



2022



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WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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Basement C32 Noida Sector-2 Uttar Pradesh 201301

Contact No. : +91 8595390705 | website : www.yojnaias.com

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APRIL 2022



Neptune Anti-Ship Cruise Missile



Neptune Anti-Ship Cruise Missile – Today Current Affairs

- Recently Ukraine claimed that it has damaged the Russian fleet's main ship 'Moskva' stationed in the Black Sea by attacking it with Neptune anti-ship cruise missiles.

Today Current Affairs

About Neptune:

- The Neptune is a coastal anti-ship cruise missile that has a range of 300 km.
- The missile system was inducted into the Ukrainian Defense Forces in March 2021 after going through six years of testing and development phases.
- The cruise missile was developed in a hurry by the military as the Russian threat to Ukraine's coastal areas was growing rapidly since the annexation of Crimea in 2014. The Hindu Analysis
- The missile's design is based on a Russian KH-35 cruise missile known as the AS-20 Kayak of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).
- The attack was carried out by cruise missiles using TB-2 drones by Cruiser Air Defense Systems,

among other measures.

Moskva : The Hindu Analysis

- It is a guided missile cruiser of the Russian Navy named after the city of Moscow.
- A cruiser is a large surface warship built for high speed and high cruise radius, capable of defending not only its own fleet and coastline but also controlling enemy nations.
- Moskva was originally commissioned as Slava in the year 1983. **The Hindu Analysis**
- It was recommissioned in the year 2000 as Moskva with updated weapon systems and electronics.
- It has a transfer capacity of 12,490 tonnes.
- It is the flagship of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Navy and has a crew of about 500 personnel.

Swadeep Kumar

Prison Modernization Plan: Ministry of Home Affairs



Prison Modernization Plan – Today Current Affairs

- Recently, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued guidelines to the States and Union Territories to modernize the prisons under the Prisons Modernization Project.

Need for Prison Modernization Plan:

An integral part of the justice system:

- Prisons are an important and integral part of the criminal justice system of the country.
- They not only play an important role in detaining criminals but also help in the process of their reformation and reintegration into the society through various reform programs in prisons.
- Indian prisons are facing three long standing structural constraints which include:
 - » Overcrowding in prisons.

- » Lack of staff and lack of finance.
- » Violent confrontation between prisoners.

Today Current Affairs

Prison Modernization Plan:

- It has been decided by the Government of India to provide financial assistance to the States and Union Territories through Prison Modernization Scheme for using modern security equipment in prisons which includes:
- Enhancing the security of prisons.
- To facilitate the task of reform and rehabilitation of prisoners through corrective administrative programmes.
- Duration: The duration of this scheme is five years (Year 2021 to Year 2026).

Grant : The Hindu Analysis

- The Central Government will provide grants-in-aid to the States and Union Territories for the implementation of the project.
- Grants-in-aid is the payment of aid, donation or contribution given by one government to another government, body, institution or person.

Implementation Strategy : The Hindu Analysis

- The Ministry of Home Affairs will provide funds to the States/UTs on the basis of the number of prisons in a State/UT, the number of prisoners in jail, prison staff, etc.
- Decision on the proposal of financing will be taken by the Steering Committee constituted for the implementation of the Jail Modernization Plan.

Coverage : The Hindu Analysis

- The project will cover all the States and Union Territories and will specifically cover different types of prisons like Central Jail, District Jail, Sub-jail, Women's Jail, Open Jail, Special Jail etc.

Objective of the scheme : The Hindu Analysis

- Addressing the existing gaps in the security structure of prisons.
- Providing new security equipment to the prisons as per modern technology.
- Strengthening the prison security system through security devices like door frames / metal detectors / security poles, baggage scanners / frisking / search / jamming solutions etc.
- Administrative reforms, which include changing the mindset of prison officers handling prisoners through extensive training and introducing suitable programs for skill development and rehabilitation of prisoners including appointment of trained correctional specialists, behavioral experts, psychologists etc.

Other related initiatives of the government : The Hindu Analysis

- **Modernization Scheme of Prisons:** The scheme for modernization of prisons was started in the year 2002-03 with the objective of improving the condition of prisons, prisoners and prison workers.
- **E-Jail Project:** The E-Jail project aims to bring efficiency in prison management through digitization.
- **Model Jail Manual 2016:** The manual provides detailed information about the legal services (including free services) available to prison inmates.
- **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA):** It was constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, which came into force on 9th November, 1995 to establish a nationwide network for providing free and efficient legal services to the weaker sections of the society.

Swadeep Kumar

Presidential election



Presidential election – Today Current Affairs

- The term of the current President of India is about to end in July 2022, along with the 16th presidential election will be held in the country to elect his successor.

Today Current Affairs

How is the President elected?

