of **National Digital Tourism Mission** is published for feedback from the public. The tourism ministry has invited final comments on the draft report.
- The draft report highlighted that the tourism sector is highly fragmented and there are many challenges in subsectors of tourism such as transport, accommodation, restaurants, etc.
- However, **there are many opportunities in these sectors.**
- The draft report noted that the tourism sector is unable to reap the combinatorial benefits of information exchange because most of the tourism systems developed by the government and the private sector are currently functioning in silos.
- The current data systems don't interact with each other **using a common language, thereby hindering data analytics and the subsequent policy-making.**
- Thus, there is a need for seamless and standardized data exchange among various stakeholders of the tourism sector.



### About the National Digital Tourism Mission

- The **National Digital Tourism Mission** aims to bridge the current information gap among various stakeholders of the tourism sector with the help of a digital highway.
- The objective is to harness the full potential of digitization in the tourism sector by enabling the exchange of information and services.

### Implementing Agency:

- The projects identified under this scheme shall be implemented through the identified agencies by the respective State/ Union Territory Government.

### Objective:

- **Rejuvenation and spiritual augmentation of important national/ global pilgrimage and heritage sites.**
- **Follow community-based development and create awareness among the local communities.**
- **Integrated tourism development of heritage city, local arts, culture, handicrafts, cuisine, etc., to generate livelihood.**
- **Strengthen the mechanism for bridging the infrastructural gaps.**



## #GOVT. PREPARED DRAFT NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY

Recently, the Government has prepared the **Draft National Tourism Policy** focusing on **Green, and digital tourism** and has been sent to the industry partners, state governments, other allied ministries for feedback, before it is sent for approval.



- Earlier, the Ministry of Tourism has formulated **three draft strategies** with roadmaps for promoting Medical and Wellness Tourism, for development of Rural Tourism and for promotion of MICE Industry in India.

### What are the Key Points of the Draft Policy?

- **Industry Status to Sector:** To promote investment in the tourism sector, the document mentions granting of industry status to the sector, along with formally **granting infrastructure status to hotels**.
- **Five Key Areas:** Five key areas would be given significant focus in the next 10 years — **green tourism, digital tourism, destination management, skilling the hospitality sector and supporting tourism-related to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**.
- **Relief Measures and Taxation Breaks:** The industry, which has been the worst sufferer over the last two years of the **pandemic**, had sent multiple representations to the government representatives for relief measures as well as taxation breaks.

### Related Initiatives:

- Swadesh Darshan, a **Central Sector Scheme**, was **launched in 2014 -15** for integrated development of theme based tourist circuits in the country.
- This scheme is envisioned to synergise with other schemes like **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill India, Make in India** etc.
- Under the scheme, the **Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA)** to State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for infrastructure development of circuits.
- One of the objectives of the scheme is to **develop theme-based tourist circuits** on the principles of **high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability** in an integrated manner.
- **Tourism Circuits:** Under the scheme, **fifteen thematic circuits have been identified**- Buddhist Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Desert Circuit, Eco Circuit, Heritage Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Krishna Circuit, North East Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Sufi Circuit, Tirthankar Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Wildlife Circuit.

### PRASHAD Scheme:

- **Launch:** 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.

- The **name of the scheme was changed** from PRASAD to “National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)” in October 2017.
- **Implementing Agency:** The projects identified under this scheme shall be implemented through the identified agencies by the respective State/ Union Territory Government.
- **Iconic Tourist Sites:** Buddhist Sites at **Bodhgaya, Ajanta & Ellora** have been identified to be developed as **Iconic Tourist Sites** (aimed at enhancing India’s soft power).
- **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 was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in 2020 to encourage the citizens to travel widely within the country thus enabling the development of Domestic Tourism tourist facilities and infrastructure.

## #WHAT IS NEW HEALTH LAW BILL?

- The **process of finalizing the New Health Law Bill** has been started by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare as well as the other concerned Government Departments.
- The **New Health Law Draft Bill by the Government of India** will have various provisions, including the establishment of a four-tier health administration system with well-defined powers to the setting up a public health cadre as well as defining a lockdown.
- Once the draft of the New Health Law Bill is ready, it will be placed in the public domain for consultation before being sent to the Union Cabinet.
- The **National Public Health Bill** is expected to be introduced in the Monsoon Session of the Parliament.



## What is the New National Public Health Law?

- The proposed National Public Health Act by the Union Government has been in the works since 2017, and once the law is enacted, it will replace the 125-years old Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897.
- The new National Public Health Act will also cover the public health emergencies that are caused by natural disasters, bioterrorism, chemical or nuclear attacks, or terrorism.

## What is 4-tier Health Administration Architecture System?

- The **New Health Law Draft Bill proposes a 4-tier Health Administration** Architecture System. Under it, there will be multisectoral national, state, district, and block-level public health authorities who will have well-defined powers and the functions to deal with public health emergencies.

## National Public Health Law: Background

- The Health Ministry of India in 2017 had released the draft of the **Public Health (Prevention, Control, and Management of Epidemics, Bio-terrorism, and Disasters) Act, 2017**.

- Later in September 2020, the then **Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan** announced in the Indian Parliament that a government will formulate a new National Public Health Law.

## #LAUNCH OF SUJALAM 2.0 CAMPAIGN

- On **23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022**, the **Sujalam 2.0** campaign was launched by Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, the Union Minister of Jal Shakti.
- This campaign has been launched for greywater management. The launch event was held virtually by the Ministry of **JalShakti's Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS)**.



### Overview:

- **9 Ministries signed a joint advisory to look into how greywater management** can be planned based on the convergence model along with those who are associated directly in the implementation of this programme.
- M/o Rural Development, M/o Jal Shakti, M/o Youth Affairs and Sports, M/o Women & Child Development, M/o Health and Family Welfare, M/o Tribal Affairs, M/o Environment, Forest and Climate Change, M/o Education, and M/o Panchayati Raj are the nine ministries that signed the joined advisory.

### The theme for this campaign

- **'Groundwater: making the invisible visible'** is the theme for this campaign.

### The objective of this campaign

- The Sujlam 2.0 campaign was launched with the objective of managing greywater through the participation of the people. Under this campaign, there are plans to **mobilize communities such as schools, panchayats, and anganwadis to help in greywater management**.
- **Funds for greywater management** will be provided from the Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin Phase II or through grants under the 15th Finance Commission as well as the MGNREGS or through the convergence between all of them.

## #WORLD WATER DAY: 22<sup>ND</sup> MARCH

**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)**.

### History:

- The idea for this international day goes back to 1992, the year in which the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro took place.
- That same year, the **United Nations General Assembly** adopted a **resolution** by which 22nd March of each year was declared World Day for Water, to be observed **starting in 1993**.
- Later on, other celebrations and events were added. For instance, the **International Year of Cooperation in the Water Sphere 2013** and the current **International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028**.

### Other Important Days :

- **22 March: World Water Day**
- **22 April: Earth Day**
- **22 May: World Biodiversity Day**

### What does the UN World Water Development Report 2022 say?

- Groundwater, which accounts for 99% of all liquid freshwater, has the potential to provide societies with tremendous social, economic and environmental benefits and opportunities.
- The groundwater already provides **almost half of the total water used for domestic purposes including drinking water**. The water resource has though been mismanaged, undervalued and abused.
- The report describes **groundwater to be central to the fight against poverty** and achieving food and water security and even the creation of jobs and socio-economic development.
- **The Asia-Pacific region is the largest groundwater abstractor in the world**, containing seven out of the ten countries that extract most groundwater (Bangladesh, China, **India**, Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey).
- These countries alone **account for roughly 60% of the world's total groundwater withdrawal**.
- The **present dependence on groundwater will only increase due to increasing water demand** by all sectors and increasing disruption in rainfall patterns.
- The report states that it all starts with **making the invisible visible** and the action would require strong and concerted efforts to manage and use it sustainably.

### About:

- The awards are organised by the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- The Jal Shakti Ministry had launched the first '**National Water Award**' in **2018**.
- They **facilitate a good opportunity for the start-ups** as well as the leading organisations to engage with the senior policymakers on adopting the best water resources management practises in India.
- They 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:

- To **motivate individuals/organisations who are doing commendable work** in the field of water resources conservation and management.
- To **create awareness among the people about the importance of water** and encourage them to adopt the best water usage practises.

### Jal Shakti Mantralaya

- The government has created a new Ministry called '**Jal Shakti**' after merging **Ministries of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation** along with **Drinking Water and Sanitation**.
- '**Jal Shakti**' ministry will encompass issues ranging from providing **clean drinking water**, international and inter-states water disputes, to the NamamiGange project aimed at cleaning Ganga and its tributaries, and sub-tributaries.
- The ministry will roll out the government's ambitious **plan ('Nal se Jal' scheme** under jaljivan plan) to provide **pipd water connection** to every household in India by **2024**.

### #BORDER PACT SIGNED BETWEEN ASSAM & MEGHALAYA

- A border agreement was signed between Assam and Meghalaya on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022. With this newly signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), Meghalaya will be gaining 18.33 square kilometers and Assam will be gaining 18.46 sq km out of the total of 36.79 sq km. in **6 out of 12 areas of differences that were resolved between the two states**.
- This MoU was signed between HimantaBiswaSarma, the Chief Minister of Assam, and Meghalaya chief minister Conrad K Sangma.
- Amit Shah, the Union Home Minister was also present during this signing.



- The **boundary dispute** has been going on between both states for a long period of time and over the years 50 meetings have been conducted to resolve this issue.

### About the MoU

- The MoU will be considered to be a full and final agreement in respect of the six areas of difference.

- The areas mentioned are approximate in nature based on a **table-top exercise conducted using spatial technologies**.
- It will be more accurately determined during the Survey of India's detailed survey for the demarcation and delineation of the boundary that will be conducted in the presence of representatives from both the state's respective governments.
- **Purpose of the MoU:** This MoU has been signed to settle the case of the inter-state boundary between Meghalaya and Assam with respect to 6 of the 12 areas of difference.

### Assam and Meghalaya border dispute

- Assam and Meghalaya share an **885-km-long border**. As of now, there are **12 points of dispute along their borders**.
- The Assam-Meghalaya border dispute are the areas of Upper Tarabari, Gazang reserve forest, Hahim, Langpih, Borduar, Boklapara, Nongwah, Matamur, Khanapara-Pilangkata, Deshdemoreah Block I and Block II, Khanduli and Retacherra.
- Meghalaya was carved out of Assam under the **Assam Reorganisation Act, 1971**, a law that it challenged, leading to disputes.

### Major Point of Contention:

- A major point of contention between Assam and Meghalaya is the **district of Langpih in West Garo Hills** bordering the Kamrup district of Assam.
- Langpih was part of the Kamrup district during the British colonial period but post-Independence, it became part of the **Garo Hills** and Meghalaya.
- Assam considers it to be part of the **Mikir Hills in Assam**.
- Meghalaya has questioned Blocks I and II of the Mikir Hills -now KarbiAnglong region - being part of Assam. Meghalaya says these were parts of erstwhile United Khasi and Jaintia Hills districts.

### Efforts to Resolve Disputes:

- Both Assam and Meghalaya have constituted **border dispute settlement committees**.
- It has been decided to set up **two regional committees to resolve the border disputes** in a phased manner and five aspects will be considered while resolving the border dispute.
- They are **historical facts, ethnicity, administrative convenience, mood and sentiments** of the people concerned and the contiguity of the land.
- Six sites are in consideration in the first phase. These are Tarabari, Gijang, Hahim, Baklapara, Khanapara-Pilangkata and Ratacherra.
- These disputed areas are part of **Cachar, Kamrup Metro and Kamrup Rural** on Assam's side and **West Khasi Hills, Ri Bhoi district and East Jaintia Hills** on Meghalaya's side.

### Assam and Border Issues:

- The states of the **Northeast were largely carved out of Assam**, which has border disputes with several states.

- Assam's border disputes with **Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland** are pending in the **Supreme Court**.
- Assam's **border disputes with Mizoram** are currently in the **phase of resolution** through negotiations.

- Other Border Disputes between Different States:**
- Belagavi Border Dispute** (between Karnataka and Maharashtra)
- Odisha's Border Disputes**

## #SIKKIM LAUNCHED 'BAHINI SCHEME'

The Sikkim government is **set to announce a scheme (Bahini)** to **install vending machines to provide free sanitary pads**.

- This is the **first time that a state government** has taken a decision to cover all girls studying in Classes 9-12.



### What is the Purpose of the Scheme?

- It aims at providing **"100% access to free and safe sanitary pads to secondary and senior secondary school going girls"**.
- It is also aimed to **curb dropout of girls from schools** and raise awareness about menstrual hygiene.
- The scheme is based on an **experiment the state government initiated in 2018**, in collaboration with **Sulabh International**, where vending machines were installed in some schools.
- Sulabh International is an **India-based social service organization** that works to **promote human rights, environmental sanitation, non-conventional sources** of energy, waste management and social reforms through education.

### Menstrual Hygiene Scheme

- The major objectives of the Menstrual Hygiene Scheme is:
- To increase awareness among adolescent girls on Menstrual Hygiene
- To increase access to and use of high quality sanitary napkins to adolescent girls in rural areas.
- To ensure safe disposal of Sanitary Napkins in an environmentally friendly manner

### Rashtriya Kishor SwasthyaKaryakram

- The major objectives objective of RKSK is:
- Improve Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Enhance Mental Health
- Prevent Injuries and violence
- Prevent substance misuse

### National Family Health Survey (NFHS):

- The **NFHS** is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India.



- **Conducted By:** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) has designated the **International Institute for Population Sciences(IIPS) Mumbai**, as the **nodal agency** for providing coordination and technical guidance for the survey.
- IIPS collaborates with a number of Field Organizations (FO) for survey implementation.
- **Goals:** Each successive round of the NFHS has had two specific goals:
  - To provide essential data on health and family welfare needed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and other agencies for policy and programme purposes.
  - To provide information on important emerging health and family welfare issues.
- **Funding:** The funding for different rounds of NFHS has been provided by **USAID, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, UNICEF, UNFPA, and MoHFW (Government of India)**.

## #MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES LAUNCHED 'DOM'

Recently, the Ministry of Earth Sciences has launched the **Deep Ocean Mission (DOM)**.

- DOM is a mission mode project to support the Blue Economy Initiatives of the Government of India.
- Earlier, the Ministry of Earth Sciences had also rolled out the draft **Blue Economy Policy**.
- **Blue Economy** is the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and **ocean ecosystem health**.



## What are the Major Components of DOM?

- **Development of Manned Submersible Vehicle:** A manned submersible will be developed to carry three people to a depth of 6,000 metres in the ocean with a suite of scientific sensors and tools.
- NIOT & ISRO is jointly developing a **Manned Submersible Vehicle**.
- **National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)**, an autonomous institute under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- **Leveraging Ocean Resources:** Oceans, which cover **70% of the globe**, remain a key part of our life. About 95% of the **Deep Ocean remains unexplored**.
- Three sides of India are surrounded by the oceans and around **30% of the country's population lives in coastal areas**, the ocean is a major economic factor supporting fisheries and aquaculture, tourism, livelihoods and blue trade.
- Considering the importance of the oceans on sustainability, the UN has declared the decade, 2021-2030 as the **Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development**.

## What are other Blue Economy Initiatives

- **India-Norway Task Force on Blue Economy for Sustainable Development:** It was inaugurated jointly by both the countries in 2020 to **develop and follow up joint initiatives between the two countries**.
- **Sagarmala Project:** The **Sagarmala project** is the strategic initiative for **port-led development** through the extensive use of IT-enabled services for the modernization of ports.



- **O-SMART:** India has an umbrella scheme by the name of **O-SMART** which aims at regulated use of oceans, marine resources for sustainable development.
- **Integrated Coastal Zone Management:** It focuses on the conservation of coastal and marine resources, improving livelihood opportunities for coastal communities etc.
- **National Fisheries Policy:** India has a **National Fisheries policy** for promoting the '**Blue Growth Initiative**' which focuses on sustainable utilisation of fisheries wealth from marine and other aquatic resources.

## 37<sup>TH</sup> FOUNDATION DAY OF NCRB

Recently the **37<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** was celebrated (11th March 1986).

### What is the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)?

- NCRB, headquartered in New Delhi, was set-up in 1986 under the **Ministry of Home Affairs** to function as a repository of information on crime and criminals so as to assist the investigators in linking crime to the perpetrators.
- It was set up based **on the recommendations of the National Police Commission (1977-1981)** and the **MHA's Task Force (1985)**.



### Functions:

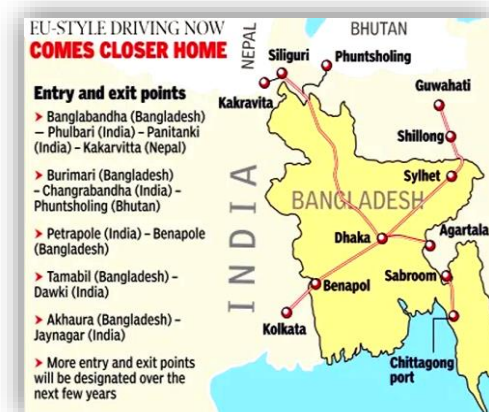
- The Bureau has been entrusted to maintain **National Database of Sexual Offenders (NDSO)** and share it with the **States/UTs on regular basis**.
- NCRB has also been **designated as the Central Nodal Agency** to manage technical and operational functions of the '**Online Cyber-Crime Reporting Portal**' through which any citizen can lodge a complaint or upload a video clip as an evidence of crime related to child pornography, rape/gang rape.
- The responsibility of implementation of the **Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS)** has also been given to the NCRB.
- ICJS is a **national platform for enabling** integration of the main IT system used for delivery of Criminal Justice in the country.
- It seeks to integrate the **five pillars of the system** viz Police (through Crime and **Criminal Tracking and Network Systems**), e-Forensics for Forensic Labs, **e-Courts** for Courts, e-Prosecution for Public Prosecutors and **e-Prisons** for Prisons.
- The Government of India has set a target of the second phase of ICJS (Inter-operable Criminal Justice System) by 2026 with an expenditure of about Rs. 3,500 crore.
- **Major Publications:**
  - **Crimes in India**
  - **Accidental Deaths and Suicides**
  - **Prison Statistics**
  - **Reports on Missing Women and children in India**

## #BBIN MOTOR VEHICLES AGREEMENT

Recently, India, Bangladesh and Nepal finalised an enabling memorandum of understanding (MoU) for implementing the long-gestating **Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA)**.

### What is the BBIN connectivity Project?

- **Background:** The project was conceived after the **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)** failed to agree on a regional motor vehicles agreement at a **summit in Nepal in 2014**, mainly because of opposition from Pakistan.
- **Origin:** The **BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement for the Regulation of Passenger, Personal and Cargo Vehicular Traffic** between the 4 countries was signed during a transport ministers' meeting in **Thimpu on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015**.
- **Objective:** Operationalising the MVA by concluding the **Passenger and the Cargo Protocol** will help realise the full potential of trade and **people to people connectivity** between the BBIN countries by **fostering greater sub-regional cooperation**.
- **Bhutan's Reluctance:** The BBIN project suffered a setback in **2017 when Bhutan temporarily** opted out of it after being unable to get parliamentary approval for the MVA.
- The **3 other countries** decided at the time to press ahead with the agreement.
- **Foreign Funding:** The **Asian Development Bank** has supported the project as part of its **South Asian Subregional Economic Cooperation programme**, and has been requested to prioritise about 30 road projects worth billions of dollars.
- The **World Bank**, which has estimated that the implementation of the MVA will potentially see an increase in traffic-regional trade within South Asia by nearly 60%, has also announced its interest in supporting infrastructure.
- **Persisting Issues:** There are still some agreements holding up the final protocols, including issues like insurance and bank guarantees, and the size and frequency of freight carriers into each country, which they hope to finalise this year before operationalizing bus and truck movements between them.



### What are the concerns of Bhutan?

- The objections of Bhutan pertain to **sustainability and environmental concerns**.
- In 2020, Prime Minister LotayTshering held that given **Bhutan's "current infrastructure" and top priority to remaining a "carbon-negative" country**, it would not be possible to consider joining the MVA.
- Thus, the Bhutanese parliament decided not to endorse the plan.

### RELATED: What are the Similar Connectivity Initiatives?

- **Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Corridor**

- The **2800 km BCIM corridor** proposes to link **Kunming in China's Yunnan province** with **Kolkata**, passing through nodes such as **Mandalay in Myanmar** and **Dhaka in Bangladesh** before heading to Kolkata.
- ***China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC)***
- The **1,700-km corridor** provides China another node to access the Indian Ocean.
- The CMEC will run from **Yunnan Province of China to Mandalay in Central Myanmar**.
- From there it will head towards Yangon, before terminating at the Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone (SEZ) on the Bay of Bengal.
- The **CMEC will reduce Beijing's trade and energy reliance on the Malacca straits** — the narrow passage that links the Indian Ocean with the Pacific.
- China is worried that US Naval domination over the Malacca straits can threaten one of China's major economic lifeline.
- ***Nepal-China Trans-Himalayan Multi-dimensional Connectivity Network***
- The Nepal-China Trans-Himalayan connectivity network starting from Chengdu, from where it is linked to Tibet by the **Sichuan-Tibet Highway and Railway**.
- China has visualized that that **railway can eventually be connected with the Indian railway network**, linking China and India across the Himalayas.

### China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

- The CPEC is a bilateral project between Pakistan and China, intended to promote connectivity across Pakistan with a network of highways, railways, and pipelines accompanied by energy, industrial, and other infrastructure development projects.
- **CPEC links the Western part of China to the Gwadar Port in Balochistan**, Pakistan running some 3000 km from **Xinjiang to Balochistan via Khunjerab Pass** in the Northern Parts of Pakistan.

### Look East Policy

- In order to recover from the loss of the strategic partner -USSR (end of the Cold war 1991), India sought to build up a relationship with the USA and allies of the USA in Southeast Asia.
- In this pursuit, former Prime minister of India P V Narasimha Rao launched Look East policy in 1992, to give a strategic push to India's engagement with South-East Asia region.

### How Act East is different from Look East policy?

- Look East policy focused on the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries + Economic Integration**.
- India became a dialogue partner of ASEAN in 1996 and summit level partner in 2002.
- In 2012 the relationship got up-graded into a **Strategic Partnership in 2012**.
- The time when India launched Look East Policy in 1992, India's trade with ASEAN was \$2 billion. After signing the Free Trade Agreement in 2010 with ASEAN, the trade has grown to \$72 billion (2017-18).
- India is also an active participant in several regional forums like the **East Asia Summit (EAS)**, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) etc.

- Act East Policy focused on **ASEAN countries + Economic Integration + East Asian countries + Security cooperation.**
- Prime minister of India highlighted **4C's of Act East Policy.**
- Culture
- Commerce
- Connectivity
- Capacity building
- **Security** is an important dimension of **India's Act East Policy.**

## #INDIA 1<sup>ST</sup> WOMEN OWNED INDUSTRIAL PARKS

- Commemorating the **International Women's Day 2022** on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022, India's first 100 percent women-owned industrial park was opened in Hyderabad, Telangana. Telangana Industries Minister KT Rama Rao inaugurated this park.
- With 25 women-owned and operated Green Projects, this industrial park has begun its operations.

- The FLO Industrial Park is named after the **FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO)**, which is promoting it in association with the Telangana government.



- The **FLO Industrial Park**, covers 50 acres and cost Rs 250 crore to build.
- An expansion of 100 acres of the FLO women industrial park has also been promised by the Industries Minister subject to the park's focus on various novel products.
- It is the nation's flagship as well as the first-of-its-kind project.
- **FLO chapter members and national members are also welcome to participate.**
- The park has also established amenities, such as creches and playschools, to provide a home-like atmosphere for women while keeping in mind the needs of working women entrepreneurs.
- In Phase II, the FLO wants to establish similar multi-industry women industrial parks **across the country, as well as a centre of excellence for skill development.**

## About FICCI Ladies Organization

- The **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry's (FICCI)** women wing is named FICCI Ladies Organization. FICCI is the top body of commerce and industry in India.
- In 1983 FLO was established. Its members include corporate executives, professionals, and entrepreneurs.
- **FLO, with its head office located in New Delhi**, is an all India organization and has 18 chapters across the nation including New Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Mumbai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Lucknow, Jaipur, Indore, Coimbatore, Pune, Kanpur, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Uttarakhand, and Northeast.

## #HARYANA: SUSHMA SWARAJ AWARD

- **Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar of Haryana** while presenting the state budget has announced a '**Sushma Swaraj Award**' for women for their significant achievements or contribution in different walks of life in the international and national spheres.
- The **Sushma Swaraj Award** will carry award money of **Rs 5 lakh** along with a commendation.



### About Sushma Swaraj

- **Sushma Swaraj** was a lawyer of the Supreme Court as well as an Indian politician. She was a senior member of the **Bharatiya Janata Party**, served as India's Minister of External Affairs during the first Narendra Modi government (2014–2019).
- After Indira Gandhi, she was the second woman to occupy this position. **She was elected seven times as a Member of Parliament and three times as a Member of Legislative Assembly.**
- In 1977, at the age of 25, she became the youngest cabinet minister in the state of Haryana. She also served as Delhi's 5th Chief Minister for a brief period in 1998, and also became the city's first female Chief Minister. The US daily Wall Street Journal called her India's "best-loved politician".

### Other important announcements in the budget

- A populist budget of Rs 177,256 crore for 2022-23, was proposed which is an increase of 15.6 percent over this fiscal of Rs 153,384 crore. 34.4 percent (Rs 61,057.36 crore) of the budget has been allocated to capital expenditures, while 65.6 percent (Rs 16,198.63 crore) **has been allocated to revenue expenditures.**
- Tablets for all students in class 10 to 12, a scheme to help women entrepreneurs with soft loans, **and the establishment of three dedicated funds to accelerate growth in different sectors have all been announced.**
- A research and innovation fund **to promote scientific activity**, a climate and sustainable development fund to **achieve green development objectives** along with scholarships in educational institutions and universities, and a venture capital fund to encourage entrepreneurship, were also announced in the budget.

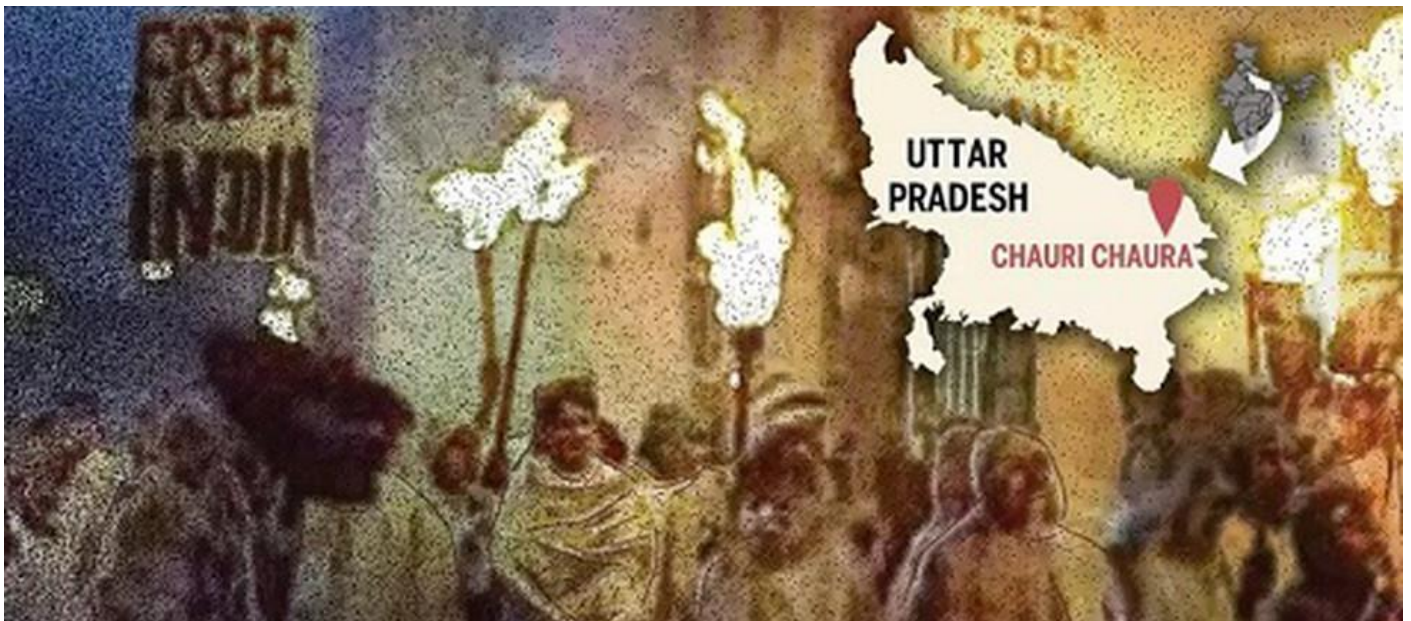


## #100 YEARS OF CHAURI CHAURA INCIDENT

- On 4 February 2021, Prime Minister Modi **inaugurated 'Chauri Chaura'** Centenary Celebrations at Chauri Chaura, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh and released a postal stamp dedicated to the event via video conferencing.

### Chauri Chaura Incident

- On 2 February 1922, **Non-cooperation Movement** was led by a retired Army soldier Bhagwan Ahir **against high food prices and liquor sale**. The **protestors** were beaten by the local police and **several leaders were imprisoned** at the Chauri Chaura police station.
- In response to this incident, **around 2,000 to 2,500 protesters assembled at Chauri Chaura**, Gorakhpur district of the United Province, British India (present-day Uttar Pradesh, India) and **began marching towards the market on 4 February 1922**.
- They picketed a liquor shop following which their leader was beaten and imprisoned.
- A group of **protestors gathered in front of the local police station, demanding the release of their leader** while another **group continued marching towards the market and raised anti-government slogans**. In an attempt to **disperse the protestors**, the police fired shots in the air which worsened the situation as **protestors began throwing stones at the police**.



- To control the situation, **the sub-inspector in charge ordered the police to open fire on the advancing crowd--** killing three and injuring others. In the ensuing chaos, the **heavily outnumbered police get back to the police station while the angry mob advanced and set the police station ablaze, killing all of its occupants**. The incident resulted in the **death of 22 policemen**.
- In view of this incident, **Martial law was imposed by the British administration in and around the Chauri Chaura area**. **Raids were also conducted** and hundreds of people were arrested in response to the killing of policemen.
- On 12 February 1922, reacting upon the incident, Mahatma Gandhi halted the non-cooperation movement at the national level.

- In connection with the incident, **Mahatma Gandhi was also arrested and sentenced to six years of imprisonment.** However, he was **later released on grounds of ill health in February 1924.**

### Background of the Surat Split

- **The years from 1885-1905** was known as the period of the moderates because they dominated the Indian National Congress. The Moderates used **petition, prayers, meetings, leaflets, pamphlets, memorandum and delegations to present their demands to the British government.**
- Their only notable achievements were expansion of the legislative council by the Indian Councils Act of 1892. This created dissatisfaction among the people. The 1907 INC meeting was to be held in Nagpur. The Extremists wanted leaders were not released till that date. Some of the new extremists came into being with the same policy of prior extremists. The Moderates **supported Rash Bihari Ghosh. Gopal Krishna Gokhale** moved the meeting place from Nagpur to Surat fearing that in **Nagpur, Bal Gangadhar Tilak** would win. The partition of Bengal drove the rise of extremism in INC.
- An INC meeting was shifted from Nagpur to Surat. Since Surat was in the **home province of Bal Gangadhar Tilak**, he could not preside over the meeting. But what outraged the extremists was that he was not even given permission to speak. This led to a violent altercation between the two factions and the meeting being cancelled.
- The Moderates and the Extremists patched up their differences for a year, but in 1907 the two groups permanently split.

