

YOJNA IAS

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JULY 2022



2022 Yojna IAS

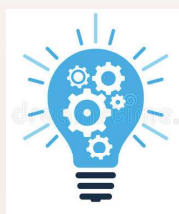
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2022



YOJNA IAS

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

YOJNA IAS WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

4/07/2022 TO 31/07/2022

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CURRENT AFFAIRS

JULY 2022



Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) Ranking



- Recently the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has released the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) ranking, which is based on the Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP) Report, 2020.

About ranking:

Purpose:

- Promote ease of doing business to encourage investors and ease of doing business across the country through a healthy competitive environment through a system of assessing states based on their performance in the BRAP.

Constituent:

- The parameters include various areas, such as construction permits, labor regulation, and environmental registration, access to information, land availability and single window system.

Ease of Doing Business:

Top Achievers:

- Seven states – Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Punjab, Telangana and Tamil Nadu – were classified as ‘Top Achievers’ in the Ease of Doing Business ranking of states and union territories.

Achievers:

- Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh are the other states classified as achievers in the ranking.

Emerging Business Ecosystem:

- Six states – Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Puducherry and Jammu and Kashmir – were ‘emerging trading ecosystems’.

Aspirant:

- Seven states- Goa, Assam, Kerala, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Bengal have been classified as ‘aspirational’ districts.

About BRAP:

- It was launched in the year 2015.
- It is based on the Ease of Doing Business Index (BRAP).
- It was introduced to encourage a healthy competition among the states.
- This will help in attracting investment and ease of doing business in each state.
- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has been assessing the performance of States/UTs since 2014 on the basis of their implementation of the reforms laid down in the BRAP exercise.
- So far, the estimates of States/UTs for the years 2015, 2016, 2017-18, 2019 and 2022 have been released.

BRAP 2020:

- The report includes 301 improvement points that cover 15 business regulatory areas such as access to information, single window systems, labour, environment, sectoral reforms and other reforms spanning the life cycle of a specific business.

- For the first time, sectoral reforms have been introduced in BRAP 2020, in which 72 reforms have been identified in 9 sectors namely- Trade License, Healthcare, Legal Metrology, Cinema Hall, Hospitality, Fire NOC, Telecom, Movie Shooting and Tourism.

Swadeep Kumar

High-Speed Expandable Aerial Target



- Recently India successfully test-fired its indigenously designed exercise: High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (Abhyas: High-speed Expendable Aerial Target- HEAT) in Odisha.
- The test was conducted by the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur, Odisha.

About exercise:

Design & Development:

- The exercise has been designed and developed by the Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE) of DRDO.
- ADE is a premier Aeronautical Systems Design Laboratory under DRDO.
- It is involved in the design and development of state-of-the-art Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and aeronautical systems and technologies to meet the requirements of the Indian Armed Forces.

Features:

- It is powered by gas turbine engine which maintains long flight at subsonic speed.
- It is equipped with Micro-Electro-Mechanical Systems (MEMS) based Inertial Navigation System (INS) for navigation along with Flight Control Computer (FCC) for guidance and control.
- The vehicle is programmed for fully autonomous flight. The air vehicle is tested using a laptop based Ground Control Station (Ground Control System-GCS).
- The exercise system is equipped with Radar Cross-section (RCS) and infrared signature which can be used to simulate different types of aircraft for anti-aircraft warfare exercises and tests designed to target air targets purpose can be done.

Utility:

- It will be used as a target for evaluation of various missile systems.
- It presents a Realistic Threat Scenario for the practice of weapon systems.

Recent Developments:

- In September 2021, DRDO test-fired a new variant of Akash missile- 'Akash Prime' from Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha.
- DRDO launched Akash-NG (New Generation) and Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM) in July 2021.
- A new generation nuclear capable ballistic missile Agni-P (Prime) was successfully test fired by DRDO in June 2021.
- In February 2021, India also successfully test-fired indigenously developed anti-tank guided missile systems 'HELINA' and 'Dhruvastra'.
- In October 2020, DRDO successfully flight-tested Supersonic Missile Assisted Release of Torpedoes (SMART) from Wheeler Island off the coast of Odisha.

Swadeep Kumar

National Investigation Agency



National Investigation Agency – Today Current Affairs

- Recently, the Union Home Ministry has handed over the investigation of the brutal murder of a pharmacist in Maharashtra's Amravati to the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

Today Current Affairs

National Investigation Agency (NIA):

- NIA is India's central counter-terrorism law enforcement agency, mandated to investigate all crimes affecting the sovereignty, security and integrity of India. It contains:
- Friendly relations with foreign states.
- Against nuclear and nuclear facilities.
- Smuggling of arms, drugs and counterfeit Indian currency and cross-border infiltration.
- Offenses under statutory laws enacted to give effect to international treaties, agreements, conventions and resolutions of the United Nations, its agencies and other international organizations.
- It was constituted under the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act, 2008.
- The agency is empowered to investigate crimes related to terrorism in the states without special permission from the states under a written proclamation from the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Headquarters: New Delhi

Evolution : The Hindu Analysis

- In the wake of the 26/11 Mumbai terrorist attack in November 2008, which shook the

whole world, the then United Progressive Alliance government decided to set up the NIA.

- In December 2008, former Union Home Minister P Chidambaram introduced the National Investigation Agency Bill.
- The agency came into existence on 31st December, 2008 and started its operations in the year 2009. Till now NIA has registered 447 cases.

Jurisdiction : The Hindu Analysis

- The law under which the agency operates is applicable to Indian citizens throughout India and outside the country as well.
- Wherever the persons are posted in the service of the Government.
- Persons on ships and aircraft registered in India, wherever they are.
- Persons who commit a listed offense outside India against an Indian citizen or affecting the interest of India.

Listed Offenses : The Hindu Analysis

- A list of offenses has been made under the Act on which the NIA can investigate and prosecute.

The list includes : The Hindu Analysis

- Explosive Substances Act
- Atomic Energy Act
- Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act
- Anti-hijacking Act
- Suppression of unlawful acts against the protection of the Civil Aviation Act
- SAARC Convention (Eradication of Terrorism) Act.
- Elimination of unlawful acts against maritime navigation and the protection of fixed platforms on the Continental Shelf Act
- Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Supply System (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act
- Any other relevant offense under the Indian Penal Code, Arms Act and Information Technology Act
- Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act

NIA investigation process:

State government : The Hindu Analysis

- Under Section 6 of the Act, the State Governments can refer the cases related to the

listed offenses registered in any police station to the Central Government (Union Home Ministry) for NIA investigation.

- After assessing the details provided, the Center may direct the agency to handle the matter.
- State Governments are required to provide all kinds of assistance to the NIA.

Central government : The Hindu Analysis

- In India: When the Central Government is of the opinion that an inquiry into a scheduled offense committed is necessary under the Act, it may direct the agency to conduct the inquiry.
- Outside India: When the Central Government finds that the Act is applicable at any place outside India where a scheduled offense has been committed, it may also direct the NIA to register a case and investigate.
- Recent Amendments to the NIA Act : The Hindu Analysis
- NIA was amended in 2019 with the objective of speedy investigation and prosecution of certain offenses including those committed outside India.

The main areas of revision:

Crimes outside India : The Hindu Analysis

- The original Act allowed the NIA to investigate and prosecute crimes in India.
- The amended Act empowered the agency to investigate crimes committed outside India under international treaties and domestic laws of other countries.

Extending the scope of the law:

The amendment has allowed the NIA to investigate matters relating to : The Hindu Analysis

- Human trafficking
- Fake currency or banknotes
- Manufacture or sale of prohibited weapons
- Cyber terrorism
- Offenses under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908.

Swadeep Kumar

Geographical Indication of Kai Chutney of Odisha



Geographical Indication of Kai Chutney of Odisha – Today Current Affairs

- Scientific Kai Chutney has been submitted for Geographical Indication (GI) registry in Odisha.
- The GI tag standard will help in developing a structured hygiene protocol for widespread use of kai chutney. The GI label enhances the prestige and value of local products and supports local businesses.
- Odisha got GI tag for Odisha Rasgulla in the year 2019.

Today Current Affairs

Weaver Ants:

- Kai (Red Weaver Ant) ants, scientifically called *Ocophila smaragdina*, are found in abundance in Mayurbhanj throughout the year. They build nests from the leaves of the host trees.
- Nests are strong enough to withstand wind and are impervious to water.
- Moss nests are usually oval in shape and range from a small folded leaf to a large nest consisting of several leaves that exceed half a meter in length.
- There are three categories of members in its family – workers, main workers and queens.
- Workers and key workers are mostly orange in colour.
- They feed on small insects and other invertebrates, their prey mainly being beetles, flies and hymenopterans.
- Kais is a bio-control agent. They are aggressive and prey on most arthropods that enter their territory.
- Due to their predatory habit, CAS are recognized as biological control agents in tropical

crops as they are able to protect different crops against many different pests. Thus they are indirectly used as an alternative to chemical insecticides.

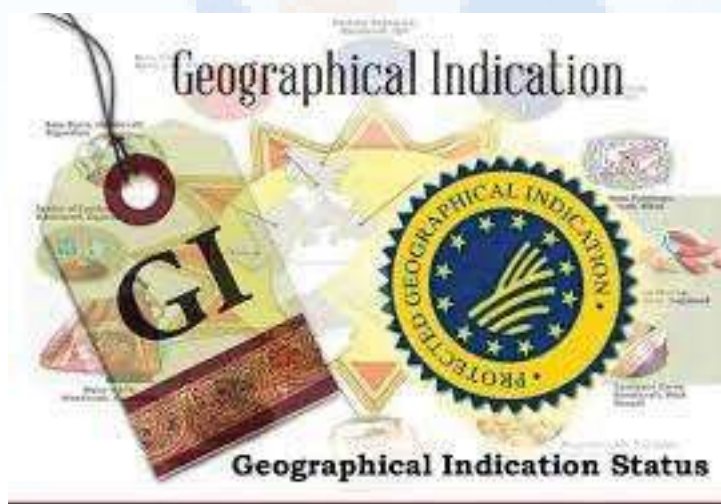
Kai Chutney : The Hindu Analysis

- Kai Chutney is prepared from Weaver Ants and is popular amongst tribal people mostly in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha.
- If necessary, the leafy nests of ants are plucked from their host trees and collected in a bucket of water before the leaves and debris are sorted and separated.

Importance : The Hindu Analysis

- It helps to get rid of flu, common cold, whooping cough, increases appetite and improves eyesight naturally.
- Tribal healers also prepare medicated oil, which is used as baby oil and used externally to cure arthritis, ringworm and other skin diseases.
- It is the only panacea for the tribes.

Geographical Indication Location : The Hindu Analysis



- GI is an indicator used to identify goods with special characteristics originating from a certain geographical area.
- The 'Geographical Indications of Goods' (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 seeks to provide better protection and registration of Geographical Indications relating to goods in India.
- The Act is administered by the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks who is the Registrar of Geographical Indications.
- Geographical Indication Registration Office is located in Chennai.
- Registration of Geographical Indication is valid for a period of 10 years. It can be renewed

from time to time for an additional period of 10 years.

- It is also part of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) of the World Trade Organization.
- Recent examples: Judima Wine Rice (Assam), Tirur Vetila (Kerala), Dindigul Lock and Kandangi Sari (Tamil Nadu), Odisha etc.

Importance of Geographical Indication : The Hindu Analysis

- Once granted Geographical Indication status, no other manufacturer can misuse its name to market similar products. It also facilitates the customers about the authenticity of that product.
- Geographical Indication of a product prevents unauthorized use of other Registered Geographical Indications which promotes export of Indian Geographical Indications by providing legal protection and also enables to obtain legal protection in other WTO member countries.

Swadeep Kumar

Digital India Week 2022



Digital India Week 2022 – Today Current Affairs

- Recently, the Prime Minister inaugurated Digital India Week 2022 under the Digital India programme, which aims to promote ease of doing business and make life easier.
- Theme: 'New India Technology Inspiration'.
- To transform the country into a digitally empowered society and knowledge based economy.
- During the event, the Prime Minister launched several digital initiatives aimed at

increasing access to technology, streamlining service delivery to make life easier and promoting startups.

Today Current Affairs

Initiatives:

- Digital India Bhashini:
- Digital India Bhashini is India's Artificial Intelligence (AI) led language translation platform.
- Bhashini platform will make Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) resources available in public domain to MSMEs (Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises), Startups and individual innovators.

Digital India Genesis (GENESIS) : The Hindu Analysis

- 'Digital India Genesis' (Gen-Next Support for Innovative Startups) is a national deep-tech startup platform to discover, support, develop and succeed successful startups in Tier-II and Tier-III cities of India.

My Scheme : The Hindu Analysis

- It is a search and discovery platform facilitating access to government schemes.
- It aims to introduce a one-stop search and discovery portal, where users can search the schemes for which they are eligible.

My identity : The Hindu Analysis

- It is a National Single Sign on (NSSO) for a citizen login.
- It is a user authentication service in which a single set of credentials provides access to multiple online applications or services.

Chips Startup (C2S) Program : The Hindu Analysis

- The objective of the C2S program is to train specialized manpower in the area of semiconductor chips design at Bachelor's, Master's and Research levels and act as a catalyst for the growth of startups involved in semiconductor design in the country.
- It offers mentoring at the organizational level and provides state-of-the-art facilities for design to institutions.

India Stack Global : The Hindu Analysis

- It is a global repository of key projects implemented under India Stack like Aadhaar, UPI (Unified Payment Interface), DigiLocker, Coin Vaccination Platform, Government e-Marketplace, Diksha Platform and Ayushman Bharat Digital Health Mission.

- It will help establish India as a leader in building digital transformation projects at the population level.

Digital India Program : The Hindu Analysis

- It was launched in the year 2015.
- This program has been enabled for many important government schemes like BharatNet, Make in India, Startup India and Standup India, Industrial Corridors etc.

Field of vision : The Hindu Analysis

- Digital infrastructure as useful to every citizen.
- Governance and services on demand.
- Digital empowerment of citizens.

Purpose : The Hindu Analysis

- To prepare India's knowledge for the future.
- To be transformative, IT (Indian Talent) + IT (Information Technology) = IT (India Tomorrow) have to be realized.
- Centralizing technology to enable change.
- An umbrella program covering multiple departments.

Achievements of Digital India Program : The Hindu Analysis

- Since 2014, more than Rs 23 lakh crore has been transferred to the beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer or DBT.
- Digital platform services like Aadhaar, UPI, Covin and Digilocker have contributed to the "ease of living" as it allows citizens to get online services without having to go to government offices or middlemen.
- Digital India has brought the government to the doorsteps and phones of the citizens. More than 1.25 lakh Common Service Centers (CSCs) and Grameen Stores are now taking e-commerce to rural India.
- Similarly property documents for rural properties are being made available using technology.
- With the help of One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC), free ration was ensured for more than 80 crore countrymen.
- India has undertaken the world's largest and most efficient COVID vaccination and COVID relief program through the Co-Win platform.

Swadeep Kumar

Custodial death



Custodial death – Today Current Affairs

- India has a poor record in terms of police brutality and custodial violence. Between 2001 and 2018, 1,727 people died in police custody, but only 26 policemen were convicted in these cases.
- Custodial deaths are common despite huge expenditure of time and money on training police personnel to adopt scientific methods to investigate crimes. This is because policemen are human from different backgrounds and different perspectives.
- In this context, it would be relevant to consider the questions relating to custodial deaths.

Today Current Affairs

Custodial deaths mean:

- Custodial Deaths or 'Custodial Deaths' means the death of persons in police custody or while serving a sentence in judicial custody or imprisonment during trial.
- It is not a secret that when the police are not satisfied with the findings obtained during their interrogation, they sometimes resort to torture and violence, which can lead to the death of the suspect.
- It includes torture, death and other excesses in police custody or imprisonment.

Scenario of Custodial Deaths in India : The Hindu Analysis

- According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, there have been 1,888 custodial deaths, 893 cases filed against policemen and charge sheets filed against 358 policemen across the country in the last 20 years. But according to official records, only 26 policemen were convicted in the same period.
- Except in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Odisha, no policeman was held responsible for such deaths anywhere else in the country.
- In addition to custodial deaths, more than 2,000 human rights violations were also registered against the police between 2000 and 2018, and only 344 policemen were convicted in those cases.

What are the possible causes of custodial deaths?

Lack of strong law : The Hindu Analysis

- Anti-torture Legislation does not exist in India, nor has Custodial Violence been declared a crime, while the status of action against the guilty policemen/officers is also unsatisfactory.

Institutional Challenges : The Hindu Analysis

- The entire prison system is inherently vague and gives little opportunity for transparency.
- India has also failed to bring much-needed prison reforms and prisons continue to suffer from poor conditions, overcrowding, and acute shortage of personnel and lack of minimum safeguards against violence/trauma in prisons.

Extreme coercion : The Hindu Analysis

- The state tends to use extreme coercion including torture, the victims of which are marginalized communities. The state also resorts to the use of coercion to control those participating in movements or propagating ideologies that the state considers against itself or sees as a threat.

Long Judicial Processes : The Hindu Analysis

- The lengthy, costly formal procedures followed by the courts discourage the poor and vulnerable.

Not Compliance with International Standard : The Hindu Analysis

- Although India had signed the United Nations Convention against Torture in the year 1997, it has not ratified it yet.
- While this signature only indicates the country's intention to fulfill the obligations stipulated in the treaty, its ratification or ratification will pave the way for the creation of

laws and mechanisms to fulfill the commitments.

What Provisions Are Available With respect to Custody?

Constitutional Provisions:

Article 21 : The Hindu Analysis

- Article 21 states that “No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.”
- Protection from torture is a fundamental right under Article 21 (Protection of life and personal liberty) of the Indian Constitution.

Article 22 : The Hindu Analysis

- Article 22 provides for “protection from arrest and detention in certain cases”.
- Under Article 22(1) of the Constitution of India, a person has a fundamental right to seek advice and to be defended by a legal practitioner of his interest.

Legal Provisions:

Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) : The Hindu Analysis

- Section 41 of the CrPC was amended in the year 2009 and safeguards were added to ensure that proper grounds and documentary procedures are followed for arrest and detention for interrogation, making arrest transparent to family, friends and general public and be protected through legal representation.

Mathura Case of 1972 : The Hindu Analysis

- The Mathura rape case was a serious case of custodial rape that took place on March 26, 1972. A tribal girl named Mathura was allegedly raped by two policemen in the premises of Desaijanj police station in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra.
- This case prompted the Indian government to amend rape laws in the country and in 1983 a new category was added to the criminal laws dealing with rape.
- Provision has been made in the law that if a woman says that she did not consent to sex, then the court will hear that she is telling the truth.
- The Mathura case also paved the way for in-camera trial as a closed proceeding and subsequent ban on marking rape victims by their real names.
- Besides defining custodial rape, the amendment shifted the burden of proof from the accuser to the accused.
- Provision was also made that women could not be called to the police station before sunrise and after sunset.

Role of technology in relation to custodial interrogation

Brain Fingerprint System (BFS) : The Hindu Analysis

- BFS is a type of lie-detection technique through which a person's brain waves are measured to find out whether a person is telling the truth while answering the questions asked.
- This technology helps the investigating agencies to find clues in complex cases.

Robot : The Hindu Analysis

- Robots are increasingly being used by the police department for surveillance and for bomb detection.
- Many experts believe that robots can perform the same role as or better than a human interrogator in interrogation.
- Suspects may be more receptive to automated conversational robots than to police to uncover the truth.
- Robots equipped with AI and sensor technology can form a seamless connection with suspects, use persuasive techniques such as flattery, shaming and pressure, and strategically use body language.
- The University of Arizona has developed an automated interrogation technology called 'Automated Virtual Agent for Truth Assessments in RealTime (AVATAR)'.
- It uses visual, auditory, near-infrared and other sensors to test the suspect's eye movements, voice and other things during interrogation.

AI : The Hindu Analysis

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are emerging as tools of inquiry. AI can detect human emotions and predict behaviour.
- The ML can immediately alert the superiors when the police are treating the suspects in an inhumane manner.

Related concerns : The Hindu Analysis

- With the use of technology comes the risk of bias, skepticism associated with automated interrogation tactics, the risk of machine learning algorithms targeting individuals and communities, and its misuse for surveillance.
- While the technologies available to police and law enforcement agencies are constantly improving, it is only a limited means that cannot completely eliminate custodial deaths.

Swadeep Kumar

Infrastructure regarding Food Safety in States

Infrastructure regarding Food Safety in States – Today Current Affairs

- The FSSAI has released the Fourth State Food Safety Index recently.

Today Current Affairs

What is the State Food Safety Index?

- FSSAI has developed the State Food Safety Index to measure the performance of states on various parameters of Food Safety.
- It was first started in 2018-19 with the aim of creating a competitive and positive change in India's food safety ecosystem.
- This index is based on performance of State/ UT on five significant parameters
 - Human Resources and Institutional Data
 - Compliance
 - Food Testing – Infrastructure and Surveillance
 - Training & Capacity Building
 - Consumer Empowerment

What about the recent index? The Hindu Analysis

- In the 4th index, Tamil Nadu topped the list among larger states, followed by Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- Among smaller states, Goa was the winner, followed by Manipur and Sikkim.
- Jammu and Kashmir emerged top among Union Territories, followed by Delhi and Chandigarh.

How can the States' index be improved? The Hindu Analysis

- Support of the Centre– States need the support of the Central government in developing food laboratory infrastructure and enhancing manpower.
- Assistance– Liberal assistance should be provided to the States and Union Territories as far as laboratory infrastructure and improvement of manpower are concerned. The Hindu Analysis
- Role of private sector– The private sector should come forward in a big way to have staff trained at their cost to improve productivity.
- Use of ICT– The participation of information technology majors with the help of non-governmental organisations can be utilised in getting surplus food distributed to the

needy.

What are some of the important initiatives for food safety in India? The Hindu Analysis

- Eat Right India Movement– to transform the country's food system in order to ensure safe, healthy and sustainable food for all Indians.
- Eat Right Station Certification– awarded by FSSAI to railway stations that set benchmarks (as per the FSS Act, 2006) in providing safe and wholesome food to passengers.
- The Eat Right Research Awards and Grants– for high quality research in the area of food safety and nutrition in India.
- PAN-India survey– for identifying the presence of industrially produced trans fatty acid content in the selected foods has been released.

Anshum

Alternatives to Plastic: NITI Aayog



Alternatives to Plastic: NITI Aayog – Today Current Affairs

- Recently NITI Aayog has released a report titled 'Alternative Products and Technologies for Plastics and their Applications' to encourage the use of alternatives to plastics.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has also banned Single Use Plastic (SUP), violating this ban will attract penal action under Section 15 of the Environment Protection Act (EPA).

Today Current Affairs

Key features of the report:

Global Plastics Production and Disposal : The Hindu Analysis

- Cumulative production of polymers, synthetic fibers and additives “between” 1950-2015 was 8,300 million tonnes, of which 55% was dumped directly into landfills or 8% incinerated and only 6% of plastics were recycled.
- If production is continued at this rate till the year 2050, it will produce 12,000 metric tons of plastic.

Case of India : The Hindu Analysis

- India produced 47 million tonnes of plastic waste annually, of which per capita waste increased from 700 grams to 2,500 grams in the last five years.
- Goa, Delhi and Kerala generated the highest per capita plastic waste, while Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura generated the lowest per capita plastic waste.

Challenge : The Hindu Analysis

- Globally, 97–99% of these plastics are derived from fossil fuel feedstocks, while the remaining 1-3% is bio (plant) based plastics.
- Only a small portion of this plastic waste is recycled, as it is believed that the majority of this waste is expelled into the environment through various polluting routes.
- India collects only 60% of its plastic waste and the remaining 40% remains uncollected which directly enters the environment as waste. The Hindu Analysis
- Almost every piece of plastic begins as a fossil fuel, and greenhouse gases (GHG) are emitted at each stage of the plastic lifecycle:
 - Fossil fuel extraction and transportation
 - Plastics Refining and Manufacturing
 - Management of plastic waste
 - Impact on oceans, waterways and various ecosystem landscapes

Initiative : The Hindu Analysis

- The most preferred option for waste management is waste reduction. Strengthen the waste reduction campaign through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), proper labeling and composting and collection of biodegradable plastics, while relaxing the timelines for adoption of biodegradable plastics.
- Developing emerging technologies, for example additives that can convert plastics into biodegradable polyolefins, such as polypropylene and polyethylene.

Uses of Bio-Plastics : The Hindu Analysis

- As an economical alternative to plastics.
- To encourage R&D and manufacturing sector.
- Increase transparency in the disclosure of waste generation, collection, recycling or scientific disposal to set accountability and avoid greenwashing.
- Greenwashing is a process of providing misleading information about how a company's products are environmentally sound.

Plastic option:

Glass : The Hindu Analysis

- Glass has always been the safest and most viable option for packaging and use of food and liquids.
- Glass can be recycled multiple times, so it does not end up in landfills. It is cost effective given its durability and recyclability.

Bagasse : The Hindu Analysis

- Compostable eco-friendly bagasse can eliminate the need for plastic in the form of disposable plate cups or boxes.
- After extracting the juice from sugarcane or beet, bagasse is made from the remaining pulp. It can also be used for other purposes like biofuel.

Bioplastics : The Hindu Analysis

- Plant-based plastics, known as bioplastics, are touted as a green alternative to fossil fuel-based plastics, especially when it comes to food packaging.
- But bioplastics have their own environmental footprint, which requires growing crops and using land and water.
- Bioplastics are considered to be just as harmful and in some cases more harmful than conventional plastics.