- The Indian President is elected through an Electoral College system, in which votes are cast by national and state level MPs.
- The election is conducted by the Election Commission of India (EC).
- The Electoral College is made up of all the elected members of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament (Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha MPs) and elected members of the Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) of the States and Union Territories.

Related Constitutional Provisions : The Hindu Analysis

- **Article 54:** Election of the President.
- **Article 55:** Procedure for the election of the President.
- **Article 56:** Term of office of the President.
- **Article 57:** Eligibility for re-election.
- **Article 58:** Qualification for election as President.

Process : The Hindu Analysis

- Before voting comes the nomination phase, where the candidate submits his intention to stand for election and files his nomination along with a signed list of 50 proposers and 50 supporters.
- These proposers and supporters can be any of the members of the Electoral College at the state and national level.
- The rule requiring 50 proposers and supporters was introduced when the Election Commission observed in 1974 that nominations were filed by many candidates, many of whom had little chance of winning.
- A voter cannot propose or support the nomination of more than one candidate.

What is the value of each vote and how is it calculated? The Hindu Analysis

- The vote cast by each MP or MLA does not count as one vote.
- The value of vote of each MP of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha is fixed at 708.
- The value of votes of MLAs depends on the population of different states.
- According to the Constitution (84th Amendment) Act 2001, at present the population of the states is based on the census data of 1971, which will be changed after the publication of census data after the year 2026.
- The value of each MLA's vote is determined by dividing it by the number of MLAs in the state assembly and dividing the quotient obtained by 1000.
- For example in Uttar Pradesh the highest vote value for each MLA is 208. The vote value of an MLA in Maharashtra is 175, while in Arunachal Pradesh it is just 8.

What is needed to ensure victory? The Hindu Analysis

- A nominated candidate does not win by simple majority but is ensured through the system of securing a specific quota of votes. During the counting of votes, all valid votes cast by the electoral college through ballot papers are summed up by the Election Commission and the candidate for victory has to get 50% + 1 of the total votes cast.
- Unlike general elections, here voters vote for the candidate of one party and the names of the candidates are written in the order of preference on the electoral ballot paper.
- The President is elected according to the system of proportional representation by means of single transferable vote and the process of secret ballot is adopted.

Impeachment of the President : The Hindu Analysis

- According to Article 61, the President can be removed from office before the expiry of his term only

on the ground of 'violation of the Constitution'.

- However, the meaning of the phrase 'violation of the constitution' has not been defined in the Indian Constitution.
- The process of impeachment of the President can be initiated in either House of the Parliament.
- A motion against the President must be signed by at least one-fourth of the members of the House.
- The impeachment motion of the President should be passed by a special majority (two-thirds) in the original house.
- After this the motion is sent to the second house for consideration. The second house acts as an inspector. A select committee has been constituted to investigate the allegations against the President.
- During the process, the President has the right to defend himself through an authorized lawyer. He may choose to defend himself or may appoint a person/lawyer or Attorney General of India to do so..

Swadeep Kumar

'e-DAR' portal



'e-DAR' portal – Today Current Affairs

- Recently the Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has developed a portal named 'e-DAR' (e-Detailed Accident Report).
- This portal provides instant information on road accidents and helps in speedy settlement of accident compensation claims so that the families of the victims can get relief.

Today Current Affairs

Status of road accidents in India:

- Road safety is a major developmental and public health concern, which remains a leading cause of death and injury worldwide.

- According to the Global Road Safety Status Report, road accidents cause more than 1.35 million deaths globally, of which more than 90% are from developing countries and 11% from India alone.
- The number of accidental deaths in India in the year 2019 was 1,51,113.

Benefits of 'e-DAR' portal : The Hindu Analysis

- Integrated Database: Digitized Detailed Accident Report (DAR) will be uploaded on the portal for easy access.
- The web portal will be linked to the Integrated Road Accident Database (iRAD).
- More than 90% of the datasets from the Integrated Road Accident Database (iRAD) will be directly accessed in the 'e-DAR' portal through the application.
- Stakeholders like Police, Road Authority, Hospital etc. need to enter very little information for the 'e-DAR' form.
- Thus, the 'e-DAR' portal will be an extension and e-version of iRAD.
- **Dealing with bogus claims:** The DAR portal will check against bogus claims by comprehensive search of vehicles involved in the accident, date of accident and First Information Report number.
- **Cross-platform linkage:** The portal will be linked to other government portals for obtaining vehicle or driving license details and registration of vehicles.
- **Identification of Accident Hotspots:** Accident hotspots will also be identified so that solutions can be found to avoid accidents at these hotspots.