### Important Points regarding the Surat Split

- **The dream of a 'Surat Split' was already conceived by Curzon when he made the statement 'Congress was tottering to its fall and one of the biggest ambitions in my life is to give it a peaceful demise'.**
- The Surat split was a big jolt to the Indian National Congress. In fact, the difference between the moderates and the extremists presented an opportunity to the British.
- The moderates were quite reluctant to pass the motion on the demand for Swaraj. **The Arya-samajist notion of Swaraj and Swadeshi**, was the hallmark of the programme of the extremists.
- In the initial days, there were many Congress leaders who opposed the notion of Swaraj, the demand for Swaraj, and extremist politics, but in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, some of the veteran Congress leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, and G.K. Gokhale, had the word, 'Swaraj' in their minds.

### For Example,

- **In 1905 (Banaras Session of the INC):** Gokhale was the President and for the first time he had a discussion over 'Swaraj'.
- **In 1906,** Dadabhai Naoroji (who was the President of the INC session at Calcutta), and in his Presidential address, used the word Swaraj. Thus, the word, 'Swaraj' wasn't untouchable to them, but they were reluctant to pass the resolution over 'Swaraj'.
- **In 1907, Surat Session:** The two main objectives placed by the extremists were that:
  - Demand for the resolution of Swaraj
  - Lala Lajpat Rai to be made the President of the INC
- **These two demands were not acceptable to the moderates.** Thus, instead of Lala Lajpat Rai (November 17 1928), the moderates supported the idea of Rash Behari Ghosh as the President. This was the first time that there was to be an election in the INC for Presidentship. In between the election, the extremists were expelled from the INC, and the moderates had complete command over the affairs of the INC. Rash Behari Ghosh became the President of the Surat session.

- **The Surat split was a victory of the British policy of Divide and Rule**, and after a long time, the British believed that they were in control of the affairs of the moderates over the INC.
- In 1909: Separate electorates were granted to the Muslim community during a time when the Congress was at its lowest ebb. The most critical and vocal elements were not a part of the INC. Thus the British had taken absolute advantage over the INC.
- **Satyagraha Movements in India:** Mahatma Gandhi believed that the dharma of non-violence could unite all Indians.
- In **1916** he travelled to **Champaran in Bihar** to inspire the peasants to struggle against the **oppressive plantation system**.
- In **1917**, he organised a satyagraha to **support the peasants of the Kheda district of Gujarat**. Affected by crop failure and a plague epidemic, the peasants of Kheda could not pay the revenue, and were demanding that revenue collection be relaxed.
- In **1918**, he went to **Ahmedabad** to organise a satyagraha movement amongst **cotton mill workers**.
- In **1919**, he decided to launch a **nationwide satyagraha against the proposed Rowlatt Act (1919)**.
- The Act gave the government enormous powers to repress political activities, and allowed detention of political prisoners without trial for two years.
- On **13<sup>th</sup> April, 1919** the infamous **Jallianwalla Bagh incident** took place. Seeing violence spread, Mahatma Gandhi **called off the movement (18<sup>th</sup> April, 1919)**.

### Khilafat (Caliphate) Issue

- **Turkey's Alliance against British:** The Muslims all over the world, including India, regarded the sultan of Turkey as their spiritual leader, Khalifa (Caliph).
- During the First World War, Turkey had allied with Germany and Austria against the British.
- **Discontented Indian Muslims:** The Indian Muslims supported the government during the First World War with an understanding that the sacred places of Ottoman Empire would be in the hands of Khalifa.
- However, after the War, the **Ottoman Empire was divided, Turkey was dismembered and the Khalifa was removed from power**.
- This angered the Muslims who took it as an insult to the Khalifa. The Ali brothers, **Shoukat Ali and Mohammad Ali** started the Khilafat Movement against the British government.
- This movement took place between 1919 and 1924.
- **Khilafat Committee:** In early 1919, the **All India Khilafat Committee** was formed under the leadership of the **Ali brothers, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Ajmal Khan and Hasrat Mohani**, to force the British Government to change its attitude to Turkey.
- Thus, the grounds for a country-wide agitation was prepared.
- An **All India Khilafat Conference** was held in Delhi in November 1919 and the call was made to boycott the British goods.
- **Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22):** At the **Calcutta session of the Congress in September 1920**, he convinced other leaders of the need to start a non-cooperation movement in **support of Khilafat as well as for swaraj**.
- At the **Congress session at Nagpur in December 1920**, the Non-Cooperation programme was adopted.
- In Feb **1922**, Mahatma Gandhi decided to withdraw the Non-Cooperation Movement after the Chauri-Chaura incident.

- **The Salt March and the Civil Disobedience Movement:** For several years after the Non-cooperation Movement ended, Mahatma Gandhi focused on his social reform work.
- In **1930**, Gandhiji declared that he would lead a march to **break the salt law**.
- According to this law, the state had a monopoly on the manufacture and sale of salt.
- The march was over 240 miles, from Gandhi's ashram in Sabarmati to the Gujarati coastal town of Dandi, where they broke the government law by gathering natural salt found on the seashore, and boiling sea water to produce salt.
- This **marked the beginning of the Civil Disobedience Movement**.
- In 1931, Gandhi accepted a truce (**the Gandhi-Irwin Pact**), called off civil disobedience, and agreed to attend the **Second Round Table Conference** in London as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress.
- After returning from London, Mahatma Gandhi relaunched the Civil Disobedience Movement. For over a year, the movement continued, but **by 1934 it lost its momentum**.

### Government of India Act 1935

- The Constitution of 1950 was a by-product of the legacy started by the Government of India Act 1935. This was the longest act passed by the British government with 321 sections and 10 schedules. This act had drawn its content from four sources – Report of the Simon Commission, discussions and deliberations at the Third Round Table Conference, the White Paper of 1933 and the reports of the Joint select committees.
- This act abolished the system of provincial dyarchy and suggested the establishment of dyarchy at the centre and a 'Federation of India' consisting of the provinces of British India and most of the princely states.
- Most importantly, the act established the office of the Governor; all the executive powers and authority of the centre was vested in the Governor.
- Some features of the Government of India Act 1935 were:
- **Federal Legislature:** The act suggested that the legislature will have two houses, i.e., the Council of States and a Federal Assembly. **The Council of States** was the upper house which was a permanent body with a tenure of three years and composed of 260 members of which 156 were representatives of British India and 101 of the Princely Indian states.
- **The Federal Assembly** was the lower house with a tenure expanding up to five years and its composition included 250 representatives of British India and 125 members from Princely states.
- **Provincial Autonomy:** This act enabled the Provincial Governments to be responsible only to Provincial Legislatures and helped them break free from external control and intrusion.
- It was with the establishment of this act that the powers between the centre and provinces were divided in terms of **three lists** – Federal list (59 items for the Centre), Provincial list (54 items for Provinces) and Concurrent list (36 items for both). The Residuary powers were handed over to the Viceroy.

### Quit India Movement:

- With the outbreak of **World War II (1939-45)**, the nationalist struggle in India entered its last crucial phase.
- The failure of the mission of **Sir Stafford Cripps**, a British cabinet minister who went to India in March 1942 with an offer that Gandhi found unacceptable, the British equivocation on the transfer of power to Indian hands, and the encouragement given by high British officials to conservative and communal forces promoting discord between Muslims and Hindus impelled Gandhi to demand in the summer of **1942** an immediate British withdrawal from India—what became **known as the Quit India Movement**.



## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

### #PM MODI IN QUAD LEADERS' VIRTUAL MEETING

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in a **Quad Leaders' virtual meeting** along with US President Joe Biden, **Australian PM Scott Morrison**, and **Japanese PM Fumio Kishida**.

- The **Quad Leaders** will also review ongoing efforts to implement the Leaders' initiatives announced as part of the Quad's contemporary and positive agenda.

- The QUAD leaders will have an opportunity to continue their dialogue after the September 2021 Summit in Washington DC. The meeting was not previously scheduled, as Japan is scheduled to host the next in-person summit of the Quad in the first half of 2022.
- The **four QUAD nations** are yet to finalise a date for this meeting due to a variety of scheduling reasons.



### Key Agenda

- **The main agenda of the current virtual summit is to discuss developments in the Indo-Pacific.** MEA said in a statement that the virtual summit will provide the leaders with an opportunity to continue their dialogue and they will exchange views about important developments in the Indo-Pacific.

### Significance

- **The QUAD leaders' virtual summit will be held at the backdrop of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.**
- The agenda, however, does not include the Ukraine crisis. India had chosen to abstain three times in a vote against Russia at the United Nations, while other three QUAD members had voted in favour of Ukraine. India has though repeatedly urged Russia to cease its military operations in Ukraine.

### Background

- The **QUAD leaders had met last in September 2021 at Washington DC.**
- The latest meeting comes as the United States and its Western allies are leading the international community in bringing crippling **sanctions against the Vladimir Putin-led Russian regime.**

### #QUAD FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING AT MELBOURNE

- On 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022, Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar attended the **Fourth Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting held at Melbourne – Australia.**
- The meeting was attended by his counter parts from **US, Australia and Japan.**
- At the **4<sup>th</sup> Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting**, EAM Jaishankar called for a free and open Indo-Pacific and urged member nations to work towards ensuring a rule-based international order.

### Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting

- Australia is hosting the 4<sup>th</sup> Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting in Melbourne. Foreign Ministers from all 4



members' nations of Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) – i.e., Australia, India, Japan and the United States are meeting to discuss global order and rising geo-political and geo-economic challenges in the global order.

- Australia was being re-presented by Foreign Minister Marise Payne who was joined by Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs Hayashi Yoshimasa, and **United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken**.

### EAM's Jaishankar 1<sup>st</sup> Official Visit to Australia

- **External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar** is also on his 1<sup>st</sup> Official Visit to Australia from 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> February 2022. During his visit, Mr Jaishankar will also co-chair the 12th Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2022.
- On 12<sup>th</sup> February, Foreign Ministers of India and Australia will also co-chair the inaugural Foreign Ministers' Cyber Framework Dialogue (FMCDF) with **Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne**.
- During the dialogue, ministers will assess the implementation of India-Australia Framework Arrangement on Cyber and Cyber-Enabled Critical Technology Cooperation which was signed in June 2022 by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison**.

### RELATED: 1<sup>ST</sup> IN-PERSON QUAD SUMMIT

The first in-person meeting of **Quad** leaders was hosted by the US. Issues like climate change, Covid-19 pandemic and challenges in the Indo Pacific, amidst China's growing military presence in the strategic region, were discussed in the meeting.

### Background:

- In **November 2017**, **India, Japan, the US and Australia** gave shape to the long-pending proposal of **setting up the Quad** to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence.
- **China claims nearly all of the disputed South China Sea**, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of it.
- The South China Sea is an arm of the Western Pacific Ocean.
- In **2020**, the trilateral **India-US-Japan Malabar naval exercises expanded to include Australia**, marking the first official grouping of the Quad since its resurgence in 2017.
- Further, it is the first joint military exercises among the four countries in over a decade.
- In **March 2021**, the **Quad leaders met virtually** and later released a joint statement titled '**The Spirit of the Quad**,' which outlined the group's approach and objectives.
- Further, just before this meeting, the US has announced a new trilateral security partnership for the Indo-Pacific, between **Australia, the UK and the US (AUKUS)**.
- **Major Highlights of the Quad Summit:**
- Discussed **Afghanistan** and agreed to deepen their cooperation in South Asia.
- **Quad Vaccine Initiative:** Under this, the Quad countries have pledged to donate more than 1.2 billion Covid-19 vaccine doses globally, in addition to the doses financed through **Covax**.

- **Building Back Better Health Security:** Supported the call for a "global pandemic radar" to improve viral genomic surveillance and expand the **WHO Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)**.
- **Quad Infrastructure Coordination Group:** The **G7 grouping** has recently announced the **Build Back Better World (B3W)** initiative.

## #DIFFERENCE BETWEEN QUAD & AUKUS?

- **Prime Minister Modi** has arrived in **Washington DC** for his visit to the United States of America. He was invited by US President Joe Biden.
- This is PMs first visit to any country beyond the neighbourhood since Covid-19 pandemic. He would also attend the QUAD summit along with **Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga**.
- However, this is different from the AUKUS (Australia- UK-US) Alliance that was recently announced.

### What is QUAD?

- The **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or QUAD** is a strategic dialogue between four countries.
- These are the **United States, India, Australia and Japan**.
- The dialogue began in 2007 by the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe along with the US Vice President Dick Cheney, Australian PM John Howard and Indian PM Manmohan Singh. **The military exercise associated with it was the Malabar exercise.**

### What is AUKUS?

- AUKUS is a trilateral security alliance between the **United States, United Kingdom and Australia**. It was initiated on September 15, 2021.
- The pact would allow the US and UK to help Australia develop nuclear powered submarines and **deploy them in the Pacific region**.
- This would increase the **presence of Western military in the Pacific**. As of now no other country has been mentioned by the founding countries to be a party in this alliance and it is speculated that it may be a counter to China's increasing presence in the region.

AUKUS	Quad
It is a security pact between three countries	It is a dialogue between 4 countries
The countries under it are Australia, USA and UK	United States, India, Japan and Australia come under it
It was announced on 15th September 2021	It was initiated in 2007
The treaty covers AI, Cyber warfare, underwater capabilities etc	The alliance envisions a shared vision for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific

Australia would be helped to develop  
nuclear powered submarines

Here military exercises like Malabar are conducted but no  
nuclear submarines are developed

## Nuclear Submarine Alliance: AUKUS

Recently, **Australia, the US and the UK** signed an agreement allowing the exchange of sensitive “**naval nuclear propulsion information**” between their nations.

- It is the first agreement on the technology to be publicly signed since the three countries announced the formation of a **defence alliance, AUKUS**, to confront strategic tensions in the Pacific where China-US rivalry is growing.
- Under the AUKUS deal, Australia would obtain **eight state-of-the-art, nuclear-powered but conventionally armed submarines** capable of stealthy, long-range missions.

## Five Eyes Alliance

- The Five Eyes alliance is an intelligence-sharing arrangement between five English-speaking democracies: the US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.
- The alliance was created during the **Cold War (1946-1991)** that was fought between the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as their respective allies.
- The alliance was needed to share sensitive information regarding their adversaries on all possible fronts available.
- It is often described as the **world's most successful intelligence alliance**.

## #14<sup>TH</sup> INDIA-JAPAN ANNUAL SUMMIT

Recently, the Japanese Prime Minister was on an official visit to India for the **14<sup>th</sup> India-Japan Annual Summit** between the two Countries.

- The Summit took place at a time when the two countries were celebrating the **70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the** establishment of diplomatic relations and India was celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence.
- Earlier, the Indian PM virtually inaugurated a Japanese ‘**Zen Garden - Kaizen Academy**’ at the Ahmedabad Management Association (AMA) in Gujarat.



14th India Japan Annual Summit

## What are the Key Points of the Summit?

- Investment by Japan:** Japan will invest Rs 3.2 lakh crores in the next five years in India.
- 7 JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) loans for projects in connectivity, water supply and sewerage, horticulture, healthcare, and biodiversity conservation in various States.
- An MoU has been signed to introduce **Johkasou technology** in India by Japanese companies for decentralised wastewater treatment. It is used in areas where sewage infrastructure has not yet been developed.

- **Sustainable Development Initiative for the North Eastern Region of India:** It has been launched with an eye on India's infrastructure development in the Northeast, and includes both ongoing projects and possible future cooperation in connectivity, healthcare, new and renewable energy, as well as an initiative for **strengthening bamboo value chain**.
- **India-Japan Digital Partnership:** On **cyber security**, the leaders discussed "India-Japan Digital Partnership" with a view to enhancing the digital economy through promotion of joint projects **in the area of IoT (internet of Things), AI (Artificial Intelligence) and other emerging technologies**.
- Japan is looking forward to attracting more highly skilled Indian IT professionals to contribute to the Japanese ICT sector.

### Clean Energy Partnership:

- It was launched for cooperation in areas such as electric vehicles, storage systems including batteries, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, development of solar energy; hydrogen; ammonia; etc.
- The objective is to encourage manufacturing in India, **creation of resilient and trustworthy supply chains in these areas** as well as fostering collaboration in R&D (Research and Development).
- It will be implemented through the existing mechanism of **Energy Dialogue**.
- **Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR):** India appreciated **Japan's cooperation on the MAHSR and various Metro projects in India** and looked forward to the planned preparatory survey for the Patna Metro.

### On Indo-Pacific:

- The two leaders expressed their commitment to promoting **peace, security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region**.

### QUAD:

- The two PMs affirmed **the importance of bilateral and plurilateral partnerships among like-minded countries in the region** including the **QUAD grouping** between India-Australia-Japan and the United States.
- The Japanese Prime Minister **invited PM Modi for the QUAD Summit Meeting in Tokyo**.
- **Terrorism:** The two leaders reiterated "**condemnation of terrorist attacks in India, including 26/11 Mumbai and Pathankot attacks, and called upon Pakistan to take resolute and irreversible action against terrorist networks** operating out of its territory and comply fully with international commitments, including to **FATF (Financial Action Task Force)**."
- **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty:** The Japanese PM stressed the **importance of early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)**.
- The Treaty intends to ban all nuclear explosions - everywhere, by everyone. It will enter into force after all 44 States listed in Annex 2 to the Treaty will ratify it.
- **India has not yet signed** the Treaty.

### On Situation in Other Countries:

- **Ukraine:** Talked about the **serious invasion of Russia into Ukraine** and sought a peaceful solution on the basis of international law.
- **China:** India **informed Japan about the situation in Ladakh**, about the attempts of amassing **troops** and India's talks with China over border-related issues.
- The Japanese PM also briefed India about his perspective of the **East and South China sea**.

### Afghanistan:

- On Afghanistan, the PMs expressed their intention **to collaborate closely to realize peace and stability in Afghanistan**, and stressed the importance of addressing the humanitarian crisis, promoting human rights and ensuring establishment of a truly representative and inclusive political system.
- They also **referred to the UNSC Resolution** that unequivocally demands that "Afghan territory not be used for sheltering, training, planning or financing terrorist acts".
- **North Korea:** The PMs condemned **North Korea's** destabilising ballistic missile launches in violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs).
- **Myanmar:** They called on Myanmar to urgently implement **ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus**.

### What are other Recent Developments between India and Japan?

- Recently, **India, Japan and Australia** have formally launched the **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)** in a move to counter China's dominance of the supply chain in the Indo-Pacific region.
- In **2020**, India and Japan **signed a logistics agreement** that will allow armed forces of both sides to coordinate closely in services and supplies. The agreement is known as the **Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)**.
- In 2014, India and Japan upgraded their relationship to '**Special Strategic and Global Partnership**'.
- The India-Japan **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** that came into force in **August 2011** covers trade in goods, services, movement of natural persons, investments, Intellectual Property Rights, custom procedures and other trade related issues.
- Japan is India's 12th largest trading partner, and trade volumes between the two stand at just a fifth of the value of **India-China bilateral trade**.
- **Defence Exercises:** India and Japan defence forces organize a series of bilateral exercises namely, **JIMEX** (naval), **SHINYUU Maitri** (Air Force), and **Dharma Guardian** (Army). Both countries also participate in **Malabar exercise** (Naval Exercise) with the USA and Australia.
- Both India and Japan are members of **G-20** and **G-4**.
- They are also member countries of the **International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER)**.



## #BIMSTEC 2022 SUMMIT

- **India will** provide the BIMSTEC secretariat USD 1 million to increase its operational budget, announced PM Narendra Modi at **5th BIMSTEC Summit on March 30, 2022**.
- He urged that it is important to strengthen the capacity of BIMSTEC secretariat and suggested the Secretary-General create a roadmap for the same.
- PM Modi said that the time has come to make the Bay of Bengal the **bridge of connectivity, prosperity and security**. He called on BIMSTEC nations to dedicate themselves to working with new enthusiasm to achieve the goals they achieved together in 1997.

## BIMSTEC SUMMIT 2022 | CONVERSATIONS



- The **BIMSTEC Summit 2022 is being hosted in a hybrid mode by Sri Lanka**, the current chair of BIMSTEC. Sri Lankan President is chairing the 5th BIMSTEC Summit with the virtual participation of leaders of **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Thailand**. **Myanmar** Foreign Minister is representing the nation at the summit.
- The **BIMSTEC Senior Officials (SOM)** meeting had taken place on March 28, followed by meetings of the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers on March 29 to prepare for the summit.
- **BIMSTEC Summit 2022 Theme**
- **The BIMSTEC Summit 2022 theme was** "Towards a Resilient Region, Prosperous Economies, Healthy People". The theme captures the main current priorities of member states.
- **The main topic of deliberations during the BIMSTEC Summit 2022 included:**
  - COVID-19 pandemic related challenges.
  - Uncertainties within the international system.
  - Progress of BIMSTEC as a regional group.
  - Establishment of basic institutional structures and mechanisms of the group.

## BIMSTEC Summit 2022: Key Outcome

- The main outcome of the BIMSTEC Summit 2022 was the adoption and signing of the BIMSTEC Charter, which formalizes the grouping into an organization with an emblem, flag and formally listed principles to be adhered to.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with other BIMSTEC leaders also witnessed the signing of 3 BIMSTEC agreements that represent progress being achieved in ongoing cooperation activities.

### BIMSTEC Agreements:

- BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters
- BIMSTEC MoU on Mutual Cooperation in diplomatic training
- Memorandum of Assn on **Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility**
- The Summit also saw considerable progress in BIMSTEC connectivity agenda with adoption of the 'Master Plan for Transport Connectivity', **which lays out a guidance framework for connectivity related activities in the region in the future.**

### BIMSTEC Charter

- PM Modi added saying that the recent developments in Europe have raised questions about the stability of the international order. "In this context, it has become a greater priority to have regional cooperation. Today we are **adopting BIMSTEC charter** to develop institution architecture for our group," he said.
- The 'Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)' is a regional multilateral organisation.
- BIMSTEC members are seven countries that lie in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal. The BIMSTEC member nations include Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand.

### When was first BIMSTEC summit held?

- The first BIMSTEC Summit was held on July 31, 2004. The grouping then got its name BIMSTEC or the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.
- BIMSTEC was initially formed with four member states- Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand on June 6, 1997. **BIMSTEC was then called BIST-EC (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand Economic Cooperation).**
- It was renamed BIMST-EC in **December 1997, following the inclusion of Myanmar.**

### What is the main purpose of BIMSTEC?

- BIMSTEC main purpose is to accelerate economic growth and social progress and collaboration in the sub-region through joint initiatives.
- The 15 priority areas of cooperation for BIMSTEC include trade and investment, energy, tourism, transport and communication, public health, counter-terrorism and transnational crime, environment and disaster management, technology, fisheries, agriculture, poverty alleviation, cultural cooperation, people-to-people Contact and Climate Change and Blue Economy.

## #PM MODI & SCOTT MORRISON VIRTUAL SUMMIT

- PM Narendra Modi and the Prime Minister of Australia Scott Morrison will hold the **2nd India-Australia Summit in a virtual mode on March 21, 2022.**
- The summit has come two years after the historic first virtual summit which was held in **June 2020 when the two nations had elevated their relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership.**
- **During India-Australia Virtual Summit 2022,** the leaders of the two countries are likely to take stock of the progress made on various initiatives under the 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership'.



## India- Australia Summit 2022: What will be on agenda?

- Apart from the Russia-Ukraine, Indo-Pacific on the agenda during India-Australia Summit, the two leaders are expected to also commit to closer cooperation in critical minerals, in trade, migration, and mobility, among others.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Scott Morrison** will also share their views on the international and regional issues of mutual interest.
- India-Australia Summit is also expected to witness the largest ever trade pact by the Government of Australia in India with Canberra set to announce worth Rs. 1,500 crores in India across multiple sectors.
- **India and Australia** are also expected to conclude an early harvest agreement by the end of this month.
- During India-Australia Summit, the two countries will sign an MoU in the field of critical minerals. It will help in increasing India's access to **metallic coal and lithium in Australia and will cater to the country's growing demand for electric vehicles and growing infrastructure.**

## What is an early harvest agreement between India and Australia?

- An early harvest agreement between the Governments of India and Australia is aimed at liberalizing the tariffs on the trade of certain goods between the two nations or the trading blocs before a comprehensive agreement.
- India-Australia continued close relations despite pandemic
- Despite the widespread COVID-19 pandemic, India and Australia continued their close collaboration in various areas including defence, cyber, science and technology, critical and strategic materials, public administration and governance, and water resource management.
- The two leaders had met in Washington DC for the first in-person meeting after the pandemic in September 2021 **on the margins of the QUAD Leaders' summit.**

## India-Australia Virtual Summit 2020

- **During India-Australia Virtual Summit 2020,** the two countries delivered eight landmark agreements to drive India-Australia cooperation.

## #WHAT IS MONTREUX CONVENTION?

- The **Montreux Convention** Regarding the Straits Regime, or simply Montreux Convention, is an international treaty that governs Turkey's Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits.
- It was signed on July 20, 1936, in the **Montreux Palace in Switzerland**, and took effect on November 9, 1936.
- This convention was signed to address the long-running Straits Question of who should manage the strategically **important route between the Black and Mediterranean Seas**.
- The maritime traffic through the **Black Sea is regulated by the Montreux Convention**.
- During peacetime, it grants full freedom of passage for all civilian vessels and allows **Turkey to limit the movement of navies who do not belong to the Black Sea states**.
- During wars, this pact gives **Turkey the right to regulate** the naval warship transits and blocking of the strait for warships of the countries in conflict.
- Military warships are restricted in terms of **tonnage, number, and weaponry, with specific rules that govern their duration of stay and mode of entry**.
- Advanced notifications have to be provided by warships to the Turkish authorities, who then must notify the parties to the Convention.



## Implementation of the Montreux Convention

- The provisions of the Convention reflected the **world situation in the mid-1930s to a great extent**.
- They primarily benefited the Turks and Soviets by allowing Turkey to reclaim military control of the Straits and ensuring Soviet control of the Black Sea.
- Although the Convention limited the Soviet Union's ability to send naval forces into the Mediterranean Sea, **it also ensured that outside powers could not use the Straits to threaten the Soviet Union**.

## What is the Location of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits?

- The Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits, also known as **Turkish Straits or the Black Sea Straits**, connect the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea via the Sea of Marmara.
- It is the only passage through which the Black Sea ports can access the Mediterranean and beyond.
- Over **three million barrels of oil**, about **3% of the daily global supply**, mostly produced in **Russia, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan**, pass through this waterway every day.
- The route also **ships large amounts of iron, steel, and agricultural products** from the Black Sea coast to Europe and the rest of the world.

## What is the Role of Turkey in the Present Crisis?

- In the current situation, the Turkish government finds itself in a **difficult position**, as **both Ukraine and Russia** are important partners in **critical energy and military trade agreements**.
- Turkey, a **NATO member since 1952**, wants to strengthen its ties with the **West while not upsetting Russia**. Its control over these key straits may test its **balancing act**.

- In this context, Turkey has held that it cannot block all Russian warships accessing the Black Sea **due to a clause in the pact exempting** those returning to their registered base.
- **Article 19 of the treaty contains an exception** for the countries on the Black Sea that can effectively undermine **Turkey's power in blocking the Russian warships entering or exiting the Black Sea.**
- Vessels of war belonging to belligerent powers, whether they are Black Sea Powers or not, which have become separated from their bases, may return thereto.
- This exception provides Russia with an alternate way to exploit the **Montreux Convention**, which would be to reassign some of its vessels to the Black Sea.

## #RELATED: UNGA RESOLUTION ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE

Recently, **India has abstained** at the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The **emergency special session** was convened by UNGA for discussing a resolution **that called for Russia to unconditionally withdraw its troops.**

- The resolution was discussed under the rubric of the **"Uniting for Peace" resolution.**
- The General Assembly session was convened after a similar resolution had failed to pass the **U.N. Security Council (UNSC) when Russia exercised its veto.**

## What is uniting for Peace Resolution?

- **About:** UN General Assembly **resolution 377(V)** is known as the Uniting for peace resolution which was **adopted in 1950.** The most important part of resolution is section A which states that where the **Security Council, because of lack of unanimity** of the permanent members, fails to exercise its **primary responsibility** for the **maintenance of international peace and security**, the **General Assembly** shall seize itself of the matter.
- **Origin:** The Uniting for Peace resolution was **initiated by the United States**, in October 1950, as a means of **circumventing further Soviet vetoes** during the course of the **Korean War.**
- **Objective:** Under this, the UNGA granted to itself the power to deal with threats to the peace if the UNSC fails to act after a veto by a permanent member.
- Such an interpretation sees the **UNGA as being awarded 'final responsibility'** for matters of international peace and security, by the UN Charter.
- **Emergency Special Session (ESS):** If not in session, the General Assembly may meet using the mechanism of the emergency special session. To date, 11 emergency special sessions have been convened.
- First ESS was instigated **after France and UK veto over UNSC resolution 119** during the **Suez Crisis 1956.**

## What are the Key Points of the resolution?

- The resolution, **co-sponsored by 96 countries**, needed **two thirds of those present and voting to support it, for it to pass.**
- It condemns the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022 **'special military operation'** by Russia over Ukraine.
- It says **no territories acquired through force (Donetsk and Luhansk) will be recognised and calls for Russia to "immediately, completely and unconditionally" withdraw from Ukraine.**



## #RUSSIA RECOGNIZED TWO REGION OF UKRAINE AS INDEPENDENT

- Recently, Russia recognised the Ukraine rebel regions in eastern Ukraine - **Donetsk and Luhansk** – as independent areas despite calls from the west to put an end to the **tensions** driven by fears that Russia may attack Ukraine.
- This paved the way to provide them **military support** — a **direct challenge to the West** that will fuel fears that Russia could imminently invade Ukraine.
- Tensions have peaked over the last few weeks as Russia amassed over 1,50,000 troops at Ukraine borders in one of the worst crises since the **Cold War**.
- The announcement shatters a **2015 peace deal signed in Minsk** requiring Ukrainian authorities to offer a broad self-rule to the rebel regions.

### What is Russia's Stand?

- It blamed the **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)** for the current crisis and called the US-led alliance an existential threat to Russia.
- Charged that **Ukraine had inherited Russia's historic lands** and after the Soviet collapse was used by the West to contain Russia.
- It **wants Western Countries to guarantee that NATO won't allow Ukraine** and other former Soviet countries to join as members.
- It has also **demande the alliance halt weapons deployments to Ukraine** and roll back its forces from Eastern Europe.
- The **western countries have rejected the demand**.

### What is the Background of the Crisis?

- Ukraine and Russia **share hundreds of years of cultural, linguistic and familial links**.
- For many in Russia and in the ethnically Russian parts of Ukraine, **the shared heritage of the countries is an emotional issue** that has been exploited for electoral and military purposes.
- As part of the Soviet Union, **Ukraine was the second-most powerful Soviet republic after Russia**, and was crucial strategically, economically and culturally.
- The Donbass region, comprising the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine, has been at the centre of the conflict since March 2014 when Moscow (Russia) invaded and annexed the Crimean Peninsula.
- In April, **pro-Russia rebels began seizing territory** (with Russia supporting them through hybrid warfare) in Eastern Ukraine and in May 2014, the **rebels in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions held a referendum to declare independence** from Ukraine.
- Since then, these **predominantly Russian speaking regions** (more than 70% speak Russian) within Ukraine have been **witnessing shelling and skirmishes between the rebels and Ukrainian forces** leading to the loss of over 14,000 lives by most estimates, creating around 1.5 million registered Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and destruction of the local economy.

- What has changed now is that the **shelling has intensified since last October 2021 when Russia began amassing troops along the borders with Ukraine.**
- If the situation in the Donbass escalates, the **possibility of a war cannot be dismissed.** One way to prevent the outbreak of a war would be to implement the Minsk agreements immediately, as Russia has suggested.