Natural Fabrics : The Hindu Analysis

- Millions of tiny plastic fibers are shed with each wash, making cotton, wool, linen and hemp the traditional choice when it comes to replacing polyester and nylon fabrics.
- Production of cotton is posing a serious threat to the environment.

Refill, reuse and buy unpacked : The Hindu Analysis

- Least harmful packaging is one that can be used repeatedly or not at all.
- Reusable cloth bags for fruits and vegetables etc.

- Reusable containers and boxes for meat, fish, cheese etc.
- Refillable bottles and jars for oil and vinegar, cleaning liquids, etc.
- Wrapping Beeswax instead of Foil and Clingfilm.

Swadeep Kumar

Election of vice president



Election of vice president – Today Current Affairs

- Recently the Election Commission announced the Vice-Presidential election to be held in August 2022.

Today Current Affairs

Provisions relating to Vice President:

- The Vice President is the second highest constitutional office of India. He serves for a term of five years, but he can continue in office notwithstanding the expiry of the term until the office is taken over by the successor.
- The Vice President can resign from office by giving his resignation to the President of India which becomes effective from the day the resignation is accepted. The Hindu Analysis
- The Vice-President can be removed from office by a resolution of the Council of State (Rajya Sabha), which is then passed by a majority of the members present, with the consent required by the Lok Sabha. A motion to this effect can be moved only after giving

a notice of not less than 14 days for the purpose.

- The Vice President is the ex-officio President of the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) and does not hold any other office of profit.

Qualification : The Hindu Analysis

- Must be a citizen of India.
- Must have completed 35 years of age.
- Must be eligible for election as a member of the Rajya Sabha.
- Should not hold any office of profit under the Central Government or any State Government or any local authority or any other public authority.

Electoral College : The Hindu Analysis

- According to Article 66 of the Constitution of India, the Vice President is elected by the members of the Electoral College.

Electoral Board Members : The Hindu Analysis

- Elected members of Rajya Sabha.
- Nominated members of Rajya Sabha.
- Elected members of Lok Sabha.

What is the election process? The Hindu Analysis

- According to Article 68 of the Indian Constitution, elections to fill a vacancy caused by the termination of office must be completed before the term of the outgoing Vice President expires.
- The superintendence, direction and control of the conduct of elections to the office of the Vice-President is vested in the Election Commission of India under Article 324 of the Constitution along with the Presidential and Vice-President Election Act, 1952 and the President and Vice-President's Election Rules, 1974.
- Notification for election shall be issued on or after sixty days before the expiry of the term of the outgoing Vice-President.
- Since all the members of the electoral college are members of both the Houses of Parliament, each Member of Parliament's vote will have the same value i.e. 1 (one). The Hindu Analysis
- The Election Commission, in consultation with the Central Government, appoints the Secretary General of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha as Returning Officers on rotational basis.
- Accordingly, the Secretary General, Lok Sabha shall be appointed as the Returning Officer for the present election to the office of the Vice President of India.

- The Commission has also decided to appoint an Assistant Returning Officer in the Parliament House (Lok Sabha) to assist the Returning Officer.
- As per Rule 8 of the Election of President and Vice-President Rules, 1974, voting for the election shall be held in the Parliament House.

Swadeep Kumar

Unethical Practices should be stopped in Pharma Field

Unethical Practices should be stopped in Pharma Field – Today Current Affairs

Context:

- Pharma should be used for the well-being of the Public. Through a recent decision, the honorable supreme court has cleared it. In a judgment of the Supreme Court of India by a two-judge Bench
- Introduction court dismissed the Special Leave Petition by Apex Laboratories to claim deduction on freebies given to doctors. the Bench said that the act of pharmaceutical companies giving freebies to doctors is clearly 'prohibited by the law'. Further, it cannot be claimed as a deduction under Section 37(1) of the Income Tax Act, 1961.

Today Current Affairs

Introduction

- In pharma filed we generally see the unethical practice of the gifting the medicines to the doctors and the companies raised the price of medicines accordingly. Some doctors who received the gift from the several pharma company recommend their medicines to the patient. In this way the patient are generally exploited and cheated .
- Court states that it is a type of bribe which should be stopped immediately . Justice Ravindra Bhat said that pharmaceutical companies have misused a legal gap which gave the right stop pharma companies for the promotion of his brand through the gifting of medicines to doctors . However MCI (Medical Council of India) never recognized this mal practice.
- Judge said that these types of the mal practices ultimately impacts the life of the costumer. The pharmaceutical company raises the price of the medicines which ultimately impacts the public life, which should not be tolerated .

- Upholding the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) circular dated August 1, 2012, and applying it to the case, the Court also cited and relied upon Regulation 6.8 of the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002 framed under the Medical Council Act, 1956, now repealed and substituted by the National Medical Commission Act, 2019.
- The court also highlighted Qureshi (2007) 2 SCC 759 and Commissioner Of Income Tax vs Khemchand Motilal Jain to explain this illegal practice which must be prohibited

What is the practice in US : The Hindu Analysis

- To elaborate his decision court had to take the example of US where the the health department of the Govt of US stated in its report “Savings Available Under Full Generic Substitution of Multiple Source Brand Drugs in Medicare Part D” dated July 23, 2018 that the beneficiaries could have saved over \$600 million in out-of-pocket payments had they been dispensed generic equivalent drugs. Similar voice was raised by the reason of the Physician Payments Sunshine Act 2010 also known as Section 6002 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010

The Issue of Retail price : The Hindu Analysis

- It has been observed in India there is huge anomalies in the retail price of the medicines. Some medicine provide the discount up to 90 %. However still there cost is high. The retail price of the medicine in India is a scam and this scam is going on with the support of pharma companies . generally the medicines are sold in the shop on MRP. These types of the malpractices impacts the treatment of a patient and the life of the patient as well

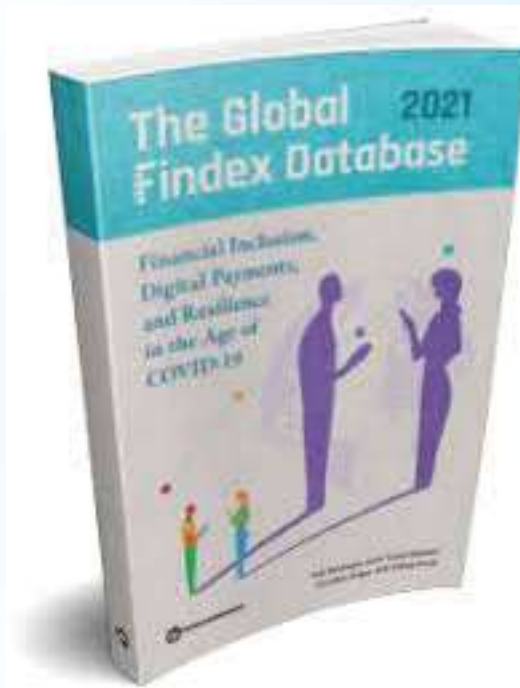
Today Current Affairs

Conclusion

- As per the above discussion , it can be concluded that, government should have strong hold on the pharma, companies in India . The medicines are the essential for the life of the citizens therefore every type of the mal practices in the field of the pharma should be stopped. However , this is the right of pharma company to provide the medicine in free to doctor to promote their brand , but this tis also a moral and ethical duty of the doctor not to promote the medicines of the high price. Doctors should prescribe only those medicines which are cheap and effective . However government can fix the price of the some medicines also.

Swadeep Kumar

The Global Findex Report 2021



The Global Findex Report 2021 – Today Current Affairs

- Recently the World Bank has released 'The Global Findex Report 2021'.
- Global Findex surveyed more than 125,000 adults in 123 economies during COVID-19 to better understand how people use formal and informal financial services and digital payments.

Today Current Affairs

Conclusion:

Account Ownership:

- Worldwide account ownership has increased by 50%, with 76 percent of the adult population having access to accounts.
- Account ownership has increased widely in dozens of developing economies, and most new accounts have been opened in India and China.

Access to Formal Banking : The Hindu Analysis

- The bulk of the global population (130 million and 230 million, respectively) without formal banking lives in India and China.

- Women are often excluded from formal banking services because they lack official identification documents, do not have mobile phones or other forms of technology, and have little financial capacity.
- In developing countries, men accounted for 74%, while women were six points behind with 68% of the accounts.

Unbanking : The Hindu Analysis

- Globally 24% of adults are unbanked, with one of various reasons being a lack of money, with distance being a barrier for 31% of unbanked adults.
- People who do not have an account with any financial institution or mobile money service provider are classified as unbanked.
- Globally, 64% of unbanked adults are educated at the primary level or below.
- 36% of unbanked adults worldwide say financial services are too expensive.

COVID-19 and Digital Payments : The Hindu Analysis

- The COVID-19 pandemic catalysed an increase in the use of digital payments.
- In the year 2021, 18% of adults in developing countries paid utility bills directly from the account. About one-third of these bills were paid online for the first time.

Mobile Money : The Hindu Analysis

- Mobile Money is supporting financial inclusion in sub-Saharan Africa, especially for women.
- There are 11 economies where adults have more mobile money accounts than financial institution accounts, all located in sub-Saharan Africa.

Contribution to the expansion of financial reach of financial providers : The Hindu Analysis

- Government, private employers and financial providers helped expand financial access and use among the unbanked by reducing barriers and improving infrastructure.
- Financial inclusion has become a cornerstone for both short-term relief and sustainable recovery efforts since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Financial Concerns : The Hindu Analysis

- In terms of finances, adults in developing countries are more likely to be concerned than adults in high-income countries.
- The highest concern with regard to medical expenses was observed in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, with 64% of adults being more concerned, and the lowest in East Asia and the Pacific at 38% of adults.

Recommendations : The Hindu Analysis

- As governments seek to accelerate and expand access to digital banking services to tide over the pandemic, policies need to factor in protections for the most vulnerable sections, including women, the poor and those with limited educational qualifications or financial literacy.
- The gender gap in mobility must be bridged to ensure equitable progress on financial inclusion.

Swadeep Kumar

Operation Narcos



Operation Narcos – Today Current Affairs

- Railway Protection Force (RPF) recently recovered narcotics worth more than Rs 7.40 crore under Operation “Narcos” (NARCOS).

Today Current Affairs

What is Operation Narcos?

- A month long all India campaign against drug trafficking through rail with a code code named “Operation Narcos” was launched in June-2022, with special focus on the menace of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS).
- RPF has intensified its investigation in trains and identified black spots across the country in coordination with Narcotics Control Bureau and other law enforcement agencies to

target drug smugglers involved in this illegal trade.

Railway Protection Force : The Hindu Analysis

- The RPF contingent is an armed force of the Union of India. It is a security force owned by the Indian Railways, Ministry of Railways.
- The history of RPF dates back to 1882 when various railway companies appointed their own guards to protect railway property.
- The force was declared a statutory force in 1957 by an Act of Parliament, which was later declared as an armed force of the Union of India in 1985.
- RPF has been entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding railway property.

Other initiatives of RPF:

Operation AAHT : The Hindu Analysis

- Special teams will be deployed on all long distance trains/routes to rescue the victims, especially women and children, from the clutches of traffickers.

Meri Saheli : The Hindu Analysis

- This initiative will focus on the safety of women passengers. It was launched in September 2020 as a pilot project in South-Eastern Railway. Since then it has been extended to all the zones.

Operation Yatri Suraksha : The Hindu Analysis

- Under “Operation Yatri Suraksha”, the RPF supports the State Police in the fight against passenger crime.

Operation Nanhe Faristey : The Hindu Analysis

- It rescued 1,045 children who were found alone or abandoned at railway stations.

Swadeep Kumar

Impact of Global Warming on Indian Monsoon

Impact of Global Warming on Indian Monsoon – Today Current Affairs

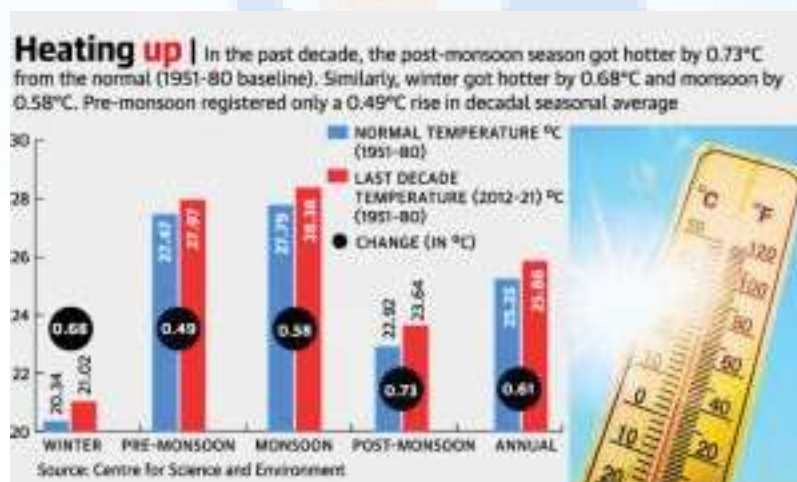
Context:

- It has been observed that during the monsoon seasons the temperatures are 0.3 degrees Celsius higher than the average summer figures' which explains some anomalies in the climate change

Today Current Affairs

Introduction

- Recently, it has been reported that the temperature during the monsoon season is higher in comparison to the summer season however it should be lesser. Generally, the Monsoon season gives us relief from the higher temperature but this year one side high temperature distraught the people, and on the other side high humidity also.



Data of Higher Temperature in India – Today Current Affairs

- If we see the date of the average temperature of all India levels, we see the average temperature is 0.3 degrees Celsius higher than the average summer temperatures (March to May). If we compare it from 1951 to 1980 we see it has risen in comparison to past years. In the past decade, 2012-2021, this anomaly has risen to 0.4 degrees Celsius.
- As per the data record of the India Meteorological Department, the average temperature of India has risen 0.62 degrees Celsius from 1901 to 2020. The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) (A nonprofit organization of research-based in Delhi) shows it has translated to summer temperatures rising slower than not only monsoon but even post-monsoon (October-December) and winter (January and February) temperatures. The

Hindu Analysis

- However, the rise in temperature can be also observed in the summer season. In the summer season, it has risen up to .49 degrees Celsius while in summer it rose .58 degrees Celsius. This year, India saw record pre-monsoon temperatures in northern and western regions, in the absence of rain.
- The average daily temperature has also risen mainly in Northern India. The average daily maximum temperature for March and April for Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand — as per IMD classification — was almost 4 degrees Celsius above normal (compared to its baseline of 1981-2010), which is just double as the anomaly observed at all India level

Causes of these Temperature anomalies : The Hindu Analysis

- As per the report of the Institute of Climate Change Studies (An autonomous body under the state government of Kerala), the temperature anomalies are increasing mainly because of less clouding on a higher number of days. “So, if rainy days are reducing, cloudless or less cloudy days will increase.

The causes of the rise in temperature can also be linked to the Global warming

- Pollution is another reason for the higher temperature of the cities. A city also generates a lot of waste heat due to human activities which adds to the natural heat. This extra heat should dissipate after sunset, but due to pollution and continuing generation of waste heat the city fails to cool down, leading to the warmer conditions compared to rural areas,”

Consequences : The Hindu Analysis

- Because of the high temperature, many deaths have been recorded due to lung and heart attack, dehydration, etc. The increased temperature and humidity impact the efficiency of the work. The headache and tiredness are the other impacts of the high temperature.

Today Current Affairs

Conclusion

- As per the above analysis, it has been observed that due to pollution and Global warming how our daily life is being impacted. Therefore all of us should have civic sense and should try to reduce the pollution from our side. Because, pollution and climate change are the inevitable consequences of urbanization. therefore, we should opt for several measures to reduce the inevitable consequences of urbanization otherwise we have to pay the big cost of this climate change

Anshul

Guidelines to prevent false or misleading advertisements: CCPA



- The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has recently issued guidelines to prevent false or misleading advertisements.

Central Consumer Protection Authority:

- CCPA is a regulatory body established in the year 2020 based on the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- CCPA works under the administrative control of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs.

Purpose:

- To promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers as a class.
- Investigating consumer rights violations and making complaints/prosecutions.
- Ordering the return of unsafe goods and services, the cessation of unfair trade practices and deceptive advertisements.
- Penalizing the producers/exhibitors/publishers of misleading advertisements.

Guidance:

Non-misleading and legitimate advertisements:

- Advertising can be considered non-misleading if it contains a true and honest representation of the object and does not exaggerate accuracy, scientific validity or practical utility or potential.
- In case of an inadvertent omission, the advertisement may still be considered valid if the advertiser has taken prompt action to notify the consumer of the deficiency.

Surrogate Advertisement:

- “Surrogate Advertisement” means the advertisement of an article under the guise of other goods.
- Like advertisement of tobacco under the guise of pan masala.
- No surrogate advertising or indirect advertising shall be created for goods or services that are otherwise prohibited or restricted by advertising law.
- To circumvent such prohibition or restriction and portray it as advertising of other goods or services shall not be permitted.

Ads targeting children:

- Advertisements that may be dangerous to children or take advantage of children's inexperience, credibility or sense of trust, etc., that encourage, induce behavior or improperly imitate them are banned.
- It is clear that advertisements influence children's shopping behavior and encourage them to consume unhealthy items or develop negative feelings towards healthy items.

Disclaimer in Ads:

- The Guidelines also introduce a requirement of “Disclaimer in Advertisements” to clarify, qualify or address ambiguities made in such advertisement so as to explain such claim in more detail.
- In addition, the advertiser must not “attempt to conceal material information in respect of any claim made in such advertisement, the omission or absence of which is likely to mislead the advertisement or conceal its commercial intent”.

Duty:

- The guidelines also require manufacturers, service providers and advertising agencies not to make claims or make comparisons in advertisements that are not based on objectively detectable facts.
- In addition, advertising should be designed to gain the trust of consumers, and not to “abuse the trust of consumers or take advantage of their lack of experience or knowledge”.

Importance of Guidelines:

- Guidelines are pioneering because they fill important consumer protection gaps by clearly outlining the duties of an advertiser.
- The guidelines also try to discourage the promotion of irrational consumerism aimed at children.
- The problem of misleading, tempting, surrogate and child-targeted advertising has been going on for a very long time without any break.

- The guidelines do the essential job of bringing the Indian regulatory framework at par with international norms and standards.
- Guidelines are important to empower customers against misleading advertisers.
- The guidelines refer to terms defining an advertisement as “non-misleading and legitimate” rather than defining a misleading or invalid advertisement.
- The challenges faced in implementing the existing advertising regulations have also been made punishable through the guidelines.

Swadeep Kumar

Intangible Cultural Heritage: UNESCO



- India has been elected to the Inter-Governmental Committee of UNESCO’s 2003 Convention for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) for the period 2022-2026.
- India has served as a member of the ICH committee twice, from 2006 to 2010 and 2014 to 2018.
- Earlier, Durga Puja in Kolkata was inscribed in UNESCO’s representative list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (ICH).

Intangible cultural Heritage:

- Intangible cultural heritage is the practices, expressions, knowledge and skills that communities, groups and sometimes individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.
- Also called living cultural heritage, it is usually expressed in one of the following forms:

- Oral traditions
- Performing Arts
- Social Practices
- Rituals and Festive Programs
- Knowledge and practice related to nature and the universe
- Traditional Craftsmanship

Importance of India being elected to the convention:

- It will help India to promote community participation, strengthen international cooperation through intangible heritage, promote academic research on intangible cultural heritage and align the work of the Convention with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- India will have the opportunity to closely monitor the implementation of the 2003 Convention.
- India will endeavor to encourage intra-state international dialogue for the Convention to appropriately reflect the diversity and importance of living heritage.

UNESCO's Convention for the Protection of Intangible Heritage:

- The Convention on the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2003 and entered into force in 2006.
- It consists of 24 members and is elected by the General Assembly of the Convention according to the principles of equal geographical representation and rotation.
- The members of the committee are elected for a term of four years.

Purpose:

- To protect the manifestations of intangible cultural heritage threatened by the processes of globalization.
- Ensuring respect for the intangible cultural heritage of communities, groups and individuals.
- Raising awareness of the importance of intangible cultural heritage at the local, national and international level.

Publications:

- Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- List of intangible cultural heritage in need of immediate protection.
- Register of Good Security Practices

Recognized Indian Heritage as ICH:

- ICH's prestigious UNESCO Representative List of Humanity includes 14 Intangible Cultural Heritage of India
- Apart from Durga Puja, there are 13 traditions recognized by UNESCO as ICH in India.

Swadeep Kumar



CURRENT AFFAIRS

JULY 2022



Mission Vatsalya Child Protection Scheme



- Recently, the Central Government had issued guidelines to the states regarding the Mission Vatsalya Child Protection Scheme.

New Guidelines:

- As per the guidelines, states cannot change the original name of the scheme to get access to the funds given by the central government.
- Funds to the states will be approved through the Mission Vatsalya Project Approval Board (PAB), headed by the WCD Secretary, who will scrutinize and approve the annual plans and financial proposals received from the states and union territories for release of grants.

- It will be implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme in partnership with State Governments and UT Administrations with a fund-sharing pattern in the ratio of 60:40.
- However, for the eight states of the Northeast as well as Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the share of the Center and the State/ UT will be in 90:10.
- The MVS, in partnership with the states and districts, will implement a 24×7 helpline service for children, as defined under the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015.
- It will support the State Adoption Resource Agencies (SARAs) which will support the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) in promoting adoption in the country and regulating inter-country adoptions.
- SARA will coordinate, monitor and develop activities related to non-institutional care including adoption in the state.
- The mission plans to set up Cradle Shishu Reception Centers in at least one specialized adoption agency in each area to receive abandoned and trafficked children.
- Children in need of care as well as children with special needs will be placed in separate homes based on gender (including separate homes for transgender children) and age.
- Since they cannot attend school due to physical or mental disabilities, these institutions will provide specialized teachers, doctors and nurses to provide occupational therapy, speech therapy, verbal therapy and other remedial classes.
- In addition, the employees of these specialized divisions should be proficient in sign language, braille and other related languages.
- The state government will support the establishment of open shelters for the care of runaway children, missing children, trafficked children, working children, street children, child beggars, drug abusers, etc.
- Financial assistance has also been earmarked to support education, nutrition and health needs for vulnerable children living with extended families or in foster care.

Mission Vatsalya:

Historical perspective:

- Before 2009, the Ministry of Women and Child Development implemented three schemes for children in need of protection:
- Juvenile justice programs for children in need of care and protection as well as children,
- Integrated program for street children,

Child Home Assistance Scheme.

- In the year 2010, these were merged into a single scheme which is known as Integrated Child Protection Scheme.

- In the year 2017 it was renamed as “Child Protection Service Scheme” and then renamed as Mission Vatsalya in the year 2021-22.

Introduction:

- This is the umbrella scheme for child protection services in the country.
- Components under Mission Vatsalya include improving the functioning of statutory bodies, strengthening service delivery structures, enhanced institutional care and services, promotion of non-institutional community-based care, services for emergency access and training and capacity building.

Purpose:

- To ensure a healthy and happy childhood for every child of the country.
- To promote a sensitive, supportive and synchronous ecosystem for the development of children, to assist the States and Union Territories in delivering the mandate of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 to enable them to achieve their full potential and nurture them in all respects. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure opportunities to assist in
- It promotes family-based non-institutional care of children in difficult situations based on the ‘principle of institutionalization of children’ as a last resort.

Swadeep Kumar

India's exports in defense sector



- India's defense exports for the year 2021-22 was estimated at Rs 13,000 crore, which is the highest ever.

- The US was a major buyer as well as nations from Southeast Asia, West Asia and Africa.

Key points

- The private sector accounted for 70% of exports, while the public sector firms were responsible for the rest.
- Earlier the share of private sector used to be 90% but now the share of defense public sector units has increased.
- While India's defense imports from the US have increased significantly in recent years, Indian companies are increasingly becoming part of the supply chain of US defense companies.

Recent Initiatives to Boost Defense Exports:

- In January 2022, India signed a US\$ 374.96 million deal with the Philippines for the supply of three batteries for the shore-based anti-ship version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, its largest defense export order.
- India has imposed a phased import ban on 310 different weapons and systems during the last two years, which has helped boost exports.
- These weapons and platforms will be indigenized in several phases over the next five to six years.
- Increased partnership with the private sector has led to a substantial increase in defense exports.

India's Defense Exports:

- Defense exports are the main pillar of the government's campaign to achieve self-reliance in defense production.
- More than 30 Indian defense companies have supplied arms and equipment to countries like Italy, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Russia, France, Nepal, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Israel, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Philippines, Poland, and Spain has exported.
- Exports include personal protective materials, defense electronics systems, engineering mechanical equipment, offshore patrol ships, advanced light helicopters, avionics suits, radio systems and radar systems.
- However, India's defense exports are yet to reach the expected limits.
- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) ranked India 23rd in the list of major arms exporters for 2015-2019.
- India still exports only 0.17% of global weapons.
- The reason for the disappointing performance in India's defense exports is that the Defense Ministry of India does not have any dedicated agency for exports as of now.

- India has set a defense export target of US\$ 5 billion by 2024.

Defense Sector Initiatives:

Defense Production and Export Promotion Policy 2020 (DPEPP 2020):

- DPEPP 2020 is envisaged as a comprehensive guiding document to provide a focused, structured and critical thrust on the country's defense production capabilities for self-reliance and exports.

Multidimensional step towards self-reliant defense sector:

- Progressive changes have taken place with a focus to empower private industry.
- DPP 2016 comes out with a new category called Indian IDDM (Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured).
- If an Indian company opts for Indian IDDM, it is given preference over all other categories.

Strategic Partnership:

- A strategic partnership model allows Indian companies to collaborate with foreign OEMs and transfer technology and build and maintain projects in India.
- First RFP for conventional submarines in operation.