Other initiatives related to road safety:

Global scale : The Hindu Analysis

Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety (2015):

- The declaration was signed at the second global high level conference on road safety held in Brazil. India is a signatory to the Declaration.
- Countries have planned to reduce the number of global deaths due to road traffic accidents by the year 2030 by Sustainable Development Goal 3.6.

United Nations Global Road Safety Week:

- It is celebrated every two years. Its sixth edition (held from May 17 to 23, 2021) highlighted the need for strong leadership for road safety.

International Road Assessment Program (iRAP):

- It is a registered charity dedicated to saving lives through safe roads.

India : The Hindu Analysis

Motor Vehicles Amendment Act, 2019:

- This act increases the punishment for traffic violation, defective vehicle, juvenile driving etc.
- It establishes a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund, which will provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in India for certain types of accidents.
- The Act provides for a National Road Safety Board, to be set up by the Central Government through

a notification.

- It also provides for the protection of the persons helping.

Carriage by Road Act, 2007:

- The Act makes provisions relating to the regulation of common goods carriers, limiting their liability and declaring the value of the goods delivered to them so as to determine the liability for loss or damage to such goods which may be caused by negligence or by criminal acts caused by themselves, their servants or agents.

National Highway Control (Land and Traffic) Act, 2000:

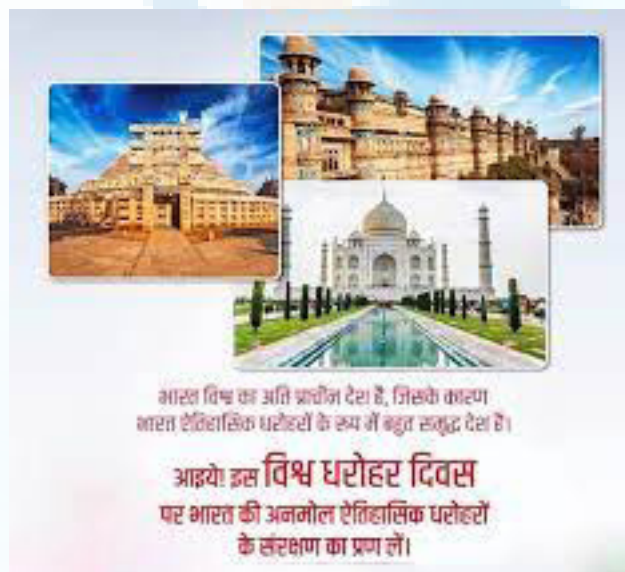
- The Act provides for control of land within national highways, right of way and traffic control on national highways and also provides for removal of unauthorized occupation on them.

National Highways Authority of India Act, 1998:

- The Act provides for the constitution of an authority for the development, maintenance and management of national highways and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto..

Swadeep Kumar

World heritage day



World heritage day – Today Current Affairs

- Every year on 18 April, 'International Day for Monuments and Sites' or 'World Heritage Day' is organized to create awareness for the protection of cultural-historical sites and heritage. .
- The theme of World Heritage Day for the year 2022 is "Heritage and Climate".

Today Current Affairs

Introduction:

- The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) established 'World Heritage Day' in the year 1982 and in 1983 it was approved by UNESCO.
- The day aims to create awareness about the cultural-historical heritage among different communities.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites : The Hindu Analysis

- World Heritage/Heritage Site means a place which has been listed by UNESCO because of its specific cultural or physical importance.
- The list of World Heritage Sites is prepared by the 'World Heritage Program', this program is administered by the 'World Heritage Committee' of UNESCO.
- This list is embodied in an international treaty named 'Convention on the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage', adopted by UNESCO in the year 1972.

World Heritage Sites in India : The Hindu Analysis

- Presently there are 40 World Heritage Sites in India.
- Of these, 32 are in the 'Cultural' category, such as the Ajanta Caves, Fatehpur Sikri and Hampi Monuments etc., while 7 are in the 'Natural' category, including Kaziranga, Manas and Nanda Devi National Parks.
- The Harappan city of Dholavira in Gujarat has been ranked as the 40th World Heritage Site of India.
- Ramappa Temple (Telangana) was the 39th World Heritage Site of India.
- Sikkim's Kangchenjunga National Park is the first and only site in India designated as a "mixed World Heritage Site".
- In the year 2022, the Union Ministry of Culture has designated the holy congregation of Hoysala temples to be considered as a World Heritage Site for the year 2022-2023.

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UNESCO

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations.
- It seeks to establish peace through international cooperation in the fields of education, science and culture.
- It has 193 member countries and 11 affiliated members. India joined UNESCO in the year
- Its headquarter is in Paris (France).