## #WHAT IS CAATSA SANCTION?

- **Amid Russia and US conflict over Russia's invasion of Ukraine,** the United States has announced that the country has been looking whether to apply or waive sanctions on India for its purchase of S-400 Triumf missile defence system from Russia, under the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).
- The **latest remarks from the United States** came as India drew criticism from the US lawmakers, both Democrats and Republicans, at a hearing on the US relationship with India for being among the 35 countries that abstained on March 2 from a UN vote to rebuke Russia's invasion.
- For India, not voicing against Russia has become a critical issue as the **country relied heavily on the Russian Military exports. In 2020, Russia contributed 49% to India's total military imports.**



## What is CAATSA Act?

- The 'Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)' is a piece of US legislation that imposes sanctions on the American Adversaries- North Korea, the States of Iran, and Russia. CAATSA Bill was passed back in 2017.

## What sanctions are under CAATSA?

- ***The sanctions under CAATSA Act cover:***
- **Countering Iran's destabilizing activities act of 2017:** It required the US president to impose sanctions against Iran's ballistic missile or weapons of mass destruction. The President may also impose sanctions against persons responsible for the violations of internationally recognized human rights committed against individuals.
- **Countering Russian Influence in Europe and Eurasia Act of 2017:** The act had imposed new sanctions on Russia for the interference in the 2016 US elections and its involvement in Ukraine and Syria, among others.
- **Korean interdiction and Modernization of Sanctions Act:** Among other impositions, under the act US financial institutions are not to establish or maintain any correspondent accounts used by the foreign financial institutions for providing indirect financial services to North Korea.
- ***The sanctions under Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)*** are intended to economically hurt the countries. As part of the sanctions, the United States can also economically push any country which will try to engage in the transactions with the nations against whom sanctions are imposed.

## How and Why US can impose sanctions against India?

- As Russia progresses day by day in controlling Ukraine's cities, **the US has been imposing sanctions against Russia over its actions and violence in Ukraine, whether they are economic or defence.**
- With India's 'no stand' against Russia's actions in Ukraine and the latest decision of abstaining from the UN vote to rebuke Russia's invasion, the US's mounting pressure on the country to take sides has become a problem point for India.
- Under CAATSA, US can consider sanctions against **India for continuing with defence deals with Russia amid the international crisis.**
- A concern that stood out repeatedly during a hearing on the US relationship with India was the India-US defence security cooperation and whether India will be sanctioned for its **purchase of the S-400 Triumf missile defence system from Russia.**
- However, Biden Administration is yet to decide on applying sanctions on India under CAATSA.
- As the United States strengthens its ties with India as a pivotal regional counterweight to China, Joe Biden's administration has delayed the enforcement of a law ordering sanctions on India for trading with Russia.

## Background

- **The latest move by the US against India** has come as the country abstained from a UN vote to rebuke Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
- The voting results that were displayed on the screens at the United Nations General Assembly showed that 141 countries had voted in favour of condemning **Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while 5 nations were against it, with 35 countries, including India, abstaining.**

## #INDIA & CANADA RE-LAUNCH CEPA NEGOTIATIONS

- **India and Canada** agreed to re-launch **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) Negotiations.**

- The decision regarding the re-launch of CEPA negotiations was announced following the fifth India- Canada ministerial dialogue on trade and investment, held on 11<sup>th</sup>

- The ministerial dialogue was **co-chaired by Piyush Goyal (India's Minister of Commerce)** and Mary Ng (Canadian Minister for Export Promotion and International Trade).
- Both ministers highlighted the importance of ensuring supply chain resilience in critical sectors and exchanged views on collaboration in this regard. The ministers agreed to enhance cooperation in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, rare earth minerals, and in areas like tourism, urban infrastructure, mining, etc.



## Early Progress Trade Agreement (EPTA)

- India and Canada agreed to consider the **Early Progress Trade Agreement (EPTA)**, which can be concluded early as a transitional step in the process of CEPA. **EPTA will include high-level commitments from both sides on the following aspects of the trade:**

- Goods, services, and rules of origin
- Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary measures
- Technical barriers to trade, and dispute settlement
- Any other areas mutually agreed upon by both countries.
- India seeks to gain market access in Canada for its agricultural goods such as sweet corn, baby corn, and bananas, while Canada's focus is to export its cherries and lumber to India.

## Bilateral Investment Agreement

- At the ministerial dialogue, both countries also agreed to intensify negotiations towards signing the Bilateral Investment Agreement. **This agreement will promote & protect bilateral investments.**
- The negotiations to conclude CEPA were going on since 2010, but did not see much progress. **Till now 10 rounds of negotiations were held between both countries.**
- The last round of negotiations was held in 2017 and later the talks derailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- CEPA will help in expanding **India- Canada bilateral trade** by unlocking the potential across various sectors.

## #HISTORIC INDIA-UAE CEPA SIGNED

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a virtual summit with Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi** and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed Forces, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan on February 18, 2022.
- The joint statement issued by the two leaders establishes a clear roadmap for a future-oriented partnership between India and UAE. It also identifies focus areas and outcomes.
- The two leaders **released a Joint Commemorative Stamp** to celebrate 75th anniversary of India's independence and the 50th year of UAE's foundation.
- India and UAE also signed a **historic India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**. The CEPA was signed Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and UAE's Economy Minister Abdulla bin Touq Al Marri.
- India and UAE also signed two other MoUs, one to expand cooperation in **climate action and another on education.**



## India-UAE CEPA

- India and UAE signed the historic **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**, which is aimed at boosting the bilateral trade between the two countries to USD 100 billion in the next five years.
- **India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement** is a complete and comprehensive economic partnership agreement finalised in the shortest possible time.
- The CEPA is expected to lead to increase in bilateral trade from the **current USD 60 bn to USD 100 bn in the next 5 years.**
- The agreement will provide significant benefits to Indian and UAE businesses, including enhanced market

access and reduced tariffs.

- The India-UAE CEPA is the **first bilateral trade accord concluded by the UAE**. It is also India's first bilateral trade agreement in the MENA region.
- The agreement will transform bilateral economic and investment ties between the two nations and could possibly open up emerging **trade routes between Asia and Africa**.

### Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

- It is a **kind of free trade pact** which covers negotiation on the trade in **services and investment**, and other areas of economic partnership. It may even consider negotiation on areas such as trade facilitation and customs cooperation, competition, and **Intellectual Property Rights**.
- Partnership agreements or cooperation agreements are more comprehensive than **Free Trade Agreements**.
- CEPA also looks into the **regulatory aspect of trade** and encompasses an agreement covering the regulatory issues.
- India has signed CEPAs with South Korea and Japan.

### Other Types of Trade Agreements

- **Free Trade Agreement (FTA):** It is an agreement in which **two or more countries agree to provide preferential trade terms, tariff concession etc.** to the partner country.
- India has negotiated FTA with many countries e.g. Sri Lanka and various trading blocs as well e.g. **ASEAN**.
- **Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA):** In this type of agreement, two or more partners give **preferential right of entry to certain products**. This is done by reducing duties on an agreed number of tariff lines.
- Tariffs may even be reduced to zero for some products even in a PTA. **India signed a PTA with Afghanistan**.
- **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA):** CECA generally **covers negotiation on trade tariff and TRQ (Tariff Rate Quotas) rates only**. It is not as comprehensive as CEPA. India has signed CECA with Malaysia.
- **Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT):** It is a bilateral agreement in which **two countries sit together and decide the conditions for private investments** by citizens and firms of the two countries.

### India-UAE Bilateral Relations

- India and UAE have strengthened their bilateral ties in all areas in recent years. The two nations had initiated negotiations for the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in September 2021 and they got completed now.
- The **United Arab Emirates is already India's third-largest trade partner**.
- The two nations have shared robust bilateral trade, investment and energy relations and is expected to get a further boost.



- The two nations have also witnessed high-level visits on both sides. While PM Narendra Modi had visited the UAE in 2015, 2018, and 2019, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi visited India in 2016 and 2017.
- Several ministerial visits have also taken place between the two sides including **three visits of External Affairs Minister and a visit of Commerce and Industry Minister to UAE in 2021.**
- The two sides had also signed an **Air Bubble Arrangement during the pandemic in 2020** to ensure seamless movement of people between the two countries despite the challenges posed by Covid-19.
- They are also strengthening their cooperation in new areas including startups, renewable energy and fintech. **India had participated in the Dubai Expo 2020 with one of the largest pavilions.**
- **Indian diaspora in UAE**
- **UAE is home to a large Indian community that numbers to almost 3.5 million.** The UAE leadership has been extremely appreciative of the Indian community's contribution in the country's development.

### Gulf Cooperation Council

- GCC was **established by an agreement** concluded in 1981 among **Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE** in view of their special relations, geographic proximity, similar political systems based on Islamic beliefs, joint destiny and common objectives.
- The **structure** of the GCC consists of the Supreme Council (the highest authority), the Ministerial Council and the Secretariat General. The **Secretariat** is located in **Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.**
- It is a **political, economic, social, and regional organisation** according to its charter.

### India's Relations with the GCC

- **Political:** The governments of the GCC members are **India-friendly and Indian-friendly.**
- The Prime Minister of India has received the '**Order of Zayed**', the highest civilian order of the UAE and the '**King Hamad Order of the Renaissance**', the third-highest civilian order of Bahrain.
- In the recent past, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have **not adopted hostile posture** to India's domestic developments such as **removing the special status for Jammu & Kashmir under Article 370.**

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- Tariffs may even be reduced to zero for some products even in a PTA. **India signed a PTA with Afghanistan.**
- **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA):**
- Partnership agreement or cooperation agreement are more **comprehensive than an FTA.**
- CEPA covers negotiation on the trade in services and investment, and other areas of economic partnership.

- India has signed CEPAs with South Korea and Japan.
- **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA):**
- CECA generally cover **negotiation on trade tariff and TRQ (Tariff Rate Quotas) rates** only. It is **not as comprehensive as CEPA**. India has signed CECA with Malaysia.

## #YOON SUK YEOL AS NEW PRESIDENT OF SOUTH KOREA

- **Yoon Suk Yeol** has been elected as South Korea's new President, after winning the South Korean Presidential Elections 2022.
- Yoon Suk Yeol, the **conservative beat Democratic Party's Lee Jae-myung** in one of the most closely fought elections, with the final count separated by less than 1 percent vote.
- Yoon Suk Yeol received 48.6 percent of the votes, while his rival Lee Jae-myung received 47.8 percent of the votes.
- Yoon Suk Yeol is scheduled to be sworn in as **the next President of South Korea in May 2022**. He will serve for a term of five years. His democratic rival Lee, who is a former governor of Gyeonggi province, gracefully accepted his defeat and congratulated Yoon for his victory.



## Election of the Unfavourables?

- As per various reports, both the presidential candidates were widely unpopular throughout the campaign. The local media in fact had dubbed the elections as the election of the unfavorable.
- Yet, there was a high turnout on the polling day, **with 77 percent of eligible voters turning up to cast their votes**.
- The top concerns of the South Korean people have been **raising house prices, stagnant economic growth, unemployment among the youth and gender inequality**.
- While South Korea has a Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, its work has been almost negligible when it comes to the promotion of equality for women.
- **Yoon had pledged to abolish the Ministry if he comes to power.**
- The **South Korea Presidential Elections 2022** were fought hard in the bitterest way, with the candidates ripping down each other with more focus on mudslinging and personal attacks.
- Both had failed to present a clear strategy on how they would ease the threat from North Korea and its nuclear weapons. The voters were also skeptical about how they would handle international relations amid the US-China rivalry and address widening economic inequality.
- Yoon had promised to make an **enhanced alliance with the US centre of his foreign policy and be more assertive towards China**.
- He had accused North Korean leader Kim Jong Un of trying to influence the results of the South Korean election in favour of his **Democratic rival Lee after North's latest ballistic missile launch**.
- Lee had, on the other hand, called for greater reconciliation with North Korea and a diplomatic pragmatism amid the US-China faceoff.

## Who is Yoon Suk Yeol?

- Yoon Suk Yeol had previously served as prosecutor general of South Korea from 2019 to 2021 under South Korean President Moon Jae-in's regime. He had played a major role in the conviction of former President Park Geun-hye as the chief prosecutor of South Korea.
- **Why did South Korean President Moon Jae-in not run for second term?**
- The incumbent **South Korean President Moon Jae-in**, could not seek reelection, as the nation's constitution limits a president to a single five-year term. Moon Jae-in had come to power in 2017 after the impeachment of conservative President Park Geun-hye over a huge corruption scandal.
- **Yoon Suk Yeol had been Moon Jae-in's** prosecutor general but he resigned and joined the opposition party in 2021.

## #HUNGARY'S 1<sup>ST</sup> FEMALE PRIME MINISTER

- **Katalin Novák**, a close ally of **Prime Minister Viktor Orban**, has been elected as Hungary's first female president by the Hungarian parliament.
- Novák, who was most recently a minister for family policy, described her victory as a win for women.
- She won 137 votes to 51 in the parliament, **which is dominated by Orban's right-wing Fidesz party, defeating opponent Peter Rona, an economist.**
- Novák will be succeeding Janos Ader, a co-founder of Orban's ruling Fidesz party who has served as prime minister since 2012.
- Novák has been the face of government initiatives which include encouraging young families to have more children, as well as giving significant tax breaks.

## About Katalin Novak

- **In 1977, Katalin Novák** was born in Szeged and she attended the National University of Public Service (NKE) in Budapest, the University of Szeged.
- Novák began her **political career as an advisor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2001 which she left in 2003.**
- In 2010, she became an advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and in 2012, she became the Minister of Human Resources' Head of Cabinet.
- Novák rose to State Secretary for Family and Youth after the 2014 elections. She was even one of **Fidesz's deputy party leaders between 2017 and 2021**, and she has been a member of parliament since 2018.
- She had been **Hungary's Minister of Family and Youth since 2020, but resigned when she decided to run for president.**

## #EAM'S ON A VISIT TO SRI-LANKA

Recently, **India's External Affairs Minister visited Sri Lanka.** The visit finalized an MoU that provided **India to set up hybrid power projects in three Islands (Nainativu , Delft or Neduntheevu , and Analaitivu) off Jaffna.**

- In this Project, India will effectively **replace the Chinese venture.**
- It is the **third Indian energy project** coming up in Sri Lanka's north and east.

- Earlier, **India extended a USD1-billion short-term concessional loan to Sri Lanka** to help the island nation cope with one of the **worst economic crisis** in decades.

### What are the Highlights of the Visit?

- **Fending Off Chinese Threat:** In January 2021, Sri Lanka's Cabinet decided to award renewable energy projects in Nainativu, Delft or Neduntheevu, and Analaitivu islands to Chinese company Sino-solar Etechwin, following an **Asia Development Bank**-backed competitive bid.



- India was quick to express concern to the Sri Lankan side over the Chinese project coming up in the **Palk Bay**, barely 50 km off Tamil Nadu.
- Thus, India offered to execute the same project with a grant rather than a loan.
- **MRCC:** Further, India and Sri Lanka have also agreed to set up a **Maritime Rescue Coordination Center (MRCC)**, signaling greater defence sector collaboration between the neighbours.
- MRCCs are part of an international network under the UN's International Maritime Organisation to monitor the sea lanes with the objective of swift response to emergencies, such as vessels in distress, rescue and evacuation of people, and prevention of and containing environmental disasters such as oil spills.
- The agreement **appears to be part of India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for all in the Region) initiative** in the Indian Ocean, which has also seen India, Sri Lanka and Maldives give a new push to their 2011 **Colombo Security Conclave** that now includes Mauritius.
- **Fisheries Harbours:** India will also help develop fisheries harbours in Point Pedro, Pesalai, and Gurunagar in the Northern Province, and Balapitiya, south of capital Colombo.
- **Capacity Building:** India also assured supporting education, extending a grant for Sri Lanka's Unique Digital Identity project, and collaborating in diplomatic training.
- **Resolution of Tamil Question:** On developments in regard to **Sri Lanka's long-pending Tamil question**, India has welcomed the recent talks between President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) representing war-affected Tamils of the north and east.

## What are Recent Issues in India-Sri Lanka Relations?

- **Killing of Fishermen:** Killing of Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy is a lingering issue between these two nations.
- In 2019 and 2020, a total of 284 Indian **fishermen were arrested** and a total of 53 Indian boats were confiscated by the Sri Lankan authorities.
- **Influence of China:** China's rapidly growing economic footprint (and political clout as a corollary) in Sri Lanka is straining India-Sri Lanka relations.
- China is already the largest investor in Sri Lanka, accounting for **23.6%** of the total **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** during 2010-2019 as against **10.4% from India**.
- China is also one of the largest export destinations for Sri Lankan goods and holds over 10% of its external debt.
- **13<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Sri Lankan Constitution:** It envisages devolution of necessary powers to the provincial councils to address the just demand of the Tamil people for equality, justice, peace, and respect within a united Sri Lanka. India supports its implementation.

## Significance of SAGAR Vision

- SAGAR provides a mechanism for India to expand strategic partnerships with other IOR littorals in Asia and Africa.
- SAGAR indicates the leadership role and responsibilities India is ready to play in the region on a long-term basis in a transparent manner through its capacity building and capability enhancement programs.
- The key relevance of SAGAR emerges when seen in conjunction with India's other policies impacting the maritime domain like **Act East Policy, Project Sagarmala, Project Mausam, India as 'net security provider', focus on Blue Economy** etc.
- This symbolises India's maritime resurgence, as maritime issues are now centre of India's foreign policy.
- With effective implementation of all these policies, India can **act as an enabler to create a positive environment in the IOR**.

## #GLOBAL PLASTICS TREATY SIGNED AMONG NATIONS

- **Global Plastics Treaty** will be one of the most significant international environmental laws in history.
- UN member states have agreed to start international negotiations on drawing up a **global plastics treaty that could set rules for the production, use, and disposal of plastics**.
- The decision was made at a meeting of the **UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi**.
- An **International Negotiating Committee (INC)** will be tasked with drafting and ratifying the mandate by 2024. The main aim is to end global plastic pollution.



- According to the agreed mandate, the treaty makes it legally binding for the signatories to tackle the



whole life cycle of plastic, from production to disposal and not just post-consumer waste. **Previous approaches focused on plastic as a “marine litter” issue.**

- The text also recognizes the significant contributions of waste pickers and workers in the informal economy, who are vulnerable to occupational health risks.

### India's proposal

- While the majority of countries favor binding commitments, **India proposed voluntary actions. The term voluntary was retained as an option upon insistence by India.**
- India was also keen on the insertion of the words “national circumstances and capabilities” in the text which is in alignment with its position of common but differentiated responsibility (CBDR) under the Paris agreement, 2015.

### India's initiatives

- India **has banned single-use plastic, which will come into effect on July 1, 2022.**
- Recently, the **Central government** has also issued fresh guidelines for manufacturers, brand owners, importers of plastics making it mandatory to recycle plastic.
- Central government has drawn up a pathway to incorporate the large informal sector, which is involved in plastic recycling, in a more formal circular economy.
- The creation of this mandate recognizes the urgency of addressing the plastic crisis. Solving the plastic problem is crucial to protect human rights and **achieve UN sustainable development goals (SDG).**

## RELATED: INITIATIVES TO CURB PLASTIC WASTE

### Swachh Bharat Mission

- SBM-U 2.0, announced in **Budget 2021-22**, is the continuation of SBM-U first phase. The government is trying to tap **safe containment, transportation, disposal of faecal sludge, and septage from toilets.**
- **SBM-U** first phase was launched on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014 aiming at making urban India **Open Defecation Free (ODF)** and achieving 100% scientific management of municipal solid waste. **It lasted till October 2019.**
- It will be implemented over five years **from 2021 to 2026** with an outlay of Rs.1.41 lakh crore.
- **Aim:** It focuses on **source segregation of garbage, reduction in single-use plastic and air pollution**, by effectively managing waste from construction and demolition activities and **bioremediation of all legacy dump sites.**
- Under this mission, all wastewater will be treated properly before it is discharged into water bodies, and the government is trying to make maximum reuse a priority.

### India Plastics Pact

- The India Plastics Pact is an ambitious, **collaborative initiative that aims to bring together businesses, governments and NGOs across the whole value chain** to set time-bound commitments to reduce plastics from their value chains.
- While the India Plastics Pact **will be active in India**, it will **link globally with other Plastics Pacts.**

- The Pact will develop a road map for guidance, form action groups composed of members, and initiate innovation projects.
- **Members' accountability** is ensured through ambitious targets and annual data reporting.
- The vision, targets and ambition of the India Plastics Pact are **aligned with the circular economy principles of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's New Plastics Economy**.
- **Un-Plastic Collective**
- **Un-Plastic Collective (UPC)** is a voluntary initiative launched by the **UN-Environment Program-India, Confederation of Indian Industry** and **WWF-India**.
- The Collective seeks to **minimise externalities** of plastics on the **ecological** and **social health** of our planet.
- As a part of **UPC initiative** companies set time-bound, public targets to:
  - Eliminate unnecessary use of plastic.
  - Reuse and circulate plastics through the **circular economy**.
  - Replace plastic with sustainable alternative or recycled plastics.
  - Turn commitments to meaningful and measurable action.

## #PERMANENT INDUS COMMISSION B/W INDIA & PAKISTAN

The **117<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Permanent Indus Commission (PIC)** between India and Pakistan was held.

- Earlier, the **Central government** has decided to adopt a **new criterion** for selecting members of the **Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB)**.



### What are the Highlights of the Meeting?

- Both sides **discussed the exchange of hydrological and flood data** during which the Indian side underscored that all its projects are fully compliant with the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty.
- The issue of the Fazilka drain was also discussed and Pakistan assured that all necessary action will continue to be taken to ensure the free flow of **Fazilka drain into the river Sutlej**.
- Fazilka drain is one of 22 drains and water bodies, where untreated water of **Malwa district (Punjab, India)** is discharged.
- The **drain is closed at the borderline of countries**, leading to stagnation in the shape of ponds and deterioration of quality of groundwater in the border area.
- Technical discussions were held **regarding ongoing projects** including **PakalDul, Kiru and Lower Kalnai**.
- The **PakalDul Hydro Electric Project (1000 MW)** is proposed on river Marusudar, a tributary of **Chenab river** in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.
- **Kiru Hydro Electric Project (624 MW)** is proposed on **River Chenab**, located in Kishtwar district of Jammu & Kashmir.

- **Lower Kalnai project is a hydroelectric power project** in the Doda and Kishtwar districts of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Indian side explicitly **conveyed that as an upper riparian State**, India has been providing information on extraordinary discharges of water from reservoirs and flood flows every year, as mandated under the treaty.

### What is the History of the Indus Waters Treaty?

- The Indus river **basin has six rivers- Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej**, originating from Tibet and **flowing through the Himalayan ranges** to enter Pakistan, ending in the south of Karachi.
- In 1947, the **line of partition, aside from delineating geographical boundaries** for India and Pakistan, also cut the **Indus river system** into two.
- **Both the sides were dependent on water from the Indus river basin** to keep their irrigation infrastructure functional and therefore, equitable distribution was needed.
- Initially, the **Inter-dominion accord of May, 1948 was adopted**, where both countries, after meeting for a conference, decided that **India would supply water to Pakistan** in exchange for an annual payment made by the latter.
- This **agreement however, soon disintegrated as both the countries** could not agree upon its common interpretations.
- **In 1951, in the backdrop of the water-sharing dispute**, both the **countries applied to the World Bank** for funding of their respective irrigation projects on Indus and its tributaries, which is when the World Bank offered to mediate the conflict.
- Finally in 1960, after nearly a decade of fact-finding, negotiation, proposals by the World Bank and amendments to them, an agreement was reached between the two countries, and the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) was signed by former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and then President of Pakistan, Ayub Khan.

### What are some of its Key Provisions?

- **Sharing Water:** The treaty prescribed **how water from the six rivers of the Indus River System would be shared** between India and Pakistan.
- It **allocated the three western rivers—Indus, Chenab and Jhelum—to Pakistan** for unrestricted use, barring certain non-consumptive, agricultural and domestic uses by India and the **three Eastern rivers—Ravi, Beas and Sutlej—were allocated to India** for unrestricted usage.
- This means that **80% of the share of water or about 135 Million Acre Feet (MAF) went to Pakistan**, while leaving the **rest 33 MAF or 20% of water for use by India**.
- **Permanent Indus Commission:** It also **required both the countries to establish a Permanent Indus Commission** constituted by permanent commissioners on both sides.
- **Rights over Rivers:** While Pakistan has **rights over the waters of Jhelum, Chenab and Indus**, Annexure C of the IWT allows India certain agricultural uses, while **Annexure D allows it to build ‘run of the river’ hydropower projects**, meaning projects not requiring live storage of water

### What is the Permanent Indus Commission?

- It is a **bilateral commission of officials from India and Pakistan**, created to implement and manage goals of the **Indus Waters Treaty, 1960**.
- The Commission, according to the treaty, **shall meet regularly at least once a year**, alternately in India and Pakistan.
- The functions of the Commission include:
- To study and report to the two Governments on any problem relating to the development of the waters of the rivers.
- To solve disputes arising over water sharing.
- To arrange technical visits to projects' sites and critical river head works.

## #RELATED: KRISHNA RIVER WATER DISPUTE

- On February 18, 2022, government of Karnataka moved to Supreme Court and sought to set up of a bench to hear a plea related to **dispute over allocation of water of Krishna River**.
- The Krishna River flows in states of **Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana**.
- SC bench comprising of Justice D Y Chandrachud from Maharashtra, and Justice A S Bopanna from Karnataka, had recused from the case on January 10, 2022, arising out of the decision of water tribunal.
- The judges recused themselves, because they were upset with the tone of mails and letters against them for being part of this bench on water dispute.



## What is the issue?

- Karnataka had sought the vacation on a SC order of November 16, 2011, that restrained Central government from publishing the final order of **Krishna Water Dispute Tribunal II (KWDT)** in official gazette.
- This order was pronounced in 2010 and allocated the river water to Karnataka, Maharashtra and erstwhile Andhra Pradesh.
- KWDT had further modified its final order and reported on in November 2013, to allocate surplus water to **Karnataka, Maharashtra, and erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, while preserving the allocation of 2,130 TMC**.
- However, after the bifurcation of erstwhile **Andhra Pradesh, Telangana & Andhra Pradesh** had moved to the **Supreme Court and challenged the allocation share of the KWDT**.

## Stalled projects

- Karnataka argued that its dam and irrigation projects to provide water in its parched northern areas were stalled for all these years due to 2011 order of not publishing KWDT decisions in **Official Gazette in line with Section 6(1) of the Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956**.

## #RECUSAL OF JUDGES FROM THE CASE

Recently, two judges of the **Supreme Court** have **recused** themselves from hearing a matter related to the distribution of Krishna water dispute between **Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra and Karnataka**.

- They cited the reason that they **did not want to be the target of partiality** since the dispute is related to their home states.

### Recusal of Judges

- It is the **act of abstaining from participation in an official action** such as a legal proceeding due to a **conflict of interest** of the presiding court official or administrative officer.
- When there is a **conflict of interest**, a **judge can withdraw from hearing** a case to prevent creating a perception that he carried a bias while deciding the case.
- There are **no formal rules governing recusals**, although several **SC judgments** have dealt with the issue.
- In **Ranjit Thakur v Union of India (1987)**, the SC held that the test of the likelihood of bias is the reasonableness of the apprehension in the mind of the party.
- The judge needs to look at the mind of the party before him, and decide that he is biased or not.

### Background:

- **Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal:** In 1969, the **Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT)** was set up under the **Inter-State River Water Dispute Act, 1956**, and presented its report in 1973.
- At the same time, it was stipulated that the KWDT order may be reviewed or revised by a competent authority or tribunal any time after 31st May, 2000.
- **Second KWDT:** The **second KWDT was instituted in 2004**. It delivered its report in 2010, which made allocations of the Krishna water at 65 % dependability and for surplus flows as follows: **81 TMC for Maharashtra, 177 TMC for Karnataka, and 190 TMC for Andhra Pradesh**.

### Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 262** of the Constitution provides for the adjudication of **inter-state water disputes**.
- Under this, Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution and control of waters of any inter-state river and river valley.
- The Parliament has enacted the two laws, the **River Boards Act (1956)** and the **Inter-State Water Disputes Act (1956)**.
- The **River Boards Act provides** for the establishment of river boards by the Central government for the regulation and development of Inter-state River and river valleys.
- The **Inter-State Water Disputes Act** empowers the Central government to set up an ad hoc tribunal for the adjudication of a dispute between two or more states in relation to the waters of an inter-state river or river valley.
- Neither the Supreme Court nor any other court is to have jurisdiction in respect of any water dispute which may be referred to **such a tribunal under this Act**.

### Krishna River



- **Source:** It originates near **Mahabaleshwar** (Satara) in Maharashtra. It is the second biggest river in peninsular India after the Godavari River.
- **Drainage:** It runs from four states **Maharashtra** (303 km), North **Karnataka** (480 km) and the rest of its 1300 km journey in **Telangana** and **Andhra Pradesh** before it empties into the Bay of Bengal.
- **Tributaries:** Tungabhadra, Mallaprabha, Koyna, Bhima, Ghataprabha, Yerla, Warna, Dindi, Musi and Dudhganga.

## RELATED: TELANGANA-ANDHRA PRADESH WATER DISPUTE

- Telangana and Andhra Pradesh share stretches of the **Krishna and the Godavari** and own their tributaries.
- Both states have proposed several new projects without getting clearance from the river boards, the **Central Water Commission** and the **Apex Council**, as mandated by the **Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014**.
- **The Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014** mandates for the constitution of an Apex Council by the Central Government for the supervision of the functioning of the **Godavari River Management Board** and **Krishna River Management Board**.
- The **Apex Council** comprises the Union Water Resources Minister and the Chief Ministers of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.
- The Andhra Pradesh government's proposal to increase the utilisation of the Krishna water from a section of the river above the **Srisailem Reservoir** led to the Telangana government filing a complaint against Andhra Pradesh.
- The Srisailem reservoir is constructed across the Krishna River in Andhra Pradesh. It is located in the **Nallamala hills**.
- The Andhra Pradesh government retaliated with its own complaints saying that Palamuru-Rangareddy, Dindi Lift Irrigation Schemes on the Krishna River and **Kaleshwaram, Tupakulagudem schemes** and a few barrages proposed **across the Godavari** are all new projects.

## #RUSSIA'S LIST OF UNFRIENDLY COUNTRIES & TERRITORIES

- The **Government of Russia** has approved a list of the 'unfriendly' countries and territories with Russia that imposed sanctions against the country after the **start of a military operation of the Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine**.
- The list of 'unfriendly' countries released by Russia includes the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, EU states, among others.
- Along with the list of 'unfriendly' countries and territories, Russia also declared that all the corporate deals with the companies and the individuals from these countries will have to be approved by a government commission.



- **Why Russia has released list of unfriendly countries?**
- The **Russian Government** has approved a list of the **unfriendly countries** and territories as the tensions between the West and Russia escalates amid Kremlin's tightening grip on Ukraine's invasion. The move of declaring unfriendly nations has come in the wake of severe economic sanctions faced by Russia

over the Ukraine conflict.

## Russia releases list of 'unfriendly' countries

S. No.	Countries
1.	United States
2.	Canada
3.	European Union States
4.	United Kingdom (including Jersey, the British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Gibraltar)
5.	Ukraine
6.	Montenegro
7.	Switzerland
8.	Albania
9.	Andorra
10.	Iceland

## Russia to pay foreign currency debt in Ruble

- **The List of 'unfriendly' countries by Russia** has come following a presidential decree on March 5, 2022, which allowed the Government of Russia, companies, and the citizens to temporarily pay their foreign currency debts owed to the overseas creditors from '**unfriendly countries**' in Rubles.
- Russian Government, to make such payments, said that the debtors must open a special type of Ruble account with Russian bank and transfer into it the Ruble equivalent of the foreign currency amount owed as per the Central Bank's official exchange rate on the day of the payment.
- The new temporary procedure applies to payments exceeding 10 million rubles per month (or a similar amount in foreign currency).