Positive Indigenization:

- For the first time, the government is banning itself on the import of a commodity, the government wants to empower the indigenous industry.
- There are two positive indigenization lists of 101 items and 108 items, which range from platforms to weapon systems and sensors to maximum items.

Swadeep Kumar

State Ranking Index: NFSA



State Ranking Index: NFSA – Today Current Affairs

- Recently the first edition of State Ranking Index for National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 was released.

Today Current Affairs

About index:

- This index seeks to document the status and progress of various reform initiatives and implementation of NFSA across the country in consultation with the states.
- It highlights the reforms undertaken by the states and union territories and creates a cross-learning environment and scale-up reform measures by all the states and union territories.
- The current index is largely focused on NFSA distribution and will include future procurement, Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) distribution.

Assessment Basis : The Hindu Analysis

- The index for ranking of states and union territories has been constructed on three key pillars, covering end-to-end implementation of NFSA through Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). These columns are:
- NFSA – Coverage, Targeting and Provisions of the Act
- Delivery Platform
- Nutritional Initiatives

State performance:

General Category States : The Hindu Analysis

- Odisha ranks first, followed by Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh at second and third positions respectively.

Special Category States : The Hindu Analysis

- Tripura ranks top among the Special Category States (North-Eastern States, Himalayan States and Island States).
- Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim are ranked second and third respectively.

Worst performing states : The Hindu Analysis

- Punjab, Haryana and Delhi are in the bottom five states.

Importance of Index : The Hindu Analysis

- The findings of the exercise show that most of the States and UTs have performed well

in digitization, Aadhaar seeding and ePoS installation, which reiterates the strength and standards of the reforms.

- However, states and union territories may improve their performance in certain areas. Exercises such as streamlining and administering the functions of State Food Commissions in the States and Union Territories will further strengthen the true spirit of the Act.
- This will encourage healthy competition among the states to improve their performance.

Index related challenges : The Hindu Analysis

- It does not include projects and programs undertaken by other Ministries and Departments under NFSA.
- The index only reflects the efficiency of TPDS operations, it does not reflect the level of hunger, malnutrition or both in a given state or union territory.

Significance of Odisha Ranking : The Hindu Analysis

- Odisha in the year 2015 decided to adopt NFSA with strong end-to-end computerization for operation of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) in the state.
 - The database of 25 crore digital beneficiaries has been made public and the data of 378 Ration Card Management System (RCMS) centres, 314 blocks and 64 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) have been updated.
 - In addition, 152 food storage facilities of the Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Department have been fully automated, in which real-time electronic recording of 1.87 lakh metric tonnes of food grains has been sent to 12,133 fair price stores across the state.
- The Hindu Analysis
- One Nation, One Ration Card (ONORC) program launched across the state from July 2021.
 - After its implementation, PDS beneficiaries can now choose any fair price ration shop or retailer of their choice and convenience to get food grains.
 - About 1.10 lakh families are getting ration through inter-state facility and 533 families get ration every month through inter-state programme.

National Food Security Act (NFSA) : The Hindu Analysis

- Notified: September 10, 2013.
- Objective: It aims at providing food and nutritional security to the people by providing them adequate quantity of good quality food grains at affordable prices to lead a dignified life.
- Coverage: Providing subsidized food grains to 75 percent of the rural population and 50 percent of the urban population under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- The National Food Security Act (NFSA) as a whole covers 67 percent of the total population of the country.

Eligibility : The Hindu Analysis

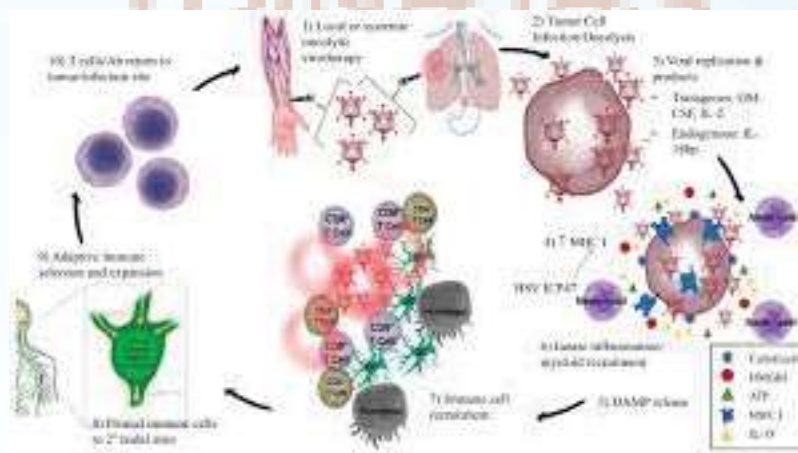
- Priority families covered under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), as per the guidelines of the State Government.
- Families covered under Antyodaya Anna Yojana.

Provision : The Hindu Analysis

- Providing 5 kg of food grains per person per month, including rice at Rs.3 a kg, wheat at Rs.2 a kg and coarse grains at Rs.1 a kg.
- However, under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana, the existing 35 kg food grains per family per month will continue to be provided.
- There is a provision to provide maternity benefit of not less than Rs 6000 to pregnant women and lactating mothers in addition to food during pregnancy and for 6 months after the birth of the child.
- Meals for children up to 14 years of age.
- To give food security allowance to the beneficiaries in case of non-supply of food grains or food.
- Establishing a grievance redressal mechanism at the district and state level.

Swadeep Kumar

Oncolytic Virotherapy (OV)



Oncolytic Virotherapy (OV) – Today Current Affairs

- Researchers in the US have developed a new method to improve cancer therapy in the form of oncolytic virotherapy (OV) that can destroy tumor cells while leaving the surrounding healthy tissue intact.

- Previously a monoclonal antibody trial was conducted in the United States, in which 12 patients were completely cured of rectal cancer without the need for surgery or chemotherapy.

Today Current Affairs

Oncolytic Virotherapy:

- Oncolytic viruses can kill cancer cells while keeping nearby healthy cells and tissues intact.
- Treatment in oncolytic virotherapy also exerts its effect by activating the antitumor immune response composed of immune cells such as natural malignant (NK) cells.
- Although sometimes they limit natural lethal oncolytic viruses, despite reasonable developments in the OV field in recent years, improvements are needed to address some of the challenges, including relatively weak therapeutic activity and means of effective systemic delivery.

Ideal Approach : The Hindu Analysis

- In this, a certain part of the gene, which indicates activation, is destroyed, as well as it enables the virus to replicate normal cells.
- Contains a new oncolytic virus called FusOn-H2, which is based on the herpes simplex 2 virus, (HSV-2), commonly known as genital herpes.
- The chimeric NK engager in FusOn-H2 that can enter tumor cells and engulf natural malignant cells, significantly enhancing the efficacy of virotherapy.

Cancer : The Hindu Analysis

- It is a large group of diseases that can start in almost any organ or tissue of the body, when abnormal cells grow uncontrollably and invade nearby parts of the body and/or spread to other organs for encroachment beyond its normal limits. The latter process is called metastasizing and is a major cause of death from cancer.
- Other common names for cancer are neoplasms and malignant tumors.
- Lung, prostate, colorectal, stomach and liver cancers are the most common cancers in men, while breast, colorectal, lung, cervical and thyroid cancers are most common in women.

Cancer burden : The Hindu Analysis

- Cancer is a chronic and non-communicable disease (NCD) worldwide, including in India, and is one of the leading causes of adult illness and death.
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), cancer is the second leading cause

of death globally and there were around 18 million cases globally in the year 2018, of which 1.5 million cases were in India alone.

Redressal : The Hindu Analysis

- Excluding key risk factors, 30-50% of cancer deaths are preventable.
- Major risk factors include tobacco, alcohol use, unbalanced diet, exposure to ultraviolet radiation, pollution, chronic infections, etc.

Remedy : The Hindu Analysis

- Cancer treatment options include surgery, cancer drugs or radiotherapy.
- Palliative care that focuses on improving the quality of life of patients and their families is an essential component of cancer care.

Initiatives to combat cancer : The Hindu Analysis

- National program for prevention and control of cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke
- National Cancer Grid
- National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority
- International Cancer Research Institute
- National Cancer Awareness Day.

Swadeep Kumar

Environment Index and India

Environment Index and India – Today Current Affairs

- India has questioned its bottom ranking among 180 nations on the Environmental Performance Index (EPI).

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What is the Environmental Performance Index?

- The EPI is an international ranking system of countries based on their environmental health.
- It is a biennial index, first started in 2002 as the Environment Sustainability Index.
- The index is released by the World Economic Forum in collaboration with the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy and Columbia University Center for International Earth Information Network.

- The report measures how close countries are to meeting internationally established sustainability targets for specific environmental issues. The Hindu Analysis
- EPI 2022 uses 40 performance indicators to assess and rank 180 countries.
- The 40 indicators are under the broad categories of
 - Climate change performance
 - Environmental health
 - Ecosystem vitality

What about the EPI assessment of India? The Hindu Analysis

- India's rank- India has fallen from rank 168 in 2020 to a rank of 180 with a score of 18.9.
- India comes after Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Myanmar, the poorest performers.
- Denmark tops the list with a score of 77.9.
- India's statement- The Indian government has said that some of the indicators used for assessing performance are extrapolated and based on unscientific methods.
 - It has cited two major concerns
 - Baseline data does not seem to have been used
- There has been no explanation for the weightages assigned to certain indicators
- MoEFCC has said the shifting of weightage on many indicators has resulted in India's low ranking.



- The government has objected to calculations of greenhouse gas projections for 2050, which ties into countries' net zero goals.

- Time period- The projection for greenhouse gas emissions has been computed based on the average rate of change in emission of the last 10 years.
- Neglection of other factors- It has ignored taking into account a longer period, extent of renewable energy capacity and use, additional carbon sinks, energy efficiency etc.
- Ignoring crucial carbon sinks- The important carbon sinks that mitigate GHG, such as forests and wetlands, have not been taken into account. The Hindu Analysis
- Emission- India's low emissions trajectory, unlike high historical trajectories of developed countries, has been ignored.
- Low weightages- The government has objected to the low weightage given to per-capita GHG emissions (2.6%).
- Neglection of renewables- No indicator talks about renewable energy, energy efficiency and process optimization.
- Quantity over quality- The index emphasises the extent of protected areas rather than the quality of protection that they afford.

Do environmental scientists agree with the report? The Hindu Analysis

- Some scientists have said that the climate change parameter of the EPI report is highly problematic.
- The weightages are the agency's discretion but giving climate change such a high weightage is problematic.
- The EPI 2022 makes an assumption that every country has to reach net-zero by 2050 ignoring the reality that developing countries will need more time.
- Also, the methodology that EPI has used for its 2050 projections, using last decade's emissions, is extremely crude.
- The low weightage given to per-capita GHG emissions automatically reduces the ranks of countries like India and China.

How seriously should the findings be taken? The Hindu Analysis

- Despite the inconsistencies, the government should not ignore the fact that India was at 168th rank in 2020 and has never been in the top 150 countries since the index was started.
- We should get carried away by only the rank and must focus on sustainable developmental pathways.

Anshum

World Population Prospect (WPP) Report 2022



- According to the 2022 edition of the United Nations' World Population Prospect (WPP) report, India is projected to overtake China as the world's most populous country in the year 2023.

World Population Prospects:

- The Population Division of the United Nations has been publishing the WPP biennially since 1951.
- Each revision of the WPP provides a historical time series of population indicators beginning with the year 1950.
- It does so by taking into account newly released national data to revise estimates of past trends in fertility, mortality or international migration.

Report Conclusion:

Population Growth: But Growth Rate Low

- The global population is expected to grow to around 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050 and 10.4 billion in 2100.
- For the first time since 1950, the global growth rate fell below 1% per annum in the year 2020.
- Rates vary greatly across countries and regions:

More than half of the projected growth in global population by the year 2050 will be concentrated in just eight countries:

- These are- Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines and United Republic of Tanzania.
- The 46 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are among the countries with the fastest population growth in the world.
- The population of many countries is projected to double between 2022 and 2050, facing additional pressure on resources and challenges in the achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Growing elderly population:

- The share of the global population aged 65 or over is projected to increase from 10% in 2022 to 16% in 2050.

Demographic Segmentation:

- The continuing decline in fertility has led to an increase in the working age population (between 25 and 64 years), creating opportunities for accelerated economic growth per capita.
- This change in age distribution provides a time bound opportunity for accelerated economic growth.

International Migration:

- International migration is having a significant impact on the population trends of some countries.
- The contribution of international migration to population growth in high-income countries exceeded the birth-death balance between 2000 and 2020.
- Migration will be the sole driver of population growth in high-income countries over the next few decades.

Conclusions related to India:

- India's growth rate was 2.3% in the year 1972, which has now come down to less than 1%.
- The number of children every Indian woman has during her lifetime has come down from about 5.4 to less than 2.1 now.
- This means that India has achieved replacement fertility rate at which a population changes itself from one generation to the next.
- The fertility rate is declining, so the death rate has increased with advances in health care and medicine.
- Populations of 0-14 years and 15-24 years will continue to decline, while populations of

25-64 and 65+ will continue to increase in the coming decades.

- This reduction in premature mortality for successive generations, reflected in increased levels of life expectancy at birth, has been a factor in India's population growth.

Initiative:

- Countries with older populations should take steps to adapt public programs to a growing proportion of older people, including improving the stability of social security and pension systems and the establishment of universal health care and long-term care systems.
- To maximize the potential benefits of a favorable age distribution, countries need to invest in the development of their human capital by ensuring access to health care and quality education at all ages, and by promoting opportunities for productive employment and decent work.
- People already in the age group of 25-64 need skills, which is the only way to ensure that they are more productive and earn better income.
- 65+ age category is going to grow very fast and it is facing many challenges. This will increase the pressure on resources before future governments. If the elderly live within the family structure, the burden on the government can be reduced. "If we go back to our roots or traditions and live as a family (as opposed to the individualism of the Western trend), the challenges will be less."

Swadeep Kumar

Foreign Ministers of India and China meeting during the G20



- During the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Indonesia's 'Bali' city, a meeting was held

between the Foreign Ministers and State Counselors of India and China separately.

- In this meeting, both sides of India and China discussed to resolve the border standoff that started in April 2020.
- The meeting also discussed the issue of Indian Prime Minister wishing the Dalai Lama a happy birthday and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) searching the offices of Chinese company Vivo in India.

Important points of the meeting:

Three reciprocal aspects: India-China relations are best expressed by three reciprocal aspects:

- Mutual respect
- Mutual sensitivity
- Mutual interests

India-China talks:

- Speedy resolution: EAM called for early resolution of all remaining issues related to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh.
- Complete withdrawal: The External Affairs Minister reiterated the need to maintain the pace of 'complete disengagement' from all remaining areas to restore peace and tranquility in the border areas.
- Regular contacts at military and diplomatic levels: The foreign ministers of both countries agreed that they should continue regular contact in military and diplomatic meetings and meeting of senior commanders at the 'Chushul Moldo border point'. Should wait for the next 16th round.
- No mention of LAC by China: The Chinese statement (readout) made no mention of the 'LAC crisis', instead calling on both sides to "strengthen coordination and cooperation and to jointly strengthen more democratic international relations and a fair international relationship". Emphasized the comments made to promote the system.
- Both sides maintained communication: China said that the two sides have so far "maintained communication and exchanges" and "effectively managed differences".
- Assured Support: China has assured support for India's upcoming G20 and SCO presidency.

Line of Actual Control:

- The 'Line of Actual Control (LAC)' is the demarcation, which separates the Indian controlled area from the Chinese controlled area.
- LAC is different from the 'Line of Control' (LoC) with Pakistan. The LoC derives from the 1948 ceasefire line negotiated by the United Nations (UN) after the Kashmir War.

- It was designated as LoC in 1972 after the Simla Agreement between India-Pakistan, the two countries. This line is depicted on a map signed by the 'Director Generals of Military Operations' (DGMO) of both the armies and this legal agreement has international approval.
- In contrast, 'Line of Actual Control' (LAC) is only a concept. This line is not agreed upon by both India and China, nor is it depicted on the map, nor is it demarcated on the ground.
- India considers the 'Line of Actual Control' to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.

G-20 Group:

- It is an informal grouping of 19 countries and the European Union (EU), established in 1999 with representatives from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.
- G-20 member countries include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Republic of Korea, Turkey, and United Kingdom and includes the United States.
- The G-20 group includes the world's major advanced and emerging economies, which account for about two-thirds of the world's population.
- The G20 has no permanent headquarters and the Secretariat rotates each year between the countries that host or preside over the group.
- The members are divided into five groups (India is in Group 2) along with Russia, South Africa and Turkey.
- The G-20 agenda, which still relies heavily on the guidance of finance ministers and central governors, is finalized through a prescribed system of 'sherpas', who are special envoys of G-20 leaders.
- Presently the Minister of Commerce and Industry is the current "G20 Sherpa" of India.
- Another feature of the G-20 is the 'troika' meetings, which include the countries chairing the G-20 in the previous year, the current year and the next year. Currently the troika includes Italy, Indonesia and India..

Anshum

India's Economic Stakes in West Asia

- The diplomatic fallout from the communally charged comments made by two erstwhile spokespersons of the ruling party forced the government into firefighting mode.

What is the issue?

- The provocative comments spurred criticisms and protests by several West Asian nations as well as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).
- In response, Indian officials asserted that the government stood by the country's traditional values and respected all religions.
- It also tasked its diplomats to reach out to individual OIC member states and reassure them on India's position of an inclusive approach to all communities.

Why is West Asia so significant for India?

- Ties– India's cultural, economic and trade ties with the countries of the West Asian region are deep and abiding.
- Trade route– The West Asian region served as a land trade bridge to early European empires and a flourishing trade in spices, cloth, silk and indigo in exchange for gold and silver is well recorded.
- Monetary system– The British colonial era saw the advent of a loose common monetary system with the rupee serving as legal tender in several Gulf states till the middle of the 20th century.
- Oil exploitation– The discovery and commercial exploitation of oil in the Gulf region during the colonial era started to alter the balance of trade flows between India and the West Asian countries.
- Trade- Today, the countries of the West Asian region collectively account for over a sixth of India's total bilateral merchandise trade and contribute about three fifths of India's crude oil supplies.
- Employment- The region is a major provider of jobs to Indian workers, professionals and entrepreneurs and houses about 89 lakh Indians.
- Remittances- The NRIs in West Asian countries annually send home about \$40 billion, and account for more than 55% of the country's total remittance inflows.
- Investments– Investments from sovereign wealth funds and other large investors from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have also climbed steadily in recent years.

Why is India so dependent on West Asian countries for its energy needs?

- In 2020-21, the top oil exporter to India was Iraq (more than 22%), followed by Saudi Arabia (18%).
- Domestic crude production meets less than a fifth of the country's oil requirement, forcing India to take recourse to imports to fill the gap of more than 80%.
- A large proportion of India's refineries have been predominantly configured to process the sulphur-heavy sour grades of crude that are produced in the Gulf region.

- The sweeter (low sulphur) grade of oil such as Brent proves to be comparatively costlier than the sour grades.

How reliant is India on the region for non-oil trade?

- From 2017 through 2021, Iran and the GCC member states accounted for a 15.3% share of India's cumulative two-way merchandise trade.
- Out of that, the UAE contributed the lion's share of almost 7%, followed by Saudi Arabia.
- The region is today a key market for several Indian commodities ranging from tea and basmati rice to electrical equipment, apparel, and machinery.
- India has signed a CEPA with UAE with the aim of increasing the total value of bilateral trade in goods to more than \$100 billion and getting services trade to exceed \$15 billion over the five years.
- The trade pact will provide Indian exporters preferential market access on 99% of the country's exports to the UAE in value terms, particularly from labour-intensive sectors.
- The government is actively pursuing a broader FTA (Free Trade Agreement) with the GCC as a whole.
- The region also serves as a key hub to markets in Africa.

Anshum

Sri Lanka crisis



Sri Lanka crisis – Today Current Affairs

- A day after President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Ranili Wickremesinghe

announced their resignations under pressure from historic citizens' protests, various Sri Lankan political parties have stepped up efforts to form an all-party government.

- The continuous spread of anti-government sentiment in various parts of Sri Lanka has created a situation of political instability in the country. In the event of economic crisis in the country, people have come out on the road and anti-government protests are becoming fierce.
- Sri Lanka's economy is facing an unprecedented crisis due to serious balance of payments (BoP) problems. Its foreign exchange reserves have been depleting rapidly and it is becoming increasingly difficult for the country to import essential consumption items.
- The Sri Lankan rupee has depreciated by more than 80%, food costs have risen sharply by over 50% and tourism (a major revenue source for the country) has declined sharply due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In this scenario, it would be relevant to consider the causes and effects of the rise of political and economic instability in Sri Lanka.

Today Current Affairs

Why Sri Lankan Crisis?

Background:

- When Sri Lanka came out of a 26-year-long civil war in 2009, its post-war GDP growth was at a fairly high level of 8-9% per annum and remained so until 2012.
- But after 2013, its average GDP growth rate fell to almost half as global commodity prices fell, exports slowed and imports increased significantly.
- Sri Lanka's budget deficit remained high during the wartime and the 2008 global financial crisis depleted its foreign exchange reserves, forcing the country to borrow \$2.6 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2009.
- In the year 2016, he again approached the IMF for a loan of \$ 1.5 billion, but compliance with the terms of the IMF worsened the economic health of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka's Fertilizer Ban : The Hindu Analysis

- In the year 2021, the government imposed a complete ban on all fertilizer imports and announced to convert Sri Lanka to 100% organic farming country overnight.
- This accelerated move towards organic farming badly affected the food production in the country.
- In the deteriorating scenario, the government declared an economic emergency in the country to control rising food prices, devaluation of currency and rapidly depleting foreign exchange reserves.
- Shortage of foreign exchange as well as overnight imposed restrictions on chemical

fertilizers and pesticides have led to a sharp rise in food prices.

Recent economic shocks : The Hindu Analysis

- The April 2019 Easter bombings in Colombo's churches resulted in 253 casualties, resulting in a sharp drop in tourist numbers, leading to a decline in the country's foreign exchange reserves.
- The Gotabaya Rajapaksa-led government, which came to power in 2019, had promised lower tax rates and wider SoPs for farmers in its election campaigns.
- The prompt implementation of these promises by the new government added to the problem.
- In the year 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the exports of tea, rubber, spices, clothing and tourism sector.
- China's Debt Trap Policy also played an important role in causing economic instability in Sri Lanka.
- Sri Lanka's crisis mainly stemmed from the depletion of foreign exchange reserves, which had declined by 70% over the past two years to just \$2 billion by the end of February 2022.
- While the country currently has a foreign debt obligation of about \$ 7 billion.

Current state of political vacuum : The Hindu Analysis

- Prime Minister Wickremesinghe and President Rajapaksa had indicated that they would resign to pave the way for the formation of an all-party government.

How is the Sri Lankan crisis affecting India?

Challenges : The Hindu Analysis

Financial:

- The share of Sri Lanka in India's total exports, which was 2.16% in FY15, has come down to just 1.3 percent in FY22.
- Automotive firms such as Tata Motors and TVS Motors have stopped exporting vehicle kits to Sri Lanka and halted production at their Sri Lankan assembly units in view of the country's volatile foreign exchange reserves and fuel crunch.

Refugee Crisis:

- Whenever there has been a political or social crisis in Sri Lanka, India has faced a large influx of refugees from the ethnic Tamil community through the Palk Strait and the Gulf of Munnar.
- Handling a large number of Tamil refugees can be very difficult economically, politically and socially for India, so there is a need for a sound policy to deal with this crisis.

- The state of Tamil Nadu has also started to feel the impact of the crisis with 16 illegal arrivals from Sri Lanka being recorded.

Opportunity:

Tea Market : The Hindu Analysis

- India is keen to fill this supply gap amid the sudden shutdown of Sri Lankan tea supply in the global tea market.
- India can strengthen its presence in Iran as well as in new markets like Turkey, Iraq.
- Big Sri Lankan tea importers from Iran, Turkey, Iraq and Russia are reportedly coming to India in search of tea gardens in Assam and Kolkata.
- As a result, the average price of conventionally grown orthodox leaves in the recent auctions in Kolkata has increased by 41 per cent over the same sale last year.

Apparel Market : The Hindu Analysis

- Many apparel orders from United Kingdom, European Union and Latin American countries are now being shipped to India.
- Many such orders have been received by companies located in Tiruppur, a major center of textile industry in Tamil Nadu.

Why Sri Lanka's help is in the interest of India? The Hindu Analysis

- Sri Lanka has been a strategically important partner for India. India may use this opportunity to balance its diplomatic ties with Sri Lanka, which has been somewhat affected by Sri Lanka's proximity to China.
- Due to the disagreement on the issue of fertilizer between Sri Lanka and China, the fertilizer supply by India is being seen as a positive development in bilateral relations.
- Expanding diplomatic relations with Shrilanka will help India to help the Sri Lankan archipelago from China's 'String of Pearl' policy in the Hind-Pacific region.
- India's assistance to the extent possible for mitigating the hardships of the people of Sri Lanka should be proceeded with the care that its help is also visible so that a goodwill spread for India in Sri Lanka.

How can Sri Lanka overcome this crisis?

Implementing democracy in real sense : The Hindu Analysis

- Stronger political consensus is needed in Sri Lanka for better crisis management. Reducing the militarization of the administration would also be an appropriate step.
- Various measures need to be considered to re-enable the poor and vulnerable population and help prevent long term damage to the economy.

- These measures will include increasing agricultural productivity, increasing job opportunities in non-farm sectors, better implementation of reforms and revitalizing the tourism sector.