Major Initiatives of UNESCO : The Hindu Analysis

- Human and Biosphere Program
- World Heritage Program

- UNESCO Global Geoparks Network
- UNESCO Creative Cities Network
- Atlas of the World's Languages in Gender

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) : The Hindu Analysis

- It is a global non-governmental organization affiliated to UNESCO. It is also located in Paris, France.
- Its primary mission is to promote the construction, conservation, use and enhancement of monuments, complexes and sites.
- It reviews the nominations of UNESCO World Heritage Convention and ensures their conservation status.
- As such it was established to develop 'intellectual and moral solidarity among mankind' as a means of building lasting peace in the cultural world.
- Its establishment in the year 1965 is the logical result of negotiations between architects, historians and international experts, which began in the early twentieth century and concluded in 1964 as the 'Venetian Charter'.

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40th edition of 'Hunar Haat'



40th edition of 'Hunar Haat' – Today Current Affairs

- Recently the 40th edition of 'Hunar Haat' was inaugurated in Mumbai. More than 1000 craftsmen and artisans from 31 states and union territories participated in this edition.

Today Current Affairs

About Hunar Haat:

- In the current global competition, the concept of Hunar Haat has been introduced to protect and promote the ancestral heritage of arts and crafts of the country, to support traditional artisans and craftsmen.
- Hunar Haat exhibition features selected artisans whose ancestors were involved in such traditional handmade works and are still engaged in this profession.

Theme : The Hindu Analysis

- “Vocal for Local” and “Best from Waste”

Objective : The Hindu Analysis

- Providing market access and employment opportunities to artisans, craftsmen and traditional culinary experts.
- To promote the skills of artisans, weavers and artisans who are already engaged in traditional ancestral work.

Organizer : The Hindu Analysis

- Hunar Haat is organized by the Ministry of Minority Affairs under the Ustad scheme.
- The objective of the Ustad scheme is to promote and preserve the rich heritage of traditional arts and crafts of minority communities.

Importance : The Hindu Analysis

- The concept of self-reliant India is being strengthened with initiatives like Hunar Haat.
- Under these, skill training is provided so that people can be made employers instead of job seekers. for example:
- Tejas Skills Program has been launched by the Government of India.
- Under Tejas' skilling programme, India plans to send skilled workers to countries like the United Arab Emirates. 30,000 skilled workers seeking jobs will be sent to UAE within a year.
- Through Hunar Haat the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat will be clarified and an opportunity will be given to experience the essence of Unity in Diversity..

Swadeep Kumar

State sponsors of terrorism



State sponsors of terrorism – Today Current Affairs

- Recently Ukraine has requested the US to designate Russia as a “state sponsor of terrorism”.
- This would result in the imposition of the most stringent of all sanctions against Russia available to the US.

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State sponsor of terrorism means

- Under this, the US Secretary of State has the power to designate “countries that repeatedly provide support for acts of international terrorism” as “state sponsors of terrorism”.

The US can impose four types of sanctions on the countries included in this list : The Hindu Analysis

- Restrictions on US foreign aid
- Ban on defense export and sale
- Certain controls on the export of dual-use goods
- Miscellaneous financial and other restrictions
- Under this, sanctions can also be imposed on those countries and individuals who engage in trade with specified countries.

Countries included in this list : The Hindu Analysis

So far there are four countries on the list of state sponsors of terrorism:

- Syria (designated 29 December 1979)

- **Iran** (designated 19 January 1984),
- **North Korea** (designated on 20 November 2017).
- On 12 January 2021, Cuba was re-designated as a state sponsor of terrorism.

Laws Enrolling as State Sponsors of Terrorism : The Hindu Analysis

There are currently three laws that authorize the Secretary of State to nominate a country to provide repeated support for acts of international terrorism:

- **The Foreign Aid Act of 1961:** it prohibits the transfer of most aid;

Arms Export Control Act (AECA) : The Hindu Analysis

- It prohibits exports, credits, guarantees, other financial aid and export licensing controlled by the State Department; and

Today Current Affairs

Export Control Act of 2018

- Of these three laws, only AECA defines offensive activities to a limited extent as terrorism, while none of the three Acts defines “international terrorism” in the broadest sense..

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Vaquita porpoise



Vaquita porpoise – Today Current Affairs

- According to the United States Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), the vaquita porpoise (*Phocoena sinus*) is near extinction and urgent protection measures are needed to save its remaining population.

Today Current affairs

Porpoise

- Porpoises are one of the smallest members of the cetacean family (whales, porpoises and dolphins).
- They are only remotely related to dolphins (they had a common ancestor about 15 million years ago).
- There are only seven species of porpoise; their most popular species is the widely found harbor porpoise.
- There are several species, including the vaquita, that are rarely studied. Whatever information we have got about them has been obtained after the study of the same organisms that reach the shores by flowing with the ocean waves.