## #RELATED: US BAN RUSSIAN OIL & NATURAL GAS

- US President Joe Biden on March 8, 2022 announced a **complete ban on all Russian oil, natural gas and coal imports to the United States**, in an effort to impose harsher sanctions amid Putin's war in Ukraine.
- The United States has banned oil and energy imports from Russia in a unilateral move. The European nations are yet to follow suit, with some of them including Denmark pledging to become independent of Russian natural gas.
- Recently, India abstained on a vote at the **UN Human Rights Council** in Geneva. The Council moved the resolution to set up an **international commission of enquiry into Russia's actions in Ukraine**.
- The move is significant in the terms that the vote followed even after **India's meeting with Quad countries**.
- India has also abstained from similar resolutions in the **United Nations General Assembly** and **United Nations Security Council**.

- India also abstained from the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** resolution that was related to safety at four nuclear power stations and a number of nuclear waste sites including Chernobyl, as the Russians seized control of them.

### What is the UN Human Rights Council?

- The HRC is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of **human rights** around the world.
- **Formation:** The Council was **created by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006**. It replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
- The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) serves as the **Secretariat** of the Human Rights Council.
- OHCHR is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

### Members:

- It is **made up of 47 United Nations Member States** which are **elected by the UN General Assembly (UNGA)**.
- The UNGA takes into account the candidate States' contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as their voluntary pledges and commitments in this regard.
- The Council's Membership is based on equitable geographical distribution. Seats are distributed as follows:
  - African States: 13 seats
  - Asia-Pacific States: 13 seats
  - Latin American and Caribbean States: 8 seats
  - Western European and other States: 7 seats
  - Eastern European States: 6 seats
- Members of the Council **serve for a period of three years and are not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms**.

## ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

### #NATIONAL LAND MONETIZATION CORPORATION?

Recently, the **Union Cabinet** has approved the setting up **National Land Monetization Corporation (NLMC)** as a wholly owned Government of India company.



- The Finance Minister had **announced plans to set up a special purpose vehicle** for this purpose in the **Union Budget 2021-22**.
- In August, 2021, the government of India launched the **National Monetization Pipeline (NMP)**.

### What is National Land Monetization Corporation (NLMC)?

- NLMC will **undertake surplus land asset monetisation as an agency function**, and assist and provide technical advice to the Centre in this regard.
- NLMC has been announced with an **initial authorized share capital of Rs 5000 crore** and **paid-up share capital of Rs 150 crore**.
- The **Board of Directors of NLMC** will comprise senior Central Government officers and eminent experts to enable professional operations and management of the company.
- The Chairman, non-Government Directors of the NLMC will be **appointed through a merit-based selection process**.
- The new company, which will be set up under the administrative jurisdiction of the finance ministry.
- NLMC will **hire professionals from the private sector** just as in the case of similar specialised government companies like the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) and **Invest India**.

### Benefits:

- This will **enable productive utilization of under-utilized assets** to trigger private sector investments, new economic activities, boost local economy and generate financial resources for economic and social infrastructure.
- NLMC is also **expected to own, hold, manage and monetize surplus land and building assets** of CPSEs under closure and the surplus non-core land assets of Government owned CPSEs under strategic disinvestment.
- This will **speed up the closure process of CPSEs** and **smoothen the strategic disinvestment process of Government owned CPSEs**.

### What will be the Function of the NLMC?

- NLMC will undertake monetization of surplus land and building assets of **Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs)** and other Government agencies.
- CPSEs are those companies in which the **direct holding of the Central Government or other CPSEs is 51% or more**.

- At present, CPSEs hold considerable surplus, unused and under-used non-core assets in the nature of land and buildings.
- NLMC will also advise and support other Government entities (including CPSEs) in identifying their surplus non-core assets and monetizing them in a professional and efficient manner to generate maximum value realization.
- NLMC will act as a repository of best practices in land monetization, assist and provide technical advice to the Government in implementation of asset monetization programmes.

### What is Asset Monetization?

- **About:** It is the process of creating new sources of revenue for the government and its entities by unlocking the economic value of unutilized or underutilized public assets.
- India needs more infrastructures but the public sector simply doesn't have the resources to build it. There are two possible responses.
- For setting new infrastructure, one can think of bringing in the private sector with a contractual framework for what it has to do, and then let it bring its own resources.
- To recognise that there are more risks in the construction stage and it is perhaps better to let the public sector build the asset and then sell it off to private players or if not an outright sale, let the private sector manage it.

### Public-Private Partnership Model:

- PPP is an arrangement between government and private sector for the provision of public assets and/or public services. Public-private partnerships allow large-scale government projects, such as roads, bridges, or hospitals, to be completed with private funding.
- In this type of partnership, investments are undertaken by the private sector entity, for a specified period of time.
- These partnerships work well when private sector technology and innovation combine with public sector incentives to complete work on time and within budget.
- As PPP involves full retention of responsibility by the government for providing the services, it doesn't amount to privatization.
- There is a well defined allocation of risk between the private sector and the public entity.
- Private entity is chosen on the basis of open competitive bidding and receives performance linked payments.

### #National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP)

- **About:** The National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) envisages an aggregate monetisation potential of ₹6-lakh crore through the leasing of core assets of the Central government in sectors such as roads, railways, power, oil and gas pipelines, telecom, civil aviation etc, over a four-year period (FY 2022-25).

### Significance of NMP:

- **Boost Economy:** It is the first-of-its-kind initiative that will boost the economy, generate better employment opportunities and drive the competitiveness of the Indian economy.



- Utilising Underutilised Public Assets: The NMP advocates **unlocking idle capital** from non-strategic underperforming government owned assets.
  - Eight core industrial sectors that support infrastructure (coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilizers, steel, cement, and electricity) have a **total weight of nearly 40% in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**.
-

## LEGAL AFFAIRS

### #CONSENT OF STATES FOR CBI INVESTIGATIONS

- Meghalaya has become the ninth state of the country to withdraw consent to CBI to investigate cases in the state.
- The **Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946**, governs the CBI and it is mandatory to obtain the concerned state government's consent before beginning to investigate a crime in a state.
- States typically give a general consent to assist the CBI in conducting a seamless investigation of cases of corruption involving central government personnel in their states.
- This is consent by default otherwise CBI would have to seek permission from the state government in every case, even for small tasks.



### What is the meaning of withdrawal of consent?

- It means that the **CBI will not be able to file any new cases** involving central government officials or private persons in the state without the permission of the state government.
- CBI officers who will be entering the state that has withdrawn consent will lose all powers of a police officer as soon as they enter the state unless they have received permission from the government of the state.
- Calcutta High Court had declared that the central agency cannot be barred from investigating a central government employee in another state even if the **central government employee is posted in a state that has withdrawn consent**.
- The withdrawal of permission would be applicable in circumstances involving only state government employees. In the Supreme Court, this ruling has been challenged.

### Which states have withdrawn consent?

- Before Meghalaya, the eight other states that had withdrawn consent to the CBI are **Punjab, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Mizoram, and Kerala**.
- The **first state to withdraw consent was Mizoram which did so in 2015**.
- **CBI can take advantage of the Calcutta HC order till and if it is overturned by the Supreme Court. Even if consent is revoked**, CBI can retain the power to investigate cases that had been registered before the withdrawal of consent. Also, a case registered anywhere else in the country involving individuals stationed in these states extended the CBI's authority to these states.

### Background:

- **Withdrawal of Consent:** Eight States have withdrawn consent to the CBI for launching investigations in their territory.
- **Eight States** — West Bengal, Maharashtra, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Mizoram have withdrawn consent to the CBI for launching investigations in their territory.

- **Argument of CBI:** According to the CBI, such widespread withdrawal of consent is **rendering it redundant with regard to investigation of corruption charges against Central employees** and undertakings working within the territorial jurisdiction of various States.
- While the States' responses were primarily an **act of politico-legal ring-fencing** against the politics of the Central Government employing its agencies, the withdrawal of general consent by a number of States **has left the CBI handicapped**.

### About the Consent Given by State Government:

- **Legal and Constitutional Basis:** According to **Section 6** of the **Delhi Special Police Establishment Act of 1946** under which the CBI functions, the State's consent is required to extend CBI investigation beyond Union Territories.
- The legal foundation of the CBI has been construed to be based on **Entry 80** of the **Union List** which provides for the extension of powers of the police force belonging to one State to any area in another State but not without its permission.
- "Police" is Entry 2 in the **State List** under the **Seventh Schedule** of the Constitution.

### Types of Consent:

- There are **two types of consent** for a probe by the CBI.
- **General Consent:** When a state gives a general consent (Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act) to the CBI for probing a case, **the agency is not required to seek fresh permission every time** it enters that state in connection with investigation or for every case.
- A general consent is given to facilitate that seamless investigation in a case of corruption or violence.
- **Specific Consent:** When a general consent is withdrawn, **CBI needs to seek case-wise consent** for investigation from the concerned state government.
- If specific consent is not granted, the CBI officials will not have the power of police personnel when they enter that state.
- This hurdle impedes seamless investigation by the CBI.

### SC Judgement:

- In the ***Advance Insurance Co. Ltd case, 1970***, a Constitution Bench held that the definition of "State", as contained in **The General Clauses Act**, includes Union Territories as well.
- Hence the CBI, being a force constituted for Union Territories as recognised under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act of 1946, **can conduct investigation into the territories of the States only with their consent**.

### Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)

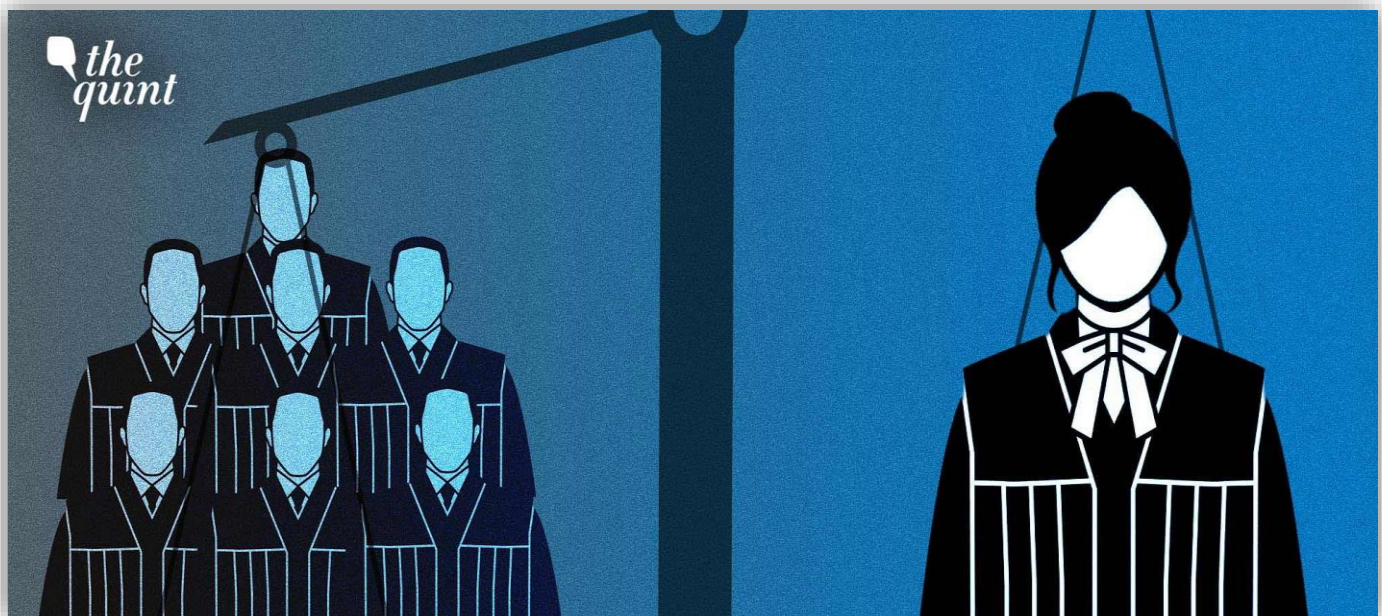
- The CBI was **set up in 1963** by a resolution of the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- Now, the CBI comes under the administrative control of the **Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT)** of the **Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions**.
- The establishment of the CBI was recommended by the **Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption (1962-1964)**.

- The CBI is **not a statutory body**. It derives its powers from the **Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946**.
- The CBI is the **main investigating agency of the Central Government**.
- It also provides assistance to the **Central Vigilance Commission** and **Lokpal**.
- It is also the nodal police agency in India which coordinates investigations on behalf of **Interpol Member countries**.

## #REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN JUDICIARY

Recently, the **Chief Justice of India** raised concerns about the **lack of women among High Court judges**.

- He made this remark while addressing an event on the occasion of the **International Day of Women Judges (10<sup>th</sup> March)**.
- What is the International Day of Women Judges?
- **About:** United Nations General Assembly Resolution 75/274 designated **10<sup>th</sup> March** the International Day of Women Judges **in 2021**.
- India was **among the nations that sponsored the resolution**, which was moved by Qatar.



### Significance:

- The day **aims to recognise the efforts and contributions** being made by women judges.
- The day also **empowers young women and girls** who aspire to become judges and leaders in the community.
- Combating gender disparity in the judicial services will also help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.
- **SDG Goal 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

### What is the State of Women in Judiciary?

- In high courts, the percentage of **women judges** is a mere **11.5%**, while in the **Supreme Court** there are **four sitting women judges out of 33 in office**.

- The situation of **women lawyers in the country** is not any better. Out of 1.7 million advocates registered, **only 15% are women**.

### What are the Reasons for Low Women Representatives?

- **Patriarchy in Society:** The **primary reason for underrepresentation** of women in judiciary is deeply ingrained patriarchy in society.
- Women often have to face **hostile atmospheres within courtrooms**. **Harassment, lack of respect from members of the bar and bench**, the silencing of their opinions, are some of the other traumatic experiences often recounted by many women lawyers.
- **Opaque Collegium System Functioning:** More women tend to enter the lower judiciary at the entry level because of the method of recruitment through an entrance examination.
- However, the higher judiciary has a collegium system, which has tended to be more opaque and, therefore, more likely to reflect bias.
- Recently, the **Supreme Court Collegium** recommended **192 candidates for the High Courts**, out of these, 37, that is 19%, were women. But Unfortunately, so far only 17 of the 37 women recommended were appointed.
- **No Women Reservation:** Many states have a reservation policy for women in the lower judiciary, which is missing in the **High Courts and Supreme Court**.
- States such as Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha and Rajasthan have benefited from such reservation as they now have 40-50% women judicial officers.
- However, the **Bill for giving 33% reservation to women in Parliament** and state legislatures has not been passed till date, despite all major political parties publicly supporting it.

### Data on Gender Gap in Judiciary:

- The SC only has **2 women judges**, as against the **34 seats reserved for women judges** and there has **never been a female Chief Justice of India (CJI)**.
- There are **only 80 women judges** out of the **total sanctioned strength of 1,113 judges** in the SC and the HCs.
- Out of these 80 women judges, there are only two in the SC, and the other 78 are in various HCs, comprising only 7.2% of the total number of judges.
- Of the 26 courts whose data was accessed, including the SC, the **Punjab and Haryana HCs has the maximum strength** of women judges (11 out of 85 judges) in the country, **followed by the Madras HC** (9 out of 75 judges). Both Delhi and Bombay HCs have 8 women judges.
- The HCs of Manipur, Meghalaya, Patna, Tripura, Telangana, and Uttarakhand, do not have any women in the sitting judges.

### #What is a Collegium System and How Did It Evolve?

- It is the **system of appointment and transfer of judges** that has evolved through judgments of the **Supreme Court (SC)**, and **not by an Act of Parliament** or by a provision of the Constitution.
- **Evolution of the System:**



- **First Judges Case (1981):** It declared that the “primacy” of the CJI’s (Chief Justice of India) recommendation on judicial appointments and transfers can be refused for “cogent reasons.”
- The ruling gave the Executive primacy over the Judiciary in judicial appointments for the next 12 years.
- **Second Judges Case (1993):** SC introduced the Collegium system, holding that “consultation” really meant “concurrence”.
- It added that it was not the CJI’s individual opinion, but an institutional opinion formed in consultation with the two senior-most judges in the SC.
- **Third Judges Case (1998):** SC on the President's reference (Article 143) expanded the Collegium to a five-member body, comprising the CJI and four of his senior-most colleagues.

### Who Heads the Collegium System?

- The SC collegium is headed **by the CJI (Chief Justice of India) and comprises four other senior most judges** of the court.
- A HC collegium is led by its Chief Justice and four other senior most judges of that court.
- Names recommended **for appointment by a HC collegium reaches the government only after approval by the CJI** and the SC collegium.
- Judges of the higher judiciary are appointed only through the collegium system and the government has a role only after names have been decided by the collegium.
- **Related Constitutional Provisions**
- **Article 124(2)** of the Indian Constitution provides that the **Judges of the SC are appointed by the President after consultation** with such a number of the Judges of the SC and of the High Courts in the States as the President may deem necessary for the purpose.
- **Article 217** of the Indian Constitution states that the **Judge of a High Court shall be appointed by the President in consultation with the CJI, the Governor of the State**, and, in the case of appointment of a Judge other than the Chief Justice, the Chief Justice of the High Court.

### #PROVISION OF BAIL UNDER UAPA

Recently, a Delhi court granted bail to a former Congress (Political Party) councillor in an **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967 (UAPA)** case filed in connection with the 2020 anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, (CAA) protests.



### What is the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019?

- The CAA provides citizenship to six undocumented non-Muslim communities (**Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians**) from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, who **entered India on or before 31st December, 2014**.
- It exempts the members of the six communities from any criminal case under the **Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport Act, 1920**.
- The two Acts specify punishment for entering the country illegally and staying here on expired visas and permits.

## What was the Current Ruling?

- The **court granted bail** to the accused despite the prosecution arguing that there were limitations contained in **Section 43D(5) of the UAPA**, a provision which makes grant of bail virtually impossible, as it leaves little room for judicial reasoning.
- The Defence argued that Section 43D UAPA only **puts restrictions but is not an absolute bar to the grant of bail**.
- What are the Bail Related Provisions and Issues in UAPA?
- The major problem with the UAPA lies in its **Section 43(D)(5), which prevents the release of any accused person on bail** if, police have filed the chargesheet that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accusation against such person is prima facie true.
- The effect of Section 43(D)(5) is that **once the police elect to charge an individual under the UAPA, it becomes extremely difficult for bail to be granted**. Bail is a safeguard and guarantee of the constitutional right to liberty.
- This provision leaves very **little room for judicial reasoning, and makes the grant of bail virtually impossible under UAPA**.
- In the case of **Zahoor Ahmed Shah Watali**, the **Supreme Court** in 2019 confirmed that **courts must accept the state's case without examining its merits**.
- However, **courts have since read this provision differently, emphasizing the right to a speedy trial** and raising the bar for the state to book an individual under UAPA.

## What is Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967?

- The UAPA was enacted in 1967, and later **strengthened to be modelled as an anti-terror law by the government in 2008 and 2012**.
- In August 2019, Parliament cleared the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019** to designate individuals as terrorists on certain grounds provided in the Act.
- In order to **deal with the terrorism related crimes**, it deviates from ordinary legal procedures and creates an exceptional regime where constitutional safeguards of the accused are curtailed.
- Between 2016 and 2019, the period for which UAPA figures have been published by the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**, a total of 4,231 **First Information Report (FIR)** were filed under various sections of the UAPA, of which 112 cases have resulted in convictions.
- This frequent application of UAPA indicates that it is often misused and abused like other anti-terror laws in the past in India such as **POTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act) 2002** and **TADA (Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act) 1987**.

## What are other Associated Issues of the UAPA?

- **Vague Definition of Terrorist Act**: The definition of a “terrorist act” under the UAPA substantially **differs from the definition promoted by the United Nations (UN)** Special Rapporteur on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism.
- According to Special Rapporteur to call an offence a “terrorist act”, three elements must be cumulatively present:

- The means used must be deadly.
- The intent behind the act must be to cause fear amongst the population or to compel a government or international organisation to do or refrain from doing something.
- The aim must be to further an ideological goal.
- **UAPA**, on the other hand, **offers an overbroad and ambiguous definition** of a “terrorist act” which includes the death of, or injuries to, any person, damage to any property, etc.
- **Pendency of Trials:** Given the state of justice delivery system in India, the rate of **pendency at the level of trial is at an average of 95.5%.**

## #PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL OFFENCES

Recently, a 2-judge bench of the Supreme Court has delivered a split verdict on the issue whether **Section 155(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure** will apply to the investigation of an offence under **Section 23 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO).**



- As per **Section 155(2) CrPC**, a police officer cannot investigate a non-cognizable offence without the order of a Magistrate.
- **Section 23 of POCSO** relates to the **offence of disclosure of the identity of the victim of the sexual offence.**
- One of the judges opined that **disclosure of the identity of a child** who is a victim of sexual offences or who is in conflict with the law is in **fundamental breach of the right of the child to dignity, the right not to be embarrassed.**

## What are the issues related to Child Sexual Abuse?

- **Multi-layered Problem:** Child sexual abuse is a **multi-layered problem which negatively impacts children’s physical safety, mental health**, well-being and behavioural aspects.
- **Amplification Due to Digital Technologies:** Mobile and digital technologies has further amplified child abuse and exploitation. New forms of child abuse like online bullying, harassment and **Child Pornography** have also emerged.
- **Ineffective Legislaton:** Although Government of India has enacted the **Protection of Children against Sexual Offences Act 2012 (POCSO Act)**, it has **failed to protect child from sexual abuse.** The reasons for this can be following:
  - **Low Conviction Rate:** The rate of conviction under the **POCSO act is only about 32%** if one takes the average of the past 5 years and the percentage of cases pending is 90%.
  - **Judicial Delay:** The Kathua Rape case took 16 months for the main accused to be convicted whereas the POCSO Act clearly mentions that the entire trial and conviction process has to be done in one year.
  - **Unfriendly to Child:** Challenges related to **age-determination of the child.** Especially laws that focus on biological age and not mental age.

## What are the Related Initiatives?

- **Child Abuse Prevention and Investigation Unit**

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

### What are the Related Constitutional Provisions?

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

### Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012

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

### About the BetiBachaoBetiPadhao (BBBP) Scheme:

- **Main Objectives:**
- Prevention of gender-biased sex-selective elimination.
- Ensuring survival & protection of the girl child.
- Ensuring education and participation of the girl child.
- Protecting rights of Girl child.
- **Multisectoral Nationwide Campaign:**

- BBBP is a **national campaign** and focussed **multisectoral action** in 100 selected districts low in **Child Sex Ratio (CSR)**, covering all States and UTs.
- This is a **joint initiative** of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource Development.

## #ARTICLE 355 & BREAKDOWN OF CONSTITUTIONAL MACHINERY

Citing post-poll violence in **Birbhum district, West Bengal**, many political leaders have urged the president to invoke **Article 355 of the Constitution** to ensure that the state government functions in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

- The petitioner has asked for imposition of **Article 355** on account of **breakdown of constitutional machinery**.



### What is Article 355?

- Article 355 refers to the provision in the Constitution that states that “It shall be the duty of the **Union to protect every State against external aggression and internal disturbance** and to ensure that the **government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution**”.
- The Article 355 is part of **emergency provisions** contained in **Part XVIII of the Constitution of India**, from Article 352 to 360.

### What is the Relation Between Article 356 and Article 355?

- It is this duty in the performance of which the centre takes over the government of a state under **Article 356** in case of **failure or breakdown of constitutional machinery in a state**.
- This is popularly known as ‘**President’s Rule**’.
- **Grounds of imposition:** the president’s ruler can be proclaimed under Article 356 on two grounds:
- **Article 356** empowers the **President to issue a proclamation** if he is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the government of a **state cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the constitution**.
- **Article 365** says that whenever a **state fails to comply with or to give effect to any direction from the centre**, it will be lawful for the President to hold that a situation has arisen in which the government of the state cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the constitution.

- **Parliamentary approval and duration:** A proclamation imposing the president's rule must be approved by both the **houses of parliament within two months** from the date of its issue.
- **Consequences of the President’s rule:** The President acquires the following extraordinary powers when the President’s rule is imposed in a state:

- He can take up the **functions of the state government and powers vested in the governor** or any other executive authority in the state.
- He can declare that the **powers of the state legislature are to be exercised by the parliament**.
- He can take all other necessary steps including the **suspension of the constitutional provisions relating to any body or authority in the state**.



- **Scope of judicial review:** The **38<sup>th</sup> Amendment act of 1975** made the satisfaction of the President in invoking **Article 356 final and conclusive** which would not be challenged in any court on any ground.
- But, this provision was subsequently deleted by the **44<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act of 1978** implying that the satisfaction of the President is not beyond **judicial review**.

### What are Emergency Provisions?

- These provisions **enable the Central government to meet any abnormal situation effectively**.
- **Emergency Provisions** in Indian Constitution are **taken from Government of India Act 1935**.
- However, suspension of Fundamental Rights during emergency is taken from **Weimer (German) Constitution**.
- The rationality behind the incorporation is to safeguard the **sovereignty, unity, integrity and security of the country**, the democratic political system and the Constitution.
- The Constitution stipulates three types of emergencies:
- **National Emergency**
- **Constitutional Emergency**
- **Financial Emergency**

### What Is a National Emergency?

- National emergency can be **declared on the basis of war, external aggression or armed rebellion**.
- The Constitution employs the expression '**proclamation of emergency**' to denote an emergency of **this type**.

### Grounds of declaration:

- Under **Article 352**, the president can declare a national emergency when the security of India or a part of it is threatened by war or external aggression or armed rebellion.
- The President **can declare a national emergency even before the actual occurrence** of war or armed rebellion or external aggression
- When a national emergency is declared on the **grounds of 'war' or 'external aggression'**, it is known as '**External Emergency**'.
- On the other hand, when it is declared on the **grounds of 'armed rebellion'**, it is known as '**Internal Emergency**'.
- This term '**armed rebellion**' is inserted from the **44<sup>th</sup> amendment**. Before this term it was known as internal disturbance.

### What is a Financial Emergency?

- **Grounds of declaration:** **Article 360** empowers the president to proclaim a Financial Emergency if he is satisfied that a **situation has arisen due to which the financial stability or credit of India or any part of its territory is threatened**.
- What is the impact of Emergencies on Fundamental Rights?
- Articles **358 and 359** describe the effect of a National Emergency on the **Fundamental Rights**. These two provisions are explained below:

- **Suspension of Fundamental rights under Article 19:** According to Article 358, when a proclamation of National Emergency is made, the six fundamental rights under Article 19 are automatically suspended.
- **Suspension of other Fundamental Rights:** Under Article 359, the President is authorised to suspend, by order, the right to move any court for the enforcement of Fundamental Rights during a National Emergency.
- However it should be noted that Fundamental Rights are **not affected during President's Rule and Financial Emergency.**

## #CONSTITUTION (ST) ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2022

- Lok Sabha passed the **Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2022** on March 28, 2022. The Bill seeks to amend the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 for the inclusion of the Darlong community in the list of Tripura Scheduled Tribes.
- The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2022 proposes the "**Darlong**" community as a sub-tribe of "**Kuki**" in the list of Scheduled Tribes in Tripura.
- The bill was tabled by Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda. He The Minister said that the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2022 has been introduced to include Darlong community as a sub-tribe of Kuki community in Tripura.



## Why has Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill 2022 been introduced?

- The **Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill 2022** proposes the inclusion of a community - Darlong in Tripura Scheduled Tribes list as in hilly areas the people of the same community are residing as different sub-tribes and are excluded from the list for a long time.

## Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill 2022: Key Provisions

- The Tripura state government had requested to include the "**Darlong**" community as a sub-tribe of "**Kuki**" in entry 9 in the list of Scheduled Tribes in respect of the State of Tripura.
- Based on this recommendation, it was proposed to modify the list of Scheduled Tribes in respect to Tripura state by amending the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950.
- **The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2022** proposes to amend Part XV- Tripura of the Schedule to the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 to insert the "Darlong" community as a sub-tribe of "Kuki" after item (iii) Chhalya in entry 9 in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Tripura.

## How will this benefit the community?

- The addition of the community to the list of Scheduled Tribes of Tripura may entail additional expenditure, as the people belonging to the community will be entitled to the **same benefits under the continuing schemes meant for the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes.**

- The additional expenditure shall be accommodated within the approved budgetary outlay of the Government. The additional expenditure to be incurred on this account has not been estimated yet.

### Significance

- While **tabling the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill 2022**, the Tribal Affairs Minister said that the government is committed to the all-around development of tribal areas.
- He further informed that there has been a gradual increase in the allocation of funds under Scheduled Tribe Component-STC. While during 2014-15, the allocation was only Rs 16,111 crore, it was increased to Rs 87,585 crore in 2021-22.
- The IT Ministry recently initiated a scheme with an outlay of around Rs 7000 crore to **enable broadband and 4G connectivity to all villages under ST component to enable better connectivity in the villages.**
- The centre is also implementing Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana with the objective of ensuring integrated development of tribal areas under which, **several schemes on education, health and tap water are being provided to the people.**

### SC/ST Act:

- SC ST Act 1989 is an Act of Parliament enacted to **prohibit discrimination against SC & ST community's members** and prevent atrocities against them.
- The Act is also a **recognition of the depressing reality** that despite undertaking several measures, the **Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes** continue to be subjected to various atrocities at the hands of upper-castes.
- The Act has been enacted keeping in view the express constitutional safeguards enumerated in **Articles 15 (Prohibition of Discrimination), 17 (Abolition of Untouchability) and 21 (Protection of Life and Personal Liberty) of the Constitution**, with a twin-fold objective of **protecting the members of these vulnerable communities** as well as to **provide relief and rehabilitation** to the victims of caste-based atrocities.
- In the **amended SC/ST Act (2018)**, preliminary inquiry is not a must and no prior approval is also required for appointing authorities for senior police officers to file FIRs in cases of atrocities on SC and ST.

### Article 142:

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

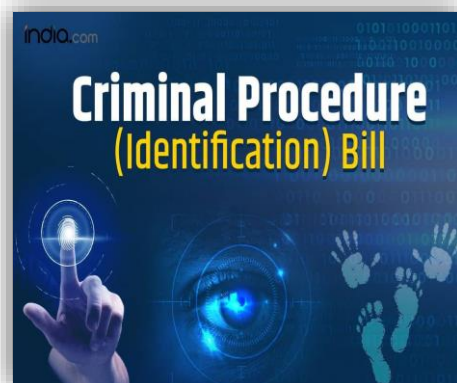
- In the **Union Carbide case**, relating to the victims of the Bhopal gas tragedy, the Supreme Court placed itself above the laws made by the Parliament or the legislatures of the States by saying that, to do complete justice, it could even override the laws made by Parliament.
- However, in the **Supreme Court Bar Association v. Union of India**, the Supreme Court stated that **Article 142 could not be used to supplant the existing law, but only to supplement the law.**
- **Cases of Judicial Overreach:** In recent years, there have been several judgments of the Supreme Court wherein it has been **foraying into areas which had long been forbidden to the judiciary by reason of the doctrine of 'separation of powers'**, which is part of the basic structure of the Constitution. One such example is:
- The **ban on the sale of alcohol along national and state highways:** While the notification by the central government prohibited liquor stores along National Highways only, the Supreme Court put in place **a ban on a distance of 500 metres by invoking Article 142.**

### Provisions against Untouchability in India

- **Article 17-** Abolition of Untouchability. It is a Fundamental Right (Part III), available against individual; Article 17 does not define the term 'untouchability'.
- To expand the ambit of Article 17, the government came up with the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989. The new legislation was enacted to deal with more violent caste-driven atrocities against scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.
- Above provisions are not exhaustive, there are many other provisions which prevent any form of discrimination or promote the weaker section. E.g. **Article 46 from Directive Principles of State Policy** talks about promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections.
- **Article 330** provides for the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha and **Article 332** provides for the reservation of seats in the Legislative Assemblies of the States.