Support from India : The Hindu Analysis

- India, following the 'Neighborhood First Policy' to strengthen its relations with neighboring countries, should provide additional assistance to Sri Lanka to overcome the current crisis and realize its potential, which will benefit from a stable and friendly neighbourhood. India itself will also get it in the form.
- Indian businesses can build supply chains that interconnect the Indian and Sri Lankan economies across a wide spectrum of goods and services, from essential goods to information technology services.
- India has supplied over 270,000 metric tonnes of diesel and petrol to Sri Lanka since mid-March.
- In addition, about 40,000 tonnes of rice has also been supplied by India under the recently extended \$1 billion line of credit.
- India can also facilitate Sri Lanka's presence in multilateral fora such as the G20, which will provide a base for Sri Lanka to get aid from developed nations.

Relief from International Monetary Fund : The Hindu Analysis

- Sri Lanka has approached the IMF for a 'bailout'. The IMF may support Sri Lanka's efforts to overcome the current economic crisis.
- The IMF can contribute to the restoration of macroeconomic stability and credit sustainability by advancing structural reforms to protect the poor and vulnerable, safeguard financial stability and address corruption-related vulnerabilities and realize Sri Lanka's growth potential.

Utilizing Possibilities of Cyclical Economy : The Hindu Analysis

- Dependence on imports in the context of economic instability in Sri Lanka can be minimized by circular economy which will provide a sustainable alternative to aid recovery.

Swadeep Kumar

Red panda protection



Red panda protection – Today Current Affairs

- Recently the Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park has started an ambitious program to release 20 red pandas into the wild in about five years.
- Singilla National Park, the most protected area in West Bengal, will soon get new residents.

Today Current Affairs

Red Panda:

- The giant panda and red panda are the only two different panda species in the world.
- It is also the state animal of Sikkim.
- Red pandas are shy, solitary and tree-dwelling animals and are considered an indicator species for ecological change.
- Both (sub) species found in India:
 - Himalayan Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgens*).
 - Chinese Red Panda (*Ailurus stanei*)
- Siang River in Arunachal Pradesh divides two phylogenetic species.
- It is found in the northern mountains of India, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar and in the forests of southern China.
- Singilla and Neora Valley National Parks in West Bengal are the two protected areas where red pandas are found, even in these protected areas the panda population has

declined.

Conservation status:

Red Panda : The Hindu Analysis

- IUCN Red List: Endangered
- CITES: Appendix 1
- Wildlife Protection Act 1972: Schedule 1

Giant Panda : The Hindu Analysis

- IUCN Red List: Vulnerable
- CITES: Appendix 1

Red Panda Project : The Hindu Analysis

- Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park has launched an ambitious program to release 20 of these mammals into the wild in about five years.
- Padmaja Naidu Park Darjeeling is one of the highest altitude zoos in the country and has been very successful in breeding these mammals. The Hindu Analysis
- These pandas will be released in Singilla National Park, the highest protected area of West Bengal.
- Singilla National Park is located on the Singalila Ridge in Darjeeling district.
- It is the highest altitude park in the state of West Bengal.
- It was initially a wildlife sanctuary and was made a national park in the year 1992.

Other National Parks of West Bengal are : The Hindu Analysis

- Jalda Para National Park
- Neora Valley National Park
- Sunderbans National Park
- Gorumara National Park
- Buxa National Park and Tiger Reserve

India's Efforts for Conservation of Red Panda:

Securing Red Panda Habitat : The Hindu Analysis

- WWF-India works with local communities to reduce their dependence on fuel wood by introducing them to innovative technologies to meet their energy demands.
- More than 200 persons have been trained in making bio-briquettes in Sikkim.

Local Support : The Hindu Analysis

- Local communities are involved in alternative livelihood activities that benefit them, as well as supporting conservation initiatives.
- Community based tourism in Arunachal Pradesh enables local people to earn additional income from tourists visiting red pandas.

Mitigating the threat to the red panda population : The Hindu Analysis

- To work with local communities to reduce forest dependence and involve them in conservation measures, as well as to address the threat of habitat degradation and fragmentation.
- WWF-India has also collaborated with Sikkim Anti-Rabies and Animal Health (SARAH) and initiated a program to sterilize them to control the growing population of wild dogs around important wildlife areas.

Swadeep Kumar

Dragon fruit



Dragon fruit – Today Current Affairs

- Recently the center has decided to promote the development of dragon fruit, recognizing

it as a “special fruit” considering its health benefits.

- In addition, the Center believes that due to the nutritional benefits of the fruit and the global demand, its cultivation can be increased in India.

Today Current Affairs

Dragon Fruit:

- Dragon fruit grows on the Hilocereus cactus, also known as the Honolulu Queen.
- This fruit is native to southern Mexico and Central America. Even today it is grown all over the world.
- At present, Mizoram is at the fore in the states cultivating this fruit.
- It is known by many names, including papaya, pitaya and strawberry, pear.
- Of the two most common types, it is bright red in color with a green plumage that resembles a dragon.
- It is known by many names, including papaya, pitaya and strawberry, pear.
- Of the two most common types, it is bright red in color with a green plumage that resembles a dragon.

Largest producer : The Hindu Analysis

- The world’s largest producer and exporter of dragon fruit is Vietnam, where the plant was introduced by the French in the 19th century.
- The Vietnamese call it thanh long, which translates to “dragon’s eye”, which is believed to be the origin of its common English name.
- Apart from Vietnam, this exotic fruit is also grown in USA, Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, China, Australia, Israel and Sri Lanka.

Features : The Hindu Analysis

- Its flowers are bisexual in nature (male and female organs in the same flower) and open at night.
- Plant gives yield for more than 20 years, it is value added with high nutraceutical properties (having medicinal effect) and is beneficial for processing industries.
- It is a rich source of vitamins and minerals.

Climatic Conditions : The Hindu Analysis

- According to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, this plant does not require much water and can be grown on dry land.
- The cost of cultivation is high initially but the plant does not require productive land; its maximum production can be done in unproductive, less fertile areas.

Steps taken by State Governments : The Hindu Analysis

- The Gujarat government recently named the dragon fruit as Kamalam (lotus) and announced incentives for the farmers who cultivate it.
- The Haryana government also provides grants to those farmers who are willing to grow this exotic fruit variety.
- Government of Maharashtra has taken an initiative to promote dragon fruit cultivation in different regions of the state by providing good quality planting material and subsidy for its cultivation through Integrated Horticulture Development Mission (MIDH)..

Swadeep Kumar

The draft of the national policy for persons with disabilities (“Policy”): Critical evaluation

The draft of the national policy for persons with disabilities (“Policy”): Critical evaluation – Today Current Affairs

- Context: recently Government of India drafted the national policy for persons with disabilities (“Policy”) for uplifting the condition of disabled persons. The government invited the suggestion for this policy.

Today Current Affairs

Introduction:

- the establishment of equality among all persons is the key objective of any democratic and welfare country. Therefore, The Department of Empowerment of Person with Disabilities (DoEPwD) Government of India also released a policy for disabled persons so that they could be strengthened. But this policy is just drafted and put for the comments and suggestions of the public. this is a good practice of the democracy
- This new policy , infact replaces the old policy of 2006 for the disabled persons . Here it should be analysed regarding the new provisions of the policies and what were the flaws of the old policies so those old policies had to be substituted ‘

Need for the new policy : The Hindu Analysis

- Multiple factors are responsible for this policy like the agreement of the India with United

Nations where India signed on United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

- In the last several years, the number of the disabled person has also increased therefore the enactment of new disability legislation (Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016) new policy was required.
- India is also a party of the Incheon Strategy which was made for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022 (“Incheon commitment” Incheon is a south Korean city where this convention was convened). The Hindu Analysis
- The 10 goals were identified by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) for any Asia-Pacific country to ensure the empowerment of disabled persons up to 2030 with the Sustainable Development
- The commitment of the government to the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities

The Draft of the Policy : The Hindu Analysis

- This draft of the policy highlighted the inclusion of disabled persons in every field of social and educational development but by providing them the political inclusiveness other efforts would not be suffice
- Article 29 of the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities instructs the state should ensure the maximum and even full participation of the disabled person in the election procedure directly and indirectly . All the facilities which are required for participation in the election procedure in India must be provided to disabled persons. We have to check whether , in this new policies some efforts are done for political inclusiveness of the disabled persons or not. The Hindu Analysis
- In the Indian democratic system, the inclusion of the disabled person is nominal. There are many even election booths where the minimum required facilities for disabled persons are available so that the disabled person could encourage the cast their votes
- We should also ensure the representation of physically disabled persons in the political system, we should make laws in this regard also. The first visually disabled Member of Parliament in independent India, Sadhan Gupta, hardly finds mention in our political or disability discourse. However, some states have taken the initiative for increasing the political participation of disabled persons in local political units

Today Current Affairs

Conclusion

- Hence it may be concluded that any policy would be really affectable related to disabled person when the political representation of disabled persons would be ensured at the maximum level. Once these people are politically empowered , automatically their

community would be empowered. Without giving the proper representation of the disabled Persians their welfare and inclusive development of society are not possible.

Newadmin

Service charges: CCPA



Service charges: CCPA – Today Current Affairs

- Recently, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued rules to avoid unfair trade practices and protect consumer interests in hotels and restaurants that assess service charges.

Today Current Affairs

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA):

- It was established under the Consumer Protection Act (CPA) 2019.
- It reserves the right to control abuse of consumer rights, unfair trade practices and false or deceptive marketing that is harmful to the public interest.
- It has the power to protect, promote and most importantly prevent violation of the rights of consumers under Section 18 of the CPA, 2019 under the Act.
- Apart from this, it promotes consumer rights and ensures that no person indulges in unfair trade practices and it also has the right to issue guidelines to enforce the rights of

consumers.

New Guidelines : The Hindu Analysis

- According to this, there is a ban on charging additional charges automatically or by default in the bill in the name of service charge in hotels and restaurants.
- They must inform customers that service charges are voluntary and optional.
- Most importantly, hotels and restaurants are no longer allowed to limit admission or services based on the collection of service charges. The Hindu Analysis
- Further, hotels are not allowed to add service charges to their bills and collect total GST.
- Any tip, token, donation etc. will be treated as a separate transaction between the hotel staff and the consumer which is completely voluntary for the consumer.

Correction Process : The Hindu Analysis

- If any hotel or restaurant is charging service charges, the customer can ask the concerned hotel or restaurant to deduct the service charge from the bill or can lodge a complaint on NCH by calling the number 1915 or through the NCH mobile app. The Hindu Analysis
- The National Consumer Helpline acts as an alternate dispute resolution mechanism at the pre-litigation stage.
- A complaint against unfair trade practice can be lodged with the Consumer Commission electronically through edaakhil.nic.in for quick and effective redressal.

Service tax : The Hindu Analysis

- It is a tip or direct transaction between the customer and the restaurant staff, especially the wait staff.
- It is the cost charged for services related to the purchase of a main product or service.
- It is collected by the hospitality and food and beverage industries as a fee for serving the consumers.

Reason for issuing new guidelines : The Hindu Analysis

- A large number of complaints were registered on the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) regarding unnecessarily levying of service charges in payment bills.
- The bill was often charging additional amount as the total amount under the guise of some other charges.
- As per the new rules, charging a consumer more than the price of the food item on the menu and applicable taxes is considered 'unfair trade practice' under the CPA.

Swadeep Kumar

I2U2 Summit



I2U2 Summit – Today Current Affairs

- Recently the first I2U2 (India, Israel, United States of America and United Arab Emirates) leaders' summit was held in virtual form.

Today Current Affairs

I2U2

- I2U2 is a group formed by India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates and the United States of America. It is also known as 'West Asian Quad'.
- I2U2 was formed in October 2021 after the Abrahamic Agreement to address issues related to maritime security, infrastructure and transport.
- The 'Abraham Accord' is the first peace agreement between Israel and the Arab countries in the last 26 years.

Purpose : The Hindu Analysis

- Its stated objective is to discuss "strengthening economic partnership in trade and investment in and outside common areas of mutual interest".
- Six areas of mutual cooperation have been identified by countries and aimed at promoting joint investments in water, energy, transport, space, health and food security.

Highlights of the summit : The Hindu Analysis

- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced an investment of USD 2 billion in India to develop food parks across the country.
- India will provide suitable land for this project and facilitate integration of farmers into

food parks.

- The group announced the support of a “hybrid renewable energy project” in Gujarat, which includes 300 megawatts (MW) of wind and solar capacity. The Hindu Analysis
- This project will prove to be another important step in India for 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030.
- The US and Israel will be invited to provide their expertise in the private sectors and provide innovative solutions that contribute to the overall sustainability of projects under the group.

Food Park : The Hindu Analysis

- Food Park is a concept that aims to establish direct linkage of consumer markets from farm to processing.
- This includes Collection Centers (CCs) and Primary Processing Centers (PPCs) attached to the Central Processing Centre.

Importance of Food Park:

Dealing with food insecurity : The Hindu Analysis

- Investment in food parks will help combat food insecurity in South Asia and the Middle East, while maximizing crop yields.
- They aim to reduce “food loss and food spoilage”.
- India is the major food producer in the world.
- It has become imperative to focus on food and energy security in the backdrop of the current military situation in Ukraine, which has had a massive negative impact on the food, energy and other sectors.

Increase in Income : The Hindu Analysis

- Farmers’ income will increase manifold and they will come on the table.
- Streamlining the agricultural supply chain:
- India was selected for the food project as it would help in building a smooth agricultural supply chain due to its proximity to Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

Swadeep Kumar

The trend of World Politics toward Europe

The trend of World Politics toward Europe – Today Current Affairs

- Context: For several months the Russian Ukrainian war, once again influenced the entire world. The economy of the entire world is influenced by this war. Therefore, the political scientist once again has started to say the world is once again influenced and centralized towards Europe. This Euro center of world order would be more dangerous than the first second decades of the 20th century.

Today Current Affairs

Introduction

- For several years world, politics was centralized in Europe after the second world war and the defeat of Germany. The two poles of the powers evolved. One pole of world politics was headed by the UAS and another by the USSR. But after the disintegration of the USSR, once again this world has become unipolar. For the last decades, the world has been converted into a multipolar world in which China, India, Russia, Japan, Israel, etc type countries have emerged as one of the biggest powers in economy and military. But once again after the Russia Ukrain war, once again the world is centralizing toward Euriope.

The reasons behind this changing world order : The Hindu Analysis

- There are several reasons which are responsible for this changing world order. After the Russian Ukrain war, the feeling of insecurity among the European countries increased. The small countries and pacific countries of Europe had lost their faith in America so therefore they are also increasing their investment in the defense sector gradually. Germany continuously increased its defense power itself.
- If we suppose Donald Trump becomes the president in 2024 once again and he adopts several strict measures for her own security. n any case, there is little doubt that Europe, going forward, will emerge as a major locus of trans-Atlantic security imagination. The process has clearly begun. If wars have the potential to shape international orders, it is Europe's turn to shape the world, once again. The Hindu Analysis
- The Russian aggression once again had shown the power of Russia in front of the world and it alarmed other European countries to unite once again to protect their sovereignty because America would be more interested in her personal interest. therefore European countries would more focus on NATO. The European Union (EU) Commission in Brussels has backed Kyiv's bid for EU candidature, and the 30-state military alliance, NATO, has two more members in its fold (Finland and Sweden) all thanks to what the Europeans call "Putin's" war in Ukraine (they make a careful distinction between Russia

and Vladimir Putin).

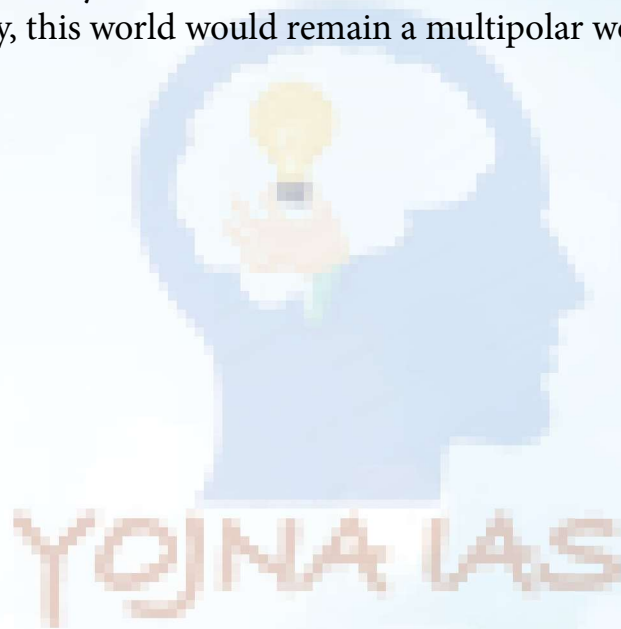
- This Ukraine war also impacted some institutions. EU and NATO type of institutions that has been always depended on America now trying to be strengthened by their own. In this entire world, politics is moving towards Europe.

Today Current Affairs

Conclusion

- On the bases of the above discussion, the Russian Ukraine war would bring many changes in every field. It would change the world order also in the future and it may be predicted that the world is once again centralizing towards European politics. China and India, Israel type of the countries also indirectly supported one of the groups and all these countries are influenced by the Russian Ukrainian War. Therefore, to protect this world from other instability, this world would remain a multipolar world.

Anshul



CURRENT AFFAIRS

JULY 2022



CAATSA Act



CAATSA Act – Today Current Affairs

- Recently the United States House of Representatives has approved amendments to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which proposes to keep India out of the purview of sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).
- It will allow India to freely buy Russia's S-400 missile system without fear of US sanctions.
- The National Defense Authorization (NDAA) is legislation that Congress passes each year to change the policies and organization of the United States defense agencies and provide guidance on how funds allocated to the military sector can be spent.

Today Current Affairs

Proposed Amendments:

- The amendment urges the US administration to use its authority to grant India an

exemption under the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) to help deter aggressors like China.

- The law states that the United States-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (ICET) aims to address the latest advances in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, biotechnology, aerospace and semiconductor manufacturing by governments, academia and industry in both countries. It is a welcome and necessary step to develop closer partnership between.

CAATSA

US law : The Hindu Analysis

- CAATSA is a US law that was enacted in the year 2017 and its main objective is to counter the aggression of Iran, Russia and North Korea through punitive measures.
- Its Title II primarily deals with sanctions on Russian interests such as its oil and gas industry, defense and security sector, financial institutions in the backdrop of its military interference in Ukraine and its alleged interference in the 2016 US presidential elections.
- Section 231 of the Act empowers the US President to impose at least five of the 12 sanctions listed in Section 235 of the Act on persons engaged in "substantial transactions" with the Russian defense and intelligence sectors.

Sanctions that may affect India : The Hindu Analysis

- There are only two sanctions that can affect India-Russia relations or Indo-US relations.
- Prohibition of Banking Transactions : The Hindu Analysis
- The first of these, which is likely to have an impact on India-Russia relations, is the "prohibition of banking transactions".
- This will result in difficulty in paying Russia in US dollars for the purchase of the S-400 system for India. It will also affect India's procurement of spare parts, components, raw materials and other services.
- In the year 2020, Turkey was approved for the purchase of the S-400 system.

Export Approval : The Hindu Analysis

- Viewed in the context of the "export clearance" ban, it has the potential to completely derail the India-US strategic and defense partnership, as it would deny licenses and exports of any goods controlled by the US.

Exemption Criteria : The Hindu Analysis

- The US President was empowered to waive CAATSA sanctions on a 'case-by-case' basis in 2018.

Russia's S-400 Triumph Missile System : The Hindu Analysis

- It is a mobile, surface-to-air missile system (SAM) designed by Russia.
- It is the most dangerous operationally deployed 'Modern Long-Range SAM' (MLR SAM) in the world, which is considered to be much more advanced than the US-developed 'Terminal High Altitude Area Defense' system (THAAD). The Hindu Analysis
- This system is 30 km. At an altitude of up to 400 km. It can target all types of air targets, including aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and ballistic and cruise missiles within range.
- The system can track 100 air targets and hit six of them simultaneously.

Importance for India : The Hindu Analysis

- From India's point of view, China is also buying defense equipment from Russia. In 2015, China signed an agreement with Russia. And it was launched in January 2018.
- The acquisition of the S-400 system by China has been seen as a "game changer" in the region. However its effectiveness against India is limited.
- Its acquisition is critical to countering attacks in a two-front war, including even the high-end F-35 US fighter aircraft.

CAATSA exemption on Indo-US relations : The Hindu Analysis

- The NDAA amendment also urged the US to take more steps to help India pivot away from its reliance on Russian-made weapons.
- This amendment is in line with the period of recent bilateral strategic relations.
- The crucial year was 2008 and since then US defense contracts with India are worth at least US\$ 20 billion. In the period prior to 2008, it was only US\$500 million.
- In addition, in the year 2016, the US recognized India as a major defense partner. Strategic ties have also been strengthened through groups such as Quad and now I2U2.
- It is in its strategic interest for India to move away from Russian platforms.
- Russia's dependence on China has increased significantly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a situation that is unlikely to change in the future.
- Already, China is second only to India as the second largest recipient of Russian arms exports.
- Given India's long-standing border management protocol with China, reliance on Russian weapons is unwise.

Swadeep Kumar

National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) Ranking 2022



National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) Ranking 2022 – Today Current Affairs

- Recently the Ministry of Education has released the 7th edition of National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), Ranking 2022.

Today Current Affairs

National Institutional Ranking Framework:

Launch:

- The 'National Institutional Ranking Framework' (NIRF) was approved by the Ministry of Education (erstwhile Ministry of Human Resource Development) in September 2015.
- This is the first effort of the Government of India to rank higher educational institutions (HEIs) in the country.
- In the year 2018, it was made mandatory for all government educational institutions across the country to participate in the 'National Institutional Ranking Framework'.

Evaluation on five parameters : The Hindu Analysis

- Teaching, Learning and Resources-TLR
- Research and Professional Practices-RP
- Graduation Outcomes-GO
- Outreach and Inclusivity-OI

- Peer Perception

Categories : The Hindu Analysis

- The best institutions have been listed in a total of 11 categories – Overall National Ranking, Universities, Engineering, Colleges, Medicine, Management, Pharmacy, Law, Architecture, Dentistry and Research.

Reason to launch : The Hindu Analysis

- The subjectivity in the ranking methodology developed by the QS World University Rankings and the Times Higher Education World University Rankings prompted India to introduce its own ranking system for Indian HEIs on the lines of the Shanghai Ranking.
- NIRF's long-term plan is to make it an International League Table.
- More than 7,000 institutions participated in the NIRF rankings.

Key Features of Ranking 2022 : The Hindu Analysis

- Overall, IIT-Madras, IISc-Bangalore and IIT-Bombay are the top three higher education institutions in the country.
- University: IISc- Bangalore University tops the category.
- Colleges: Miranda College has retained the first position among colleges for the sixth year in a row, followed by Hindu College, Delhi and Presidency College, Chennai.
- Research Institute: IISc-Bangalore has been ranked as the best research institute after IIT-Madras.
- Engineering: IIT-Madras has been ranked number one among engineering institutes.
- Management: Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad has been ranked first and IIM-Bangalore second in the field of management.
- Medicine: All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi has been at the top position in medicine for the fifth year in a row.
- Pharmacy: Jamia Hamdard has topped the list for the fourth time in a row in the field of Pharmacy.
- Architecture: IIT Roorkee has topped in Architecture for the second time.
- Law: National Law School of India University, Bangalore has maintained its first position in law for the fifth year in a row.
- Dental: Savita Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences, Chennai has got the first rank.

Swadeep Kumar

The Indian Patent Regime



The Indian Patent Regime – Today Current Affairs

- The U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) said in a recent report that India was one of the most challenging major economies as far as IP protection and enforcement is concerned.

Today Current Affairs

How is India's patent regime?

- A patent is an exclusive set of rights granted for an invention, which may be a product or process that provides a new way of doing something or offers a new technical solution to a problem.
- Indian patents are governed by the Indian Patent Act of 1970.
- Under the act, patents are granted if the invention fulfils the following criteria.
- It should be novel
- It should have inventive steps or it must be non-obvious
- It should be capable of industrial application
- It should not attract the provisions of sections 3 and 4 of the Patents Act 1970
- India became a party to the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement following its membership to the World Trade Organization in 1995.
- The original Indian Patents Act did not grant patent protection to pharmaceutical products and was re-introduced after the 2005 amendment to comply with TRIPS.
- India is also a signatory to several IPR related conventions including
- The Berne Convention (governs copyright)
- The Budapest Treaty
- The Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property
- The Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT)

What were the challenges raised by USTR? The Hindu Analysis

- Special 301 Report– The USTR releases a Special 301 Report on intellectual property (IP) annually.
- It identifies trading partners that do not adequately/ effectively protect and enforce IP rights or deny market access to U.S. innovators and creators that rely on protection of their IP rights and place them in the Priority Watch List or Watch List.
- India continues to be on the ‘Priority Watch List’ of the USTR for lack of adequate IP rights protection and enforcement.
- Issues- Concerns raised include what can be patented, waiting times for obtaining patents, reporting requirements, and data safety.
- The USTR also highlighted the threat of patent revocations, lack of presumption of patent validity and narrow patentability criteria as issues.
- The USTR report too highlighted issues relating to judicial delays despite constituting the 2015 Commercial Courts Act.
- It has also expressed the concerns against the abolition of IPAB under Tribunals Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Ordinance, 2021.