Vaquita Porpoise : The Hindu Analysis

- Vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*) is the smallest cetacean in the world. Its name means “little cow” in Spanish.
- It has a dark ring around its eyes which is its most distinctive feature, as well as its proportionally large dorsal fins.
- It is unique among all porpoises in that it is the only species in the family to live in warm waters, and it is believed that its dorsal fins are adapted to live in warmer waters, which allow excess body heat to adapt.
- Like many other species of porpoise, the vaquita is shy and cunning and will evade when it comes into contact with boats.

Accommodation : The Hindu Analysis

- This species is found only in the northern Gulf of California (Sea of Cortez). They are usually found in shallow water (up to a depth of 50 m).

To risk : The Hindu Analysis

- The vaquita's population has declined drastically over the decades. In recent times, gill-nets used to catch the totoaba (a large fish whose swim bladders are in high demand) have reduced their numbers further.
- Fixed fishing nets (gill-nets) used for fishing often trap small creatures, known as by-catches.

Protection status : The Hindu Analysis

- IUCN Red List: Critically Endangered.
- CITES:.

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Cases Pending in Supreme Court



Cases Pending in Supreme Court – Today Current Affairs

- Many sitting judges of the Supreme Court are retiring in the year 2022, as a result of which many posts in the top court will become vacant this year.

Today Current affairs

Related concerns:

- These retirements in the Supreme Court are taking place at a time when the court is in the process of stabilizing itself, especially after the brutal waves of the pandemic, with a large number of cases pending in the court.
- India's legal system has the 'largest pending case backlog' in the world – about 30 million cases pending.
- This number continues to grow, reflecting the flaws in its own legal system.
- And because of this backlog, most of the prisoners in India's prisons are undertrials awaiting trial.

Cases pending in Supreme Court : The Hindu Analysis

- As per Supreme Court data, 70,362 cases are pending in the apex court as of April 1, 2022.
- More than 19% of these cases are not ready to appear before a court bench for 'judicial hearing' as the required preliminary process has not been completed.
- 52,110 cases are still at the entry stage, while 18,522 cases are related to regular hearing.
- The total number of cases (main and allied matters) before the Constitution Bench is 422.
- The Supreme Court has recently resumed 'full physical hearing', after two years of 'virtual system'.

Various steps taken by the government to reduce the pendency of cases : The Hindu Analysis

- The "National Litigation Policy 2010" has been implemented to turn the government into an efficient

and responsible 'litigant'.

- According to the 'National Litigation Policy' 2010, 'State Litigation Policies' have been prepared by all the states.
- The 'Legal Information Management and Briefing System (LIMBS)' was formulated in 2015 with the objective of keeping track of the cases in which the government is a party.
- The Supreme Court has advised the Central Government that the social service duties should be allotted to criminals sentenced to imprisonment for 6 months or one year, instead of sending them to burden the already overcrowded jails.

Demand on Time : The Hindu Analysis

- Revise the National Litigation Policy.
- 'Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism' should be promoted to encourage arbitration.
- Coordinated action should be taken between the government and the judiciary.
- The judicial capacity in the lower courts should be strengthened to reduce the burden on the higher courts.
- Expenditure on the judiciary should be increased.
- Court case management and court automation system should be improved.
- Constitution of subject-specific 'Pethas'.
- Strong internal dispute resolution mechanism.
- Judges should write shorter and more precise decisions..

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Timor Leste



Timor Leste – Today Current Affairs

- Recently, East Timor (Timor Leste), also known as Asia's newest democracy, concluded the second and final round of presidential elections.

Today Current Affairs

Key points about East Timor:

History:

- The region was colonized by Portugal in the 18th century and remained under Portuguese control until 1975.
- When the Portuguese withdrew from the region, it was invaded by Indonesia and established East Timor as its 27th province.
- There was a long and bloody struggle for the independence of East Timor, in which at least 100,000 people died.
- In 1999, East Timorese voted for independence in a UN-supervised referendum, but this encouraged violent activities until peacekeeping forces were allowed to enter the region.
- The country was officially recognized by the United Nations in the year 2002.
- East Timor has also applied to become a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).
- At present it has observer status.

Geographical situation : The Hindu Analysis

- East Timor is bordered by the Timor Sea to the southeast, the Wetar Strait to the north, the Ombai Strait to the northwest, and West Timor (part of the Indonesian province of East Nusa Tenggara) to the southwest.
- East Timor includes the eastern part of the island of Timor, the western half of which is part of Indonesia.
- It covers a land area of 15,000 square km, slightly smaller than Israel and its 1.3 million people are predominantly Roman Catholic.

About economy and political system:

Politics : The Hindu Analysis

- In the nearly 20 years since independence, East Timor's presidential and parliamentary elections have been dominated by many people alike.
- In its political system, the President also shares some executive powers and appoints the government and has the power to veto ministers or dissolve Parliament.