### #CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (IDENTIFICATION) BILL, 2022

- The Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill, 2022 was introduced in the Lok Sabha by Minister of State in **Home Affairs Ministry Ajay Mishra Teni on March 28, 2022.**
- The bill was presented during the ongoing second half of the Budget Session of the Parliament to repeal the Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920.
- **The Minister said that the current Identification of Prisoners Act was formed in 1920.**



### What is Criminal Procedure Identification Bill?

- The **Criminal Procedure Identification Bill 2022** seeks to repeal the existing "The Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920", which is limited to allowing collection of finger and footprint impressions and photographs for a limited category of convicted and non-convicted persons on the order of a Magistrate.

## What powers does Criminal Procedure Identification Bill 2022 give to police?

- The Criminal Procedure Identification Bill 2022 aims to authorise the police to take measurements of convicts and other persons for the purposes of their identifications and investigations in criminal matters to preserve records.
- The Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920 allowed collection of measurements for limited category of prisoners, the new **Criminal Procedure Identification Bill 2022** will allow police or prison officials to collect measurements of all those who are detained under various charges or even those under preventive detention.
- It will somewhere give the **police to take physical and biological samples of all detainees.**

## Know Key Provisions of the Bill in 5 Points

- **The Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill 2022** will repeal the Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920, which is limited to collecting **fingerprint and footprint impressions for limited category of prisoners.**
- The new bill will allow the police to take measurements of all convicts and other detained persons to preserve records for the purpose of their identification.
- As per provisions of the new Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill 2022, any person detained, convicted or arrested or under any preventive detention law will be required to provide "measurements" to a police officer or a prison official.
- The bill will allow the police to take iris and retina scan, photographs, finger-impressions, palm-print impressions, footprint impressions, physical, biological samples and their analysis.
- The bill will also allow the police to collect their behavioural attributes including signatures and handwriting or any other examination referred under **section 53 or section 53A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.**

## What does this mean?

- Under the **new criminal identification bill**, any person who is detained, arrested, convicted or under preventive detention will be required to provide the above measurements to a police officer.

## Background

- The **budget session of the Parliament** was held in two parts, the first half had begun on January 31 and concluded on February 11. **The second half of the Budget session of Parliament began on March 14 and is scheduled to conclude on April 8, 2022.**

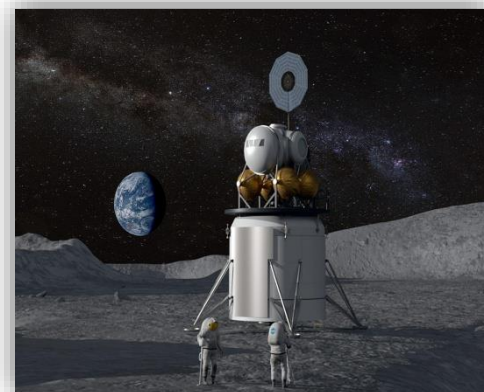


## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### #WHAT IS NASA'S ARTEMIS PROGRAMME?

Recently, the **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** rolled out its **Artemis I moon mission** to the launchpad for testing at the **Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, United States**.

#### What is Artemis Mission?



- NASA's Artemis mission is touted as the **next generation of lunar exploration**, and is named after the **twin sister of Apollo from Greek mythology**.
- **Artemis is also the goddess of the moon.**
- It is the **first in a series of increasingly complex missions** that will enable **human exploration to the Moon and Mars**.
- With the Artemis programme, **NASA aims to land humans on the moon by 2024**, and it also plans to land the **first woman and first person of colour on the moon**.
- NASA will establish an **Artemis Base Camp** on the surface and a **gateway (the lunar outpost around the Moon)** in lunar orbit to aid exploration by robots and astronauts.
- The gateway is a critical component of **NASA's sustainable lunar operations and will serve as a multi-purpose outpost orbiting the moon**.
- **Other space agencies** are also involved in the Artemis programme.
- **Canadian Space Agency** has committed to providing **advanced robotics** for the gateway,
- **The European Space Agency** will provide the **International Habitat and the ESPRIT module**, which will deliver additional communications capabilities among other things.
- The **Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency** plans to contribute **habitation components and logistics resupply**.

#### What are Key Points of Artemis I Mission?

- **Artemis I, formerly Exploration Mission-1**, will be the first integrated flight test of NASA's **Deep Space Exploration Systems**:
- **Orion spacecraft**: Orion spacecraft is going to remain in space without docking to a space station, longer than any ship for astronauts has ever done before.
- **Space Launch System (SLS) rocket**: It is the most powerful rocket in the world — and travels 2,80,000 miles from the earth for over four to six weeks during the course of the mission.
- **Newly upgraded Exploration Ground Systems** at Kennedy Space Centre in Cape Canaveral, Florida.
- It is an **uncrewed space mission** where the spacecraft will launch on an SLS rocket.
- The primary operating goal of the mission is to assure a safe crew module entry, descent, splashdown, and recovery.
- **SLS and Orion under Artemis I** will be launched from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, U.S. in the summer of 2022.

- The mission will end with the Orion spacecraft's ability to return safely to the earth.

### What are the future missions in the Artemis programme?

- The second flight under the programme will **have crew on board and will test Orion's critical systems with humans onboard.**
- Eventually, the learnings from the **Artemis programme will be utilised to send the first astronauts to Mars.**
- NASA plans on using the lunar orbit to gain the necessary experience to extend human exploration of space farther into the solar system.

### What is the History of Moon Exploration?

- In 1959, the **Soviet Union's uncrewed Luna 1 and 2** became the first rover to visit the Moon.
- The US began trying to put people in space as early as **1961.**
- Eight years later, on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 1969, **Neil Armstrong along with Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin became the first human to step on the Moon** as part of the Apollo 11 mission.
- Before the USA sent the **Apollo 11 mission to the Moon**, it sent three classes of robotic missions between **1961 and 1968.**
- After July 1969, **12 American astronauts walked on the surface of the Moon until 1972.**
- In the 1990s, the USA resumed **lunar exploration with robotic missions Clementine and Lunar Prospector.**
- In 2009, it began a new series of robotic lunar missions with the launch of the **Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) and the Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing Satellite (LCROSS).**
- In 2011, NASA began the ARTEMIS.
- In 2012, the **Gravity Recovery and Interior Laboratory (GRAIL)** spacecraft studied the Moon's gravity.
- Apart from the USA, the European Space Agency, Japan, China, and India have sent missions to explore the Moon.
- China landed two rovers on the surface, which includes the **first-ever landing on the Moon's far side in 2019.**

### What are ISRO's Moon Exploration Efforts?

- **Chandrayaan 1:**
- The **Chandrayaan project** began in 2007 with an agreement between **India's space agency ISRO and Russia's ROSCOSMOS for mutual cooperation.**
- However, the mission was postponed in January 2013 and rescheduled to 2016 as Russia was unable to develop the lander on time.
- **Findings:** Confirmed presence of lunar water.
- Evidence of lunar caves formed by an ancient lunar lava flow.
- Past tectonic activity was found on the lunar surface.
- The faults and fractures discovered could be features of past interior **tectonic activity** coupled with **meteorite** impacts.

- **Chandrayaan-2** is India's second mission to the moon and comprises a **fully indigenous Orbiter, Lander (Vikram) and Rover (Pragyan)**.
- The Rover Pragyan is housed inside **Vikram lander**. The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** recently announced India's third lunar mission **Chandrayaan-3**, which will comprise a lander and a rover.

## #NASA LAUNCHED PSYCHE MISSION

- **NASA's Psyche mission** is going to be launched in August 2022. It will be the first launch to explore a giant metal asteroid known as Psyche in the main asteroid belt.
- The asteroid Psyche is in **between Mars & Jupiter** and is orbiting the Sun.
- The Psyche mission is one among the two missions of NASA to explore early Solar System. The Lucy mission is another mission to explore Jupiter's Trojan asteroids in order to study early Solar System.



## NASA's Psyche mission

- **NASA's Psyche Mission** is the first mission that will be launched to explore a unique giant metal asteroid called Psyche. The mission is being led by Arizona State University.
- Mission management, navigation and its operations will be looked upon by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Mission was selected as one of the two missions to explore early Solar System on in 2017.
- Mission will be launched in August 2022 from **Kennedy Space Center, Florida and will arrive on Psyche asteroid in 2026.**

## Observation Period of Psyche asteroid

- Mission will spend 21 months for studying and mapping the asteroid Psyche.
- Instruments on Psyche mission
- The Psyche asteroid is carrying following scientific instruments:
- X-band Gravity Science Investigation
- Gamma Ray and Neutron Spectrometer
- Multispectral Imager
- Magnetometer

## What is the Objectives mission?

- To understand how planets and other bodies separated into layers such as cores, mantles, and crusts.
- To examine an asteroid made of metal.
- To **explore early eras of solar system**
- About Asteroid Psyche: Italian astronomer Annibale de Gasparis had discovered the Psyche as 16<sup>th</sup> asteroid in 1852. He named the asteroid after the Goddess of Soul in ancient Greek mythology. It is 210 kilometers in diameter. The asteroid is made up of mostly metallic iron and nickel, similar to Earth's core.

### Reason for Choosing Dimorphos:

- **Didymos is a perfect system** for the test mission because it is **an eclipsing binary** which means it has a **moonlet that regularly orbits the asteroid** and which can be seen when it passes in front of the main asteroid.
- **Earth-based telescopes can study this variation in brightness** to understand how long it takes Dimorphos to orbit Didymos.

### SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

- SpaceX has launched its Falcon Heavy rocket carrying 24 experimental satellites on boosters that are being reused.
- The payloads have been assembled from several partners, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NASA and university research projects.
- **The Falcon Heavy, which the company SpaceX considers to be the most powerful operational rocket in the world** by a factor of two, will carry the two dozen spacecraft into **three distinct orbits**.
- The company also will attempt to land the Falcon Heavy's **two boosters back on earth simultaneously**, then land the first stage of the rocket on a drone ship in the ocean about 770 miles away from where it initially takes off.
- SpaceX **first** demonstrated the 230-foot-tall (70-meter) **Falcon Heavy** in February **2018**. In April 2019, it launched Falcon Heavy for its first paying customer, Saudi Arabia's commercial satellite operator Arabsat.
- SpaceX is a **private company** founded in 2002 by Elon Musk.
- Its **headquarters** is located in Hawthorne, **California (U.S.A)**.

### #NASA TO LAUNCH 'LUCY' MISSION

- **NASA is set to launch Lucy**, the first spacecraft to study Jupiter's Trojan asteroids.
- The **Lucy spacecraft** is scheduled to be launched on an **Atlas V rocket from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida**.
- **NASA's Juno spacecraft** has been orbiting Jupiter since 2016 but the Lucy spacecraft will be the first expedition by **NASA to study the Trojan asteroids** that orbit the Sun in two swarms, one leading ahead of Jupiter and other trailing behind the planet.

### NASA's Lucy mission to study Jupiter's asteroids

- The **Lucy spacecraft which is NASA's first spacecraft to study Jupiter's Trojan asteroids** will be launched on October 16, 2021.
- The spacecraft will be launched on a 12-year mission to help scientists gain an up-close view of the Trojan asteroids.
- The **study of Jupiter's Trojan asteroids** will help scientists to understand how the Solar System and its planets were formed approximately 4.5 billion years ago and why did they end up in the current sequence.

## What is the goal of NASA Lucy mission?

- The Lucy spacecraft is designed to travel nearly 4 billion miles. The Lucy spacecraft and a remote-sensing instrument will study geology, physical properties, and **surface composition of the Trojan asteroids**.
- The **first asteroid flyby of the Lucy spacecraft** will happen in 2025. The seven other Trojan asteroids encounters are expected to happen between 2027 and 2033.

## Naming of Lucy Mission – Background

- The **Lucy mission has been named after the discovered partial skeleton** from a human ancestor that is believed to have lived more than 3 million years ago.
- The fossilized remains were named Lucy. Just as the fossil remains named Lucy offered insights into human evolution, the Lucy mission to Trojan asteroids is expected to help in understanding the planetary origins and the formation of the Solar System, including Earth, said NASA.

## About Trojan asteroids

- The Trojan asteroids have been **named after characters in Greek mythology**.
- They orbit the Sun in two swarms, one ahead of Jupiter and the other trailing behind it. These asteroids were formed in the aftermaths of the leftovers of the primordial material from which Jupiter and the other outer planets were formed.

## #JAMES WEBB SPACE TELESCOPE

- The **James Webb Space Telescope**, the world's largest and most powerful space telescope, was launched on December 25, 2021 beginning a one-million-mile journey to see 13.5 billion years into the past.
- The **James Webb Space Telescope** was launched aboard Ariane 5 rocket from the Guiana Space Center in Kourou, French Guiana. The 14,000-pound instrument was released into space after a 26-minute ride.



- **James Webb Space Telescope Goal:**
- The **James Webb Space Telescope** will aim to find the first galaxies that formed in the early universe and look through dusty clouds to see stars forming planetary systems.
- The space telescope will be a **giant leap forward in the quest to understand the Universe and its origins**.
- The powerful space telescope will aim to examine every phase of cosmic history, starting from the first luminous glows after the Big Bang to the formation of galaxies, stars and planets and the evolution of our solar system.

## Mission Objectives

- **Find first galaxies formed after Big Bang:** The James Webb Space Telescope will be like a powerful time



machine with infrared vision that will look back over 13.5 billion years to see the formation of the first stars and galaxies in the early universe.

- **Learn how galaxies evolved:** Its unprecedented infrared sensitivity will help astronomers compare the faintest, earliest galaxies to today's grand spirals and ellipticals. It will help deepen the understanding of how galaxies assemble over billions of years.
- **Observe the formation of stars:** The telescope will be able to see right through massive clouds of dust that are opaque to visible-light observatories like Hubble and see how stars and planetary systems are born.
- **Look for the potential for life in other planetary systems:** The telescope will also be able to tell more about the atmospheres of extrasolar planets. It could even find the building blocks of life elsewhere in the universe.

### James Webb Space Telescope v. Hubble

- **The James Webb Space Telescope will aim to replace its 30-year-old predecessor, the Hubble Space Telescope.** The Hubble orbits the Earth from 340 miles away, passing in and out of the planet's shadow every 90 minutes.
- The **James Webb Telescope is named after James Edwin Webb**, who was an American government official who served as Undersecretary of State from 1949–1952.
- He was appointed as the second administrator of NASA from February 14, 1961, to October 7, 1968. James Webb oversaw NASA during most of its formative decade of the 1960s.
- The James Webb Telescope is expected to be about 100 times more sensitive than the **Hubble telescope**. It is expected to transform scientists' understanding of the universe.

## #IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL & JCPOA

Recently, the **diplomats** from Iran and world powers reconvened in Vienna (Austria) to seek a deal reviving Iran's (Tehran's) 2015 Nuclear Accord.

- The **2015 Iran nuclear deal**, signed under President Barack Obama, and dismantled in 2018 by President Donald Trump.
- The US said it will rejoin the agreement if Iran complies with the terms of the original deal, and if it addresses other issues related to alleged ballistic missile stockpiles and the proxy conflicts that it backs across the region.

### What was the 2015 Iran nuclear deal?

- The deal, formally known as **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)**.
- The JCPOA was the result of **prolonged negotiations** from 2013 and 2015 between Iran and **P5+1** (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States + Germany).
- Under the deal, **Iran agreed to significantly cut its stores of centrifuges, enriched uranium and heavy-water**, all key components for nuclear weapons.
- Iran also agreed to implement a protocol that would allow inspectors from the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** to **access its nuclear sites** to ensure Iran would not be able to develop nuclear weapons in secret.



### What happened after the US pulled out of the deal?

- In April 2020 the US announced **its intention to snap back sanctions**. However, the **other partners objected to the move**, stating that since the US was no longer part of the deal, it could not unilaterally reimpose sanctions.

- Initially following the withdrawal, several countries continued to import Iranian oil under waivers granted by the Trump administration. **A year later, the US ended the waivers to much international criticism** and, by doing so, significantly **curbed Iran's oil exports**.
- The other powers, in an attempt to keep the deal alive, **launched a barter system known as INSTEX** to facilitate transactions with Iran outside the US banking system. **However, INSTEX only covered food and medicine**, which were already exempt from US sanctions.
- In January 2020, after the **US assassinated the top Iranian general Qasem Soleimani**, Iran announced that it would no longer limit its uranium enrichment.

## What is the Timeline & Background of JCPOA?

- The JCPOA was the **result of prolonged negotiations from 2013 and 2015 between Iran and P5+1** (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States).
- It happened **due to the backchannel talks between the US** (President Barack Obama) **and Iran, quietly brokered by Oman**, in an attempt to repair the accumulated mistrust since the 1979 Islamic revolution.
- Islamic Revolution, also called Iranian Revolution, popular uprising in Iran in 1978–79 that resulted in the toppling of the monarchy on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 1979, and led to the establishment of an Islamic republic.
- The JCPOA **obliged Iran to accept constraints on its uranium enrichment program** verified by an intrusive inspection regime in return for a partial lifting of economic sanctions.
- However, faced with a **hostile Republican Senate**, **President Obama was unable to get the nuclear deal ratified** but implemented it on the basis of periodic Executive Orders to keep sanction waivers going.
- When **Donald Trump** became president, he **withdrew from the deal** and called it a **"horrible, one-sided deal that should have never, ever been made"**.
- The US decision was **criticized by all other parties to the JCPOA** (including the European allies) because Iran was in compliance with its obligations, as certified by the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**.
- Tensions rose as the US pushed ahead with its unilateral sanctions, widening its scope to cover nearly all Iranian banks connected to the global financial system, industries related to **metallurgy, energy, and shipping, individuals related to the defence, intelligence, and nuclear establishments**.
- For the first year after the US withdrawal, Iran's response was muted as the **E-3 (France, Germany, the U.K.)** and the **European Union (EU)** promised to find ways to mitigate the US decision.
- The E-3's promised relief Instrument in **Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX)**, created in 2019 to facilitate limited trade with Iran.
- However, by May 2019, **Iran's strategic patience** ran out as the anticipated economic relief from the E-3/EU failed to materialize.
- As the sanctions began to hurt, Iran shifted to a strategy of 'maximum resistance'.

## International Atomic Energy Agency

- Widely known as the world's “**Atoms for Peace and Development**” organization within the **United Nations** family, the IAEA is the international centre for cooperation in the nuclear field.
- **Establishment:** The IAEA was created in 1957 in response to the deep fears and expectations generated by the discoveries and diverse uses of nuclear technology.
- **Headquarter:** Vienna, Austria.
- **Objective:** The Agency works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.
- In 2005, it was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** for their work for a safe and peaceful world.
- **Functions:** It is an **independent international organization** that reports annually to the **United Nation General Assembly**.
- When necessary, the IAEA also reports to the UN Security Council in regards to instances of members' non-compliance with safeguards and security obligations.

## #INDIA-PAK MOST VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE: IPCC

- The latest **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** report has cautioned that the **extreme climatic conditions are threatening the food security in South Asia** with escalated droughts and floods making India and Pakistan the most vulnerable to climate change.
- The **second installment of the IPCC Report** titled ‘**Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptations, and Vulnerability**’ was released on February 28, 2022.
- The report stated that the climate-related risks to the agriculture and food systems in **Asia will intensify with the changing climate, with differentiated impacts across the region.**
- It also further mentioned that the temperatures enhance not only the **ozone production but also the ozone uptake by plants, exacerbating yield and quality damage.**



- Extreme **climatic condition threatens food security in South Asia**
- IPCC Report has explained that the differential human vulnerability to environmental hazards results from a range of economic, social, political, and historical factors, all of which operate at multiple scales.
- As the **report highlighted that the climate-related risk** to agriculture and food systems in Asia will

intensify, it added that climate change is expected to have serious impacts on the people living within these hotspot areas, as observed from the loss of food crop yields to disasters such as fluctuations in seasonal water availability, floods or other systematic effects.

### Climate change threatens India and Pakistan

- IPCC report further explained that in South Asia, extreme climatic conditions are threatening food security, thus agro-based economies such as India and Pakistan have become the most vulnerable to climate change.
- The report warned that the major projected impacts of climate change in the food and agriculture sector will include a decline in **fisheries, crop production, aquaculture, particularly in South and Southeast Asia.**

### Impact on India

- Due to the **extreme climatic condition** and its impact, the rice production in India can decrease from 10 percent to 30 percent, whereas the maize production can decrease from 25 percent to 70 per cent., assuming the range of temperature **increases from 1 degree to 4 degree Celsius.**
- **As per the IPCC Report climate change mentions** that the international food supplies are also under threat and the risks, it further highlighted that the threats to water and food supply, because of the continues climate change, can increase the risk of social unrest and armed conflict, particularly in the poorer countries, although the other factors are also significant.

### Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

- It is the **international body for assessing the science related to climate change.**
- It was **set up in 1988** by the **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** and **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** to provide policymakers with regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation.
- IPCC assessments **provide a scientific basis for governments at all levels to develop climate related policies**, and they underlie negotiations at the UN Climate Conference – the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).**

### IPCC Assessment Reports

- Every few years the IPCC produces assessment reports that are the most **comprehensive scientific evaluations of the state of earth's climate.**
- So far, five assessment reports have been produced, the **first one being released in 1990.** The **fifth assessment report had come out in 2014** in the run up to the **climate change conference in Paris.**
- The Assessment Reports - by **three working groups of scientists.**
- **Working Group-I** - Deals with the scientific basis for climate change.
- **Working Group-II** - Looks at the likely impacts, vulnerabilities and adaptation issues.
- **Working Group-III** - Deals with actions that can be taken to combat climate change.

### United Nations Environment Programme

- **About:** The UNEP is a leading global environmental authority established on 5th June 1972.



- **Functions:** It sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the sustainable development within the **United Nations** system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for global environment protection.
- **Major Reports:** **Emission Gap Report, Adaptation Gap Report, Global Environment Outlook, Frontiers, Invest into Healthy Planet.**
- **Major Campaigns:** Beat Pollution, UN75, World Environment Day, Wild for Life.
- **Headquarters:** Nairobi, Kenya.

### About UNFCCC:

- The **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**, signed in **1992** at the **United Nations Conference on Environment and Development** also known as the **Earth Summit, the Rio Summit or the Rio Conference**.
- **India** is among the select few countries to have hosted the COP of all three Rio conventions on climate change (UNFCCC), biodiversity (Convention on Biological Diversity) and land (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification).

The UNFCCC entered into force on **21<sup>st</sup> March 1994**, and has been **ratified by 197 countries**.

- It is the **parent treaty of the 2015 Paris Agreement**. It is also the **parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol**.
- The **UNFCCC secretariat** (UN Climate Change) is the **United Nations entity** tasked with supporting the global response to the threat of climate change. It is **located in Bonn, Germany**.
- **Objective:** To achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous repercussions within a time frame so as to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally and enable sustainable development.

### #EUROPE'S LARGEST NUCLEAR POWER PLANT CAPTURED BY RUSSIA

- The **Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Station** is located near the city of Enerhodar, Southeastern Ukraine, on the Kakhovka Reservoir's southern shore on the River Dnieper. **It is Europe's largest nuclear power plant and is among the world's top 10 largest.**
- This nuclear power plant consists of 6 VVER-1000 pressurized light-water nuclear reactors (PWR) and all of them are fuelled with U235 (LEU) and generate 950 MWe, which gives a total of 5700 MWe power output.
- **Between 1985 and 1989**, the first five were brought online, and the sixth was added in 1995.
- Nearly half of the **country's electricity is derived from nuclear power from this plant.**
- **Zaporizhzhia thermal power station** is located nearby.
- After a modernization work was completed on unit 3, in 2017, it enabled a 10-year life extension till 2027
- Unit 5's modernization was finished in 2021, allowing for a 10-year life extension.

### Effect of Russian Invasion of Ukraine on this Nuclear Power Plant

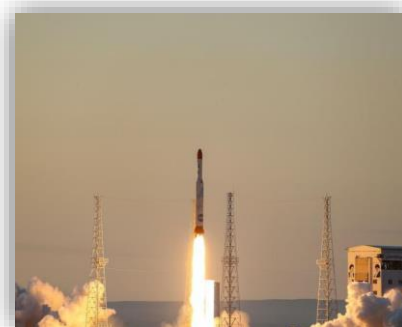
- During the **ongoing Russian-Ukraine crisis**, Units 1 to 4 remained active, but Units 5 and 6 were shut down. Russia claimed to have captured Enerhodar as well as the nuclear power plant but Dmitri Orlov, the mayor of Enerhodar denied this.
- **Russian soldiers attempted to take control of the power plant recently**, with Orlov announcing that

parts of the building were burning due to artillery strikes from the Russian forces. A fire broke out near one of the six units, reportedly in a training building outside the security perimeter.

- Although the reactor is undergoing renovations and is not operational, it still holds nuclear fuel. According to initial assessments, **radiation levels remained normal as the fire** did not cause any significant damage, and workers prevented further damage.
- Dmytro Kuleba, Ukraine's foreign minister, warned that if the plant were to explode, the fallout could be ten times larger than what happened at Chernobyl.
- Following an intense battle, and confirming there were no changes to radiation levels, Russian troops were able to occupy the plant.

## #IRAN'S MILITARY SATELLITE NOOR-2

- A military satellite, Noor-2, has been launched into orbit at an altitude of 500 kilometres or 311 miles from the earth by **Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)**.
- This is the **Islamic Republic's second military satellite launch**.
- In April 2020, the first Noor military satellite was launched at an orbit of 425km or 265 miles above the surface of the earth.
- **In the Persian language Noor means light.**
- The Noor 2 was launched from the Shahroud spaceport by the three-stage Qased, or "Messenger" launcher.
- The launch of Iran's second satellite into orbit would be a significant step forward for the country's military. This will also increase concerns about the country's nuclear and missile programs.
- The weight of the satellite is less than 45 kgs or 100 pounds. Details regarding the Noor-2 satellite were not released by the officials of the country.



## About Noor Satellite

- The **Nour Spacecraft, also known as "NOUR 01,"** is an Iranian military satellite that was put into orbit on April 22, 2020.
- The launch of the Nour satellite took place from Iran's central desert. The Nour Satellite was launched by Qased, a **three-stage rocket propelled by a mix of solid and liquid fuels.**
- **Nour is Iran's first military satellite.**

## #RUSSIA WITHDRAWN SUPPORT FROM ISS

Recently, after **Russia invaded Ukraine**, the **US imposed sanctions on Russia** including a ban on transfer of **technology and on Russian banks**.

- Following this, the **Russian space agency Roscosmos** held that the State Corporation will not cooperate with Germany on joint experiments in the Russian segment of the **International Space Station (ISS)**.



### What is Russia's role in maintaining the ISS?

- The ISS is built with the cooperation of scientists from **five international space agencies** — **NASA of the US, Roscosmos of Russia, JAXA of Japan, Canadian Space Agency and the European Space Agency**.
- **Each agency has a role to play and a share in the upkeep of the ISS.** Both in terms of expense and effort, it is not a feat that a single country can support.
- Russia's part in the collaboration is the **module responsible for making course corrections to the orbit of the ISS**.
- Further, the Russian segment ensures that the **space station's orbit is corrected to keep it away from space debris, roughly 11 times a year**.
- It also ferry astronauts to the ISS from the Earth and back.

### What could be the impact of Russia's Withdrawal?

- Due to its enormous weight and the ensuing drag, the ISS **tends to sink from its orbit at a height of about 250 miles above the Earth**.
- It has to be **pushed up to its original line of motion every now and then**.
- Russia's withdrawing from its segment of the ISS cooperation spacecraft **could affect correcting the orbit of the ISS**.
- This meant the ISS could fall into the sea or on the land.
- ISS would likely **crash down on some country, but most probably not Russia itself**. The orbit of the ISS does not fly over Russian territory mostly.
- However, dropping of ISS poses a **greater risk to regions that are closer to the equator**. But this is only a probability, as it can move or disintegrate.
- In case of this eventuality, people in the ISS will be brought back, modules can be detached thereby making it much smaller which will ensure that it disintegrates before touching the earth.

### What is the International Space Station (ISS)?

- The ISS is the most **complex international scientific and engineering project** in history and the largest structure humans have ever put into space.
- This **high-flying satellite** is a laboratory for new technologies and an **observation platform for astronomical, environmental and geological research**.
- As a permanently **occupied outpost in outer space**, it serves as a stepping stone for further space exploration.
- The space station flies at an **average altitude of 400 kilometers above Earth**. It circles the globe every 90 min. at a speed of about 28,000 kph.
- In one day, the **station travels about the distance it would take to go from Earth to the moon and back**.
- The space station can rival the **brilliant planet Venus in brightness** and appears as a **bright moving light across the night sky**.
- It can be seen from Earth without the use of a telescope by night sky observers who know when and where to look.
- Five different space agencies representing 15 countries built the **USD 100-billion International Space Station and continue to operate it today**.
- The International Space Station was taken into space piece-by-piece and gradually built in orbit.
- It consists of modules and connecting nodes that contain living **quarters and laboratories, as well as exterior trusses that provide structural support, and solar panels that provide power**.
- The first module, **Russia's Zarya module**, launched in 1998.
- The first space station crews were three-person teams, though after the **tragic Columbia shuttle disaster** the crew size temporarily dropped to two-person teams.
- The space station reached its full six-person crew size in 2009 as new modules, laboratories and facilities were brought online.
- Current plans call for the space station to be operated through at least 2020. NASA has **requested an extension until 2024**.

### Are there any substitutes for Russia?

- There are right now two possibilities. **SpaceX's dragon module and Boeing's Starliner** can dock with the ISS.
- Until SpaceX's dragon spacecraft came into the picture the Russian spacecrafts were the only way of reaching the ISS and returning.

### #RELATED: NASA TO RETIRE ISS IN 2031

- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration have announced that the **International Space Station (ISS)** will cease its functioning by 2031.
- At the end of the year 2030, the **low-Earth orbit** will see the last of the International Space Station as the floating laboratory will cease the operations and swoop down the Earth.



## International Space Station: What is the significance?

- The International Space Station has been hovering in the low Earth orbit for more than two decades, zooming across the periphery of the Earth at the speed of 8 km per second.
- International Space Station is one of its kind laboratories that has helped human civilization research and achieves some cutting-edge scientific and technological developments.
- International Space Station also hosts the groundbreaking work by NASA of sending the first humans to Mars.

## ISS to retire in Pacific Ocean

- As per the **National Aeronautics and Space Administration**, the operators of ISS in 2031 will direct the station to fall in the South Pacific Oceanic Uninhabited area which is commonly known as Point Nemo.
- **Point Nemo in the Pacific Ocean** is considered to be the remotest location on Earth.
- With this, the **International Space Station** will no longer be a cosmic entity but will return to the ground, and all that is left behind will be its legacy.

## 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.

## #RELATED: CHINA'S PERMANENT SPACE STATIONS

Recently, China **launched an unmanned module of its permanent space station that it plans to complete by the end of 2022.**

- The module, named "**Tianhe**", or "**Harmony of the Heavens**", was launched on the **Long March 5B**, China's largest carrier rocket.
- **India** has also set its eye on building its own space station in low earth orbit to conduct microgravity experiments in space in 5 to 7 years.

## Background:

- The **only space station** currently in orbit is the **International Space Station (ISS)**, from which **China is excluded**.
- 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.
- The **ISS is backed** by the United States, Russia, Europe, Japan and Canada.
- **China has been a late starter** when it comes to space exploration. It was only in 2003 that it sent its first astronaut into orbit, making it the third country to do so, after the Soviet Union and the US.



- So far, China has sent two previous space stations into orbit. The **Tiangong-1** and **Tiangong-2** were **trial stations** though, simple modules that allowed only relatively short stays by astronauts.

## #WHAT IS SUPER-COMPUTER PARAM GANGA?

- A super computer made in India, '**PARAM Ganga**' was installed at IIT Roorkee on March 7, 2022.
- The installation of the super computer was done by B.V.R. Mohan Reddy, Chairman of IIT Roorkee.
- The **Petascale Super Computer** has been made in India under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM). The key focus is to provide computational power to the **user community of IIT Roorkee and neighbouring academic institutions**.