What is India’s stance on the issue? The Hindu Analysis

- The issues regarding IPR were tackled by the Parliamentary Standing Committee which undertook a ‘Review of the Intellectual Property Rights Regime in India’.
- Article 3(d) of the Indian Patent Act– Section 3 and Section 3(d) deals with what does not qualify as an invention under the Act.
- The Parliamentary Standing Committee pointed out that the section acts as a safeguard against frivolous inventions thus preventing “evergreening” of patents.
- Section 3(d) allows for generic competition by patenting only novel and genuine inventions.
- It said that this ensures the growth of generic drug makers and the public’s access to affordable medicines.
- The Committee refers to the judgement in the Novartis vs. Union of India which upheld the validity of section 3(d) and held that it complies with the TRIPS agreement and the Doha Declaration.
- It concluded that India must not compromise on the patentability criteria under Section 3(d) as a sovereign country.

What is the Doha Declaration? The Hindu Analysis

- The Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health was adopted in 2001 by the WTO member states.
- It recognises the gravity of public health problems affecting developing and least developed

nations and stresses the need for TRIPS to be part of the wider national and international action to address these problems.

- These flexibilities include
- The right to grant compulsory licences and the grounds for such licences
- The right to determine what constitutes a national emergency or other circumstances of extreme urgency, including public health crises
- The right to establish its own regime for the exhaustion of intellectual property rights.

What positive steps were taken by India regarding IPR? The Hindu Analysis

- Accession to treaties– The positive steps taken by India in the recent past include accession to the
- World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Performances and Phonograms Treaty
- WIPO Copyright Treaty (collectively known as the WIPO Internet Treaties) in 2018
- Nice Agreement in 2019
- Revised manual– India issued a revised Manual of Patent Office Practice and Procedure in 2019 and revised Form 27 on patent working in 2020 to reduce redundancy of information filing by patent applicants in India.
- IP division– After IPAB was abolished, the Delhi High Court created an IP division in 2021, for which the draft rules have been released for comment.
- CIPAM– The Cell for Intellectual Property Rights Promotion and Management (CIPAM) has been promoting IP awareness across India.
- MoU– The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) and Department for the Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) are working to further a MOU signed in 2020 relating to IP technical cooperation mechanisms.

Anshum

Legal provision for handcuffing



Legal provision for handcuffing – Today Current Affairs

- Recently, the High Court of Karnataka in 'Suprit Ishwar Devet v State of Karnataka' has given liberty to the State to recover an amount of two lakh rupees from a convicted police officer as compensation for handcuffing an accused without recording reasons in the police case diary given to the government.

Today Current Affairs

Principles of handcuffs

- According to the Karnataka High Court, handcuffs can be used only in 'extreme circumstances', for example where there is a apprehension of the accused/undertrial prisoner escaping from custody or causing self-harm or harm to others.
- Also, the arresting officer is required to record the reasons for handcuffing, which are to be produced in the court during the judicial inquiry.

A person can be legally handcuffed under three circumstances. The Hindu Analysis

- On the arrest of the accused and before his production before a Magistrate
- While transporting an Undertrial Prisoner from prison to court and back
- While taking a convicted person from jail to court and back.
- With regard to handcuffs, the Supreme Court in Prem Shankar Shukla v. Delhi Administration case (1980) held that handcuffs can be used in the only circumstance when there is no other reasonable option available to prevent the accused from escaping.
- Also, if an arrest or convict can be prevented from escaping by increasing the security, then in such a situation increasing his security instead of handcuffing is an ideal option.

Court view on compensation : The Hindu Analysis

- The Court may, after questioning the arrested person, accept or deny the reasons for handcuffing.
- The principles of handcuffing the accused or undertrials or criminals remain the same in all cases. However, if a person is in judicial custody, the permission of the court is required to be handcuffed except in exceptional circumstances.
- In State of Maharashtra v. Ravikant S. Patil case (1991), the Bombay High Court held the Inspector of Police responsible for the violation of Article 21 and ordered payment of compensation.
- However, the Supreme Court did not hold the police officer personally liable as he had acted in the capacity of his official.

- Also, the Supreme Court amended the order and directed the state (not the police inspector) to pay the compensation.
- Thus, the decision of the Karnataka High Court does not appear to be in consonance with the judgment of the Supreme Court.

Solution : The Hindu Analysis

- Strict departmental action is necessary against the officer in case of any animosity regarding handcuffing.
- Reasons for handcuffing must be mentioned in the case diary.
- Instead of ordering payment of compensation, it is more appropriate to initiate disciplinary action against the erring officer under the Service Conduct Rules.
- Review of police activities, requirement of additional manpower and technical equipment from time to time by the State Governments.

Swadeep Kumar

India-Belarus Relations



India congratulated Belarus on the occasion of its 78th Independence Celebration.

Today Current Affairs

India-Belarus Relations:

Diplomatic Relations:

- India's relations with Belarus have traditionally been warm and cordial.

- India was one of the first countries to recognize Belarus as an independent country after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Support in multilateral fora : The Hindu Analysis

- Cooperation between the two countries is visible in several multilateral fora such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).
- Belarus was one of the countries whose support helped cement India's candidature for a temporary seat at the UNSC in July 2020.
- India has supported Belarus in various international fora such as membership of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and other international and multilateral groups such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Wide Participation : The Hindu Analysis

- The two countries have a comprehensive partnership and establish mechanisms for exchange of views on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues through Foreign Office Consultations (FOC), Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC), Joint Commission on Military Technical Cooperation has been done.
- The two countries signed several MoUs on various subjects such as defense and technical cooperation including trade and economic cooperation, culture, education, media and sports, tourism, science and technology, agriculture, textiles, double taxation avoidance, investment promotion and protection.

Trade and Commerce : The Hindu Analysis

- In the economic sector, the annual bilateral trade turnover in the year 2019 was US\$ 569.6 million.
- In the year 2015, India granted market economy status to Belarus and a line of credit of US\$ 100 million has also helped in the development of the economic sector.
- Market economy status is given to the exporting country of the commodity accepted as the benchmark. Prior to this status the country was considered as a non-market economy (NME).
- Belarusian businessmen are benefiting from India's incentives to invest in 'Make in India' projects.

Indian Diaspora : The Hindu Analysis

- There are about 112 Indian nationals and 906 Indian students from the Indian community in Belarus who are studying medicine in state medical universities in Belarus.
- Indian art and culture, dance, yoga, ayurveda, film etc. are popular among Belarusian citizens.
- Many young Belarusians are also keenly interested in learning Hindi and dance forms of

A poverty trend in search of an explanation

A poverty trend in search of an explanation – Today Current Affairs

- A noticeable absence in the blitzkrieg of information on the economy periodically unleashed by the Union government over the past few years has been estimates of poverty.

Today Current Affairs

- The poverty estimates in India
- The first significant dent in poverty in India occurred in the late 1960s, while growth had begun to slow from the mid-sixties.
- The last official estimate of poverty that is comparable over time, undertaken by the Planning Commission, is for the year 2011-12.
- The reason behind this state of affairs is that we have not had a household consumption expenditure survey for a subsequent year, such a survey being the ideal basis for poverty estimation.

What is a household consumption expenditure survey? The Hindu Analysis

- Household expenditure: It is the amount of final consumption expenditure made by resident households to meet their everyday needs, such as food, clothing, housing (rent), energy, transport, durable goods (notably cars), health costs, leisure, and miscellaneous services.
- The survey reveals the average expenditure on goods (food and non-food) and services.
- Helps generate estimates of household Monthly Per Capita Consumer Expenditure (MPCE) as well as the distribution of households and persons over the MPCE classes.

What has been the real consumption expenditure situation in India? The Hindu Analysis

- A consumption expenditure survey was conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) for 2017-18 but was rejected by the government as defective.
- A leaked version of the report showed that real consumption expenditure had fallen since 2011-12.
- It was observed that a decline in consumption is not possible when income (GDP) has grown.

- However, it was argued that a decline in consumption cannot be ruled out even in the presence of growth, for the income distribution could shift in a way that leaves those at the lower end of the distribution with less real income.
- The Union government's rejection of the report for 2017-18 has meant that we have not been able to say anything about the trend in poverty over a whole decade.

What are the recent developments? The Hindu Analysis

- Two recent studies have made up for this lacuna, emerging as they do, separately, from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (henceforth Fund-Bank).
- The first is a working paper by Bhalla, Bhasin, and Virmani and the other is by Roy and van der Weide.
- They give us an estimate of the poverty rate for five data points after 2011-12, poverty is identified as per capita consumption of less than \$1.90 per day, being the World Bank's definition of "extreme poverty".
- The level of poverty estimated by these two studies varies considerably.
- The one by Roy and van der Weide shows twice the poverty level estimated by Bhalla et al.
- They share a common feature, which is an accelerated decline in poverty since 2011-12, with the acceleration commencing in 2014-15 in the Bhalla et al study and in 2016-17 in the former.
- With the workforce concentrated overwhelmingly in agriculture, it would be expected that wages and consumption of rural workers grew.
- Rural poverty declined steadily.
- A decline in urban poverty was to take longer, pointing to the historic role of agriculture in India.
- According to the World Poverty Clock in 2021, roughly 6% of the population in India are living in poverty.

How has demonetization impacted the country's poverty levels? The Hindu Analysis

- Data from the Periodic Labor Force Survey show that the unemployment rate rose sharply after demonetization, which remained higher than in most years of the decade.
- Since inflation has been lower since 2014, real wage growth would be faster, enabling greater consumption and thus an accelerated decline in poverty.

The annual all-India real wage growth is computed for two groups of rural men, namely non-agricultural labourers, and construction workers. The Hindu Analysis

- The resulting estimates show that for non-agricultural labourers, annual real wage rate growth was either negligible or negative in four out of the five years during the period 2015-16 to 2019-20.
- For construction workers, annual real wage growth was negative in three years, barely positive in one year, and slightly over 1% in only one year.
- There appears to have taken place little real wage growth since 2015-16.
- This finding, that there has been very little real wage growth since 2015-2016, cannot be taken as a rejection of the Fund-Bank estimates of poverty.
- It does, however, underline the need for an explanation of the accelerated decline in poverty.

What is the way forward? The Hindu Analysis

- The Planning Commission estimates in 1997 showed a slowing of the rate of poverty reduction soon after the reforms, resulting in a rise in the number of poor in 1993-94 for the first time in 15 years.
- The then government did not squash the study.
- The delay in undertaking a household consumption expenditure survey leaves us unsure of the trend in poverty in India in recent years.

Anshum

Varanasi is SCO's first "tourism and cultural capital"



Varanasi is SCO's first "tourism and cultural capital" – Today Current Affairs

- Varanasi has been selected as the first "Tourism and Cultural Capital of the SCO region 2022-23" ahead of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit to be held in September 2022.
- The SCO summit will be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan where two new members- Iran and Belarus are likely to join the SCO. The agreement was signed by the Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports as a result of the adoption of the Agreement on September 17, 2021 by the SCO member countries on cooperation in the field of youth work.
- India will host the SCO summit in the year 2023.

Today Current Affairs

Initiative:

- In a new recurring initiative to promote people-to-people contact and tourism among member states, it has been decided to make Varanasi the "Cultural and Tourism Capital".
- Every year a city of cultural heritage of a member country, which will hold the recurring presidency of the organization, will be awarded a title to highlight its prominence.
- The new initiative will come into force after the Samarkand summit, after which India will assume the presidency and host the next Heads of State Summit.

SCO Expansion : The Hindu Analysis

- It has been observed that the international influence of SCO is increasing and the principles of the SCO Charter are being widely accepted.
- China and Russia want to prepare the grouping as a counter to the West, especially as an extension of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).
- Although it is believed that there is a lot of contradiction between SCO and NATO.
- The expansion of NATO is completely different as the SCO is a cooperative organization based on non-alignment and does not target any third party.
- NATO is based on Cold War thinking.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) : The Hindu Analysis

- SCO is a permanent intergovernmental international organization.
- It is a Eurasian political, economic and military organization whose goal is to maintain peace, security and stability in the region.
- It was formed in the year 2001.
- The SCO Charter was signed in the year 2002 and came into force in the year 2003.

Produce : The Hindu Analysis

- Before the formation of the SCO in 2001, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan were members of the Shanghai Five.
- The Shanghai Five (1996) originated as a series of border demarcation and demilitarization talks, conducted by the four former Soviet republics to ensure stability along the borders with China.
- The Shanghai five was renamed SCO after Uzbekistan joined the organization in 2001.
- India and Pakistan became its members in the year 2017.

Purpose : The Hindu Analysis

- To strengthen mutual trust and goodwill among the member countries.
- To promote effective cooperation in the fields of politics, trade and economy, research and technology and culture.
- To enhance relations in the fields of education, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection etc.
- To maintain peace, security and stability in the area concerned.
- To establish a democratic, fair and rational neo-international political and economic order.

Membership : The Hindu Analysis

- Currently its member countries include Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan and Iran.

Structure : The Hindu Analysis

- Council of Heads of State: It is the apex body of the SCO which discusses international issues through its internal activities with other nations and international organizations.
- Council of Heads of Governance: negotiates and decides on issues related to economic areas under SCO and approves the budget of the organization.
- Council of Foreign Ministers: It deals with issues related to day to day activities.
- Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS): deals with dealing with terrorism, separatism, separatism, extremism and extremism.
- Secretariat of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: It is located in Beijing to provide informational, analytical and organizational support.
- Official languages: Russian and Chinese are the official languages of the SCO.

Relevance of the Group to India : The Hindu Analysis

- Over time SCO hosts have encouraged members to use the forum to discuss differences.
- These were the occasions when the current Indian Prime Minister held a bilateral

meeting with former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 2015 and the External Affairs Minister negotiated a five-point agreement with his Chinese counterpart during the Moscow summit in 2020.

- India is also a part of the 'Quadrilateral' group along with the US, Japan and Australia.
- Its association with groups of a different nature is part of its foreign policy which emphasizes the principles of "strategic autonomy and multi-alignment".

Swadeep Kumar

National symbol



National symbol – Today Current Affairs

- The Prime Minister of India recently unveiled the 6.5 meter high National Emblem on top of the new Parliament House under construction.

Today Current Affairs

National Symbol of India:

- The State Emblem of India is the national emblem of the Republic of India and is used by the central government, several state governments and other government agencies.

History : The Hindu Analysis

- The emblem of India (National Emblem) is a replica of the Lion Pillar of Ashoka at Sarnath.
- Basically it has four lions which are standing facing all the four directions. Below it is

a round base on which an elephant, a horse, a bull and a lion are made in a running posture. This circular base is in the form of a blooming inverted lotus.

- It is carved out of monolithic stone and the Dhamma Chakra is adorned on its top.

Adopted symbol:

- In the emblem of the nation it was adopted by the Government of India on 26 January 1950, in which only three lions are visible and the fourth is hidden which is not visible.

Salient Features of the National Emblem of India : The Hindu Analysis

- The State Emblem of India is the official seal of the Government of India.

Four animals are depicted representing the four directions:

A running horse: in the west

- Horse Kanthak represents the horse, which is said to have been used by the Buddha to leave his princely life.

An Elephant: In the East

- The elephant depicts the dream of Queen Maya, where a white elephant enters her womb.

A bull: in the south

- Ox represents the zodiac sign of Taurus, the month in which Mercury was born.

A lion: in the north

- Leo represents the attainment of knowledge.
- It seems that the animals follow each other, spinning the wheel of existence for eternity.
- The word Satyameva Jayate from Mundaka Upanishad, which means 'Truth Alone Triumphs', is inscribed under the top panel in Devanagari script.
- The four lions are symbols of the Buddha spreading Dharma in all directions.
- It was built in memory of the first sermon by Buddha which is known as Dharmachakrapravartana.
- As per these rules, the National Emblem of India can be used only in accordance with the provisions of the State Emblem of India (Prohibition of Improper Use) Act, 2005 and any unauthorized use is punishable under the law.
- Violation of the law can be punished with imprisonment of up to 2 years or a fine of up to Rs 2000.

Use : The Hindu Analysis

- On the letterhead of the Central Government, State Government and other government agencies.
- On the currency of India.
- On Indian passport.

- The Ashoka Chakra in the national flag is taken from the national emblem.

On buildings : The Hindu Analysis

- President's House
- Parliament House
- Supreme Court
- High Court
- Central Secretariat
- Secretariat Buildings of States and Union Territories
- Raj Bhavan/Raj Niwas
- State Legislature
- Complex of India's diplomatic missions abroad
- Residence of Heads of Missions in countries they recognize
- At the entrance to the buildings of Indian Consulates abroad

Mauryan Pillar : The Hindu Analysis

- Maurya pillars are rock cut pillars thus displaying the skill of the carver.
- Stone pillars erected by Ashoka have been found in the north Indian part of the Maurya Empire with inscriptions on them.
- Large figures of bull, lion, elephant etc. have been carved on the top part of the pillar.
- All sizable figures are erected and carved on a square or circular abacus.
- The abacus is decorated in lotus style.

Some examples of Mauryan pillars : The Hindu Analysis

- Lauria Nandangarh Pillar (West Champaran, Bihar)
- Ashoka Pillar (Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh)
- Lion Pillar of Ashoka, (Sarnath, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh)

Some other national symbols of India:

National flag : The Hindu Analysis

- The National Flag of India is a horizontal tricolor with saffron at the top, white in the middle and green at the bottom in equal proportions. The ratio of the width of the flag to its length is two to three. In the center of the white stripe is a dark blue wheel that represents the circle.
- The design of the national flag was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of India on July 22, 1947.

National Anthem : The Hindu Analysis

- Jana-gana-mana, the national anthem of India, originally composed in Bengali by Rabindranath Tagore, was adopted in its Hindi version by the Constituent Assembly as the national anthem of India on January 24, 1950.
- It was first sung on December 27, 1911 at the Kolkata session of the Indian National Congress.

National Song : The Hindu Analysis

- Vande Mataram song in Sanskrit by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.
- On January 24, 1950, President Dr. Rajendra Prasad said in the Constituent Assembly that “Vande Mataram song, which has played a historic role in the struggle for Indian independence, will be honored equally with Jana Gana Mana and will get equal status with it.

National animal : The Hindu Analysis

- Tiger, Panthera tigris is a striped animal. It has dark yellow stripes.

National flower : The Hindu Analysis

- Lotus (Nelumbo nucifera garten) is the national flower of India.

Swadeep Kumar

China's Role in blocking Terror Designations

China's Role in blocking Terror Designations – Today Current Affairs

- China has blocked a proposal to list Pakistani terror convict Abdul Rahman Makki as a UN Security Council-designated terrorist.

Today Current Affairs

What is the issue about?

- Makki is on India's UAPA list of designated terrorists.
- He held a leadership position when the Let carried out the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack in 2008, the Red Fort Attack in 2000, as well as several attacks on security force personnel in Jammu and Kashmir in recent years.

- Makki has also been on the U.S.'s list of Specially Designated Global Terrorists since 2010.
- India and the US had submitted the joint proposal to designate Makki as a global terrorist under the 1267 ISIL and al-Qaida Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council (UNSC).
- China placed a technical hold on the proposal to list Makki which blocks the adoption of the listing proposal till it is withdrawn.
- China had earlier put a technical hold on the UNSC designation of Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar for over a decade, which it lifted only in May 2019.

What is the UN terrorist designation? The Hindu Analysis

- The UNSC 1267 Committee of the UNSC was established as a result of resolution 1267 in 1999.
- It is also known as the Al Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Committee.
- The Committee comprises all 15 members of the UNSC and decides unanimously and secretly.
- It was established for the purpose of overseeing the implementation of sanctions imposed on Taliban-controlled Afghanistan for its support of Osama bin Laden.
- Eventually the committee was modified and strengthened by subsequent resolutions.
- Including an individual/organisation in the 1267 list will
 - restrict the movement
 - impose financial penalties
 - deny access funds (assets freeze)
 - deny buying of weapons

What do China's actions signify? The Hindu Analysis

- While China defends its actions that it blocked as “technical objections” based on “procedural” loopholes, it is clearly part of a pattern of protecting Pakistan internationally.
- As a result of China's objections or otherwise, none of the terror designations under UNSC 1267 against Zaki ur Rahman Lakhvi in 2008, Hafiz Saeed in 2009 and Masood Azhar in 2019 actually contains charges for any attacks carried out in India.
- It is necessary for the Government to gather evidence and systematically build its case on cross-border terrorism on the international stage.

Anshum

Indian citizenship



Indian citizenship – Today Current Affairs

- The Ministry of Home Affairs said that in the year 2021, more than 1.6 lakh Indians gave up their Indian citizenship.
- The number of people who gave up their Indian citizenship in the year 2020 was 85,256 and in the year 2019 this number was 1.44 lakh.

Today Current Affairs

Citizenship:

Constitutional Provisions:

- Citizenship is listed in the 'Union List' under the Constitution and is thus under the exclusive jurisdiction of Parliament.
- The Constitution does not define the word 'citizen', but the various categories of persons eligible for citizenship are given in Part 2 (Articles 5 to 11).

Acquisition of Indian Citizenship : The Hindu Analysis

- The Citizenship Act of 1955 specifies five methods of obtaining citizenship, which include birth, descent, registration, naturalization and incorporation of territory.

Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 : The Hindu Analysis

- The Act amended the law to accelerate citizenship for religious minorities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, especially Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians, who entered India before 2015.

- The requirement for them to have resided in India for at least 11 years before applying for Indian citizenship has been reduced to five years.

Reasons for people relinquishing citizenship:

Common cause : The Hindu Analysis

- People migrate from their countries for better employment and housing conditions and some migrate due to climate change or unfavorable political conditions in the country.

According to the Global Wealth Migration Review, 2020 : The Hindu Analysis

- High net worth individuals around the world who renounce citizenship acquired at birth may do so because of rising crime rates or a lack of business opportunities in the country.
- Other factors include safety of women and children, lifestyle factors such as climate and pollution, financial concerns including taxes, better health care for families and educational opportunities for children, and migration to escape oppressive regimes.

India : The Hindu Analysis

- In the new generation, some of the Indians holding passports from other countries are opting to live with the old Indian family settled abroad. In some high-profile cases, people leaving India are running away from the law or fearing legal action for alleged offence.
- The post-independence migrant community is moving out of India for jobs and higher education, but the pre-independence migrant movement was completely different, which saw forced and indentured labour.
- Since India does not provide dual citizenship, one has to give up his/her Indian citizenship to get citizenship of another country.
- Countries where Indians have been living for a long time or where people have family or friends will have more automated options, such as easier paperwork and a more welcoming social and ethnic environment.

Ways to relinquish citizenship in India:

Voluntary Renunciation : The Hindu Analysis

- If any Indian citizen who is of full age and capacity, can renounce the citizenship of India at his will.
- When a person gives up his citizenship, every minor child of that person also loses Indian citizenship. However when such a child attains the age of 18 years, he can get Indian citizenship again.

Termination by : The Hindu Analysis

- The Constitution of India provides for single citizenship. This means that an Indian person can be a citizen of only one country at a time.
- If a person takes citizenship of another country, then his Indian citizenship automatically ends. However, this provision does not apply when India is engaged in war.

Deprived by the Government : The Hindu Analysis

- The Government of India can terminate the citizenship of an Indian citizen if;
- Citizens have insulted the Constitution.
- Gained citizenship by fraud.
- The civilian has illegally traded or communicated with the enemy during the war.
- A citizen in any country sentenced to 2 years of imprisonment within 5 years of registration or naturalization.
- Citizen has been residing outside India continuously for 7 years.

Swadeep Kumar

Indian minority



Indian minority – Today Current Affairs

- Recently, the Supreme Court, while hearing a petition, said that the minority status of religious and linguistic communities is “state-dependent”.

Today Current Affairs

Related petition:

- The petition complains that the followers of Judaism, Wahhabi and Hinduism are de facto minorities in Ladakh, Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Kashmir, Punjab and the north-eastern states.
- However, they cannot establish and administer educational institutions of their choice due to lack of 'minority' identity at the state level.
- Religious communities like Hindus are socially, economically, politically non-dominant and few in number in many states.

Decision : The Hindu Analysis

- Every person in India can be a minority in one or the other state.
- A Marathi may be a minority outside his home state Maharashtra.
- Similarly a Kannada speaking person can be a minority in states other than Karnataka.
- The Court indicated that a religious or linguistic community that is a minority in a particular state can claim the right to conduct its own educational institutions under Articles 29 and 30 of the Constitution.

Minorities notified by the Government of India : The Hindu Analysis

- At present, only the communities notified by the Central Government under Section 2 (C) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992 are considered as minorities.
- Notwithstanding the decision of an 11-judge Supreme Court Bench in the TMA Pai case, which explicitly stipulated that linguistic and religious minorities should be identified at the state level rather than at the national level, the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act, 1992 Section 2(c) of the Act gave "unbridled power" to the Center to notify minorities. The Hindu Analysis
- MC became a statutory body in the year 1992 with the enactment of the NCM Act, 1992, which was renamed as NCM.
- The first statutory National Commission was set up in the year 1993 and five religious communities namely Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis were notified as minority communities.
- Jains were also notified as a minority community in the year 2014.

Constitutional Provisions for Minorities:

Article 29 : The Hindu Analysis

- It provides that any class of citizens residing in any part of India having a distinct language,

script or culture of its own shall have the right to preserve it.

- It provides protection to both religious minorities as well as linguistic minorities.
- However, the Supreme Court held that the scope of this article is not limited to minorities only, as the use of the word 'class of citizens' in the article includes minorities as well as the majority.

Article 30 : The Hindu Analysis

- All minorities shall have the right to establish and run educational institutions of their choice.
- Protection under Article 30 is limited to minorities (religious or linguistic) only and not to any class of citizens (under Article 29).

Article 350(B) : The Hindu Analysis

- The 7th Constitutional (Amendment) Act, 1956 inserted this article which provides for a special officer appointed by the President of India for linguistic minorities.
- It shall be the duty of this special officer to investigate all matters relating to safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under the Constitution.