Economy : The Hindu Analysis

- The country depends on the revenue from its offshore oil and gas reserves which account for 90% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- It has an agreement with Australia for the Greater Sunrise Gas Field, which is estimated to be valued at US\$65 billion.
- The Bayu Undan gas field, its main revenue field, is on the verge of drying up by the year 2023 and the country is now planning to collaborate with companies in Australia to convert it into carbon capture facilities.

Colombo Security Conference



Today Current Affairs

- Recently, the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) was organized virtual by the National Investigation Agency of India.
- Participants discussed various challenges related to terrorism in their respective countries and shared their experiences in prosecuting terrorism cases, strategies to deal with foreign fighters and countering the misuse of internet and social media.

Colombo Security Conference (CSC) : Today Current Affairs

- The CSC was formed in the year 2011 as a trilateral Maritime Security Group consisting of India, Sri Lanka and Maldives.
- In this, Mauritius was included as the fourth member in the fifth meeting of the National Security Advisors.
- Bangladesh and Seychelles participated as observers and were invited to join the group.
- Envisioned Goals: The fifth meeting of the National Security Advisors of the CSC identified key areas of cooperation to enhance and strengthen regional security in the following five pillars:
 - » Security and Maritime Security
 - » Combating terrorism and extremism
 - » Combating trafficking and international organized crime
 - » Cyber security, security of critical infrastructure and technology
 - » Humanitarian aid and disaster relief

Importance : The Hindu Analysis

- The CSC is seen as India's access to the Indian Ocean to underline regional cooperation and shared security objectives.
- **Countering China:** The CSC hopes to restrict China's influence in areas of strategic importance and reduce China's presence in member states.

- **Maritime Security:** India has a large coastline of about 7500 km along with strategic chokepoint islands. Maritime security is a priority for the country, in which the CSC plays an important role.
- **Synergy with Sagar Vision:** The grouping is in line with India's vision of "Sagar: Security and Growth for All in the Regions" and being a member of the India Quad Grouping.
- **Emerging Sub-regionalism:** The coming together of the 6 Indian Ocean Region countries on a common maritime and security platform indicates the development of sub-regionalism and also plays an important role in the wider global context.
- **Associated Challenge:** Even though the strategic interests of the six countries are aligned in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) must fulfill the effort to mold CSC into an institution to counter China's influence.

National Investigation Agency : The Hindu Analysis

- The National Investigation Agency (NIA) is a federal investigative agency set up by the Government of India to combat terrorism in India. It acts as the central counter-terrorism law enforcement agency.
- The agency came into existence with the enactment of the National Investigation Agency Bill, 2008, an Act passed by the Parliament of India on 31 December 2008.
- The National Investigation Agency was set up after the 2008 Mumbai attacks, as the need for a central agency to counter terrorism was felt after this incident.

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Central administrative tribunal



Central administrative tribunal – Today Current Affairs

- Recently, the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) launched a special drive in all the 19 benches of the tribunal to resolve the cases of applicants like senior citizens/pensioners.

Today Current Affairs

Central Administrative Tribunal:

Establishment:

- It was established under Article 323A of the Constitution.
- It provides for adjudication of disputes and complaints relating to the conditions of service and recruitment of persons appointed to public services and posts in relation to the affairs of other authorities under the control of the Union.

Legal Framework : The Hindu Analysis

- The Parliament passed the Administrative Tribunal Act in 1985 under Article 323A of the Constitution.
- The Act authorizes the Central Government to establish a Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) and State Administrative Tribunals. Today Current Affairs
- A new path was paved by this Act with the aim of providing speedy and affordable justice to the aggrieved public servants.
- CAT was established during the prime ministership of Rajiv Gandhi.
- Benches / Benches: There are 19 benches of CAT all over India.

Purpose and Structure : The Hindu Analysis

- CAT is an expert body consisting of administrative and judicial members who are capable of dispensing speedy and effective justice on the basis of their specialized knowledge.
- A sitting or retired judge of a High Court is its chairman.

Operating Principle : The Hindu Analysis

- The Tribunal follows the principles of natural justice in deciding the cases and is not bound by the procedure prescribed by the Code of Civil Procedure.
- Under Section 17 of the Administrative Tribunal Act, 1985, the Tribunal has been empowered to exercise the same jurisdiction and authority in respect of contempt itself as the High Court.

Freedom : The Hindu Analysis

- The conditions of service of the Chairperson and Members are the same as that of a High Court Judge as per the Administrative Tribunals (Amendment) Act, 2006.

Appeal against orders : The Hindu Analysis

- Matters relating to the orders of the CAT are challenged through a writ petition under Article 226/227 of the Constitution before the High Court in whose territorial jurisdiction the Bench of the Tribunal is situated.