## Param Super Computer

- IIT Roorkee** had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC)** to establish a state-of-the-art Supercomputing facility involving critical components.
- PARAM Ganga has a supercomputing capacity of 1.66 **Petaflops (Peta Floating-Point Operations per Second)**.
- The super computer has been designed and commissioned by C-DAC under Phase 2 of the build approach of the NSM.
- The substantial components utilized to build the super computer were manufactured and assembled in India along with an indigenous software stack developed by C-DAC.

## Significance

- The establishment of Param, made in India super computer is a major step towards the **Make in India** initiative of the Indian Government.
- Overall, the installation of supercomputer infrastructure at various Institutes has helped the R&D community to achieve major objectives and milestones and thousands of computing jobs have also been created.

## What is a Supercomputer?

- A supercomputer is a computer **that performs at or near the currently highest operational rate** for computers.
- Generally, PETA FLOP** is a measure of a Supercomputer's processing speed and can be expressed as a thousand trillion floating point operations per second.
- FLOPS (floating point operations per second) are typically used to measure the performance of a computer's processor. Using floating-point encoding, extremely long numbers can be handled relatively easily.
- Supercomputers are **primarily designed to be used in enterprises and organizations** that require massive computing power.

- For example: weather forecasting, scientific research, intelligence gathering and analysis, data mining etc.
- Globally, **China has the maximum number of supercomputers** and maintains the top position in the world, followed by the US, Japan, France, Germany, Netherlands, Ireland and the United Kingdom.
- India's **first supercomputer was PARAM 8000**.
- **PARAM Shivay, the first supercomputer assembled indigenously**, was installed in IIT (BHU), followed by **PARAM Shakti, PARAM Brahma, PARAM Yukti, PARAM Sanganak** at IIT-Kharagpur, IISER, Pune, JNCASR, Bengaluru and IIT Kanpur respectively.
- In 2020, PARAM Siddhi, the **High-Performance Computing-Artificial Intelligence (HPC-AI) supercomputer**, achieved global ranking of 62nd in Top 500 most powerful supercomputer systems in the world.

#### • **National Supercomputing Mission**

- The **National Supercomputing Mission (NSM)** is a joint initiative of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.
- It is being implemented by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) and Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore.

**The four major pillars of the National Supercomputing Mission include:**

- **Infrastructure**
- **Applications**
- **Research and Development**
- **HRD**
- The **C-DAC has been entrusted** with the responsibility to design, develop, deploy and commission supercomputing systems in India.
- The NSM mission plans to build and deploy 24 supercomputing facilities in India with cumulative compute power of more than 64 Petaflops.
- C-DAC has till now deployed 11 such systems at **IISc, IITs, IISER Pune, JNCASR, NABI-Mohali and C-DAC under NSM Phase-1 and Phase-2**. These systems have a cumulative compute power of more than 20 Petaflops.

### Digital India programme

- Vision Areas
- Digital infrastructure as Utility to Every Citizen
- Governance and services on demand
- Digital empowerment of citizens
- *Objectives*
- To prepare India for a knowledge future.
- For being transformative that is to realize **IT (Indian Talent) + IT (Information Technology) = IT (India Tomorrow)**.
- Making technology central to enabling change.

- On being an Umbrella Programme – covering many departments.
- The programme weaves together a large number of ideas and thoughts into a single, comprehensive vision so that each of them is seen as part of a larger goal.
- The Digital India Programme will pull together many existing schemes which would be restructured and re-focused and implemented in a synchronized manner.

### Make in India campaign

- **Make in India campaign** was launched by the Prime Minister of India on September 25, 2014.
- **Objectives**
- To **attract foreign investment for new industrialisation** and develop the already existing industry base in India to surpass that of China.
- Target of an **increase in manufacturing sector growth to 12-14% per annum** over the medium term.
- To **increase the share of manufacturing sector in the country's Gross Domestic Product from 16% to 25% by 2022.**
- To **create 100 million additional jobs by 2022.**
- To **promote export-led growth.**

## MISCELLANEOUS

### #'NATIONAL GENDER INDEX' OF NITI AAYOG

- NITI Aayog is working on development of a “National Gender Index” that will be used to measure the progress and identify persisting gaps in gender equality in order to make informed policy decisions.
- NITI Aayog in its latest annual report 2021-2022 noted that, National Gender Index will serve as a tool to map the progress of states and Union Territories (UTs) on a defined gender metrics and build foundation for positive change. It will support the policy action and advocacy around gender.
- This index will also be aligned with the framework of Sustainable Development Goals.



### Draft State Energy and Climate Index

- NITI Aayog has also developed a draft State Energy and Climate Index. This index will assess the performance of states on indicators like DISCOMs’ viability and competition; clean energy Initiative; access, affordability and reliability of energy; generation capacity; energy efficiency; and environmental sustainability and new initiatives.
- It will also help states in efficiently manage their energy resources and provide better access of energy to the people.
- In the Global Gender Gap Report by World Economic Forum, India has slipped 28 places to rank 140th out of 156 countries.
- Thus, it becomes the third-worst performer in South Asia. As per report, India has managed to close 62.5 per cent of its gender gap till date. In 2020 report, it was ranked 112th among 153 countries.

### #OTHER RELATED INDEXES OF NITI AAYOG

The **third edition** of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index and Dashboard 2020-21** was released by **NITI Aayog**.

- The SDG India Index 2020-21 is **developed in collaboration with the United Nations in India**.
- **About:**
- The NITI Aayog **launched its index in 2018** to **monitor the country’s progress on the goals through data-driven assessment**, and foster a competitive spirit among the States and Union Territories in achieving them.
- NITI Aayog has the **twin mandate to oversee the adoption and monitoring of the SDGs in the country**, and also **promote competitive and cooperative federalism** among States and UTs.
- The index represents **the articulation of the comprehensive nature of the Global Goals under the 2030 Agenda** while being attuned to the national priorities.
- In **2015**, the UNs General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- The 17 SDGs are a **bold commitment to finish what the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) started, and tackle some of the more pressing challenges.**
- The SDG India Index 2020–21 is also **live on an online dashboard**, which has cross-sectoral relevance across policy, civil society, business, and academia.

## #NITI AAYOG RELEASED MULTI-DIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX

Recently, **NITI Aayog** has released the **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)**.

- Earlier, **Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2021** was released by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI)**.
- The MPI **seeks to measure poverty** across its multiple dimensions and in effect complements existing poverty statistics based on per capita consumption expenditure.
- According to **Global MPI 2021**, India's rank is 66 out of 109 countries. The National MPI is aimed at **deconstructing the Global MPI** and creating a globally aligned and yet customised India MPI for drawing up comprehensive Reform Action Plans with the larger goal of improving India's position in the Global MPI rankings.
- It has **three equally weighted dimensions** – health, education, and standard of living.
- These three dimensions are **represented by 12 indicators** such as nutrition, school attendance, years of schooling, drinking water, sanitation, housing, bank accounts among others.



### Methodology & Data:

- The national MPI measure **uses the globally accepted and robust methodology** developed by the **Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI)** and the **UNDP**.
- This baseline report of the **national MPI measure** is based on the reference period of 2015-16 of the **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4)**.
- **NFHS-4** data has been used to derive an idea of baseline multidimensional poverty **to know the situation on ground before the full rollout of various central government schemes.**
- **NFHS-4 precedes the full roll out of (central government's) flagship schemes** on housing, drinking water, sanitation, electricity, cooking fuel, financial inclusion, and other major efforts towards improving school attendance, nutrition, mother and child health, etc.
- However, it has to be noted here that the **NFHS-5 data suggests improvement** in access to clean cooking fuel, sanitation, and electricity which translates to reduction in deprivation.

### Findings of the Index:

- **Poverty Levels:** Bihar has the highest proportion of people of the state's population followed by Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh who are multidimensional poor.
- **Kerala registered the lowest population poverty levels**, followed by Puducherry, Lakshadweep, Goa and Sikkim.



- **Malnourished People:** Bihar also has the highest number of malnourished people followed by Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh.

### Significance of the Index:

- **Contribution towards Instituting Public Policy Tool** The development of the Index is an important contribution towards instituting a public policy tool which monitors multidimensional poverty, informs evidence-based and focused interventions, thereby ensuring that **no one is left behind**.
- **Presents Overall Picture of Poverty:** This presents an overall picture of poverty in the country, while also enabling closer and more in-depth analyses of areas of interest such as regions – state or districts, and specific sectors and complements the existing monetary poverty statistics.
- **Help Achieving SDGs Goals:** It is a contribution towards measuring progress towards target 1.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which aims at reducing “at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions.

### Related Government Initiatives:

- National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)
- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (MNREGA)
- Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G)
- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)
- Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)

## #DEMOCRACY REPORT 2022

According to the latest report from the V-Dem Institute at Sweden's University of Gothenburg, the level of democracy enjoyed by the average global citizen in 2021 is down to 1989 levels, with the democratic gains of the post-Cold War period eroding rapidly in the last few years.



- The Report is titled 'Democracy Report 2022: Autocratisation Changing Nature?.'
- Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) produce the largest global dataset on democracy with over 30 million data points for 202 countries from 1789 to 2021.
- Earlier, the Global State of Democracy Report, 2021 was released by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International-IDEA).

### What Parameters were used to assess the Status of a Democracy?

- The report classifies countries into four regime types based on their score in the Liberal Democratic Index (LDI):
- Liberal Democracy, Electoral Democracy, Electoral Autocracy, and Closed Autocracy.

- The LDI captures both **liberal (individual and minority rights) and electoral aspects (free and fair elections) of a democracy** based on 71 indicators that make up the **Liberal Component Index (LCI)** and the **Electoral Democracy Index (EDI)**.
- The **LCI** measures aspects such as protection of individual liberties and legislative constraints on the executive, while the **EDI** considers indicators that guarantee free and fair elections such as freedom of expression and freedom of association.
- In addition, the LDI also uses an **Egalitarian Component Index** (to what extent different social groups are equal), **Participatory Component Index** (health of citizen groups, civil society organisations), and **Deliberative Component Index** (whether political decisions are taken through public reasoning focused on common good or through emotional appeals, solidarity attachments, coercion).

### What are the Main Findings of the Report?

- **Top Performance:** Sweden topped the LDI index, other Scandinavian countries such as **Denmark and Norway, along with Costa Rica and New Zealand** make up the top five in liberal democracy rankings.
- **India's Performance:**
- India is **part of a broader global trend of an anti-plural political party** driving a country's autocratisation.
- It was **ranked 93<sup>rd</sup> in the LDI**, India figures in the **"bottom 50%" of countries**.
- It has slipped **further down in the Electoral Democracy Index, to 100**, and even lower in the Deliberative Component Index, at 102.
- In South Asia, **India is ranked below Sri Lanka (88), Nepal (71), and Bhutan (65) and above Pakistan (117)** in the LDI.

### Spreading Autocratisation:

- Autocratisation is spreading rapidly, with a record of 33 countries autocratising.
- Signaling a sharp break from an average of 1.2 coups per year, **2021 saw a record 6 coups**, resulting in 4 new autocracies: Chad, Guinea, Mali and Myanmar.
- While the number of liberal democracies stood at 42 in 2012, their number has shrunk to their lowest level in over 25 years, with just 34 countries and 13% of the world population living in liberal democracies.
- **Closed autocracies, or dictatorships**, rose from 25 to 30 between 2020 and 2021.

### #RELATED: GLOBAL STATE OF DEMOCRACY REPORT

According to the recently released **Global State of Democracy Report, 2021**, the number of countries moving towards **authoritarianism** in 2020 was higher than that of countries becoming more democratic.

- The report **aims to influence the global debate and analyses current trends and challenges to democracy**, exacerbated by the **Covid-19 pandemic**.
- It offers specific **policy recommendations** to spark new and innovative thinking for policymakers, governments and civil society organizations supporting democracy.

- It is released by the **International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International-IDEA)**.

### About International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance:

- International IDEA is an **intergovernmental organization** that supports sustainable democracy worldwide.
- It was **founded in 1995** and currently has 33 member states.
- International IDEA advances democracy worldwide, as a **universal human aspiration and an enabler of sustainable development**, through support to the building, strengthening and safeguarding of democratic political institutions and processes at all levels.

### Highlights of the Report:

- Democratic Decline:** Democratically elected Governments, including established democracies, are **increasingly adopting authoritarian tactics**.
- Effect of Pandemic:** The pandemic placed considerable stress on democracy across the region by **imposing inevitable restrictions on movement** and—where governments were sensitive to criticism —also restrictions on **freedom of expression**.
- The year 2020 was the worst on record, in terms of the number of countries affected by deepening autocratisation.
- The pandemic has thus had a particularly damaging effect on non-democratic countries, further closing their already reduced civic space.

### #MISS WORLD 2021 WINNER FROM POLAND

- Karolina Bielawaska from Poland** won the crown of **Miss World 2021** at the 70th edition of the beauty pageant at San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- The new Miss World 2021 winner has beaten **Indonesia, the USA, Mexico, Northern Island, and Cote d'Ivoire to win the Miss World crown**. Toni-Ann Singh of Jamaica who is a Miss World 2019 crowned her successor at the finale.
- In Miss World 2021, USA's Shree Saini and Olivia Yace of Cote d'Ivoire emerged as the first and the second runners-up, respectively.



### Who is Karolina Bielawaska; Miss World 2021 winner

- Karolina Bielawaska of Poland has been crowned the new Miss World 2021** winner. Karolina is currently pursuing her Master's Degree in Management and wishes to further pursue her PhD. Currently, Karolina has been working as a model and she hopes to become a motivational speaker.
- The new Miss World 2021 winner enjoys swimming and scuba diving and playing badminton and tennis.
- Poland's Karolina Bielawaska has also furthered her support for the homeless community by organising a pop-up COVID vaccination center as many of the homeless people were unable to register for the vaccine as they do not have ID cards.
- According to the Miss World 2021 winner, it was important to make them feel safe and also to feel equal by

having the opportunity to receive the vaccine.

## Miss World 2021 contestant India

- As the winner of Miss World 2021 was announced earlier today in Puerto Rico, India's Manasa Varanasi, who was representing the country at the 70th edition of the beauty pageant failed to make it to the top 6. Manasa Varanasi was included in the list of top 13 at the 11th position.
- Manasa Varanasi making it to the top 13 contestants came almost three months after India's Harnaaz Sandhu brought home the Miss Universe 2021 crown after 21 years.
- In 2020, Manasa Varanasi won the **Femina Miss India** where she represented **Telangana**. **Manasa was also crowned as Femina Miss Indian World 2020.**

## #4<sup>TH</sup> JANAUSHADHI DIWAS CELEBRATED

**Pharmaceuticals & Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI)**, under the aegis of Department of Pharmaceuticals is going to celebrate their **4<sup>th</sup> Jan AushadhiDiwas**.



- All the activities will be organised within the spirit of “**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**” and several events have been planned at 75 locations.
- This will **generate awareness** about the **usages of generic medicines** and benefits of **Jan AushadhiPariyojana**.
- The theme of this year's (2022) JanaushadhiDiwas is **Jan Aushadhi-Jan Upyogi**.

## What is Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya JanaushadhiPariyojana (PMBJP)?

- PMBJP** is a campaign launched by the **Department of Pharmaceuticals in 2008** under the name Jan Aushadhi Campaign.
- The campaign was revamped as **PMBJP in 2015-16**.
- Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI)** is the implementation agency for PMBJP.
- The Bureau of Pharma **Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)** of India works under the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilisers.
- BPPI has also developed the **Janaushadhi Sugam Application**.
- A medicine is **priced on the principle of maximum 50% of average price** of the top three brands branded medicines. Thus, the **prices of Jan Aushadhi Medicines** are **cheaper by at least 50%** and in some cases, **by 80% to 90% of the market price of the branded medicines**.

## What is the objective of the PMBJP?

- To make **available quality medicines, consumables and surgical items** at affordable prices for all and reduce out of pocket expenditure of consumers/patients.
- To **popularise generic medicines among the masses** and dispel the prevalent notion that low priced generic medicines are of inferior quality or are less effective.
- Generic medicines** are unbranded medicines which are equally safe and having the same efficacy as that of branded medicines in terms of their therapeutic value.

- To **ensure easy availability of the menstrual health services** (Janaushadhi 'Suvidha' sanitary napkins) to all women across India.
- Generate **employment by engaging individual entrepreneurs** in the opening of PMBJP Kendras.

## #NATIONAL VACCINATION DAY OBSERVED ON MARCH 16<sup>TH</sup>

- **National Vaccination Day** is observed every year on March 16 to convey the significance of vaccination as well as its role in public health. National Vaccination Day 2022 creates awareness and sends the message that **how vaccination or immunization is the most effective way of preventing highly infectious diseases.**

- National Vaccination Day 2022 is also of certain significance amid the COVID-19 pandemic against which vaccine has come out to be the only solution of preventing the deadly disease.

- **National Vaccination Day 2022 or National Immunization Day** also marks India's victory against Polio disease. Notably, the impact of vaccination is not only limited to improving health or life expectancy, it also has a social or economic impact at the community and the National level.



### National Vaccination Day 2022 Theme

- The theme of National Vaccination Day 2022 is '**Vaccines Work for all**'. National Vaccination Day 2022 theme highlights how vaccines work for all and save lives all around the world.

### National Vaccination Day 2022: History

- National Vaccination Day is observed every year on March 16 as it was the first time on this day that the first dose of Oral Polio vaccine was given in India back in 1995.
- **National Vaccination Day or National Immunization Day** celebrates the Government of India's Pulse Polio Program which was a remarkable initiative to eradicate polio from India.
- According to the program, two drops of Polio vaccine were provided to the children from the age of 0 to 5. The Pulse Polio Program in India became a huge success as in 2014, the World Health Organisation announced India to be a 'Polio Free Country'.
- Reportedly, the last case of polio in India was reported in 2011 in West Bengal. Following the success of the Polio Program, India began its work on vaccination against severe diseases such as TB, mumps, tetanus, and much more.

### National Vaccination Day 2022: Why Vaccination Day is celebrated in India?

- Vaccines, over the last few decades, have become an important tool to fight life-threatening diseases all over the world. **National Vaccination Day 2022 acknowledges and highlights the role of vaccines** and how in today's world, the role played by them cannot be overlooked.
- According to the **report by the World Health Organisation**, vaccines save almost 2 to 3 million people every year and since the COVID-19 pandemic has been prevailing all over the world, the Government of India is taking every necessary step to vaccinate every citizen of India against the disease.



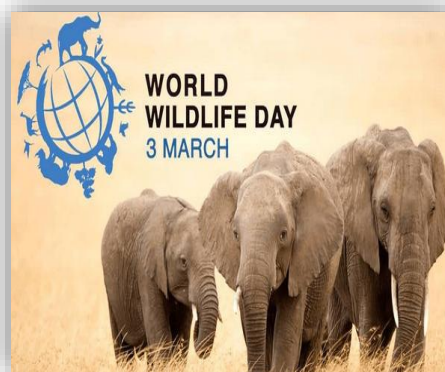
- **National Vaccination Day 2022** initiates a talk regarding the significance of vaccines and why people must get themselves, their family members and children vaccinated for the protection against certain diseases.

### National Vaccination Day 2022: Facts about Vaccination Day in India

- In 2014, Mission Indradhanush was launched under the **Universal Immunization Program to better the health of mothers and children who are deprived of vaccination.**
- Mission Indradhanush by the **Government of India aims at achieving the Sustainable Development Goal of ending preventable child deaths by 2030.**
- **The world's largest COVID-19 vaccination program** has been launched in India with an aim of vaccinating the entire population against the COVID-19 pandemic.

### #WORLD WILDLIFE DAY: 3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH

- It is observed on 3 March to raise awareness **about the world's wild animals and plants.**
- The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 20 December 2013**, at its 68th session, proclaimed 3 March which is the day of signature of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973 as UN World Wildlife Day.
- Now, it is the most **important annual event across the world dedicated to wildlife.**
- The day provides us an opportunity to celebrate various beautiful and varied forms of wild fauna and flora and to spread awareness about the several benefits that their conservation provides to people.
- It also reminds us about the urgent need to step up the **fight against wildlife crime and human-induced reduction of species, which further have economic, environmental, and social impacts.**



### What is the theme of 2022?

- Theme: **Recovering key species for ecosystem restoration.**
- This theme is chosen as a way to draw attention to the conservation status of some of the most critically endangered species of wild fauna and flora.

### What is the Significance of the Day?

- This aligns with UN **Sustainable Development Goals 1, 12, 14 and 15**, and their wide-ranging commitments on alleviating **poverty**, ensuring sustainable use of resources, and on conserving life both on land and below water to halt biodiversity loss.
- Our planet is currently facing the urgent challenge that is the loss of biodiversity and up to a million species could disappear in the coming decades if unsustainable human activity, **climate change** and habitat degradation are left unchecked.

### What about the Status of Species of Fauna and Flora?

- Around more than **8000 species of wild fauna and flora are endangered** and close to 30,000 more are known to be on the verge of getting extinct or vulnerable.
- It is also estimated that **around a million species are extinct.**
- India accounts for **7-8% of all recorded species**, including over **45,000 species of plants and 91,000 species of animals.**
- India is one of the **most biodiverse regions of the world**, home to three biodiversity hotspots - **the Western Ghats, the Eastern Himalayas, and the Indo-Burma hotspot.**
- The country has seven natural World Heritage Sites, eleven Biosphere Reserves and **forty nine Ramsar sites.**
- India is home to a number of wildlife conservation parks and sanctuaries, **notable among those are** Jim Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand, **Ranthambore National Park** in Rajasthan, **Gir National Park** in Gujarat, Bannerghatta Biological Park in Karnataka, **Periyar National Park** in Kerala, Hemis National Park in Ladakh, **The Great Himalayan National Park** in Himachal Pradesh.
- The main factors that **contribute to the extinction of species** include human activities such as habitat loss due to urbanisation, overexploitation, moving species from their natural habitat, global pollution and climate change.
- **Illegal wildlife trade** is also unsustainable, harming wild populations of animals and plants and pushing endangered species toward extinction. It also brings several public health consequences, such as the spreading of **zoonotic pathogens.**

### Constitutional Provisions for Wildlife:

- By the **42<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Act 1976** of the Constitution "Forests" was added as Entry 17A in the Concurrent List and the "protection of wild animals and birds" was added as Entry 17B.
- **Article 51 A (g)** of the Constitution states that it shall be the **fundamental duty** of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment including forests and Wildlife.
- **Article 48 A** in the **Directive Principles of State policy**, mandates that the State shall endeavor to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country.
- **Legal Framework:**
- Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
- Environment Protection Act, 1986
- The Biological Diversity Act, 2002

### #INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATED ON 8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

- **International Women's Day** is celebrated every year around the world on March 8 as a symbolic reminder of the historic journey that women have taken globally.
- International Women's Day also commemorates the political, cultural and socio-economic achievements of women.
- **International Women's Day 2022**, apart from recognising the achievements, also calls for a gender-equal world that is free of bias,



stereotypes and discrimination and one that is equitable, diverse, and inclusive.

- International Women's Day has been celebrated globally for over a century. The first gathering of women's day was in 1911 which was supported by over a million people. Today, International Women's Day 2022 is observed and celebrated widely by all the groups collectively everywhere.

### International Women's Day 2022 Theme

- International Women's Day 2022 theme is **'Gender Equality today for a sustainable tomorrow'**. The theme of International Women's Day 2022 is declared by UN Women.
- The theme of IWD 2022 attempts to recognise the contribution of women and girls around the world, who are leading the charge of climate change adaptation, mitigation and response, to **build a more sustainable future for all**.

### International Women's Day 2022 History

- IWD had first emerged from the **activities of labour movements at the turn of the 20th century across North America and Europe**.
- As per UNESCO, the **first National Women's Day** was observed in the United States on Feb 28, 1909, which the Socialist Party of America dedicated in honour of the 1908 Garment workers strike in New York where women had protested against harsh working conditions.
- The roots of International Women's Day, however, can be found in the labour movement, wherein IWD was first organised in 1911 by the **early 20th century Marxist from Germany Clara Zetkin**.
- **The Charter of the UN, in 1945** became the first international agreement to affirm the principle of equality but it was only on March 8 during International Women's Year in 1975 that the United Nations celebrated its first official International Women's Day.

### International Women's Day 2022: Why do we celebrate women's day?

- International Women's Day is celebrated all over the world **to recognise the progress made towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment**.
- However, women's day also critically reflect on those achievements and strive for a greater momentum towards achieving gender equality worldwide.
- International Women's Day is a day to recognise the **extraordinary acts of women and to stand together as a united force for advancing gender equality around the world**.
- As the world celebrates International Women's Day 2022 on March 8, the contributions and achievements of women all around the world on **Women's Day 2022**, including India, are being acknowledged and admired.
- The remarkable journey that Indian women have accomplished in these 75 Years of Independence must be admired and looked up to on International Women's Day 2022.

### #FORTUNE INDIA MOST POWERFUL WOMEN LIST

- The **Fortune India most powerful women list** recognizes the achievements of such Indian women as well as their contribution in different domains.

- Fortune India in December 2021 released a list of its top 50 most powerful women in India in 2021. The list mentions the names of various popular figures **that are known for their accomplishments in their respective fields.**
- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** grabbed a top position followed by Reliance's Nita Ambani who is a Chairperson and founder of Reliance Foundation.
- Her second place in Fortune India's 50 Most powerful women list acknowledges her vision and the impactful leadership at the Reliance Foundation, particularly at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The list released by Fortune India also included **Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist of WHO, and Gita Gopinath of the International Monetary Fund.** The other names are Tessy Thomas, Suchitra Ella, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Reddy sisters, and Isha Ambani.

### 50 Most Powerful Women in India: Full List

Rank	India's Most powerful women
1.	Nirmala Sitharaman
2	Nita Ambani
3	Soumya Swaminathan
4.	Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw
5.	Suchitra Ella

### What are the Safeguards for Women in India?

- Fundamental Rights:** It guarantees all Indians the right to equality (**Article 14**), **no discrimination by the State on the basis of gender** (Article 15(1)) and special provisions to be made by the State in favour of women (Article 15(3)).
- Fundamental Duties:** The Constitution imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen through **Articles 51 (A)(e) to renounce practices derogatory to dignity of women.**
- Legislative Framework:**
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005:** It provides victims of domestic violence with a means for practical remedy through prosecution.
- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961:** It prohibits the request, payment or acceptance of a dowry.
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013:** This legislative act seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at their place of work.
- Related Schemes:** Mahila e-haat, Women Technology Park, **Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI)**, etc.

### Are there any World Conferences on Women?

- The UN has organised **4 world conferences on women.** These took place in
  - Mexico City, **1975**
  - Copenhagen, **1980**

- Nairobi, 1985
- Beijing, 1995
- The **4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women (WCW), held in Beijing**, was one of the largest ever gatherings of the UNs, and a critical turning point in the world's focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- The **Beijing Declaration** is an agenda for women's empowerment and considered the key global policy document on gender equality.
- It **sets strategic objectives and actions for the advancement of women** and the achievement of gender equality in 12 critical areas of concern like women and health, women in power and decision-making, the girl-child, women and the environment.
- Recently, the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** has proposed a **Temporary Basic Income (TBI)** for poor women in developing countries to help them cope with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and alleviate the economic pressures they face every day.

## #WHAT IS SAMARTH INITIATIVE?

- Recently, on the occasion of **International Women's Day 2022**, the Union Minister for **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**, launched a Special Entrepreneurship Promotion Drive for Women - "**SAMARTH**".
- Under the Samarth initiative of the Ministry, following **benefits will be available to aspiring and existing women entrepreneurs**:
- **20% Seats in free Skill Development Programs** organised under skill development schemes of the Ministry will be allocated for Women.
- **20% of MSME Business Delegations** sent to domestic & international exhibitions under the schemes for Marketing Assistance implemented by the Ministry **will be dedicated to women owned MSMEs**.
- **20% Discount on annual processing fee on National Small Industries Corporation's (NSIC) Commercial Schemes**.
- **NSIC** is a Government of India Enterprise under the Ministry of MSME.
- **Special Drive for registration of women-owned MSMEs** under **Udyam Registration**.
- Through this initiative, the Ministry of MSME is **focusing on providing Skill Development and Market Development Assistance to women**.
- More than **7500 women candidates from rural and sub-urban areas will be trained** in the FY 2022-23.
- Besides, **thousands of women will be getting marketing opportunities** to showcase their products in domestic and international exhibitions.



## #INTERNATIONAL DAY OF HAPPINESS

- **International Day of Happiness** is celebrated every year on March 20th. The day aims to make people realise the importance of happiness within their lives.
- The day assumes greater significance with the unprecedented challenges that face the world today.
- The **theme of International Day of Happiness 2022 is 'Build Back Happier'**. The theme is aimed at achieving a better world post-COVID-19 pandemic, where the relationships and happiness of each person hold paramount value.



### Why do we celebrate International Day of Happiness?

- The UN General Assembly had proclaimed March 20th as the **International Day of Happiness** recognising the importance of happiness and well-being as universal goals in the lives of human beings around the world and their recognition in public policy objectives.
- The **meeting was convened at an initiative of Bhutan**, a nation that recognized the supremacy of national happiness over national income since the early 1970s. Bhutan had famously adopted the goal of Gross National Happiness over Gross National Product.

### What is the theme of International Day of Happiness 2022?

- International Day of Happiness 2022 Theme is 'Build Back Happier'.
- **How is International Day of Happiness celebrated?**
- **International Day of Happiness activities:** The United Nations invites its member states as well as other international and regional organisations to observe the International Day of Happiness through education and public awareness-raising activities.

### When was the first International Day of Happiness observed?

- The United Nations' 193 member states commemorated the first International Day of Happiness in 2013.

### Significance

- The **United Nations adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals in 2015** that aim to reduce poverty, inequality, and protect the environment, three crucial components that lead to the happiness and well-being of all human beings.
- Happiness is often overshadowed by our material possessions, anxiety and all the other challenges are exist in the world today. The current global scenario that has affected the lives of millions of people including children has made becoming genuinely happy an extremely difficult condition.
- Yet, **happiness cannot be given by anyone**, it is an inner life condition that exists within each of us. In today's society, wherein it is easy to give in to negative influences, the wisdom to live meaningfully is crucial.

## RELATED: WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT 2022

Recently, the **World Happiness Report 2022** was published by the **United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network**.

- This year marks the **10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Happiness Report**.

### What is the World Happiness Report?

- Published since 2012, the **World Happiness Report is based on two key ideas**:
- **Happiness or life evaluation** measured through opinion surveys and
- **Identifying key elements** that determine well-being and life evaluation across countries.
- The report **usually ranks 150 countries** based on several factors such as **real GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity and perceptions of corruption**.
- This year, the **report ranked 146 countries**.
- Every year, **each variable measures a populated-weighted average score** on a scale of 0-10 that is tracked over a period of time and further compared with other countries.
- This year, countries which **ranked in the top 10 last year, moved upwards and downwards**.

### What about the Performance of the Countries?

- **Top Performers:** Finland has been named the **world's happiest country** for the fifth year running followed by **Denmark**.
- The biggest gains in happiness have taken place in **Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania**.
- **Worst Performers:**
- **Afghanistan was ranked as the unhappiest nation**, followed by Lebanon, Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Botswana, respectively.
- **India's Performance:** India saw a **marginal improvement** in its ranking, jumping **three spots to 136**, from 139 a year ago.

### What is the Sustainable Development Solutions Network?

- The SDSN, launched in 2012, **mobilises global scientific and technological expertise** to promote practical problem solving for the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and the **Paris Climate Agreement**.
- It was established under the **auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General**.
- The **SDSN and the Bertelsmann Stiftung** have been publishing the annual **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Index & Dashboards Global Report** since 2016.

## #GUJARAT EXPORT PREPAREDNESS INDEX 2021

- Gujarat has topped NITI Aayog's Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2021 for the second consecutive time, while Maharashtra has been ranked second and Karnataka has been ranked third. NITI Aayog released EPI 2021 in partnership with the Institute of Competitiveness.