Swadeep Kumar

Need for change in undertrial and hasty arrest



Need for change in undertrial and hasty arrest – Today Current Affairs

- Recently, the Chief Justice of India (CJI) said that aimless and hasty arrests, long jail term of undertrials and making it almost impossible for them to get bail is proof that this system there is dire need of change.
- The CJI said it is a “serious issue”, that 80% of the 6.10 lakh prisoners across the country are undertrials.

- The 'Chief Justice of India' was delivering a speech on the completion of 75 years of parliamentary democracy in the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly. The Hindu Analysis
- He said, "The space for the opposition is shrinking" in the country, the quality of legislative performance is deteriorating, and the expected benefits of laws do not reach the people.
- Supreme Court judges have raised the issue about indiscriminate arrest and almost impossible chances of getting bail for undertrials on two different fronts within a week.

Today Current Affairs

Key points:

- Justice Sundaresh has said, the figures placed before the court show that more than two-thirds of the prisoners in jail are undertrial prisoners. There may not even have been a need to arrest most of this category of prisoners".
- The judgment in the Supreme Court underlined that a 'police state' cannot exist within a democracy.
- According to the apex court, "In a democracy there can never be an impression that it is a police state. Both are ideologically opposite to each other".

Supreme Court's decisions on reforms in the justice system : The Hindu Analysis

- Separate law for bail: The court has noted that the 'Code of Criminal Procedure' (CrPC), despite several amendments after independence, largely retained the basic framework drawn up by the previous colonial power on its subjects has gone.
- Uniformity and certainty in decisions: Courts are the foundation of the judicial system, persons accused of the same offense should never be treated differently by the same court.

Indiscriminate arrests: The court held that the culture of too many arrests – especially for non-cognizable offences – is unfair. The Hindu Analysis

- The court emphasized that arrest is not mandatory even for cognizable offenses and it should be "necessary".
- Bail Application: There is no need to insist on 'bail application' while considering the application under Sections 88, 170, 204 and 209 of the Code.
- These sections deal with the various stages of a trial where a magistrate may decide on the release of an accused.
- Direction to the States: The Supreme Court has also directed all State Governments and Union Territories to comply with the orders and follow the standing orders to avoid indiscriminate arrests.

India's Law on the Subject of Bail : The Hindu Analysis

- The word 'bailable' is not defined in the 'Code of Criminal Procedure' (CrPC), only the

offenses under the Indian Penal Code are classified as 'bailable' and 'non-bailable'.

- CrPC empowers magistrates to grant bail for 'bailable offences' as a matter of authority. It includes release without bail or on production of bond without surety.
- In case of 'non-bailable offences', the magistrate will determine whether the accused is eligible to be released on bail. The Hindu Analysis
- If 'non-bailable offences' are cognizable, the police officer has been given the power to arrest without warrant.
- Section 436 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 states that a person accused of a 'bailable offence' under the IPC may be granted bail.
- Section 437 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 states that in 'non-bailable offences' the accused does not have the right to bail.
- It is the discretion of the court to grant bail in case of non-bailable offences.

Swadeep Kumar

Digi Travel Project



Digi Travel Project – Today Current Affairs

- Recently a meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Civil Aviation was held in New Delhi to discuss the "DIGI YATRA" project.

Today Current Affairs

What is Digi Yatra?

- The project has been envisaged to ensure contactless, seamless travel process of passengers at airports based on Face Recognition System (FRT).
- The basic idea of this project is that any passenger can pass through various check points without any paperwork or contact. For this, his facial features will be used, which will

establish his identity, which will be directly linked to his boarding pass.

- It provides a decentralized mobile wallet based identity management platform which is also affordable and also addresses the privacy/data security issues in the implementation of Digi Yatra.

Digi Travel Foundation : The Hindu Analysis

- It was incorporated in the year 2019 as a Joint Venture Company under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013.
- This foundation was created with the objective of creating Digi Yatra Central Ecosystem (DYCE).
- Digi Yatra Foundation will be a pan-India entity and custodian of the Passenger ID verification process.
- It will also develop consensus among aviation stakeholders in India.
- It will also define norms for compliance and guidelines for local airport systems.

Implementation : The Hindu Analysis

- In the first phase, Digi Yatra is proposed to be launched at two airports at Varanasi and Bangalore in August 2022 and at five airports at Pune, Vijayawada, Kolkata, Delhi and Hyderabad by March next year.
- The Airports Authority of India (AAI) will identify the airports where Digi Yatra will be implemented in a phased manner.

Purpose of Digi Yatra:

- Enhance the passenger experience and provide a simple and easy experience to all air travelers.
- Achieve better throughput through existing infrastructure using “Digital Framework”.
- Low cost operation.
- Digitizing the existing manual processes and bringing in better efficiency.
- Raising security standards and improving the performance of existing systems.
- Rollout of “Digi Yatra” system with a strong verifiable digital “ID” like Aadhaar issued by the Government.

Swadeep Kumar

Left wing extremism



Left wing extremism – Today Current Affairs

- Recently, during the Question Hour in the Lok Sabha, the Ministry of Home Affairs has provided data related to Left Wing Extremism in India.

Today Current Affairs

Key Data Facts:

- Incidents of Naxal violence in the country have come down by 77 percent between 2009 and 2021, while Maoist violence in Chhattisgarh has more than doubled the number of security forces killed in the last three years.
- Similarly the resulting deaths (civilians + security forces) have come down 85% from an all-time high of 1,005 in 2010 to 147 in 2021. The Hindu Analysis
- In the year 2021, 90 percent (45 out of 50) of total security personnel deaths in the country were in Chhattisgarh. Jharkhand is the only state which recorded the death (5) of security personnel apart from Chhattisgarh in the year 2021.
- Geographical spread of violence has decreased as only 46 districts reported Left Wing Extremism-related violence in 2021, compared to 96 districts in 2010.
- Due to this the number of districts covered under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme has come down from 126 to 90 in 2018 and 70 in 2021. The Hindu Analysis
- Similarly, the number of districts, which are classified as 'most LWE affected districts', which contribute about 90 percent of LWE violence, decreased from 35 in 2018 to 30 and 25 in 2021.

Left Wing Extremism : The Hindu Analysis

- Left-wing extremist organizations are groups that seek to bring about change through violent revolution. They are against democratic institutions and use violence to destroy democratic processes at the grassroots.
- These groups block development processes in the least developed areas of the country and try to mislead people by keeping them ignorant of current events.

Cause:

Tribal Discontent : The Hindu Analysis

- The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 also debars the tribals, who depend on forest produce for their livelihood, from cutting a tree branch.
- Massive displacement of tribal population in Naxal affected states due to development projects, mining operations and other reasons.

Easy target for Maoists : The Hindu Analysis

- Such people who have no source of livelihood involve them in Maoist, Naxalite activities.
- Maoists provide arms, ammunition and money to such people.
- Gaps in the socio-economic system of the country.
- The government is measuring its success on the basis of the number of violent attacks rather than the development done in the Naxal-affected areas.
- Lack of strong technical intelligence to fight Naxalites.
- Infrastructural problems for example, some villages are not yet properly connected to any communication network. The Hindu Analysis
- No follow-up action from the administration: It is seen that even after the capture of an area by the police, the administration fails to provide essential services to the people of that area.
- Confusion over dealing with Naxalism as a social issue or as a security threat.
- The state governments are considering Naxalism as an issue of the central government and thus are not taking any initiative to fight it.

Government Initiatives to Control Left Wing Extremism : The Hindu Analysis

- The SAMADHAN Principle: It is the only solution to the problem of Left Wing Extremism. It includes the entire strategy of the government from short term policy to long term policy prepared at various levels.

Solution means: The Hindu Analysis

- S- Smart Leadership.

- A- Offensive strategy.
- M- Motivation and Training.
- A- Actionable Intelligence.
- D- Dashboard based Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Key Results Areas (KRAs)
- H- Harnessing Technology.
- A- Action plan for each theatre/drama.
- N- No access to N-financing.
- The National Strategy was formulated in the year 2015 as a multi-pronged approach to combat Left Wing Extremism. Its main objective was, inter alia, to protect the rights of the local tribals and ensure their participation.
- Intelligence sharing and a separate 66th Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) was formed by the government to counter the threat of LWE organizations.

National Policy and Action Plan in 2015 : The Hindu Analysis

- It includes a multi-pronged approach to safeguards, development initiatives and ensuring the rights of local communities.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is providing comprehensive support to State Governments through deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) battalions, helicopters and UAVs and clearance of Indian Reserve Battalions (IRBs)/Special India Reserve Battalions (SIRBs).
- Funds are provided for the modernization and training of the State Police under the Modernization of Police Force (MPF), Security Related Expenditure (SRE) and Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS).
- Several development initiatives have been implemented for construction of roads, installation of mobile towers, skill development, improving the network of banks and post offices, health and education facilities.
- Development funds are also provided to most of the Left Wing Extremism Affected (LWE) districts under the Special Central Assistance (SCA) scheme.
- Greyhounds: It was established in the year 1989 as an elite anti-Naxal force.
- Operation Green Hunt: It was started in the year 2009-10 and there was heavy deployment of security forces in the Naxal affected areas.

Swadeep Kumar

Jawaharlal Nehru Port First Major Port with Landlord Model



Jawaharlal Nehru Port First Major Port with Landlord Model – Today Current Affairs

- Recently Jawaharlal Nehru Port has become the first major port in India to have 100% Landlord Model, with all berths operating on Public-Private Partnership model.

Today Current Affairs

Landlord Port:

- In this model the publicly governed port authority acts as a regulatory body and a landlord, while private companies operate the port which mainly involves cargo-handling activities.
- In this model, the port authority owns the port, while the infrastructure is leased out to private firms, who themselves provide and maintain the port's superstructure and have their own resources to handle the cargo.
- In return, the landlord port continues to receive a portion of the revenue from the private entity.

Service Port Model : The Hindu Analysis

- In the service port model, the port authority administers and conducts port activities.
- Port operations include providing shipping services, warehouse facilities, cranes and skilled workers/labourers. It is the responsibility of the port authority to build infrastructure, provide superstructure and staff.
- Even if the port serves the public interest, the full ownership of the port remains with the state or the government.

- Service port models run at a loss due to inefficiency in most cases. Since the port belongs to the state and the port authority has its operational control, the workers go on strike for their demands.

Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNP) : The Hindu Analysis

- It is located in Navi Mumbai, which is the major container handling port in India, with about 50% of the total containerized cargo volume in the major ports of India.
- It was commissioned in the year 1989 and in three decades of its operation the JNP Bulk Cargo Terminal has become the major container port of the country.

Brief overview : The Hindu Analysis

- It is one of the leading container ports in the country and ranks 26th among the top 100 global ports (as per Lloyd's List Top 100 Ports 2021 report).
- JNP meets all international standards with its state-of-the-art facilities, user friendly environment, as well as excellent connectivity to hinterland by rail and road.
- It is currently handling 9000 Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units TEU capacity and with upgrades it can also handle 12200 TEU capacity ships.

PPP Model : The Hindu Analysis

- Public-private partnerships involve collaboration between a government agency and a private sector company that can be used to finance, build and operate projects such as public transportation networks, parks and convention centers.

Indian Perspective : The Hindu Analysis

- PPP is considered as an effective tool for attracting investment in the port sector. So far 86 projects worth Rs 55,000 crore have been approved under PPP.
- Major projects on PPP basis include Dockyard, Mechanization, Development of Oil Jetty, Development of Container Jetties, Development of O-&M of Container Terminal, Development of O-&M of International Cruise Terminal, Non-Major of PPP System Commercialization of assets, development of tourism projects, such as development of ports, islands, so as to promote tourism.
- The volume of cargo is also expected to increase, due to which this increase will increase from 1.7 percent in 2020 to double by 2020. The percentage of cargo unloading at major ports by PPPs or other operators is expected to reach 85 percent by 2030.

Swadeep Kumar

CURRENT AFFAIRS

JULY 2022



Rights of indian tribes



Rights of indian tribes – Today Current Affairs

- The election of Draupadi Murmu as the 15th President of India is symbolic of utmost importance. She will be the first person from tribal/tribal background to hold this position.
- The election of Ms. Murmu is a milestone in the journey of tribal empowerment. In colonial India, 101 years after two tribal people were elected to the legislative bodies for the first time, a person of this class has been elected to the highest office of the country. The Hindu Analysis
- Although the founders of the Republic of India were fully aware of the non-profit status of the tribal people and made special provisions like the Fifth and Sixth Schedules of the

Constitution, the systematic erosion of the safeguards they enjoyed, There is a growing concern among tribal activists regarding their harassment and repression by the police and a general intolerance towards tribal autonomy by the state.

What are the essential characteristics for a community to be recognized as a Scheduled Tribe? The Hindu Analysis

- According to the Lokur Committee (1965), they should have five essential characteristics:
- Signs of primitive traits
- Distinctive Culture
- Hesitation to get in touch with the community at large
- Geographical isolation
- Backwardness

What are the basic safeguards provided by the Constitution of India for Scheduled Tribes? The Hindu Analysis

- The Constitution of India does not attempt to define the word 'Tribe', although the term 'Scheduled Tribe' was included in the Constitution through Article 342.
- It stipulates that "the President may, by public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which shall be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this Constitution."
- The Fifth Schedule of the Constitution provides for the establishment of a Tribes Advisory Council in every State having Scheduled Areas.

Educational and Cultural Safety Measures : The Hindu Analysis

- Article 15(4): Special provision for the advancement of other backward classes (this includes Scheduled Tribes)
- Article 29: Protection of interests of minorities (this includes Scheduled Tribes)
- Article 46: The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, in particular the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.
- Article 350: Right to protection of a specific language, script or culture.
- Political Security Measures : The Hindu Analysis
- Article 330: Reservation of seats in Lok Sabha for Scheduled Tribes
- Article 337: Reservation of seats for Scheduled Tribes in State Legislative Assemblies
- Article 243: Reservation of seats for Scheduled Tribes in Panchayats.
- Administrative Security Measures : The Hindu Analysis
- Article 275: It provides for the provision of special funds by the Central Government

to the State Government for promoting the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes and for providing them a better administration.

Recent Initiatives taken by the Government for the Scheduled Tribes : The Hindu Analysis

- TRIFED
- Digital Transformation of Tribal Schools
- Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups
- Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana
- Eklavya Model Residential Schools

Problems faced by tribes in India:

Losing control over natural resources : The Hindu Analysis

- As India industrialized and natural resources were discovered in tribal-populated areas, tribal rights were eroded and state control over natural resources replaced tribal control.
- With the advent of the concept of protected forests and national forests, the tribal people felt themselves uprooted from their cultural roots and had no secure means of livelihood.

Lack of education : The Hindu Analysis

- Most of the schools in tribal areas lack basic infrastructure and there are no minimum teaching materials and even minimum sanitation provisions.
- Tribal parents prefer to engage their children in gainful employment as there is no immediate economic benefit from education.
- Most of the tribal education programs have been prepared in official/regional languages, which are unfamiliar and incomprehensible to tribal students.

Displacement and Rehabilitation : The Hindu Analysis

- Acquisition of tribal land by the government for the development process of key areas like large steel plants, power projects and large dams has resulted in large scale displacement of tribal population.
- Tribal areas of Chotanagpur region, Orissa, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh have suffered the most.
- Migration of these tribal people to urban areas causes psychological problems for them as they are not able to adjust well to the urban lifestyle and values.

Health and nutrition problems : The Hindu Analysis

- Due to economic backwardness and insecure livelihood, tribal people face health

problems related to spread of diseases like malaria, cholera, diarrhea and jaundice.

- They are also victims of malnutrition related problems like iron deficiency and anemia, high infant mortality rate etc.

Gender Issues : The Hindu Analysis

- The degradation of the natural environment, especially the destruction of forests and the rapidly shrinking resource base, has had a massive impact on the status of women.
- Opening up of tribal areas for mining, industry and commercialization has brought men and women of the tribal group under the brutal operation of the market economy where consumerism and commoditization of women is on the rise.

Erosion of Identity : The Hindu Analysis

- The traditional institutions and laws of the tribals are coming into conflict with the modern institutions which is giving rise to apprehensions among the tribals about maintaining their identity.
- The extinction of tribal dialects and languages is another cause for concern as it indicates the erosion of tribal identity.

What should be done to empower the tribes in India?

Improvement in health facilities : The Hindu Analysis

- Mobile medical camps can play a major role in improving access to remote tribal population.
- Provision of emergency transport for pregnant tribal women for access to health facilities for maternity care is one of their major needs.
- Health workers of tribal communities become a link between health facilities and tribal communities in guiding patients, explaining doctors' prescriptions, helping patients in availing welfare schemes and counseling them about preventive and promotive health practices.

Improving Food and Nutrition Facility : The Hindu Analysis

- Formation of Mini-Anganwadis on a large scale with easy norms and expansion of Village Grain Banks in Tribal Areas are some of the strategies which have been adopted to reach out to the hitherto 'unreachable' people in tribal areas.

Employment and Income Generation : The Hindu Analysis

- Employment and income generation opportunities should be ensured for the tribal areas. Improving their economic condition by providing them with paid employment or self-employment opportunities and thus freeing them from the shackles of poverty and

indebtedness would be a necessary step.

- Efforts should also be made to extend micro-credit to self-employed undertakings and implement other schemes like MGNREGA on non-availability of work opportunities.
- There is also a need to encourage the collection and marketing of minor forest produce.

Management of Water Resources : The Hindu Analysis

- There is a need for more effective implementation of the National Water Policy in tribal areas to cover expansion of irrigation facilities and provision of drinking water (with special emphasis on watershed management, rainwater harvesting and water saving practices).
- For effective water resource management and to protect water resources from pollution, it is also necessary to spread mass education and public awareness among the rural and tribal population.

Empowerment of Tribal Women : The Hindu Analysis

- Effective measures should be taken to improve the condition of tribal women. For this the following steps can be taken:
- To promote joint forest management and their leadership role in Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- To take legal and administrative measures to stop the practice of victimization of women suspected of witchcraft, along with a massive campaign for social awareness and rehabilitation of the victim women through women's organizations.

Inclusion of Tribal Population:

Cultivation of medicinal plants : The Hindu Analysis

- India holds the top position in the export of generic drugs in the world. Tribal group people should be encouraged to cooperate with the government for self-consumption as well as identification and collection of medicinal plants from the forest for sale as well as cultivation of suitable plant species.
- The Government of India has decided to take advantage of this business and for this a National Medicinal Plant Board has been established.

Infrastructure Development : The Hindu Analysis

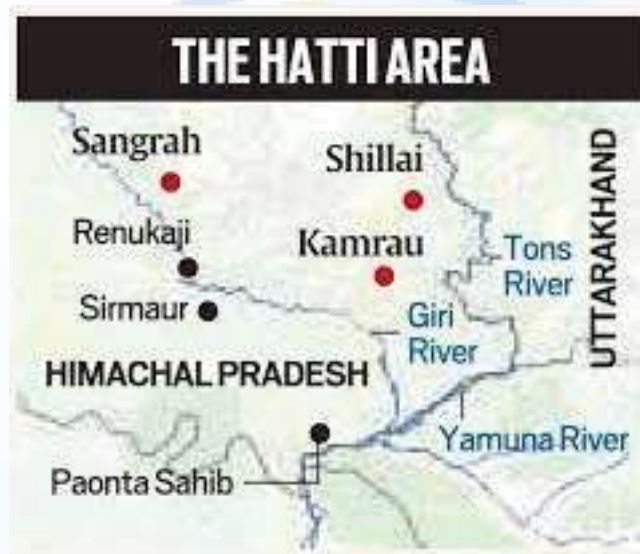
- The government can cooperate with tribal groups for the development of infrastructure in their local areas.
- Meghalaya is known for its 'living root bridge'. These bridges are traditionally built by trained Khasi and Jaintia tribesmen, who have mastered the art of building these bridges on the raised banks of streams flowing through the dense forest of Meghalaya.

Social inclusion : The Hindu Analysis

- The social exclusion experienced by tribal people is mainly due to discrimination at the social and institutional level. This has created a situation of their isolation, shame and humiliation and has consequently given opportunity for self-exclusion among the tribes.
- There is a dire need of awareness among the non-tribal population of the country to recognize the potential and dignity of the tribal people so as to ensure the unity and integrity of the country and the spirit of fraternity.

Swadeep Kumar

Hatti Community: Himachal Pradesh



Hatti Community: Himachal Pradesh – Today Current Affairs

- Recently, the central government is considering giving tribal status to Hatti community of Tan-Giri area of Sirmaur district of Himachal Pradesh.

Today Current Affairs

Hatti Community:

- The Hatti are a close-knit community, which got its name from the tradition of selling domestic vegetables, crops, meat and wool, etc., in small markets called 'Haats' in towns.
- Men in the Hatti community usually wear a distinctive white cap during ceremonies.
- This community is divided from Sirmaur by two rivers named Giri and Tons.

- Tons divide it from Jaunsar Bawar region of Uttarakhand. The Hindu Analysis
- The Hatti living in the Trans-Giri region of Uttarakhand and Jaunsar Bawar were once part of the royal princely state of Sirmaur until the separation of the Jaunsar Bawar region in the year 1815.
- Trans-Giri and Jaunsar Bawar share similar traditions and inter-caste marriages are common.
- There is a rigid caste system among the Hatti communities – Bhat and Khash are upper castes, while Badhoi are lower castes. Interracial marriages are no longer traditionally strict.
- The Hatti community is governed by a traditional council called ‘Khumbali’, which looks after community affairs like the Khap Panchayats of Haryana. The Hindu Analysis
- Despite the establishment of Panchayati Raj system, the power of Khumbali has not been challenged.
- He has a good presence in about nine assembly seats in Sirmaur and Shimla regions.
- According to the 2011 Census of India, the total tribal population of Himachal Pradesh is 3,92,126, which is 5.7% of the total population of the state.

His demands:

Tribal Status : The Hindu Analysis

- They have been demanding Scheduled Tribe status since 1967, when tribal status was given to people living in Jaunsar Bawar in Uttarakhand, which borders Sirmaur district.

Challenges : The Hindu Analysis

- The Hattis living in the Kamrau, Sangra and Shillai regions of Himachal Pradesh have been left behind in both education and employment due to topographical loss.

Status of Scheduled Tribes in India : The Hindu Analysis

- As per the 1931 Census, Scheduled Tribes are called “Backward Tribes” living in “Excluded” and “Partly Excluded” areas. The Government of India Act of 1935 called for the first time representatives of “backward tribes” in the provincial assemblies.
- The Constitution does not define the criteria for recognition of Scheduled Tribes, so the definition contained in the 1931 Census was used in the early years after independence.
- However, Article 366 (25) of the Constitution provides for the procedure for defining Scheduled Tribes only: “Scheduled Tribes” means such tribes or tribal communities or parts or groups of tribes or tribal communities as defined under Article 342 of the Constitution. The Hindu Analysis
- 342(1): The President shall, in relation to any State or Union territory, when, in relation to a State, by public notification after consultation with the Governor, tribes or tribal

communities or parts of tribes or tribal communities in relation to that State or Union territory may designate groups within.

- There are more than 705 tribes which have been notified. The largest number of tribal communities are found in Odisha.
- The Fifth Schedule of the Constitution makes provisions for the administration and control of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in states other than Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
- The Sixth Schedule deals with the administration of tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

Legal Provisions : The Hindu Analysis

- Protection of Civil Rights against Untouchability Act, 1955
- Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989
- Provisions of Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996
- The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

Related Initiatives : The Hindu Analysis

- Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)
- Digital Transformation of Tribal Schools
- Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups
- Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana

Related Committees : The Hindu Analysis

- Shasha Committee (2013)
- Bhuria Commission (2002-2004)
- Lokur Committee (1965).

Swadeep Kumar

Windfall Tax

- Against the backdrop of rising crude oil prices due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, there has been a buzz in markets about a one-time windfall tax on oil and gas companies.

What is a windfall tax?

- When a company benefits from something that they are not responsible for, the financial

gain that ensues is called windfall profits.

- Governments, typically, levy a one-time tax over and above the normal rates of tax on such profits and that is called windfall tax.
- Since, energy companies are gaining profit not because of any improvement in their processes but because of the geopolitical situation, many governments are considering imposing such tax.
- This will boost the government's finances, and help fund efforts to protect vulnerable sections from rampant inflation.

Which countries have imposed such taxes?

- Italy and the UK are two key economies that have levied windfall tax.
- Italy's case- Italy announced taxing the profits of energy companies at 25% to help fund a support package for consumers and businesses that have been hard-hit by soaring energy costs.
- UK's case- UK will increase the headline rate of tax on those profits to 65 % from 40% to profits arising on or after May 26, 2022.
- A Bill is being introduced for an 'Energy Profits Levy' and it will also include a sunset clause, which will remove the tax after 2025.

What is the case with India?

- The public expenditure on fuel, food and fertiliser subsidies are ballooning amid skyrocketing inflation.
- The FY23 fertiliser subsidy budget estimate is Rs 1.05 trillion.
- Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Ltd (OIL) reported bumper profits in the March quarter and record earnings in 2021-22.

What has to be well thought before imposing windfall tax?

- Compromise on profits- The first consideration by the government to impose windfall tax will be the production sharing contracts (PSCs).
- PSCs are long term contracts where the government is also a party and when the prices go up, the government also stands to profit.
- So, the government has to compromise on dividends and share buybacks, both of which the centre is a beneficiary of.
- Royalties- The second consideration is the royalties and ad valorem duties.
- Investor confidence- If such changes are made to the taxation policy, the government will have to consider what signal this will send out to the foreign investors under the FDI policy.

What are the criticisms against imposing windfall tax?