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Eco-Sensitive zone



Eco-Sensitive zone – Today Current Affairs

- Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has issued a draft notification to declare the area of Neyyar and Peppara Wildlife Sanctuaries in Thiruvananthapuram as Eco-sensitive Zone (ESZ).

Today Current Affairs

Neyyar and Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary

- Both these wildlife sanctuaries are included under the Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve in the Western Ghats.
- These wildlife sanctuaries are known for rich biodiversity, where 1000 species of flowers, 43 mammal species, 233 bird species, 46 reptile species, 13 amphibian species, 27 marine species are found. The endangered *Myristica* Swamp is also located in this protected area.

Provisions of notification : The Hindu Analysis

- It is imperative to prepare a regional master plan in consultation with various departments to ensure strict adherence to the rules.
- ESZ A monitoring committee will be constituted under the chairmanship of the District Collector for monitoring.

Opposition to notification : The Hindu Analysis

- Experts are of the view that notified areas may adversely affect the normal life of local bodies as well

as their development prospects.

- The restrictions imposed in this area are likely to hamper the ongoing infrastructure development projects, including the Hill Highway project.
- Farmers engaged in agricultural activities may face difficulties due to restrictions.

What is ESZ AREA? The Hindu Analysis

- These are also called Ecologically Fragile Areas or Ecologically Vulnerable Areas. Notification of these areas is issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. These are established in the vicinity of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.
- Under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, mining, sand quarrying, construction of thermal power plants etc. can be banned in these sensitive areas.

E.S.Z. Activities prohibited in the area : The Hindu Analysis

- 1 km of protected areas. No construction of any kind, including hotels and resorts, is permitted inside.
- Small scale industries classified as non-polluting by the Central Pollution Control Board can be set up in these areas.
- No tree can be felled in the forest or government or revenue or private land without the prior permission of the competent authority in the State Government.
- Commercial mining, stone quarrying etc. activities are prohibited in this area. Also, new industries and expansion of existing polluting industries are not allowed.
- In addition, hydroelectric projects, solid waste disposal sites, large-scale commercial livestock and poultry farms, wood-based industrial units and brick kilns have also been banned in these areas.
- The use or production of hazardous substances in the region, the discharge of untreated effluents into natural water bodies or land areas, the manufacture and storage of explosives, the commercial use of firewood, the dumping of solid, plastic and chemical wastes in rivers and land areas, Encroachment on the river bank will be stopped.

Today Current Affairs

Regulated activities

- Local communities in these protected areas will be allowed to continue agriculture, horticulture, dairy farming and aquaculture.
- Environment friendly activities like rain water harvesting, organic farming, cottage industries, use of renewable energy and fuel, agro-forestry, eco-friendly transport, horticulture and medicinal plantation and environmental awareness will be encouraged in these areas.

Swadeep Kumar

Earth Day



Earth Day – Today Current Affairs

- The 52nd anniversary of Earth Day was celebrated on April 22, 2022. Earth Day is an international event celebrated around the world to pledge support for environmental protection.
- The theme of Earth Day, 2022 is “Invest in our Planet”.

Today Current Affairs

Background :

- For the first time Earth Day was celebrated in the year 1970. It started after the call of US Senator Gaylord Nelson, as a result of which about 20 million people took to the streets to protest against environmental degradation.
- It was fueled by the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill, as well as other issues such as smog and polluted rivers.
- In the year 2009, the United Nations announced to celebrate 22 April as ‘International Mother Earth Day’.

About Earth Day : The Hindu Analysis

- Earth Day is organized globally by EARTHDAY.ORG, a non-profit organization. It was formerly known as the Earth Day Network.
- Its aim is to “build the world’s largest environmental movement to bring about transformative change in people and the earth.”
- It accepts a collective responsibility, as stated in the 1992 Rio Declaration (Earth Summit), to promote harmony with nature and the earth to ensure the economic, social and environmental protection of present and future generations of humanity. To strike a balance between the needs.
- It is worth noting that due to its international importance, the day of Earth Day (April 22, 2016)

was chosen for the signing of the historic Paris Agreement by the United Nations in the year 2016 to deal with climate change.