- The **Export Preparedness Index** is a comprehensive analysis of **India's export** achievements. It aims to identify the fundamental areas critical for subnational export promotion. The coastal states have been adjudged as the best performers in the index.

- The index can be used by states and union territories to compare their performance against others and analyse potential challenges to develop better policy mechanisms.



### Export Preparedness Index 2021 Parameters

- The EPI ranks the states and UTs on four main pillars and 11 sub-pillars. The four pillars include-
- Policy-** A comprehensive trade policy provides a strategic direction for exports and imports.
- Business Ecosystem-** It examines the business ecosystem, as an efficient business ecosystem can help attract investments and create an enabling infrastructure for businesses to grow.
- Export Ecosystem-** It aims to assess the business environment, specific to exports.
- Export Performance-** It examines the reach of export footprints of states and union territories.

### The 11 sub-pillars include:

- Export Promotion Policy
- Institutional Framework
- Business Environment
- Infrastructure
- Transport Connectivity
- Access to Finance
- Export Infrastructure
- Trade Support
- R&D Infrastructure
- Export Diversification
- Growth Orientation

### Export Preparedness Index 2021- Full Rankings List

Ranking	State	Export Scores	Preparedness
1	Gujarat	78.86	

• 2	• Maharashtra	• 77.14
• 3	• Karnataka	• 61.72
• 4	• Tamil Nadu	• 56.84
• 5	• Haryana	• 53.20
• 6	• Uttar Pradesh	• 51.09

### EPI 2021 - Key Goals

- The main **goal of the Export Preparedness Index 2021** is to instill competition among all Indian states including the coastal, Himalayan, landlocked and UTs to bring out favourable export promotion policies.
- It also aims to ease the regulatory framework to prompt sub-national export promotion and create the necessary infrastructure for exports.
- It also aims to assist in identifying strategic recommendations for improving export competitiveness.

### Export Preparedness Index 2021- Significance

- The Export Preparedness Index 2021 can be a valuable tool for the government and policymakers in encouraging healthy competition among states and UTs.

### #EXERCISE DUSTLIK: JOINT TRAINING EXERCISE

- EX- DUSTLIK's is a joint training exercise that is conducted between the armies of India and Uzbekistan. The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of this exercise is **being conducted at Yangiariq, Uzbekistan** from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.



### Overview

- Ex-DUSTLIK's last edition was conducted in March 2021 in **Ranikhet, Uttarakhand**.
- To take part in this exercise, the Indian contingent is being represented by a platoon strength of Grenadiers Regiment.
- The Indian regiment will be joined by a contingent of the Uzbekistan Army which is being represented by North Western Military District troops.
- The **Grenadiers battalion** that will represent India at this exercise is one of the Indian Army's highly decorated battalions.
- This battalion has a distinction of participating in most **Pre and Post-Independence Operations of the Indian army**.

### The focus of this exercise

- This **joint exercise between the two armies will focus on Counter-Terrorism** operations conducted in semi-urban terrain under a mandate of the United Nations.

## Aim of the exercise

- This exercise's training schedule will aim at **learning the best practices from each other and sharing drills at a tactical level.**
- The exercise will also aim to boost the cooperation, understanding, and interoperability between the armies of both nations.

## #WORLD WATER DAY: 22<sup>ND</sup> MARCH

**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).**

## History:

- The idea for this international day goes back to 1992, the year in which the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro took place.
- That same year, the **United Nations General Assembly** adopted a **resolution** by which 22nd March of each year was declared World Day for Water, to be observed **starting in 1993.**
- Later on, other celebrations and events were added. For instance, the **International Year of Cooperation in the Water Sphere 2013** and the current **International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028.**

## Significance:

- The day's intention is to **inspire people around the world** to learn more about water-related issues and to take action to make a difference.
- While water covers almost 70% of the planet, **freshwater only amounts to about 3% of it**, out of which two-thirds is frozen or inaccessible and unavailable for use.
- These observances **serve to reaffirm that water and sanitation measures are key to poverty reduction, economic growth, and environmental sustainability.**



### Other Important Days :

- **22 March: World Water Day**
- **22 April: Earth Day**
- **22 May: World Biodiversity Day**

### What does the UN World Water Development Report 2022 say?

- Groundwater, which accounts for 99% of all liquid freshwater, has the potential to provide societies with tremendous social, economic and environmental benefits and opportunities.
- The groundwater already provides **almost half of the total water used for domestic purposes including drinking water**. The water resource has though been mismanaged, undervalued and abused.
- The report describes **groundwater to be central to the fight against poverty** and achieving food and water security and even the creation of jobs and socio-economic development.
- The **Asia-Pacific region is the largest groundwater abstractor in the world**, containing seven out of the ten countries that extract most groundwater (Bangladesh, China, **India**, Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey).
- These countries alone **account for roughly 60% of the world's total groundwater withdrawal**.
- The **present dependence on groundwater will only increase due to increasing water demand** by all sectors and increasing disruption in rainfall patterns.
- The report states that it all starts with **making the invisible visible** and the action would require strong and concerted efforts to manage and use it sustainably.

### About:

- The awards are organised by the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- The Jal Shakti Ministry had launched the first '**National Water Award**' in **2018**.
- They **facilitate a good opportunity for the start-ups** as well as the leading organisations to engage with the senior policymakers on adopting the best water resources management practises in India.
- They 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:

- To **motivate individuals/organisations who are doing commendable work** in the field of water resources conservation and management.
- To **create awareness among the people about the importance of water** and encourage them to adopt the best water usage practises.

### Jal Shakti Mantralaya

- The government has created a new Ministry called '**Jal Shakti**' after merging **Ministries of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation** along with **Drinking Water and Sanitation**.

- 'Jal Shakti' ministry will encompass issues ranging from providing **clean drinking water**, international and inter-states water disputes, to the NamamiGange project aimed at cleaning Ganga and its tributaries, and sub-tributaries.
- The ministry will roll out the government's ambitious **plan ('Nal se Jal' scheme** under jaljivan plan) to provide **piped water connection** to every household in India by **2024**.

## #LAMITYE 2022 JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE

- The Indian Army and the **Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF)** are **holding the 9th Joint Military Exercise LAMITYE-2022 at the Seychelles Defence Academy (SDA)** in Seychelles from March 22 to March 31, 2022.



### Overview:

- This exercise will see the **participation of Infantry Platoon** strength from both the Indian Army and the Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF), **as well as Company Headquarters**.
- The goal of the exercise is to share experiences gained during various operations against hostile forces in a semi-urban environment and enhance the capability to conduct joint operations.
- The contingent of the Indian Army comprises troops **from the 2/3 GORKHA RIFLES group (PIRKANTHI Battalion)**.

### Significance of this exercise

- Since 2001, **Seychelles has hosted Exercise LAMITYE** which is a biennial training exercise. Exercise LAMITYE with Seychelles is crucial and significant in terms of security challenges faced by both nations in the context of the current global situation and growing security concerns in the Indian Ocean Region.

### The objective of the exercise

- Combat discussions, field training exercises, demonstrations, lectures, and a two-day validation exercise will be **part of the 10-day joint exercise**.
- The **joint training exercise's objective** is to strengthen and enhance bilateral military ties while also exchanging skills, experiences, and best practices between the two armies.
- ***What types of drills will be conducted under this exercise?***
- **Both sides will plan, train, and execute a series of well-developed tactical drills** for neutralizing possible threats that may be encountered in a Semi-Urban setting while demonstrating and utilizing new generation equipment and technology for combined operations. Enhancing tactical skills in defeating enemy troops in a semi-urban environment, as well as strengthening interoperability between forces, will be emphasized.

## #N. CHANDRASEKHARANA APPOINTED AS CHAIRMAN OF AIR INDIA

- **Tata Sons Chairman Natrajan Chandrasekarana** has been appointed as the new chairman of Air India. His appointment was confirmed by the Tata Sons board on March 14, 2022.
- **Natrajan Chandrasekarana is the Chairman of Tata Sons**, the holding company and promoter of over 100 Tata operating companies. He joined the Tata Sons Board in October 2016 and was appointed as its Chairman in January 2017.
- He currently chairs the boards of several group operating companies including **Tata Motors, Tata Steel, Tata Power and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)**.



- He was the Chief Executive Officer from 2009-17. He was reappointed as chairman of Tata Sons on February 2022 for a second term of five years.
- The **Tata Sons then approached the Corporate Affairs Ministry** to seek approval of N Chandrasekarana to chair the boards at a few more group firms, as he has already touched the prescribed limit at the Tata Group.

### Natrajan Chandrasekarana

- **Natrajan Chandrasekarana studied in a government school in Mohanur in Tamil Nadu.** He did his bachelor's in Applied Sciences from the Coimbatore Institute of Technology.
- **He joined Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in 1987** after completing MCA and rose through the ranks to become the CEO and Managing Director of the company in October 2009.
- He had served as the Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director of TCS prior to that.
- Under his leadership, TCS became the largest private sector employer in India and remains to be the most valuable company in India.
- **N Chandrasekarana** is a senior member of Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE). He is also an active member of Computer Society of India and British Computer Society.
- **He was nominated as the NASSCOM chairman in April 2015.**
- He was appointed as additional director on the Tata Sons board in October 2016 **when he was the CEO and managing director of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)**.
- He became the first non-Parsi and professional executive to head the Tata Group.

### Significance

- The **head of Tata Group** has become the head of Air India yet again after a gap of 32 years. Air India founder JRD Tata had been the chief of the carrier for decades after its nationalisation.
- He remained chairman till February 1978 till the **Morarji Desai government** moved him from the post. The Indira Gandhi government reappointed JRD Tata to the board of Air India in 1982. Ratan Tata later served as the chairman of the carrier from 1986-87 till early 1990.

- With the airlines back at the hand of its founder, there are major hopes for a turnaround in the carrier's fortunes. **The Tata group plans to expand Air India's network**, improve service standards and modernize its fleet to make it the world's most technologically advanced airline.
- NatrajanChandrasekarana had said recently that improving Air India's basic service standards and on-time performance will be top priorities in the coming months for the group.

### Who will be new Air India CEO?

- The Tata Group will soon announce the new CEO for Air India to replace former Turkish Airlines Chairman IlkerAyci, who declined the offer after opposition in India. Ayci was scheduled to take charge as Air India CEO and MD before April 1, 2022.
- He had initially **accepted the role but decided to turn it down later saying that his appointment was 'coloured' by the Indian media.**
- **Tata Sons have reportedly finalised the new CEO of Air India** after holding discussions in the last few days. The group is looking to get a new CEO onboard quickly to tackle the operational challenges.

### #G.F. HOUNGBO ELECTED AS DG OF ILO

- **Gilbert F. Hougbo** has recently been elected as the **International Labour Organization's 11<sup>th</sup> Director-General**. He is the former Prime Minister of Togo and will be taking office in October 2022.
- He will be the first African to have been elected to this post.
- Since 2017, he is **serving as the President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)**. From 2008 to 2012, he served as Togo's Prime Minister.

### Appointment as the Prime Minister of Togo

- Following the massive internal conflict due to the 2005 Togolese presidential election, **Hougbo was elected to this post and he oversaw political, economic, and social reforms in the country.**
- After concluding his term as the PM, he joined the International Labour Office which is the permanent secretariat of the ILO as Deputy Director-General. Later he moved on to IFAD.

### Hougbo's vision for ILO

- **Hougbo announced that his vision for the ILO** will be working toward a new global social contract, that will be looking to protect and preserve the progress that has been achieved in the fields of social justice over the previous decades.
- The **policy will be centering around global solutions** regarding environmental, human, societal, and economic values. He also proposed a programme for global social justice through which the basis for labour laws in the world post-pandemic will be strengthened. Job deficits and social protections were also addressed.

### How does ILO elect a new Director-General?

- Every 10 years, **the ILO elects a new Director-General**. The votes for this post are cast by the governing body of ILO which comprises representatives of workers, governments, and employers.

### International Labour Organization (ILO)

- The **International Labour Organization (ILO)** celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019.
  - It is the only **tripartite U.N. agency**. It brings together **governments, employers and workers** of **187 member States**, to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.

## History of the ILO

- Established in 1919 by the **Treaty of Versailles** as an affiliated agency of the **League of Nations**.
- Became the first affiliated **specialized agency** of the **United Nations in 1946**.
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland
- **Founding Mission:** social justice is essential to universal and lasting peace.
- Promotes internationally recognized human and labour rights.
- Received the **Nobel Peace Prize** in 1969.
  - For improving peace among classes
  - Pursuing decent work and justice for workers
  - Providing technical assistance to other developing nations
- The organization has played a key role in
  - Ensuring labour rights during the Great Depression
  - Decolonization process
  - The creation of Solidarność( trade union) in Poland
  - The victory over apartheid in South Africa

## India and ILO

- **India is a founding member of the ILO** and it has been a permanent member of the ILO Governing Body since 1922.
- In India, the first ILO Office was started in 1928. The decades of productive partnership between the ILO and its constituents has mutual trust and respect as underlying principles and is grounded in building sustained institutional capacities and strengthening capacities of partners.
- India has ratified six out of the **eight-core/fundamental ILO conventions**. These conventions are:
  - Forced Labour Convention (No. 29)
  - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No.105)
  - Equal Remuneration Convention (No.100)
  - Discrimination (Employment Occupation) Convention (No.111)
  - Minimum Age Convention (No.138)
  - Worst forms of Child Labour Convention (No.182)



## #JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE 'DHARMA GUARDIAN 2022'

- At Maratha Light Infantry Centre in Belagavi, Karnataka, the army contingents of India and Japan together carried out mock drills during the joint military exercise 'Dharma Guardian 2022'.

- This annual military exercise between the armies of **India and Japan commenced on 27<sup>th</sup> February and will continue till 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022.**

- Dharma Guardian is an **annual military exercise that is being conducted in India since 2018.**
- Platoon level joint training** on operations in semi-urban or urban terrain and the jungle is covered in this exercise.
- Under this exercise special emphasis is given to enhancing the tactical skills required to fight global terrorism. It also looks to enhance **inter-operability between both armies and to promote Army to Army relations.**



### Participants

- In this 12 day long joint exercise, the Indian Army's 15th Battalion the Maratha Light Infantry Regiment and the 30th Infantry **Regiment of Japanese Ground Self Defence Forces (JGSDF) are participating.**

### What does this exercise include?

- This joint exercise includes raids on terrorist hideouts in semi-urban terrain, house interventions drills, unarmed combat & close quarter combat firing where both sides will **jointly train, combat first aid, execution and planning of well-developed tactical drills for neutralization of likely threats.**

### Other Joint Exercises with Japan

- SHINYUU Maitri:** This is a bilateral exercise conducted between the Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) and the Indian Air Force.
- JIMEX:** It is a bilateral maritime exercise held between Japan and India.
- Sahayog-Kaijin:** A joint bilateral exercise between the Japan Coast Guard and the Indian Coast Guard.

## #STEALTH GUIDED MISSILE DESTROYER INS VISAKHAPATNAM

Recently, the India-made stealth guided-missile destroyer **INS Visakhapatnam** was formally affiliated to the Visakhapatnam port.

- This marks the **formal induction of the first of the four 'Visakhapatnam' class destroyers.**
- Under the **P-15B (Visakhapatnam Class)**, a total of four warships were planned (Visakhapatnam, Mormugao, Imphal, Surat) to be inducted.
- It is **indigenously designed by the Indian Navy's in-house Directorate of Naval Design** and constructed by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders, Mumbai.**

### What is INS Visakhapatnam?

- INS Visakhapatnam is the **lead ship of the P15B class of guided missile stealth destroyers** and was commissioned on **21<sup>st</sup> November 2021**.
- The ship symbolises India's matured shipbuilding capability and quest for the **Make in India initiative** towards achieving '**Atmanirbhar Bharat**'.
- The crew of the ship abides by her motto '**YashoLabhasva**' - a Sanskrit phrase that translates to '**Attain Glory**'.
- It **embodies the indomitable spirit and capability of this mighty ship** to achieve success and glory in every endeavour.
- Visakhapatnam class ships are follow-on of the **Kolkata class destroyers (P-15A) commissioned** in the last decade.
- The ship is on her maiden visit to the port for participating in the **Presidential Fleet Review (PFR) and MILAN 2022**.
- The fleet review is a **long-standing tradition** followed by navies all across the world and it is an assembly of ships at a **pre-designated place** for the purpose of displaying loyalty and allegiance to the sovereign and the state.

### What is the Role of P-15B in the Security of India?

- The **Indian Navy's responsibilities to safeguard a large coastline of 7516 Kms** and about 1100 offshore islands along with 2.01 million sq km **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** have been enhanced in the present geopolitical scenario.
- Destroyers like the **P-15B class shall play an important role in the larger oceans of the Indo-Pacific**, making the Indian Navy a potent force.
- The guided missile Destroyers are **deployed for various responsibilities** like escort duties with the Carrier Battle Group to protect the Naval fleet against any air, surface and underwater threats.

### #IONS MARITIME EXERCISE 2022 (IMEX-22)

The maiden edition of **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Maritime Exercise 2022 (IMEX-22)** was conducted at Goa and in the Arabian Sea.

#### What is IMEX-22?

- The exercise witnessed participation of 15 out of the 25 member nations of IONS.
- The aim of the exercise was to enhance interoperability in **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)** operations among member navies.
- The exercise is seen as a **significant stepping stone for regional navies to collaborate and respond collectively to natural disasters in the region** and paves way for further strengthening regional cooperation.



#### What is the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium?

- IONS are a premier forum for cooperation and collaboration **among navies of littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region**.

- The inaugural IONS Seminar was held in New Delhi in February, 2008.
- It is a **voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime cooperation among** navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues.
- There are **36 littoral states** in the Indian Ocean which have been geographically grouped into the following four sub-regions.
  - **South Asian Littorals** - Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Seychelles and Sri Lanka
  - **West Asian Littorals** - Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Yemen
  - **East African Littorals** - Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan and Tanzania
  - **South East Asian and Australian Littorals** - Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Timor Leste.
- The forum has enabled discussions on regional maritime issues, promoted friendly relationships, and significantly improved maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region.
- It **endeavours to generate a flow of information between naval professionals** that would lead to common understanding and possibly cooperative solutions on the way ahead.

### What are the Other Important Groupings/Initiatives Associated with IOR?

- **Colombo Security Conclave:** The CSC, which was formed in 2011 as a trilateral maritime security grouping of India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, is expanding. It recently welcomed Mauritius as a fourth member.
- **Indian Ocean Rim Association:** It was established in 1997. It is aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean region.
- **Indian Ocean Commission:** Recently, **India has been approved as an observer of the Indian Ocean Commission**, the inter-governmental organization that coordinates maritime governance in the south-western Indian Ocean.
- **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR):** It was launched in 2015. Through SAGAR, India seeks to deepen economic and security cooperation with its maritime neighbours and assist in building their maritime security capabilities.
- **Asia Africa Growth Corridor:** The idea of Asia Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) emerged in the joint declaration **issued by India and Japan in 2016**.
- The AAGC is raised on four pillars of Development and Cooperation Projects, Quality Infrastructure and Institutional Connectivity, Enhancing Capacities and Skills and People-to-People partnership.

## #INDIA'S FIRST DUGONG CONSERVATION RESERVE

Recently, the **Tamil Nadu government** has decided to go ahead with the **establishment of India's first conservation reserve for the Dugong in Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay.**

- It facilitates **India to act as the leading nation in the South Asia Sub-region** with respect to dugong conservation.



### What are Dugongs?

- Dugong** (Dugong dugon) also called '**Sea Cow**' is one of the four surviving species in the **Order Sirenia** and it is the **only existing species of herbivorous mammal that lives exclusively in the sea** including in India.
- Dugongs are an **important part of the marine ecosystem** and their depletion will have effects all the way up the food chain.
- Distribution and Habitat:** They are found in over 30 countries and in India are seen in the **Gulf of Mannar, Gulf of Kutch, Palk Bay, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.**
- Conservation Status:**
- IUCN Red List status:** Vulnerable
- Wild (Life) Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I
- CITES:** Appendix I

### Steps Taken for Conservation:

- In February 2020, India hosted the **13<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (CoP)** of the **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)**, an environmental treaty under the aegis of the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).**
- The Government of India has been a **signatory to the CMS since 1983.**
- India has signed **non-legally binding Memorandums of Understanding (MoU)** with CMS on the conservation and management of **Siberian Cranes (1998), Marine Turtles (2007), Dugongs (2008)** and **Raptors (2016).**
- The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change constituted a '**Task Force for Conservation of Dugongs**' to look into issues related to conservation of dugongs and implementation of the '**UNEP/CMS Dugong MoU**' in India.
- It also facilitates India to act as the leading nation in the South Asia Sub-region with respect to dugong conservation.

### What are Conservation Reserves?

- Conservation reserves and community reserves** are terms denoting protected areas of the country which **typically act as buffer zones** to or connectors and migration corridors between established national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and reserved and protected forests.

- Such areas are designated as conservation areas if they are **uninhabited and completely owned by the Government of India** but used for subsistence by communities and community areas if part of the lands is privately owned.
- These protected area categories were first introduced in the **Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act of 2002** – the amendment to the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.
- These categories were added because of reduced protection in and around existing or proposed protected areas due to private ownership of land and land use.

## #MAHATMA GANDHI GREEN TRIANGLE

**Mahatma Gandhi Green Triangle** has been unveiled in **Madagascar** to mark Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

- The word green in the **plaque** (a flat piece of stone or metal) signifies their commitment to **sustainable development** and saving the environment.
- The naming of this park as Mahatma Gandhi Green Triangle is a **tribute to Mahatma Gandhi**.
- Gandhi was a '**Pravasi**' who returned to India from South Africa, led India's freedom struggle.
- Madagascar has a **large diaspora from the Indian state of Gujarat and it is fitting that a green triangle named after Gandhi**, who hailed from Porbandar in the state, is being unveiled in the capital of Madagascar (Antananarivo).
- Madagascar voiced appreciation for efforts by the Indian Embassy in greening the area, saying it meets the objective of the **Urban Municipality of Antananarivo** to create the maximum green space in the **capital city of Madagascar**.



## What are the Key Facts Related to Mahatma Gandhi?

- Birth:** 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1869 in Porbandar (Gujarat)
- Brief Profile:** Lawyer, politician, social activist, and writer who became the leader of the nationalist movement against the British rule of India.
- Satyagrah:** In **South Africa (1893-1915)**, he had successfully fought the racist regime with a novel method of mass agitation, which he called satyagraha.
- Return to India:** He returned to India from South Africa on 9th January 1915.
- PravasiBharatiya Divas (PBD)** is celebrated on 9th January every year to mark the contribution of the Overseas Indian community in the development of India.
- Satyagraha Movements in India:** Mahatma Gandhi believed that the dharma of non-violence could unite all Indians.
- In **1917 he travelled to Champaran** in Bihar to inspire the peasants to struggle against the oppressive plantation system.
- In **1919**, he decided to launch a **nationwide satyagraha** against the proposed **Rowlatt Act (1919)**.



- **Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22):** At the Calcutta session of the Congress in September 1920, he convinced other leaders of the need to start a non-cooperation movement in support of Khilafat as well as for swaraj.
- **The Salt March and the Civil Disobedience Movement:** For several years after the Non-cooperation Movement ended, Mahatma Gandhi focused on his social reform work.
- In 1930, Gandhiji declared that he would lead a march to break the salt law.
- According to this law, the state had a monopoly on the manufacture and sale of salt.
- **Quit India Movement:** With the outbreak of **World War II** (1939-45), the nationalist struggle in India entered its last crucial phase.

### Social Work:

- He worked for the upliftment of untouchables and gave them a new name '**Harijan**' meaning the children of God.
- In September 1932, **B.R. Ambedkar** negotiated the **Poona Pact** with Mahatma Gandhi.
- His symbol of self-reliance - the spinning wheel - became a popular symbol of the Indian Independence Movement.
- **Books Written:** Hind Swaraj, **My Experiments with Truth** (Autobiography)
- **Death:** He was shot dead by Nathuram Godse on **30<sup>th</sup> January, 1948**.
- **30<sup>th</sup> January is observed as Martyrs' Day.**

### #PRESIDENT CONFERRED NATIONAL WATER AWARDS

- **President Ram Nath Kovind** on March 29, 2022, conferred the 3rd National Water Awards in the presence of Union Minister of Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Ministers of State for Jal Shakti BishweswarTudu and Prahlad Singh Patel and other officials.
- During the ceremony of the 3rd National Water Awards, the President of India also launched Jal Shakti Abhiyaan: **Catch the Rain Campaign 2022**.
- The **3rd National Water Awards** was announced by the Union Minister of Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on January 7, 2022.



- **In National Water Awards, Uttar Pradesh has secured a first position in the 'Best State Category', followed by Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.** Under the 'Best District-North Zone' category, Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh has been awarded the first prize.
- Country's current water requirement is estimated to be around 1,100 billion cubic meters per year and is projected to go up to 1,447 billion cubic meters by 2050. He added that while India has more than 18% of the world's population, the country has only 4% of the world's renewable water resources.

### 3rd National Water Awards: Significance

- National Water Awards recognizes and encourages the exemplary work and the efforts made by the States, individuals, districts, etc. across the country in attaining the **government's vision of 'Jal Samridh Bharat'**.

- The awards encourage the stakeholders to adopt a holistic approach to water resource management. National Water Awards also strives to **create awareness among the people about the significance of water and attempts to motivate them to adopt better usage practices.**

### National Water Awards

- **The Jal Shakti Ministry had launched the first 'National Water Award' in 2018.** They facilitate a good opportunity for the start-ups as well as the leading organizations to engage with the senior policymakers on adopting the best water resources management practices in India.

### #CATCH THE RAIN CAMPAIGN-2022

- The **Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain Campaign- 2022** was launched by N. Biren Singh, the Chief Minister of Manipur on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

### Aim of the campaign

- The campaign was launched with the aim of intensifying the various measures of water conservation in all the identified water-stressed districts and blocks across Manipur.
- The Nodal Department for this campaign is the **State Water Resources Department.**
- They would be responsible for carrying out this campaign.
- **Under this campaign, multiple Jal Shakti Kendras** would be set up in the State's districts.
- These kendras would also act as knowledge centres for generating awareness regarding water conservation techniques. Special focus will also be shown on the mapping of springs shed and springs during the campaign.
- The mapped springs and spring sheds will be rejuvenated and properly managed.
- Till 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022, this campaign will be implemented. Also, rainwater harvesting methods will be set up in all the **Schools, Government Offices, and Colleges** across the state so that rainwater can be harvested, stored, and treated for various uses.

### The theme of the campaign

- "Catch the Rain, where it falls, when it falls" is the theme selected for this campaign. Water conservation is very important for the state keeping in mind the state government's Green Manipur Mission.

### #OSCAR 2022 WINNERS

- The **Oscars 2022 or the 94th Academy Awards ceremony** which is presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS). This event was held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

### Overview:

- This event **honoured the best films that were released between 1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.**
- On 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022, the voting for nominations concluded and on



8<sup>th</sup> February 2022, the nominations were announced.

- The hosts for this ceremony were **Amy Schumer, Regina Hall, and Wanda Sykes**.
- For the first time since the 83rd Academy Awards held in 2011 that multiple hosts were featured.

## Winners

- **Best Picture:** CODA
- **Best Actress:** Jessica Chastain for the movie The Eyes Of Tammy Faye
- **Best Director** was won by Jane Campion for The Power Of The Dog.
- **Best Actor:** Will Smith for the movie King Richard
- **Best Supporting Actress** went to Ariana DeBose for the movie West Side Story.
- **Best Supporting Actor:** Troy Kotsur for the movie CODA
- **Best Original Screenplay:** Belfast
- **Best Adapted Screenplay:** CODA
- **Best International Feature Film:** Drive My Car (Country-Japan)
- **Best Documentary Feature:** Summer of Soul

## #WINNER OF ABEL PRIZE 2022

- The **winner of the Abel Prize 2022 is Dennis Parnell Sullivan**, an American mathematician. This award also includes prize money which amounts to 7 Million NOK (Norwegian Krone).



## Overview:

- He received this award for his contributions to topology, especially its geometric, algebraic, and dynamical aspects.
- **Topology is a field of mathematics** that considers two things of different forms to be equivalent only if they can be deformed into each other.
- Topology is a new field of mathematics as it was born at the end of the 19th century.
- Topology is important in maths and various other fields like data science, economics, and physics.

## About Abel Prize

- The King of Norway presents the Abel Prize and it is given annually to an individual who has done a remarkable job in the mathematics field.
- This prize has been named after Niels Henrik Abel who was a famous Norwegian mathematician. **This award took inspiration from the famous Nobel Prize.**
- **Nobel Prize doesn't have a section for mathematics**, though some mathematicians have won this prestigious prize in other fields. The Fields Medal is an annual award that is also considered to be the 'Mathematics Nobel' but it is only awarded to those individuals who are below the age of 40.
- The Abel Prize was first awarded in 2003 to Jean-Pierre Serre, a French mathematician, for his contribution to algebraic geometry, topology, and number theory.

## Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians

- In 2007, S. R. SrinivasaVaradhan, who is an Indian-American citizen had won the Abel Prize for his contribution in probability theory and for creating a unified large deviation theory.
- The Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians from developing countries has been given to **Professor Neena Gupta**.
  - She is a **mathematician at the Indian Statistical Institute in Kolkata** and has been awarded for her outstanding work in **affine algebraic geometry** and **commutative algebra**.
  - She is the third woman to receive the Ramanujan Prize.
  - Her solution for solving the **Zariski cancellation problem**, a fundamental problem in Algebraic Geometry, earned her the **2014 Young Scientists Award of the Indian National Science Academy**.

### About:

- The Ramanujan Prize for **Young Mathematicians from developing countries** has been awarded **annually since 2005**.
- It is administered by the **Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP)** jointly with the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**, Government of India and the **International Mathematical Union (IMU)**.
- **ICTP**: Founded in 1964 by the late **Nobel Laureate Abdus Salam**, it seeks to accomplish its mandate by providing scientists from developing countries with the continuing education and skills that they need to enjoy long and productive careers.
- **IMU**: It is an **international non-governmental and non-profit scientific organization**, with the purpose of promoting international cooperation in mathematics.
- It is a **member of the International Science Council (ISC)**.
- **DST**: The **DST** has **agreed to fund the Prize**, starting with the 2014 Prize.
- It has been supported by **DST in the memory of Srinivasa Ramanujan**, a genius in pure mathematics who was essentially self-taught and made spectacular contributions to elliptic functions, continued fractions, infinite series, and analytical theory of numbers.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS IN SHORT

### RUSSIA DESTROYED LARGEST PLANE IN WORLD

- On the fourth day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, **Russia destroyed the largest plane in the world called “Ukraine’s Antonov-225 cargo plane”**. The plane was destroyed outside Kyiv.
- According to weapons manufacturer Ukroboronprom, restoring “AN-225 Mriya” **would cost over USD 3 billion** and could take over five years.
- The aircraft was unique to the world. It was 84 meters long and could transport up to 250 tonnes of cargo at a speed of 850 kilometres per hour.
- Missile has been named **Mriya, which means “dream” in Ukrainian**.
- Maria was initially built as part of the Soviet aeronautical program. It made its first flight in 1988. **Mriya has been operated by Ukraine’s Antonov Airlines for cargo flights**. It was in high demand during Covid-19 pandemic.



### INDIA'S FIRST ELECTRONIC WASTE ECO-PARK

- The **Delhi Cabinet has approved setting up India’s first of its kind electronic-waste eco-park**. It has also agreed to devise ‘Delhi Film Policy 2022’, as a thrust to promote tourism.
- The electronic waste eco-friendly park is to be built on 20 acres of land in Delhi. Nearly, 2 lakh tonnes of e-waste are thrown by Delhi every year.
- This **eco-park will recycle, refurbish and dismantle e-waste in a scientific and safe way**.
- **About the eco-park:** This eco-park will act as an Integrated Facility, by engaging in dismantling, segregating, refurbishing, material-wise storage, testing and plastic recycling.
- It will also **have precious metal extraction facilities, especially from Printed Circuit Boards (PCBs)** through high-end technologies.
- The **Delhi Film Policy 2022 is to promote tourism in Delhi**, making the National Capital- a Brand. It will also make it a hub for modern film-making, meeting European Standards.
- The government is to **create an ‘e-Film Clearance Portal’ and provide aid of Rs 3 crores for film production**. It has also decided to incentivize hiring locals in the cinema industry.