- The one-off taxes, which by definition are imposed retrospectively, are seen as arbitrary, fueling uncertainty among businesses about future taxes.
- The imposition of windfall tax is branded as anti-investment and anti-business.

Anshum

Why the Rajya Sabha Matters



- The Rajya Sabha, which is constitutionally the Council of States, is the upper house of the bicameral Parliament of India. The origin of the Rajya Sabha can be traced back to the Montagu-Chelmsford Report of 1918 and the subsequent Government of India Act, 1919 (which provided for a Second Federal Chamber of Parliament).
- Emphasizing the federal nature of the Indian polity, the Rajya Sabha ensures a healthy bicameralism not only as a 'House for second thought' but also as a 'House of Reforms' as the custodian of the rights of the state.
- In view of the prevailing political scenario in the country, careful evaluation of the functions of the Rajya Sabha becomes all the more necessary to reinforce the fundamentals of our parliamentary democracy.

How is Rajya Sabha relevant in Indian democracy?

Permanent body:

- Unlike the Lok Sabha, the Rajya Sabha is never dissolved, rather one-third of its members retire after every second year.
- This ensures continuity and also provides an opportunity for fusion of new and old

members in the House.

- This type of arrangement is designed to help secure representation of past as well as present opinions and help maintain consistency in public policy.

Role of Review and Reevaluation:

- Rajya Sabha helps in in-depth review of laws, as it complements the lower house or Lok Sabha in ensuring greater executive accountability.
- It tries to control the hasty and faulty and unresponsive legislations brought in by the Lok Sabha by proposing amendments and reconsideration.
- It also provides a platform for small and regional parties to present their views.

House of 'Check and Balance':

- Since the decisions of the Lok Sabha can be populist and can lead the members to go against the best decision, the Rajya Sabha exercises checks and balances over it.
- Unlike the 'House of Lords' in Britain, Rajya Sabha members do not have hereditary membership rights.

Representation of States:

- The process of indirect elections also has its place in the Indian parliamentary system where the members of the Rajya Sabha are elected by the members of the state legislatures on the basis of proportional representation through the single transferable vote.
- It acts as a conduit between the states, the people and the parliament, whereby giving an independent voice to the states, furthering the principles of decentralization.
- Provisions have been made in the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution for the allocation of seats in the Rajya Sabha to the States and Union Territories.

Promote participatory democracy:

- 12 members of the Rajya Sabha are nominated by the President of India for a term of 6 years for their contribution to the arts, literature, science and social services.
- This feature of the Rajya Sabha makes it even more democratic and participatory as it allows eminent people who make important contributions to the society their way to the highest echelons of Indian politics.

Special Powers of Rajya Sabha

Legislation on the subjects of the State List:

- Article 249 allows Parliament to make laws on subjects listed in the State List, if the Rajya Sabha passes a resolution to this effect by a two-thirds majority.

Creation of All India Services:

- Article 312 allows Parliament to create All India Services for the Union and the States, if the Rajya Sabha passes a resolution to this effect.

President's Rule Declaration:

- Usually such proclamations require the approval of both the Houses of Parliament.
- But if the Lok Sabha is dissolved at the time of proclamation, then the Rajya Sabha alone can approve the imposition of President's rule (Articles 352, 356 and 360).
- Rajya Sabha meeting was specially convened in the year 1977 to extend President's rule in Tamil Nadu and Nagaland and to impose President's rule in Haryana in the year 1991.

Removal of Vice President from office:

- The Rajya Sabha can take the initiative to remove the Vice President from office.
- The implication is that the proposal for the removal of the Vice-President can be presented only in the Rajya Sabha and not in the Lok Sabha (Article 67).
- Concerns related to Rajya Sabha

Destroying the federal character of Rajya Sabha:

- Through the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, 2003, Parliament has deleted the word 'Domicile' from section 3 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- This problem was further aggravated by the 'Kuldip Nayyar judgment' which removed the domicile condition.
- After the amendment, a person who is neither a resident nor a domicile of any state can contest the Rajya Sabha election from that state.
- Ruling parties have used Rajya Sabha seats on several occasions to propel their candidates to the Upper House, who were defeated in the Lok Sabha elections.

Limited Powers relating to Money Bills:

- Money Bill can be introduced only in Lok Sabha and not in Rajya Sabha. The Rajya

Sabha also does not have the power to amend or reject a money bill.

- For this it is mandatory to send the bill back to the Lok Sabha with or without its recommendations within 14 days.
- In this regard, the Lok Sabha has the autonomous right to accept or reject any recommendation or all the recommendations of the Rajya Sabha.
- In both the cases, the money bill is deemed to have been passed by both the houses.

To 'Bypass' Rajya Sabha:

- In some cases ordinary bills have been seen as Money Bills bypassing the Rajya Sabha, which calls into question the effectiveness of the Upper House of Parliament.

Problems related to the provision of joint sitting:

- In the event of a deadlock, the President can call a joint sitting of both the Houses. In such a case the sitting is governed by the 'Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business' of the Lok Sabha and not by the rules of the Rajya Sabha.
- Since the number of members of the Lok Sabha is usually more in a joint sitting, the will of the Lok Sabha prevails over the Rajya Sabha.

Other Limitations:

- No-Confidence Motion cannot be initiated in Rajya Sabha.
- Furthermore, it has a limited role in the functioning of the Public Accounts Committee and has no role in the Estimates Committee.

Deadlock situations

- In the event of a deadlock between the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, a joint sitting of the Parliament is called. A deadlock occurs in the following three situations:
- If the bill is rejected by the other house.
- If the Houses ultimately disagree about the amendments to be made to the Bill.
- If more than six months have elapsed from the date of receipt of the Bill without the Bill being passed by the other House.
- The Speaker of the Lok Sabha presides over the joint sitting of the Parliament.
- The provision of joint sitting is applicable only to Ordinary Bills or Financial Bills and not to Money Bills or Constitution Amendment Bills

Swadeep Kumar

Abortion Laws: India



- The Supreme Court of India had allowed unmarried women to have an abortion at 24 weeks, but recently the Delhi High Court refused to allow abortion in such a case, citing the provisions of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act.

Delhi High Court Status

- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act the Act only allowed married women to have an abortion after 20 weeks, so unmarried women would not be allowed to have an abortion.
- It refers to Rule 3B of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Rules, 2003, as it seeks to change the marital status of the woman and excludes live-in relationships and unmarried women.

Supreme Court decision

- The bench said that the Explanation to Section 3 of the provisions of the MTP Act, as amended in 2021, includes the word “partner” instead of “husband”, indicating the intention of Parliament to limit the conditions arising out of marital relations only.
- It also said that the petitioner cannot be denied the benefit of the law on the ground that she was unmarried and to do so would be contrary to the “purpose and spirit” of the law.
- Further, the bench directed the Director of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to set up a medical board of two doctors to examine the woman (as per the provisions of the MTP Act) whose function is to determine whether it is safe. Whether or not and also to ensure that there is no danger to the life of the mother in case of abortion.
- If they are of the opinion that it is safe to do so, AIIMS may allow that process to go ahead.

Abortion Laws in the Indian Context:

Historical perspective:

- Abortion was illegal in India until the 1960s and a woman was subject to three years' imprisonment and/or fine under Section 312 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).
- In the mid-1960s, the government formed the Shantilal Shah Committee and a group headed by Dr. Shantilal Shah was asked to investigate abortion and decide whether India needed a law for it.
- A Medical Termination Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha based on the report of Shantilal Shah Committee and was passed by Parliament in August 1971.
- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971 came into force on 1st April, 1972 which was applicable to the whole of India except the state of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Further, Section 312 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, voluntarily causing an abortion with the consent of the pregnant woman is also an offense to "cause abortion", except when the abortion is performed to save the life of the woman.
- This means that the woman herself or any other person including the doctor can be prosecuted for abortion.

Introduction:

- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (MTP) 1971, the Act allowed termination of pregnancy by a physician in two stages:
- A doctor's opinion was required for abortions up to 12 weeks after conception.
- According to this law, abortion can legally be performed only in special circumstances, such as when there is danger to the life of the woman, there is a danger to the physical and mental health of the woman, pregnancy has been caused by rape, The child has not developed properly in the womb and there is a fear of being disabled. In the context of pregnancies between 12 and 20 weeks, the opinion of two doctors was necessary to determine all these things.

Recent Revisions:

- In the year 2021, Parliament changed the law to allow abortion on the basis of a doctor's advice for pregnancies up to 20 weeks.
- Under the amended law, the opinion of two doctors is required for pregnancy between 20 and 24 weeks.
- Further, for pregnancies between 20 and 24 weeks, the rules specify seven categories of women who would be eligible to seek termination under section 3B of the rules prescribed under the MTP Act.
 - In the event of sexual assault or rape

- Minor
- Widow and divorce circumstances ie pregnancy at the time of change in marital status
- Women physically handicapped (major disability as per norms prescribed under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016)
- Mentally ill women with mental retardation
- fetal malformation that carries a substantial risk of being incompatible with life or, if the child is born, may be seriously handicapped, suffering from physical or mental abnormalities,
- Women with pregnancy on humanitarian grounds or in disasters or emergencies.

Challenges related to MTP Act:

- While the law recognizes changes in the marital status of a pregnant woman to divorce and widowhood with her spouse, it does not address the situation of unmarried women.
- It is a highly regulated process whereby the law transfers the decision-making power of the pregnant woman to the Accredited Medical Practitioner (RMP) and it is at the discretion of the RMP whether an abortion should be performed or not.

Swadeep Kumar

A New Global Standard for AI Ethics

- Artificial intelligence (AI) is more present in our lives than ever but it cannot be said to always be beneficial.

What is Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

- AI- AI refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think like humans and mimic their actions.
- The goals of artificial intelligence include learning, reasoning, and perception.
- Machine learning- Machine learning refers to the concept that computer programs can automatically learn from and adapt to new data without being assisted by humans.
- Deep learning- Deep learning techniques enable this automatic learning through the absorption of huge amounts of unstructured data such as text, images, or video.

What about the application of AI?

- India is one of the world's largest markets for AI-related technologies valued at over 7.8 billion dollar in 2021.
- Applications of AI

- Healthcare– AI is utilised for dosing drugs and different treatment in patients, and for surgical procedures.
- Gaming- Artificial intelligence includes computers that play chess.
- Automobiles– Self-driving cars utilize AI technology.
- Finance- AI is used to detect and flag activities such as unusual debit card usage and large account deposits.
- Agriculture– AIs are utilised for real-time insights from their fields, intelligent spraying, disease diagnosis, etc.
- Assistance– Personal assistants such as Amazon’s Alexa and Apple’s Siri are included in the weak AI systems (designed to carry out one particular job).
- The National Strategy on Artificial Intelligence released by NITI Aayog in 2018 highlights the massive potential of AI across areas such as agriculture, health, and education.

What are the issues in AI?

- Biased outcomes– The data used to feed into AI often aren’t representative of the diversity of our societies, producing biased or discriminatory outcomes.
 - For instance, while India and China together constitute around a third of the world’s population, they form just 3% of images used in Image Net.
- Issue with facial recognition tech– The scope for racial discrimination is increasing with increased usage of facial recognition technology.
 - For three programs released by major tech companies, the error rate was 1% for light-skinned men, but 19% for dark-skinned men, and up to 35% for dark-skinned women.
- Biases in facial recognition technologies have led to wrongful arrests.

What is the global standard for AI ethics?

- In 2021, the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence was adopted by UNESCO’s General Conference at its 41st session.
- It aims to fundamentally shift the balance of power between people, and the businesses and governments developing AI.
- UNESCO members have agreed to use affirmative action to make sure that women and minority groups are fairly represented on AI design teams.
- The recommendation also underscores the importance of the proper management of data, privacy and access to information.
- It calls on member states to ensure that appropriate safeguards are devised for the processing of sensitive data and effective accountability and redress mechanisms are provided.

- The Recommendation takes a strong stance that
 - AI systems should not be used for social scoring or mass surveillance purposes
 - Attention must be paid to the psychological and cognitive impact that these systems can have on children
 - Member states should invest and promote not only digital, media and information literacy skills, but also socio-emotional and AI ethics skills.
- UNESCO is also in the process of developing tools to help assess the readiness in the implementation of the recommendations.
- Finland's 2017 AI Strategy demonstrated how governments can effectively promote ethical AI use without compromising the desire to be on the cutting edge of new technologies.

How to ensure the full potential of these technologies?

- The right incentives for ethical AI governance need to be established in national and sub-national policy.
- The recommendations must be put to use to guide governments and companies to develop and deploy AI technologies that conform to the commonly agreed principles.

Anshum

Japan's Sakurajima Volcano



- Recently, the Sakurajima volcano in Japan's main western island of Kyushu saw an eruption.
- In the year 2021, the Fukutoku-Okanoba Submarine Volcano erupted in the Pacific Ocean off Japan.

Sakurajima Volcano

- Sakurajima is one of Japan's most active volcanoes and has had various levels of eruptions on a regular basis.
- This is an active Strato Volcano.
- Historically the largest eruptions at Sakurajima occurred during the years 1471–76 and in 1914.
- Eruptions in it have been recorded from the 8th century.
- Due to its continuous accumulation of ash on Kagoshima and its explosive potential, it is considered one of the most dangerous volcanoes.

Volcano:

- A volcano is an opening or rupture in the Earth's surface that ejects hot liquid and semi-liquid rocks, volcanic ash and gases in the form of magma.
- The remaining material causes a volcanic eruption. This can lead to a rapid explosion, which leads to the release of a large amount of material.
- Exploded material on Earth can be liquids ("lava" when it's on the surface, "magma" when it's underground), ash and/or gas.

Reason for rise in magma:

- Ejection of magma occurs when Earth's tectonic plates undergo convergent motion. Magma rises to fill the void. When this happens, the process of volcanic formation can also take place under water.
- When these tectonic plates move towards each other, magma also rises and parts of the plate go deep into its interior, due to high temperature and pressure, the crust melts and rises up as magma.
- Magma finally rises above the hot-spot. Hot-spots are hot regions inside the Earth. These regions heat the magma. When this magma is less dense it rises up. Although the causes of magma uplift vary, they may each have the potential to form a volcano.

Type:

Shield Volcano:

- This volcano produces low viscosity, flowing lava that extends far from the source and forms a volcano with a mild slope.
- Most shield volcanoes are formed from fluid, basaltic lava flows.
- Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa are shield volcanoes. They are the largest active volcanoes in the world around the Hawaiian Islands.

Strato Volcano:

- Strato volcanoes have relatively steep slopes and are more cone-shaped than shield volcanoes.
- They are formed from viscous, viscous lava that does not flow easily.

Lava dome:

- Soufriere mountain volcano on the Caribbean island of Montserrat, known for its lava dome complex at the summit of the volcano, has gone through phases of growth and collapse. Since viscous lava is not very liquid, it cannot easily move far beyond the exhaust hole when it is expelled. Instead it accumulates in the form of a pile at the top of the vent which forms a dome shaped structure.

Caldera:

- Magma is deposited in the magma chamber under the volcano. When a volcanic eruption occurs, magma is expelled out of the chamber, causing the magma to form a depression or bowl-like structure with vertical walls on the roof surface of the chamber.
- These are calderas and can be tens of miles apart.

Volcanoes in India:

- Barren Island, Andaman Islands (India's only active volcano)
- Narcondam, Andaman Islands
- Baratang, Andaman Islands
- Deccan Traps, Maharashtra
- Dhinodhar Hills, Gujarat
- Dhosi Hills, Haryana.

Swadeep Kumar

Street vendors



- Recently, the Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs addressed the 6th meeting of the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) on the topic “From Encroachers to Self-Employed”.

Street Vendors:

- Street vendors are individuals who offer to sell goods to the public on a large scale without a permanent built structure to sell the goods.
- Street vendors permanently occupy pavements or other public/private places to sell goods or temporarily move their goods from one place to another carrying their goods in push carts or head baskets.

Population

- The number of street vendors has increased significantly in major cities around the world, especially in developing countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa.
- Around 49.48 lakh street vendors have been identified in India.
- Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of 8.49 lakhs, followed by Madhya Pradesh with 7.04 lakhs street vendors.
- There are only 72,457 street vendors in Delhi.
- No street vendor has been identified in Sikkim.

Constitutional Provisions:

Right to do business:

- Article 19(1) (g) gives fundamental right to Indian citizens to practice any profession or

to carry on business, trade or commerce.

Equality before the law:

- According to Article 14 of the Constitution, the State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.
- Social justice:
- The Preamble of the Indian Constitution states that India is a sovereign, socialist, secular democratic republic and shall ensure social, economic and political justice, equality of status and opportunity for all its citizens.

Directive Principles:

- Under Article 38(1), the state has to direct the promotion of the welfare of the people by ensuring a social order, in which social, economic and political justice will be ensured in the national institutions.
- Article 38(2) directs 'to reduce inequalities in income status, facilities and opportunities'.
- Article 39 (A) directs the state to formulate policy to ensure that citizens, men and women alike, have the right to access to adequate means of livelihood.
- Article 41 specifically provides for the 'right to work' within the limits of the economic capacity of the state.

Reasons for increasing the number of street vendors:

- First, poverty in rural areas as well as lack of gainful employment have forced people to move out of their villages in search of a better life in the cities.
- These migrants lack the skills or education to get better wages, secure employment in the organized sector, so they have to settle for work in the unorganized sector.
- Second, there is another section of the population in the country who is forced to go to the unorganized sector for employment.
- These are the workers who were once employed in the organized sector.
- They lost their jobs due to closure, shrinkage or merger of industries and they or their family members had to look for low wages work in the unorganized sector to make a living.

Challenges before Street Vendors:

Space constraints:

- The master plans prepared for our cities do not allocate space to vendors/hawkers, as the planners imitate the western concept of marketing ignoring Indian traditions.

Troubleshooting multiple authorizations:

- Vendors have to deal with many authorities- Municipal Corporation, Police (Station as well as Traffic), Regional Development Authority, District Administration, Local Panchayat etc.

Exploitation and Extortion:

- In many cases the positive steps taken by one authority get nullified because of the actions of others.
- Instead of regulating vendors, municipal corporations regard them as an encroacher and a nuisance, their policies and actions aimed more at removing and harassing them rather than regulating them.

Frequent evictions:

- Regular evictions are carried out by the district or municipal administration.
- They fear the action of the eviction team known locally by different names.

Extortion racket:

- Cases of 'extortion tax' and 'haft collection' are common.
- In many cities sellers have to pay enough money to run their business.

Government Initiatives for Street Vendors:

Svanidhi Scheme:

- SVANidhi scheme was launched to benefit more than 50 lakh street vendors of urban areas, including people from adjoining urban/rural areas.
- It aims to promote digital transactions through cash-back incentives up to an amount of Rs 1,200 per annum.

National Association of Street Vendors of India:

- NASVI is an organization working to protect the livelihood rights of thousands of street vendors across the country.
- The main objective of setting up NASVI was to bring together street vendor organizations in India so that collective efforts can be made for changes at a large scale.

The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihoods and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014:

- This act was enacted to regulate and protect the rights of street vendors in public areas.
- The Act defines a street vendor as a person who sells goods or services of everyday use to

the general public, in any public place or private area, by means of a temporary structure or by moving from place to place.

Swadeep Kumar

AI Ethics

- Artificial intelligence (AI) is more present in our lives than ever but it cannot be said to always be beneficial.

What is Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

- AI– AI refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think like humans and mimic their actions.
- The goals of artificial intelligence include learning, reasoning, and perception.
- Machine learning– Machine learning refers to the concept that computer programs can automatically learn from and adapt to new data without being assisted by humans.
- Deep learning– Deep learning techniques enable this automatic learning through the absorption of huge amounts of unstructured data such as text, images, or video.

What about the application of AI?

- India is one of the world's largest markets for AI-related technologies valued at over 7.8 billion dollar in 2021.
- Applications of AI
 - Healthcare– AI is utilised for dosing drugs and different treatment in patients, and for surgical procedures.
 - Gaming- Artificial intelligence includes computers that play chess.
 - Automobiles– Self-driving cars utilize AI technology.
 - Finance- AI is used to detect and flag activities such as unusual debit card usage and large account deposits.
 - Agriculture– AIs are utilised for real-time insights from their fields, intelligent spraying, disease diagnosis, etc.
 - Assistance– Personal assistants such as Amazon's Alexa and Apple's Siri are included in the weak AI systems (designed to carry out one particular job).

- The National Strategy on Artificial Intelligence released by NITI Aayog in 2018 highlights the massive potential of AI across areas such as agriculture, health, and education.

What are the issues in AI?

- Biased outcomes– The data used to feed into AI often aren't representative of the diversity of our societies, producing biased or discriminatory outcomes.
 - For instance, while India and China together constitute around a third of the world's population, they form just 3% of images used in ImageNet.
- Issue with facial recognition tech– The scope for racial discrimination is increasing with increased usage of facial recognition technology.
 - For three programs released by major tech companies, the error rate was 1% for light-skinned men, but 19% for dark-skinned men, and up to 35% for dark-skinned women.
- Biases in facial recognition technologies have led to wrongful arrests.

What is the global standard for AI ethics?

- In 2021, the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence was adopted by UNESCO's General Conference at its 41st session.
- It aims to fundamentally shift the balance of power between people, and the businesses and governments developing AI.
- UNESCO members have agreed to use affirmative action to make sure that women and minority groups are fairly represented on AI design teams.
- The recommendation also underscores the importance of the proper management of data, privacy and access to information.
- It calls on member states to ensure that appropriate safeguards are devised for the processing of sensitive data and effective accountability and redress mechanisms are provided.
- The Recommendation takes a strong stance that
 - AI systems should not be used for social scoring or mass surveillance purposes
 - Attention must be paid to the psychological and cognitive impact that these systems can have on children
 - Member states should invest and promote not only digital, media and information literacy skills, but also socio-emotional and AI ethics skills.
- UNESCO is also in the process of developing tools to help assess the readiness in the implementation of the recommendations.
- Finland's 2017 AI Strategy demonstrated how governments can effectively promote ethical AI use without compromising the desire to be on the cutting edge of new technologies.

How to ensure the full potential of these technologies?

- The right incentives for ethical AI governance need to be established in national and sub-national policy.
- The recommendations must be put to use to guide governments and companies to develop and deploy AI technologies that conform to the commonly agreed principles.

Anshum

India's five wetlands included in Ramsar sites



- Five more wetlands in India have been included in the Ramsar Sites, or Wetlands of International Importance, taking the number of such sites in the country to 54.

New Ramsar Sites:

Karikili Bird Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu):

- The sanctuary is spread over five kilometers in width and is home to cormorants, egrets, gray herons, open-billed storks, darters, spoonbills, white albanese, night herons, grebes, gray pelicans, etc.

Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest (Tamil Nadu):

- The Pallikaranai Marsh is one of the few and last remaining natural wetlands in South India. It covers an area of 250 square kilometers which includes 65 wetlands.

Pichavaram Mangroves (Tamil Nadu):

- One of the last mangrove forests in the country.

- It consists of an island covered with mangrove forests with vast expanses of water.

Sakhya Sagar (Madhya Pradesh):

- Formed by Maniyar River in the year 1918, Sakhya Sagar is situated near Madhav National Park.

Pala Wetlands (Mizoram):

- It is home to a wide range of animals, birds and reptiles.
- Its geographical location comes under the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot, hence it is rich in animal and plant species.
- The lake is a major component of Palak Wildlife Sanctuary and supports major biodiversity of the sanctuary.

Ramsar Recognition:

- The Ramsar site is a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, also known as the 'Convention on Wetlands', an intergovernmental environmental treaty established by UNESCO in 1971 and named after the city of Ramsar in Iran where the convention was signed that year.
- Ramsar recognition is the recognition of wetlands around the world that are of international importance, especially if they provide habitat for waterfowl (about 180 species of birds).
- Conservation of such wetlands and the judicious use of their resources involves international interest and cooperation.
- The Sundarbans in West Bengal is the largest Ramsar site in India.
- India's Ramsar wetlands, 11,000 sq km of the country's total wetland area in 18 states.
- No other South Asian country has as many sites, although this has a lot to do with India's geographical expanse and tropical diversity.

Criteria:

One of nine criteria must be met in order to be a Ramsar site.

- Criterion 1: If it contains a representative, rare or unique example of a natural or near-natural wetland type found within the appropriate biogeographic area.
- Criterion 2: If it supports vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities.
- Criterion 3: If it supports a population of plant and/or animal species important for maintaining the biological diversity of a particular biogeographic region.
- Criterion 4: If it supports plant and/or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycle or provides shelter during adverse conditions.

- Criterion 5: If it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterfowl.
- Criterion 6: If it regularly supports 1% of individuals in a population of a species or subspecies of waterbird.
- Criterion 7: if it supports a significant proportion of indigenous fish subspecies, species or families, life-history stages, species interactions and/or populations that are representative of the benefits and/or values of the wetland and Types contribute to global biological diversity.
- Criterion 8: If it is an important source of food for fish, spawning grounds, nurseries and/or migration routes on which fish stocks depend, either within wetlands or elsewhere.
- Criterion 9: If it regularly supports 1% of the population of species or subspecies of wetland-dependent non-avian animal species.

Importance:

- Ramsar Tag helps develop and maintain an international network of wetlands that are critical to human life through the conservation of global biological diversity and the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits.
- Sites are protected under strict convention guidelines.

Wetlands:

- Wetlands are ecosystems that are seasonally or permanently saturated or filled with water.
- These include mangroves, swamps, rivers, lakes, deltas, floodplains and floodplains, rice fields, coral reefs, marine areas where low tides do not exceed 6 meters deep, as well as man-made wetlands such as treated wastewater.
- Although they cover only 6% of the ground surface. 40% of all plant and animal species are found or breed in wetlands.