Other Important Days : The Hindu Analysis

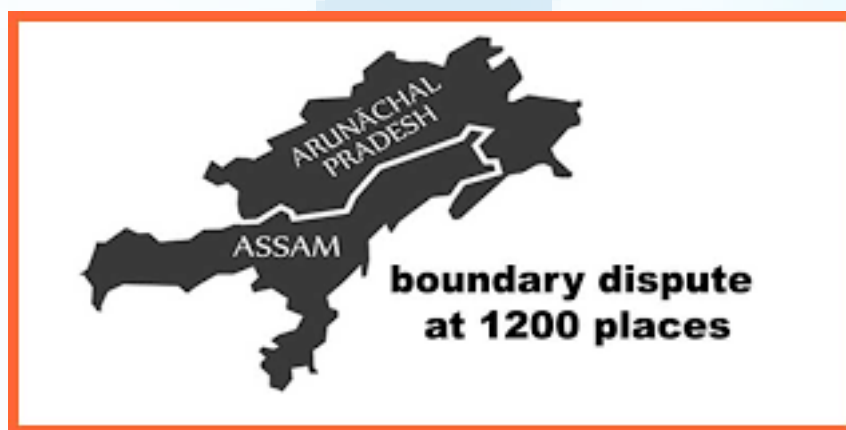
- **March 22:** World Water Day
- **April 22:** Earth Day
- **May 22:** International Day for Biodiversity
- **June 5:** World Environment Day
- Earth Overshoot Day
- Earth Hour

Earth hour : The Hindu Analysis

- Is an annual initiative of the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF), which started in the year 2007? It is organized every year on the last Saturday of March.
- It encourages people from more than 180 countries to switch off the lights from 8.30 pm to 9.30 pm as per their local time.
- This symbolic call for environmental protection aims to reduce the use of non-essential lighting to save energy.

Swadeep Kumar

Arunachal Pradesh and Assam dispute



Arunachal Pradesh and Assam dispute – Today Current Affairs

- Recently the governments of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam have decided to set up district-level committees to resolve border disputes.
- These district committees will undertake joint survey in disputed areas to find concrete solutions to the long pending issue on the basis of historical perspective, ethnicity and proximity, will of the

people and administrative convenience of both the states.

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Border disputes in the country:

Assam-Arunachal Pradesh:

- Assam shares an inter-state border of 804.10 km with Arunachal Pradesh. The state of Arunachal Pradesh, created in 1987, claims that some of the land traditionally owned by its residents has been given to Assam.
- A tripartite committee had recommended that some areas be shifted from Assam to Arunachal. Both the states are in the shelter of the court regarding this issue.

Assam-Mizoram : The Hindu Analysis

- Mizoram used to be a district of Assam before becoming a separate union territory which later became a separate state.
- Mizoram shares its border with Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj districts of Assam.
- With the passage of time, different perceptions of both the states started forming about the demarcation.
- Mizoram wants it to be along an internal line notified in 1875 to protect the tribals from external influence, which Mizos consider to be part of their historical homeland, Assam believes the boundary was drawn up later be done within limits.

Assam-Nagaland : The Hindu Analysis

- The border dispute between the two states has been going on since the formation of Nagaland in the year 1963.
- Both the states claim Merapani, a small village next to the plains of Golaghat district of Assam.
- Violent clashes have been reported in the region since the 1960s.

Assam-Meghalaya : The Hindu Analysis

- Meghalaya has identified about a dozen areas over which it has disputes with Assam over the state's boundaries.

Haryana-Himachal Pradesh : The Hindu Analysis

- The northern states of the two have a border dispute over the Parwanoo region, which is located near the Panchkula district of Haryana.
- Haryana has claimed a large area of land and has accused Himachal Pradesh of occupying some hilly areas of Haryana.

Ladakh-Himachal Pradesh : The Hindu Analysis

- Both the Union Territories of Ladakh and Himachal claim the Sarchu region, which is a major stopover point for those traveling on the Leh-Manali highway.

- This region is situated between Lahaul and Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh and Leh district of Ladakh.

Maharashtra-Karnataka : The Hindu Analysis

- Perhaps the biggest border dispute in the country is between Maharashtra and Karnataka over Belgaum district.
- Belgaum has a large population of both Marathi and Kannada speaking people and there have been conflicts in the region in the past between the two states.
- This area used to be part of Bombay Presidency during the British, but after the reorganization of the states in the year 1956, it was included in Karnataka.

Why are interstate border disputes unresolved?

Idea of Reorganization on Linguistic Basis : The Hindu Analysis

- Although the States Reorganization Commission, 1956 was based on administrative convenience, the reorganized states were largely similar to the idea of one language one state.

Geographical Complexity : The Hindu Analysis

- The second complication has been the region, where rivers, hills and forests are spread across the two states at many places and the boundaries cannot be physically marked.
- Colonial maps left large areas of the northeast outside Assam as “thick forests” or marked as “unexplored”.

Indigenous Community : The Hindu Analysis

- Indigenous communities for the most part were left alone. Boundaries were drawn only when “needed” for administrative convenience.
- The demarcation of the year 1956 did not resolve the discrepancies.
- When new states were carved out of Assam (Nagaland in 1963, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura and Manipur in 1972 and Arunachal Pradesh in 1987), it was also ignored.

Swadeep Kumar