### EUROPEAN UNION MEMBERSHIP OF UKRAINE

- President of Ukraine, **Volodymyr Zelensky, recently asked the European Union (EU)** to allow Ukraine to immediately become a member, under a special procedure.
- Following the request, President of European Council Charles Michel noted that the council will have to “**seriously look at Ukraine’s request for EU membership**”.
- Ukraine has filed the membership application as it defends against Russian invasion.

#### **EU-Ukraine Relations**

- Relations between the **EU and Ukraine are shaped through Ukraine–European Union Association Agreement** and the Deep & Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA).





- Ukraine is a priority partner within Eastern Partnership as well as the **European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)**.
- The EU and Ukraine are seeking a close relationship with each other through gradual economic integration and deepening political cooperation.

## 'INDUSTRY CONNECT 2022' INAUGURATED BY MANDAVIYA

- **Dr.MansukhMandaviya**, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Chemicals & Fertilizers has **inaugurated the seminar on “Industry Connect 2022”**: Industry and Academia Synergy.
- The stress is on the importance of innovation & technology for the progress of the country and it is for the greater industry-academia partnerships.
- The **innovative zeal and manufacturing quality products at scale** will help the Prime Minister’s vision of Make in India and Make for the World.
- During the Seminar, there were two technical sessions organised. **Many officials from the CIPET, TDB (Technology Development Board)** and various industry associations were also present in this seminar.
- **ORGANISERS:**
  - The Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals.
  - Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India.
  - Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering & Technology (CIPET).
  - Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).



## NITI AAYOG DEVELOPING 'NATIONAL GENDER INDEX'

- **NITI Aayog is working on development of a “National Gender Index”** that will be used to measure the progress and identify persisting gaps in gender equality in order to make informed policy decisions.
- NITI Aayog in its latest annual report 2021-2022 noted that, **National Gender Index will serve as a tool to map the progress of states and Union Territories (UTs)** on a defined gender metrics and build foundation for positive change.
- It will support the policy action and advocacy around gender. **This index will also be aligned with the framework of Sustainable Development Goals.**
- ***Draft State Energy and Climate Index***
- NITI Aayog has also **developed a draft State Energy and Climate Index**. This index will assess the performance of states on indicators like DISCOMs’ viability and competition; clean energy Initiative; access, affordability and reliability of energy; generation capacity; energy efficiency; and environmental sustainability and new initiatives.
- It will also **help states to efficiently manage their energy resources** and provide better access to energy to the people.

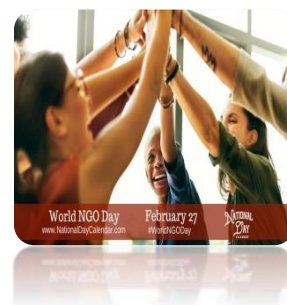


## ZERO DISCRIMINATION DAY HELD ON 1ST MARCH

- The **Zero Discrimination Day** is held every year on the **1st of March**. The day aims to ensure right to equality, inclusion and protection of all people without any discrimination in their law and policies to live a full life with dignity regardless of any barriers.
- **Zero Discrimination Day** highlights how people can become informed about and promote inclusion, compassion, peace and, above all, a movement for change.
- Zero Discrimination Day is helping to **create a global movement of solidarity to end all forms of discrimination**.
- **The theme of the day:** The theme of Zero Discrimination Day 2022: "Remove laws that harm, create laws that empower", UNAIDS is highlighting the urgent need to take action against discriminatory laws.
- **History of the day:** Zero Discrimination Day was first celebrated on March 1, 2014, and was **launched by UNAIDS Executive Director at Beijing after UNAIDS** launched its Zero Discrimination Campaign on World AIDS Day in December 2013.

## WORLD NGO DAY OBSERVED ON 27TH FEBRUARY

- Every year on February 27, **people all over the world celebrate World NGO Day** to honour the work and contributions of various NGOs. NGO stands for Non-Governmental Organization, and it is a type of organization that works to improve society.
- This day recognizes, honours, and celebrates non-profit and non-governmental organizations, as well as people who volunteer their time and effort to make society a better place to live.
- **History of this day**
- In 2010, 12 countries from the **Baltic Sea NGO Forum in Vilnius, Lithuania**, recognized and proposed World NGO Day. **Denmark, Belarus, Finland, Estonia, Iceland, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, Poland, Sweden, and Norway** were among the Baltic Sea NGO Forum's members.
- On February 27, 2014, **Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs** sponsored the first global inaugural event of World NGO Day in Helsinki, Finland.
- The heads of **UNESCO, UNOPS, the European Union, UNDP**, the Nordic Council, and other international organizations were among the international guests.



## POLIO NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION DAY 2022

- In 2022, the Government of India has organised the **Polio National Immunization Day 2022 (NID)** (also known as "Polio Ravivar") on February 27, 2022, to give two drops of oral polio vaccine (OPV) to every child in the country under the age of five.
- Over 15 crore children will be covered under the drive across all 36 States and UTs in 735 districts.
- The **National Polio Immunization Drive for 2022 was launched by Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Mansukh Mandavia** on February 26, 2022.



- **Polio history in India:** In India, one nationwide NID and two **Sub-National Immunization Day (SNIDs)** for polio is held every year to maintain population immunity against wild poliovirus and to sustain its polio-free status.
- **India was removed from the list of polio-endemic countries in 2012** and in 2013 the entire Southeast Asia Region was declared Polio free. **The last case of wild poliovirus reported in India was on 13th January 2011.**

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WEEK

- The **International Women's Day week** is celebrated by the Women and Child Development Ministry from the 1st of March as a part of **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**.
- As part of this week-long celebration, various events and social media campaigns that will cover a variety of themes that will be **related to women's empowerment and safety** are being organized by the Ministry.
- This event is being organized in partnership with the **Bureau of Police Research and Development**, with the goal of raising awareness of women's safety and security.
- **Objective of organizing the International Women's Day week**
- The objective of organizing this event so that it can be used as an opportunity to celebrate progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment while also critically reflecting on the achievements and striving for gender equality.



## WHAT IS MONTREUX CONVENTION?

- The **Montreux Convention Regarding the Straits Regime**, or simply the Montreux Convention, is an international treaty that governs Turkey's Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits.
- It was signed on July 20, 1936, in the **Montreux Palace in Switzerland**, and took effect on November 9, 1936. This convention was signed to address the long-running Straits Question of who should **manage the strategically important route between the Black and Mediterranean Seas**.
- The **maritime traffic through the Black Sea is regulated by the Montreux Convention**. During peacetime, it grants full freedom of passage for all civilian vessels and allows Turkey to limit the movement of navies who do not belong to the Black Sea states.
- During wars, this pact gives Turkey the right to regulate the naval warship transits and blocking of the strait for warships of the countries in conflict. **Military warships are restricted in terms of tonnage, number, and weaponry, with specific rules that govern their duration of stay and mode of entry.**
- Advanced notifications have to be provided by warships to the Turkish authorities, who then must notify the parties to the Convention.
- Despite being created for a specific geopolitical context, the **Montreux Convention** is still in force and is a strong example of a rules-based international order since most of its terms are still respected.



- Controversies did happen regarding its implementation, **most notably during the proposed Kanal Istanbul.**
- Another waterway would be provided by **Kanal Istanbul to the Sea of Marmara from the Black Sea,** and this could lead to circumventing the Convention.
- The **provisions of the Convention reflected the world situation in the mid-1930s to a great extent.** They primarily benefited the Turks and Soviets by allowing Turkey to reclaim **military control of the Straits and ensuring Soviet control of the Black Sea.**
- **Although the Convention limited the Soviet Union's ability to send naval forces into the Mediterranean Sea,** it also ensured that outside powers could not use the Straits to threaten the Soviet Union.

## INDIA RANKED 120TH POSITION ON SDG REPORT 2021

- India has been ranked at **120th position in the Sustainable Development Report 2021** or Sustainable Development Index 2021.
- In this Index, countries are ranked by a score out of 100. **India has a score of 60.07. Last year India's rank was 117.**
- The Index measures the country's total progress towards achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The Index has been topped by Finland.
- **The top 5 countries in this ranking are:**
  - Finland
  - Sweden
  - Denmark
  - Germany
  - Belgium
- These **17 Sustainable Development Goals** were adopted by **the UN General Assembly** in September 2015 as a part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



## INDIAN AIR FORCE TO CONDUCT EX-VAYU SHAKTI

- **Indian Air Force (I.A.F.) will conduct the Exercise Vayu Shakti,** which will happen at Pokharan home in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, on 7 March.
- **PM Narendra Modi** will be the Chief Guest of this event. A complete 148 aircraft of the **Indian Air Force (I.A.F.) will** participate in this exercise.
- Rafale aircraft will participate for the primary time during this exercise. **Exercise Vayu Shakti is organized by the Indian Air Force once every three years.**
- The **last Vayu Shakti Exercise** happened in 2019. I.A.F. has strengthened its combat potential significantly with the induction of Rafale jets armed with **potent beyond visibility (B.V.R.) missiles, S-400 Triumf air defense missile systems,** a medium-range surface-to-air missile (M.R.S.A.M.) system, and smart air-to-ground weapons





- Several platforms that have operated within the Ladakh sector will be a neighborhood of the drills within the exercise.
- These include **Rafale, MiG-29 and Sukhoi-30 fighter jets, C-17 heavy lifters, C-130J special operations aircraft, Apache AH-64E attack helicopters, and CH-47F (I) Chinook multi-mission helicopters.**

## UNHRC DEBATE ON UKRAINE

- The **United Nations Human Rights Council** voted to have an urgent debate on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, further isolating Russia, which had previously resisted Ukraine's efforts to bring attention to war crimes.
- Russia's aggression against Ukraine dominated the start of the **United Nations' main annual session in Geneva, Switzerland**, with countries rallying behind Ukraine's demand to bring Russia's actions to the spotlight.
- **Yevheniia Filipenko, Ukraine's ambassador to Geneva** talked about how Russia's attack was not only an attack on Ukraine but on every UN member state.
- Russia, which has become an international pariah due to the invasion, **rejected the call for a debate and demanded a vote on the issue.**
- However, **Ukraine's request was backed by 29 of the council's 47 members**, with only five voting against it, including Russia and China. Thirteen countries, largely from Africa, abstained from voting.
- A draft resolution was presented by Ukraine for discussion during the debate, calling for a high-level investigation into all alleged violations committed in the war, which dates back to 2014, **when Russia annexed Crimea and backed a separatist movement in Ukraine's east.**
- **About United Nations Human Rights Council**
- **UNHRC is a United Nations organization** whose objective is to protect and promote human rights across the world. **This council has 47 elected members who are chosen for a three-year term.**
- The **Council's headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland.** Federico Villegas is the council's President.
- The Council investigates allegations of human rights violations in member states of the United Nations and addresses thematic human rights issues such as freedom of expression, freedom of association and assembly, **women's rights, freedom of belief and religion, racial and ethnic minorities' rights, and LGBT rights.**
- The **United Nations General Assembly formed the Council** on 15 March 2006 to replace the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.



## 175 NATIONS SIGNED GLOBAL PLASTICS TREATY

- In a **biggest multilateral environmental deal, 175 countries** have agreed to a legally binding global treaty called "**Global Plastics Treaty**", to end the plastic pollution crisis by tackling the entire supply chain of material.
- The resolution on the first treaty was passed at a meeting of the **UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) in Nairobi in Kenya.**
- First treaty directly seeks to tackle **9 billion tonnes of plastic** produced since the plastic age ramped up in the 1950s.





- Now, they have started working on how to implement the treaty by 2024.
- **Elements of the treaty are legally binding.** The treaty also acknowledges that lower-income countries will find it more difficult to tackle plastic and pollution than high-income ones. Thus, there is a need for a financing model, in order to **help in curbing plastic use and waste.**

## SAMBHAV & SVAVLAMBAN INITIATIVES

- ‘Sambhav’ and ‘Svavlamban’ are initiatives to tackle the **issue of plastic waste in India.**
- **‘Sambhav’ and ‘Svavlamban’** initiatives were launched by Union Minister of State for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma, at the International Summit on Plastics Recycling and Waste Management.
- These initiatives aim to encourage young entrepreneurs, especially from the aspirational districts of India.



### *About International Summit on Plastics*

- **Recycling and Waste Management** It is a **2-day summit** (4th – 5th March 2022), inaugurated by Union Minister of State for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma.
- This summit is being organized in New Delhi by the MSME Ministry in association with the **All India Plastics Manufacturers’ Association (AIPMA).**
- The motto of the summit is **“Know your Waste and how Recycling is the right thing to do, which is to be done in the right way”.** Around 1350 MSMEs are expected to attend the summit, which is being conducted in hybrid mode.
- This summit provides a platform for entrepreneurs, experts, businessmen, and other stakeholders to **deliberate challenges and solutions in the MSME sector and plastics sectors.**

## MoWCD LAUNCHED 'STREE MANORAKSHA PROJECT'

- The **Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD)** and NIMHANS Bengaluru launched the ‘StreeManoraksha Project’ on Wednesday with the goal of improving women’s mental health in India.
- The project would concentrate on increasing the ability of **OSC (One-Stop Center) officials** in terms of tools and procedures for dealing with women who come to One-Stop Centers, particularly those who have experienced violence and distress, with compassion and care.
- **One-Stop Center performed admirably during the COVID time.** There are already over 700 One-Stop Centers operating across the country.
- People who work in these one-stop shops will be taught how to appropriately operate the Self Defense Shaheed Women Helpline and counsel them.
- The advanced training programme will be delivered in all of the regional languages that they want to be able to comprehend. **NIMHANS has also built a website dedicated to this,** which contains a wealth of information on training.



- The project, which has been painstakingly described by **NIMHANS based on the Ministry's expected requirements**, will be delivered in two formats.

## INDIA-CANADA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

- **India and Canada** decided to restart negotiations on the **Free Trade Agreement (FTA) or Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**.
- The benefits of **India-Canada CEPA were highlighted by "India-Canada CEO Round Table" held in 2008**. It was decided that bilateral trade would get boosted by elimination of tariffs.
- In 2010, the benefits were reiterated in the report based on joint study conducted by both the countries. In the same year, **Prime Ministers of India and Canada** announced the launch of India-Canada CEPA in Seoul, to realize the benefits.
- Later, the negotiations for India-Canada CEPA were formally launched in New Delhi.
- Both **countries held 10 rounds of negotiations**. In 2017, 10th round of India-Canada CEPA negotiations were held in New Delhi.
- A bilateral meeting was held in 2020 to explore the option of an **early harvest trade deal or interim trade deal**.
- Also, India's interests lie in reducing technical, sanitary & phyto-sanitary barriers to trade. Canada proposed **inclusion of investment protection agreement in the deal**.



## PM MODI INAUGURATED PUNE METRO RAIL PROJECT

- The **Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi** has inaugurated **Pune Metro Rail Project** on March 06, 2022, and also interacted with differently-abled, visually impaired students present inside the metro coach, during his 10-minute ride in the Pune Metro.
- **Pune Metro Rail Project has been built at a total cost of INR 11,420 Crore**. It has a total length of 33.2 km and 30 stations.
- Pune Metro is the first metro project in the country to have Aluminum body coaches, indigenously manufactured under the Make in India policy of GoI.
- PM Modi also unveiled the statue of Chhatrapati **Shivaji Maharaj at the premises of the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC)** and laid the foundation stone and inaugurated multiple developmental projects in Pune.



## WORLD'S 1ST AIRLINES TO USE SOLAR AVIATION FUEL

- **Swiss International Air Lines AG (SWISS or Swiss Air Lines)** and its parent company, Lufthansa Group have partnered with Switzerland based solar fuels start-up, Synhelion SA (Synhelion) to use its solar aviation fuel.



- Swiss International Airlines will become the first airline **to use solar aviation fuel ("sun-to-liquid" fuel) to help power its flights.** SWISS will become the first customer of solar kerosene in 2023.
- For this, Synhelion has developed a technology for manufacturing **sustainable aviation fuel (SAF)** from renewable energy sources.
- When combusted **solar fuel will only produce as much CO2** as went into its manufacture, cutting aviation emissions.
- Synhelion is set to build the world's first facility to industrially produce solar fuel in Jülich, Germany. **The plant will become operational from 2022 onwards.**

## RUPAY NAMED AS OFFICIAL PARTNER FOR TATA IPL 2022

- **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)'s**, Indian Premier League (IPL) Governing Council has announced National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)'s flagship **product RuPay as an official partner for the Tata IPL 2022.**
- This will be a multi-year partnership. RuPay offers tech-led, innovative, and customized offerings to people across India, being accepted in India and internationally.
- **Tata IPL 2022 will be co-presented by Dream11** and co-powered by Tata and CRED. Swiggy, Prystin Care, Zepto, Livspace, L'Oreal, and Spinny have been signed-on as associate sponsors.
- The 15th edition of Tata IPL 2022 will start on 26th March 2022. A total of 70 league matches will be played across four international venues in Mumbai and Pune. The venue for the playoff matches will be decided later.



## UAE INCLUDED IN FATF GREY LIST

- On 4th March 2022, **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** included the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in its grey list.
- **FATF is an inter-governmental body established by the G7 countries in 1989.** It is mainly a policy-making body and its mandate is to promote reforms in a country's financial system to combat money-laundering and terror financing.
- **About FATF grey list**
- The FATF grey list is officially known as the list of **"Other monitored jurisdictions"**. If a country is placed in the FATF grey list, it will be closely monitored and scrutinized by FATF for any deficiencies or loopholes in combating **"money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing"**.
- Such countries will also agree to cooperate with FATF to address financial irregularities **within the stipulated time frame and maintain** the integrity of the financial system.
- **FATF will also provide an action plan to the countries to improve and strengthen the financial system.** FATF will continuously monitor the progress of the commitments made by countries and update the list accordingly through its periodical reviews. When a **country is placed in the grey list, it faces the following issues:**



- Rating agencies like **Moody's, Standard & Poor's, and Fitch** will give poor ratings.
- Its reputation will be damaged and thereby foreign investments will be reduced.
- The competitive advantage of the country will be lost.

## LEGENDARY CRICKETER SHANE WARNE PASSED AWAY

- **Shane Warne was a cricketer from Australia.** He was a right-arm leg spinner who is widely regarded as one of the finest bowlers in cricket history, and he was named as **one of the five Wisden Cricketers of the Century by a panel of cricket experts in 2000**, the only specialist bowler in the quintet and the only one still playing at that time.
- He passed away on 4th March 2022 from a suspected heart attack. In a 15-year career for Australia **he took 708 test wickets, and in 1999, won the Cricket World Cup.**
- In 2009, he was awarded Marylebone Cricket Club's Honorary Life Membership.
- Warne took 34 wickets at an average of 25.79 in six tests in the 1993 Ashes series against England.
- During the 1993 series, **he was best remembered for one ball or that ball or Gatting Ball** which is termed as the ball of the century, which he bowled to Mike Gatting of England at Old Trafford, Manchester.
- He took his **500th wicket in his first Test match after his return in March 2004**, making him only the second bowler in history to do so.
- By the end of the **season (2003-2004)**, Warne and Sri Lankan off-spinner **Muttiah Muralitharan** had surpassed Courtney Walsh's (West Indies) record of 519 Test wickets set in 2001.
- He took 300 test wickets in 63 matches. In 2005, he became the first bowler in the test format to reach 600 wickets. In 2007, Warne retired from Test cricket, but he continued to play club cricket till 2011.
- In his career, **he took 708 wickets, and later this record was broken by Muralitharan.**



## KAVACH: AUTOMATIC TRAIN ANTI-COLLISION SYSTEM

- **'Kavach' is the automatic train anti-collision system** developed by the Indian Railways.
- **Kavach or "armor"** is the indigenously-developed system that prevents collisions between trains. It is also known as **Train Collision Avoidance System (TCAS).**
- It has been developed since 2012 and in 2016 first field trials were conducted. At present, it is operational in the **Lingampally&Vikarabad section of the South Central Railway (SCR) zone.** It will soon be operational all over India in a gradual manner, as proposed in the Budget.
- Kavach will cost around Rs 30 lakh to 50 lakh per kilometer, while the imported system will cost around Rs 2.5 crores a kilometer. **Thus, Kavach will help India in cutting import costs and saving forex reserves.**
- **Mechanism of Kavach:**Kavach system allows station master and loco-pilot to effectively communicate with each other during times of emergency. This is made possible with the following components:

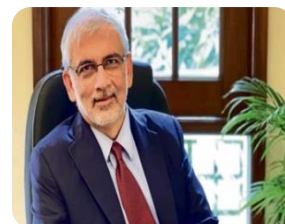




- **Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags on the railway sleepers.**
- Transmission towers are connected with the electronic devices inside the locomotive and at stations.
- Loco-pilot will be informed in advance by the instruments regarding the safe speeds to be maintained. He will also get to know **in advance about the signal**, without the need to directly see the signal.
- If a loco-pilot jumps a red signal, especially when trains are on the same line facing each other (**Signal Passed at Danger (SPAD)**), then the Kavach system will automatically apply brakes to prevent an accident.

## SANJIV KAPOOR APPOINTED AS CEO OF JET AIRWAYS

- **Sanjiv Kapoor** has been appointed as the new **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** of Jet Airways.
- Prior to this, Kapoor was the president of Oberoi Hotels and has also worked as a **chief operating officer at SpiceJet and chief strategy and commercial officer at Vistara.**
- He has worked as the Chief Strategy and Commercial Officer of Vistara Airlines for three years, and Chief Operating Officer of SpiceJet for two years. The JalanKallrock Consortium is the new promoter of Jet Airways.
  - Jet Airways CEO: **Vinay Dube.**
  - Jet Airways Founder: **Naresh Goyal.**
  - Jet Airways Founded: **1 April 1992, Mumbai.**



## SLINEX (SRI LANKA - INDIA NAVAL EXERCISE)

- From March 7 to 10, the ninth edition of the Indian and Sri Lankan Navy bilateral maritime exercise **SLINEX (Sri Lanka-India Naval Exercise)** will be held at Visakhapatnam.
- In two phases this exercise will be conducted with the **Harbour Phase taking place at Visakhapatnam** on March 7 and 8, and the Sea Phase taking place in the Bay of Bengal on March 9 and 10.
- In October 2020, the previous edition of SLINEX was conducted in Trincomalee.
- **Participants in this exercise:** The SLNS Sayurala, an advanced offshore patrol vessel, will represent the **Sri Lankan Navy, while the Indian Navy** will be represented by the INS Kirch, a guided missile corvette.
- **Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH), Seaking, INS Jyoti,** a Fleet support tanker, Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft, and Chetak Helicopters are among the Indian Navy's other participants.



## INDIA'S FIRST INDIGENOUS FLYING TRAINER 'HANSA-NG'

- India's first indigenously developed Flying Trainer, 'HANSA-NG', successfully completed the sea-level trials at Puducherry.
- HANSA-NG was flown from **Bengaluru to Puducherry on February 19**, covering a distance of 140 nautical miles in 1.5 hours at a cruising speed of 155 km/hr.
- The objectives of sea level trials is to evaluate handling qualities, climb / cruise performance, balked landing, structural performance including positive & negative G, power plant and other systems performance.
- The aircraft has been designed and developed by **CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL)**, under the aegis of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).
- **HANSA-NG is one of the most advanced flying trainers**, designed to meet the Indian flying club needs and it is an ideal aircraft for **Commercial Pilot Licensing (CPL)** due to its low cost and low fuel consumption.
- A trainer aircraft is designed specifically to facilitate flight training of pilots and aircrews.



## INDIA & ITU SIGNED HOST COUNTRY AGREEMENT

- The **Government of India** has signed the Host Country Agreement (HCA) **with International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** for the establishment of an Area Office & Innovation Centre of ITU in New Delhi.
- The **Host Country Agreement** provides the legal and financial framework for the establishment and operations of the Area Office.
- The Area Office and Innovation Centre of ITU at New Delhi will serve South Asian countries comprising Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and India.
- The agreement was signed between Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister of Communications and **H.E. Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General of ITU**, in a virtual ceremony during the World Telecommunications Standardisation Assembly-20 (WTSA-20) being held in Geneva, Switzerland.
- **About the ITU:** ITU is the United Nations specialised agency for **information and communication technologies (ICTs)**. ITU currently has a membership of 193 countries.
- It allocates global radio spectrum and satellite orbits, develops the technical standards that ensure networks and technologies seamlessly interconnect, and strives to **improve access to ICTs to underserved communities worldwide**.
  - International Telecommunication Union Headquarters: **Geneva, Switzerland.**
  - International Telecommunication Union Founded: **17 May 1865.**
  - International Telecommunication Union Secretary-General: **Houlin Zhao.**



## HIGHEST CIVILIAN HONOUR FOR WOMEN IN INDIA

- **Nari Shakti Puraskar** is the highest civilian honor for women in India.
- Nari Shakti Puraskar is an annual award given by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development** to individual women or to institutions working for women empowerment.
- In 1999, the awards were instituted under the title of Stree Shakti Puraskar. In 2015, the **awards were reorganized and renamed as Nari Shakti Puraskar**.
- Every year, on **International Women's Day (8th March)**, the President of India presents the awards to the **recipients at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi**.
- The awards are given in six institutional and two individual categories. **Each institutional category is named** after a renowned woman in Indian history.
- For the institutional category award, the cash prize is 2 lakh rupees and for the individual category award, the cash prize is 1 lakh rupees.



## SAMARTH: ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROMOTION DRIVE

- On 7th March 2022, Union Minister for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Narayan Rane launched "SAMARTH", a special entrepreneurship promotion drive for women.
- At the launch event, the MSME minister held that there are numerous opportunities for women in the MSME sector.
- The minister also highlighted that the **MSME Ministry** is continuously making efforts to develop the culture of entrepreneurship among women through its various initiatives and schemes.
- **SAMARTH will provide women with self-employment opportunities** and make them self-reliant and independent.
- Under **SAMARTH**, **20% of seats** in free skill development programs, organized by the MSME ministry, will be allocated for women entrepreneurs, which will help around 7,500 women in 2022-23.
- **Also, 20% of MSME business delegations sent to domestic and international exhibitions** for marketing assistance under the schemes of MSME ministry will be dedicated to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) owned by women. **This initiative will provide greater reach to the businesses of women.**
- 20% discount on annual processing fee on commercial schemes of the **National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC)** can be availed by women entrepreneurs in 2022-23.
- A special Drive will be conducted under Udyam Registration for the registration of women-owned MSMEs.
- SAMARTH entrepreneurship promotion drive for women was launched as a part of **International Women's Day (8th March 2022) celebrations**.



## FREEDOM OF THE WORLD REPORT 2022

- For the second consecutive year, India has been **termed as a 'partly free' country** in terms of democracy and free society, according to the annual report.
- The report titled "Freedom in the World 2022 – The **Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule**" by Freedom House, a US-based NGO that assesses political rights and civil liberties.
- **India scored 66 out of 100 in 2022.** The country had scored 67 in 2021. India was a free country till 2020 when its score was 71.
- In Internet freedom: India scored a mere 49, the **same score as that of Uganda**. Here too, the score has come down.
- The reasons are – the increasing internet shutdowns by governments, low internet penetration and poor infrastructure.
- India's **freedom scores are similar to that of Bolivia, Hungary and Albania**. The countries that have scored the worst include **South Sudan, Syria, Tibet, Turkmenistan, Eritrea and North Korea**.
- Sixty-nine countries are currently not free worldwide. This makes the situation worse than in 1973 when only 63 countries were not free.
- Apart from the worst scorers, the list also includes **Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Thailand and Qatar**. This is an increase from last year when only 54 countries were not free.
- At the same time, there is an increase in free countries from 82 to 85, compared to 2021.
- In this category, **Finland, Sweden and Norway** have achieved a perfect 100, besides **New Zealand, Canada, Uruguay, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Ireland and Denmark**.
- In 2022, 85 countries were termed as free, 56 as partly free and 69 as not free. The **Freedom in the World 2022** evaluated the state of freedom in 195 countries and 15 territories during the calendar year 2021.
- **About the report:** The report used 25 indicators, grouped into the categories of political rights and civil liberties to determine whether the country or territory has **an overall status of Free, Partly Free, or Not Free**.
- The report has been published every year since 1973 to **assess the political rights and civil liberties** of a country through a series of surveys and analyses.



## TELANGANA TOPPED COUNTRY IN PER CAPITA NET STATE

- **Telangana became the top-performing state in India** with a population over one crore in terms of the growth rate of Per Capita Net State Domestic Product at Current Prices by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**.
- It succeeded other states like **Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu**.
- According to the MoSPI: The Gross State Domestic Price (GSDP) of Telangana increased from Rs 359434 crores in 2011-12 to Rs 1,154,860 crores in 2021-22.



- It recorded GSDP growth by 31.12 per cent from 2011-12. It is one of the highest growth rates for any state in the country.
- In terms of the **percentage growth in GSDP**, **Telangana** has shown the most rapid increase in its growth rate by around 17% from 2020 to the present.
- Major projects include the **RythuBandhu scheme for farmers**, the world's largest lift irrigation Kaleshwaram project to provide water to the fields, and the Arogya Laxmi scheme for pregnant and lactating women.

## SWANTANTRATA SAINIK SAMMAN YOJANA (SSSY)

- The government has approved the continuation of the **SwatantrataSainikSamman Yojana (SSSY)** and its components for the financial years 2021-22 to 2025-26, with a financial outlay of Rs 3,274.87 crore.
- Under this scheme, freedom fighters, and their dependents are given financial benefits and pensions.
- **Under this scheme, 23,566 beneficiaries are covered across the country.** The Ministry of Home Affairs prepared the proposal for the continuation of the SSSY.
- The pension amount has been revised with time and since August 2016 Dearness Relief is also been given.
- **About SwatantrataSainikSamman Yojana**
- This is a scheme of the central government for granting pensions to freedom fighters and to their families. **This grant is provided from the Central Revenues.**
- As a gesture of respect for their contributions to the national freedom movement, **the scheme provides a monthly Samman Pension to freedom fighters.**
- After their demise, pension is given to their eligible dependents viz. unemployed and unmarried daughters, spouses, and dependent parents, as per the prescribed eligibility procedure and norms.
- On the other hand, the UN has forbidden such a launch because it fears North Korea may use it as a cover to test its long-range missile technology.



## T RAJA KUMAR NAMED AS PRESIDENT OF FATF

- **T Raja Kumar, a Singaporean**, has been named president of the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)**, the world's anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism financing agency.
- His appointment is for a set two-year term, which begins on July 1. During the FATF plenary, **he was chosen to succeed Dr Marcus Pleyer of Germany.**
- Mr Raja's nomination marks the first time Singapore has assumed the president of the organisation, according to a joint news release issued by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, the **Ministry of Finance (MOF)**, and the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) on March 7.



- Mr Raja is a senior advisor at MHA and has been the leader of Singapore's FATF mission since January 1, 2015. Since July 2018, he has also been a member of the steering group, which advises the FATF president.
  - The **FATF is an intergovernmental organisation set up by the G7** in 1989 to prevent and combat money laundering, terrorism, and proliferation finance.
  - "The FATF also reviews and supervises member jurisdictions to ensure that they fully and effectively apply the FATF standards.
  - Since 1992, Singapore has been a member of the organisation. Mr Raja has played a **key role in directing Singapore's efforts to combat money laundering and terrorism financing.**
  - Since January 2015, he has led Singapore's efforts to satisfy FATF Standards as **co-chairman of the National Interagency Committee** on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism.
-