Importance:

Helping in the fight against climate change:

- Wetlands produce CO₂ (carbon dioxide), CH₄ (methane), N₂O (nitrous oxide) and greenhouse gas (GHG) by reducing climate and land-use-mediated GHG emissions and increasing their ability to actively collect CO₂ from the atmosphere Helps in stabilizing the concentration.
- Wetlands also help reduce the risk of disasters such as floods by protecting beaches.

Carbon Storage:

- Wetland microbes, plants and wildlife are part of global cycles of water, nitrogen and sulfur.
- Wetlands store carbon within their tree communities and soil instead of releasing it into

the atmosphere as carbon dioxide.

Importance of Peatlands:

- The term 'peatland' refers to peat soils and surface wetlands.
- They cover only 3% of the world's land surface, but store twice as much carbon as forests, thus playing an important role in meeting global commitments on climate crisis, sustainable development and biodiversity.
- Peatlands, one of the world's largest carbon reserves, are scarce in India and require urgent attention.

Paradise for Migratory Birds:

- Millions of migratory birds visit India and wetlands are important for this annual event.
- Ecologically dependent on wetlands, migratory waterfowl connect continents, hemisphere cultures and societies through their seasonal migration.
- The diversity of wetland communities provides essential habitat for birds.

Cultural and Tourism Importance:

- Wetlands are also closely related to Indian culture and traditions.
- Loktak Lake in Manipur is revered by the locals as "Ima" (Mother), while Khechopalri Lake in Sikkim is popularly known as "Lake of Wishes".
- The North Indian festival of Chhath Puja is one of the most unique expressions of the association of people, culture, water and wetlands.
- Dal Lake in Kashmir, Khajjiar Lake in Himachal Pradesh, Nainital Lake in Uttarakhand and Kodaikanal in Tamil Nadu are popular tourist destinations.

Hazard:

Human Activities:

- According to the Global Assessment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Forum on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), wetland ecosystems are most threatened by human activities and global warming.

Urbanization:

- Wetlands located near urban centers are facing developmental pressure due to increase in residential, industrial and commercial facilities.
- In the case of sea level rise in areas surrounded by urban wetlands, the increase in coastal pressure can eventually lead to the loss of wetlands.

Climate change:

- The vulnerability of wetlands to climate change and associated factors and pressures is highly likely to increase.
- Rise in temperature, change in rainfall, increase in frequency of storms, droughts and floods, increase in atmospheric CO₂ concentration and rise in sea level can also affect wetlands.

Adverse effect on adaptability:

- The adaptability of wetlands is also likely to decrease due to the potential for adverse effects on ecosystems.
- Building aquifers to increase the storage of fresh or fresh water, for example in upper reaches of the river, can further increase the risk of salinization in coastal wetlands..

Swadeep Kumar

Ecotani / Despite concerns, the Cheetah project is worth pursuing



- Cheetah is the fastest land animal which was declared extinct in India in the year 1952. Now once again a plan is underway to bring him to India, under which he will be rehabilitated in the Kuno-Palpur National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh. These African cheetahs are being brought under an inter-continental transfer project between India and Africa (mainly from South Africa and Namibia).
- Plans to bring cheetahs to India, initially from Iran and now from the African continent, have been going on for decades and have been controversial enough. Many conservationists

in India are skeptical of the plan's success and fear it will divert attention away from the conservation of other endangered species in need of relocation, such as the Asiatic lion.

India's rationale behind the return of the cheetah and the associated challenges:

Biological Purpose:

- To reestablish its ecosystem function role in representative areas of the cheetah's former habitat and contribute to the global effort towards the conservation of the cheetah as a species.
- After bringing back the cheetah, India will become the only country where all the five members of the 'Big Cat' species – tiger, lion, panther, snow leopard and cheetah will be present.

Increase in livelihood options:

- The reintroduction of cheetahs will enhance livelihoods for local communities in and around those areas through increased revenues from ecotourism and related activities.

Sustaining the food chain:

- Apex predators control all levels in the food chain and are considered the umbrella species for the food chain (Umbrella species).
- Cheetah may prove to be a key and umbrella species for mobilizing resources to restore open forest ecosystem and restore balance in food web.

Climate Change Mitigation:

- It will enhance India's capacity for carbon sequestration through ecosystem restoration activities in cheetah conservation areas and thereby contribute to global climate change mitigation goals.

Reasons for the extinction of cheetahs in India:

- The cheetah in India has been recorded in history since before AD. Records of cheetahs being caught date back to the 1550s.
- A decrease in the level of genetic diversity due to a historical genetic bottleneck, resulting in its high infant mortality rate in the wild and its low ability to breed in captivity were some of the major factors in its extinction.

Hunting Entertainment:

- For centuries, cheetahs (both male and female) were widely and continuously captured from forested areas for hunting purposes.
- Detailed accounts of its contact with humans are available since the 16th century when it

was recorded by the Mughals and other kingdoms of the Deccan.

‘Bounty Killing’:

- The British increased the species’ crisis by announcing a reward for killing it in the year 1871.
- The final phase of its extinction was completed with the end of British colonial rule.
- It is recorded that the last remaining cheetahs were killed in India in 1947 and were officially declared extinct in 1952.
- Challenges associated with relocation of cheetah to India

Transition from enclosure to forest area:

- An important problem is whether a cheetah living in a cage and dependent on humans for food will be able to hunt on its own if released into the wild.
- For example, a tigress named Sundari (who had returned from Satkosia in Odisha after a failed rehabilitation effort) was eventually placed in Bhopal Zoo for life.

Adaptability:

- Re-introduced species are more vulnerable to the effects of drift, selection and gene flow evolutionary processes due to their smaller size and climatic and ecological differences between source and native habitats.
- African cheetahs need a long open space to run. Indian gardens are much smaller than those in Africa; thus providing less opportunity for their free movement.
- Studies in Africa have shown that female cheetahs stay alone and roam long distances, while males defend their small territories and bond with passing females. It causes fertility problems.

Coexistence with large predatory organisms:

- Since there has never been a time anywhere else that the cheetah coexisted with other species of the big cat, there is no real-life experience to suggest the coexistence of cheetahs, lions, tigers and leopards.
- Studies have shown that leopards have also preyed on cheetahs in Africa, and similar fears are being expressed for the Kuno, where about 50 leopards live around the same native area where the cheetahs will be kept.

Rehabilitation concerns:

- Many villages will have to be relocated to adequately protect the cheetah habitat, which will certainly affect the local people and cause unrest and migration.

Swadeep Kumar

Fiscal federalism: A Changing Pattern after the 2014

- Context: Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, in his first speech in the constitution assembly regarding fiscal federalism stated that we should reduce the possibilities of political and social conflict. Economic inequality is a big challenge for the Indian democracy which should be curtailed and by reducing this economical inequality, social justice could not be established. Organized fiscal federalism is the only tool through which this economical inequality can be reduced

Introduction

- The term fiscal federalism means the dedication of the fiscal power to the lowest political units. In the Indian constitution, the financial right (Sharing and imposing of taxes) are given to various levels. Like state level and the panchayat level also. The basic objective of this decentralization of financial rights is to curtail the inequality

Changing pattern of fiscal federalism

- Recently we observed the changing nature of fiscal federalism. If we observe the latest two latest finance commissions—the Fourteenth and Fifteenth. We can easily conclude that fiscal federalism is moving towards fiscal decentralization. The central government is continuously intervening in the financial rights of the state
- It seems that the government is ignoring the basic principles and the objective of fiscal federalism which is the reduction of economical inequality. In the process of political centralization, fiscal federalism is being ignored. To be sure, India was never truly federal — it was a ‘holding together federalism’ in contrast to the ‘coming together federalism,’ in which smaller independent entities come together to form a federation (as in the United States of America).
- Political India was more centralized in 1950, the federalism has been always the objective of the Indian constitution for the long term always. Throw recent policies the central government is weakening the financial power of the state. The central government is hallowing the fiscal capacity of the state. Presently The ability of States to finance current expenditures from their own revenues has declined from 69% in 1955-56 to less than 38% in 2019-20. While the expenditure of the States has been shooting up, their revenues did not. The state government has to still invest and expend in education and the health sector which are the backbone of the country. The reduction of fiscal capacity would hamper the education and health sectors also.
- However, the share of the state is increased by the 14th finance commission from 32% to 42 % but it was subverted by raising non-divisive cess and surcharges that go directly into the Union kitty. This non-divisive pool in the Centre’s gross tax revenues shot up to 15.7% in 2020 from 9.43% in 2012, shrinking the divisible pool of resources for transfers to States. In addition, the recent drastic cut in corporate tax, with its adverse impact on

the divisible pool, and ending GST compensation to States have had huge consequences.

- States had to pay a high-interest rate of 10 % instead of 7 %. It is not just that States are also losing due to gross fiscal mismanagement — increased surplus cash in the balance of States that is money borrowed at higher interest rates — the Reserve Bank of India, when there is a surplus in the treasury, typically invests it in short treasury bills issued by the Union at the lower interest rate

Conclusion

- Finally, it can be concluded that the load of the fiscal deficit is continuously increasing in the state states; the capacity of the fiscal affairs is continuously decreasing. Extreme political centralization would never bring prosperity to the states. In India type diversified culture political and fiscal decentralization is necessary. Therefore, recent Trends, up to a certain extent reduce the financial capacity of the state. The government of India and the financial expert should think in this regard also.

Anshul

Human-wildlife conflict



- Recently, the Minister of State for Forest, Environment and Climate Change informed in the Lok Sabha that the incidents of human-wildlife conflicts have increased.

Human-wildlife conflict

- Human-wildlife conflict (HWC) refers to conflicts when the presence or behavior of wildlife causes actual or direct threats to human interests or needs, resulting in negative

effects on people, animals, resources and habitat.

Cause:

- Habitat loss.
- Increase in the population of wild animals.
- Changing cropping patterns that attract wild animals to the field.
- Movement of wild animals from forest area to human-dominated areas for food and fodder.
- Movement of humans towards forests for illegal collection of forest produce.
- Habitat degradation due to growth of invasive alien species etc.

Influence:

- Losing life.
- Injuries to both animals and humans.
- Damage to crops and agricultural land.
- Increase in violence against animals.

Related data:

- Between 2018-19 and 2020-21, 222 elephants died of electrocution across the country.
- Apart from this, 29 tigers were killed due to poaching between the year 2019 and 2021, while the deaths of 197 tigers are being investigated.
- Elephants killed 1,579 humans in three years during human-to-animal conflicts – 585 in 2019-20, 461 in 2020-21 and 533 in 2021-22.
- Odisha tops with 332 deaths, followed by Jharkhand with 291 and West Bengal with 240.
- Whereas between 2019 and 2021, tigers killed 125 humans in the reserve.
- Nearly half of these deaths have occurred in Maharashtra.

Initiatives taken to deal with the conflict:

Advice for managing human-wildlife conflict (HWC):

- It is issued by the Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL).

Empowering Gram Panchayats:

- The advisory envisages empowering village panchayats to deal with problematic wild animals as per the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Providing Insurance:

- Using add-on coverage under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana for compensation for

crop damage due to HWC.

Growing Fodder:

- It is envisaged to increase the fodder and water sources within the forest areas.

Taking proactive measures:

- Prescribing inter-departmental committees at local/state level, adoption of early warning system, creation of barriers, dedicated circle-wise control room with toll-free hotline numbers, identification of hotspots etc.

Providing immediate relief:

- Payment of a part of the ex-gratia amount as interim relief to the victim/family within 24 hours of the incident..

Swadeep Kumar

Freebies



- Recently the Supreme Court asked the central government whether it is economically viable to distribute irrational freebies (free gifts) during election campaigns.
- It also referred to the use of the Finance Commission's expertise in curbing irrational election freebies.
- According to the Election Commission of India, whether such policies are economically viable or have an adverse effect on the economic health of the state is a question for the voters of the state to consider and decide.

Freebies:

- Political parties promise to offer free electricity/water supply, allowance to the unemployed, daily wage workers and women, as well as gadgets like laptops, smartphones etc. to secure the vote of the people.
- States have become in the habit of giving loan waivers or free gifts in the form of free electricity, cycles, laptops, TV sets etc.
- Populist promises or some of these expenditures, certainly in keeping with the elections, can certainly be questioned.
- But given that inequality has been increasing in the country for the last 30 years, providing any kind of relief to the general population in the form of subsidy cannot be considered unreasonable, but in fact it is necessary for the economy to stay on the growth trajectory.

Freebies needed:

Facilitate Development:

- There are some examples which show that some expenditure is in the form of overall benefit of the outlay such as the public distribution system, employment guarantee schemes, and support for education and health facilities especially during the pandemic.

Help to underdeveloped states:

- States having comparatively low level of development with a large section of the poverty-stricken population have such free facilities based on need/demand and in order to uplift them, it becomes inevitable to provide them with subsidies.

Fulfilment of Expectations:

- In a country like India where states have (or do not have) a certain level of development, the expectations of the people are met by populist promises made on the occasion of elections.

Drawbacks of Freebies:

Unstable for the macro economy:

- Freebies undermine the macroeconomy's sustainability infrastructure, the politics of freebies distorts spending priorities, and the outlay focuses on subsidies in some form or the other.

Impact on the financial position of the states:

- The giving of free gifts ultimately adversely affects the exchequer and most of the states in India do not have strong financial systems, often with very limited resources in terms

of revenue.

Against free and fair elections:

- Irrational pre-election promises of free public money influence voters unfairly, hinder the freedom of equal opportunity for all, and destroy the integrity of the election process.

Away from environment:

- When free electricity is provided, it will lead to excessive use of natural resources and also distract attention from renewable energy systems..

Swadeep Kumar

Diminution of the Gandhi Ji: An endanger for the essence of India's future

- Context: In the magazine Antim Jana which is published by the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti (GSDS), the description of the Savarkar and quoting Savarkar with Gandhi ji is not only questionable on the ground of historical truth but also on the ground of Indian cultural philosophy
- In this article, Savarkar is praised and tried to bring Savarkar to the same stature as Gandhi. Such type of intention is really the thread for Indian history as well as the Indian philosophy

Introduction

- Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti (GSDS) is an institution presided by the prime minister of India. This institution is formed to propagate the ideals of Gandhi Ji in the world. A magazine Anitam Jana is released from this institution. The word Antim Jana means the last people or marginalized people. Gandhi always talked about the lowest call or marginalized people.
- Savarkar was the founder of secret societies during the first decade of the 19th century and also participated in the national movement against the British. He was arrested two times but was left after the apology. The comparison of Savarkar with Gandhi Ji is completely irrational

What is GSDS

- GSDS is an institute that is dedicated the research works on the Gandhian philosophy.

It was constituted in 1984. The Prime minister of India is the Chairman of the GSDS. If any article is published through this institution, it can not free the prime minister from such responsibility. Therefore prime minister's office should keep close eyes on the functioning of this institution. The lionizing of Savarkar and the diminution of Gandhiji has implications in terms of the essence of India's future.

Recent Trend

- It has been observed that some people of rightist ideology not only criticize the ideas of Gandhiji but also they justify the assassination of Gandhi Ji also. The Savarkar was accused of the murder of Gandhi ji. However he was left in the absence of evidence but still, nobody can forget the role of RSS and Hindu Mahasabha in the assassination of Gandhiji. Through social media, these types of illogical and inappropriate facts are being spread in society which would be dangerous for the integrity and unity of India

The Philosophy of Gandhi ji

- Gandhiji believed in nonviolence but Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) criticized the concept of nonviolence. However, the nonviolence of Gandhi was not cowardness and it was the tool of the powerful person. Gandhiji invoked the epic, the Mahabharata, in ways starkly different from an invocation as a battle cry. He said; "It is said that in the Mahabharata period the Pandavas used to stay in this Purana Qila." Just like the Pandavas, said Gandhiji, the Muslims "are under your protection, and under my protection".
- Gandhi believed in communal harmony / during the Karachi session of the congress in 1931, Gandhiji emphasized religious tolerance and religious neutrality of the state. the religion of the Gandhi ji was the collection of righteous things
- While the RSS and Savarkar propagated extreme Hinduism, in their sights, minorities are a threat to the unity and integrity of India. So minorities should be separated from the country or they should be subjugated. Shruti Kapila in Violent Fraternity: Indian Political Thought in the Global Age (2021) recounts that Savarkar's idea of the virile and masculine and his desire to claim India's history and space, saw the nation as a battleground which makes violence the only desirable means to meet supremacist goals.
- Gandhi believed in the unity of all communities and believed in peace and nonviolence.

Impact of Such Articles

- The Indian education system has been based on reading books. Our students have trust in written things. If they would be provided wrong information, it would be dangerous for the new generation. Generally, through the education system, the government wants to spread some specific ideas, however, it is not correct for the education system
- These types of articles would hamper the communal harmony and the solidarity of the Muslims towards the nation also. We should not make those people our heroes who always abused a particular community. The communal philosophy and the communal

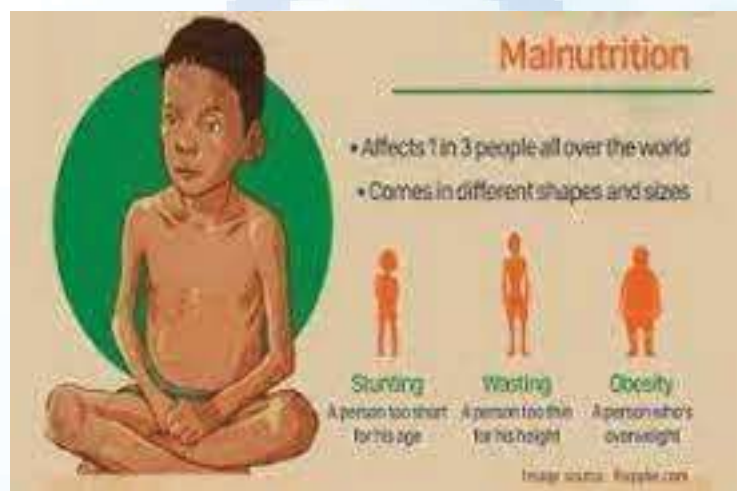
person can never be the Hero of India

Conclusion

- Gandhi worked for the solidity of all people. He worked for social justice. He believed that every citizen of India including the marginalized people and those people who are standing at the last line of the country should also be uplifted. These types of works or articles would devalue the Gandhian philosophy. Therefore we must be aware of this regard. No communal and hateful person should be praised and regarded as the hero of the nation

Anshul

Curbing malnutrition in India



- Recently the Ministry of Women and Child Development has set targets to curb malnutrition in India.

Targets set to curb malnutrition:

- Aim to reduce stunting and undernutrition (prevalence of underweight) by 2% per annum in children under 6 years of age.
- Prevention of undernutrition of children of 0 to 6 years of age and to reduce it at the rate of 6 percent i.e. 2% per annum.
- To reduce the prevalence of anemia in children aged 6 to 59 months at the rate of 9% per annum.
- To reduce the prevalence of anemia among adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating mothers in the age group of 15 to 49 years by 9% or 3% per annum.
- Anemia is a condition in which the number of red blood cells or its oxygen-carrying

capacity is insufficient to meet the body's need for blood.

This is highlighted in the NFHS-5 report which includes detailed information on key segments of the population, such as:

- Health and Family Welfare, Fertility, Family Planning, Infant and Child Mortality, Maternal and Child Health, Nutrition and Anemia, Morbidity and Health Care, Women Empowerment etc.

Findings of NFHS-5:

Data on stunted children:

- Meghalaya has the highest number of stunted children (46.5%), followed by Bihar (42.9%).
- Maharashtra has the highest rate of child wasting/disability among children at 25.6%, followed by Gujarat (25.1%).
- Jharkhand has the highest percentage (26%) of women between the ages of 15 and 49 who have a below normal body mass index (BMI).

Other Conclusions:

- The total fertility rate (TFR), the average number of children per woman, decreased from 2.2 nationally to 2.0 between NFHS -4 and 5.
- The overall Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) in the country has increased from 54% to 67%.
- Institutional births in India have increased from 79% to 89%.
- As per the report, stunting/dwarfism has come down from 4% to 35.5%, wasting has come down from 21.0% to 19.3% and underweight has come down from 35.8% to 32.1%.
- Women (15-49 years old) with a below normal body mass index (BMI) decreased from 22.9% in NFHS-4 to 18.7% in NFHS-5.

Malnutrition and related initiatives:

- Malnutrition is a condition that develops when the body is deprived of the vitamins, minerals and other nutrients it needs to maintain healthy tissue and organ function.
- Malnutrition occurs in people who are either malnourished or over-nourished.

Initiative:

- POSHAN Abhiyaan: The Government of India has launched the National Nutrition

Mission (NNM) or POSHAN Abhiyaan to ensure “Malnutrition Free India” by the year 2022.

- Anemia Mukht Bharat Abhiyan: Launched in the year 2018, the mission aims to reduce the annual rate of anemia by one to three percentage points.
- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY): Rs 6,000 is directly transferred to the bank accounts of pregnant women to get better facilities for delivery.
- Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme: It was launched in the year 1975 and the objective of this scheme is to provide food, pre-school education, primary health care, immunization, health check-up and other is to provide services.

Swadeep Kumar

Eleventh Agricultural Census (2021-22)



- Recently the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare launched the “Eleventh Agriculture Census (2021-22).”
- This calculation will benefit a huge and agricultural country like India in a big way.

Agricultural Census:

- Agriculture Census is conducted every 5 years, which is being delayed this time due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The entire census is conducted in three phases and the operational ownership for data collection is viewed as a statistical unit at the micro level.
- Based on the Agriculture Census data collected in three phases, the department presents three detailed reports analyzing trends on various parameters at all India and State/UT

level.

- District/Tehsil level reports are prepared by the respective States/UTs.
- Agriculture Census is the main source of information on various agricultural parameters at a relatively small scale, such as the number and area of operational holdings, their size, class-wise distribution, land use, tenancy and cropping patterns etc.

Eleventh Census:

- Agriculture census work will start in August 2022.
- This is the first time that the data collection for the Agriculture Census will be done on smartphones and tablets, so that the data is available in a timely manner.

This includes:

- Access to digital land records such as land title records and survey reports.
- Collection of data through app/software using smartphone/tablet.
- Enumeration of all villages in non-land record states during Phase-I as done in land record states.
- Real time monitoring of progress and processing.
- Most of the states have digitized their land records and surveys, which will further accelerate the collection of agricultural census data.
- A database of operational holdings in the country will be created using a mobile app for data collection and use of digital land records.

Digital Agriculture:

- Digital agriculture is an information and communication technology (ICT) and data ecosystem that supports the development and delivery of timely targeted information and services to make farming profitable, sustainable while providing safe, nutritious and affordable food for all.

Example:

- Biotechnology agriculture is a range of equipment, including traditional breeding techniques that modify living organisms, or parts of organisms, to create or modify products; it involves the improvement of plants or animals or the development of microorganisms for specific agricultural uses.
- Precision farming (PA) is an approach where precise amounts of agricultural outputs are used to achieve increased average yield as compared to traditional farming techniques like agro-forestry, inter-cropping, crop rotation, etc. It is based on using digital agriculture information and communication technology.
- Digital and wireless technologies for data measurement, weather monitoring, robotics/drone technology etc.

The gain:

Agricultural Machinery Automation:

- It allows the inputs to be fixed and reduces the demand for manual labour.

Remote Satellite Data:

- Remote satellite data and in-situ sensors improve accuracy and reduce the cost of monitoring crop growth and land or water quality.
- Freely available and high quality satellite imagery dramatically reduces the cost of monitoring many agricultural activities. This could allow governments to move towards more targeted policies that pay (or penalize) farmers based on environmental consequences.

Traceability Technologies and Digital Logistics:

- These services provide the ability to streamline the agri-food supply chain while providing consumers with reliable information.

Administrative Objectives:

- In addition to monitoring compliance with environmental policies, digital technologies enable the automation of administrative processes for agriculture and the development of extended government services in relation to extension or advisory services.

Maintenance of Land Records:

- Using technology, a large number of holding data can be suitably tagged and digitized.
- This will not only help in better targeting but will also reduce the number of litigation for land disputes in the courts.

Government Initiatives for Digital Agriculture:

AgriStack:

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has planned the creation of 'AgriStack', which is a collection of technology based interventions in agriculture. It will create an integrated platform to provide end to end services to the farmers in the agri-food value chain.

Digital Agriculture Mission:

- This initiative has been started by the government from the year 2021 to 2025 to promote projects based on new technologies like artificial intelligence, block chain, remote sensing and GIS technology, use of drones and robots in the agriculture sector.

Integrated Farmer Service Platform (UFSP):

- It is a combination of core infrastructure, data, applications and tools that enables seamless interoperability of various public and private IT systems in the agriculture ecosystem across the country.

UFSP performs the following roles:

- It acts as a central agency in the agriculture ecosystem (like UPI in e-payments).
- Enables registration of service providers (public and private) and farmer services.
- Enforces various rules and assumptions required during the service delivery process.
- Serves as a repository of all applicable standards, Application Programming Interface (API) and formats.
- To act as a medium of data exchange between various schemes and services to ensure the delivery of services to the farmers at a wider level.

National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGP-A):

- It is a centrally sponsored scheme, the scheme was launched in the year 2010-11 on a pilot basis in 7 states. Its objective is to promote rapid development in India through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for timely access to agricultural information to farmers.
- In the year 2014-15, the scheme was extended to all remaining states and 2 union territories.
- Other digital initiatives: Kisan Call Centre, Kisan Suvidha App, Krishi Bazaar App, Soil Health Card (SHC) Portal etc.

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