



# **MONTHLY**

# **CURRENT**

# **AFFAIRS**

# **MAGAZINE**

## **MAY 2022**

# **CONTENTS**

## ***SOCIETY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE***

- + **BILL ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE**
- + **GENDER BIAS IN PERSONAL LAWS**
- + **HATTIS DEMAND FOR ST**
- + **LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY**
- + **SHRESHTA**
- + **PRADHAN MANTRI ANUSUCHIT JAATI ABHYUDAY YOJANA (PM AJAY)**

GEO IAS

## ***ECONOMY***

- + **REPORT OF SC APPOINTED COMMITTEE ON FARMLAWS**
- + **DRAFT POLICY ON BATTERY SWAPPING**
- + **DECODING RBI'S STANDING DEPOSIT FACILITY (SDF)**
- + **SPECIAL PURPOSE ACQUISITION COMPANIES (SPACs)**
- + **PM MUDRA YOJANA COMPLETES 7 YEARS**
- + **RBI'S GUIDELINES ON DIGITAL BANKING UNITS**
- + **TAX REVENUES HIT RECORD HIGH**
- + **FEDERAL TENSIONS OVER TAXES ON PETROL AND DIESEL**
- + **EXTENSION OF ATAL INNOVATION MISSION**
- + **SLOW PROGRESS IN PMKUSUM: CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS**

✚ **PM DAKSHA YOJANA**

✚ **IMPORTANCE OF UKRAINIAN CRISIS ON GLOBAL AGRICULTURAL MARKETS**

## ***POLITY AND GOVERNANCE***

✚ **UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS**

✚ **UNIFORM CIVIL CODE**

✚ **HOME MINISTRY ASK MORE TIME TO FRAME CAA RULES**

✚ **ELECTORAL BONDS MUST GO**

✚ **PUNJAB STAKING CLAIM ON CHANDIGARH**

✚ **DARLONG COMMUNITY INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULED TRIBE LIST**

✚ **TWITTER GOVERNANCE IN TELANGANA**

✚ **NEW VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR NITI AAYOG**

✚ **UNFOUNDED APPREHENSIONS AGAINST CRIMINAL IDENTIFICATION ACT**

✚ **AMENDING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION ACT**

✚ **RESOLVING ASSAM-ARUNACHAL DISPUTE**

✚ **SUPREME COURT RESTRICTS FOREIGN DONATIONS**

## ***INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS***

✚ **INDIA – UK RELATIONS**

✚ **INDIA NEPAL**

✚ **RAISINA DIALOGUE 2022**

- ✚ **NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY STRATEGY**
- ✚ **AL AQSA MOSQUE**
- ✚ **GOLAN HEIGHTS, WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP**

## ***SUMMITS AND ORGANISATIONS***

- ✚ **2ND INDIA-NORDIC SUMMIT**
- ✚ **INDIA ELECTED AS CHAIR OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ASIAN ELECTION AUTHORITIES**
- ✚ **INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION REVIEW FORUM**
- ✚ **WEF ANNUAL MEETING 2022**

GEO IAS

## ***DEFENSE AND SECURITY***

- ✚ **TOUR OF DUTY SCHEME**
- ✚ **ARMY'S FIRST WOMAN COMBAT PILOT**
- ✚ **INS SURAT AND INS UDAYGIRI**

## ***GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT***

- + **FOREST FIRES**
- + **HEAT WAVES**
- + **PREDICTING INDIAN MONSOON**
- + **BIO-DIGESTERS**
- + **FOREST COVER IN INDIA**
- + **FRONTIERS 2022: NOISE, BLAZES AND MISMATCHES**
- + **SPECIES IN NEWS**

## ***SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY***

- + **NEAR FIELD COMMUNICATION (NFC) TECHNOLOGY**
- + **RECOMBINANT VARIANTS OF SARS-COV-2**
- + **MICROBOTS FOR DRUG DELIVERY**
- + **GSLV-F10**
- + **VACCINES ARE ADMINISTERED INTO THE UPPER ARM**
- + **WHO & TRADITIONAL MEDICINE**
- + **INS VAGSHEER**
- + **SPACE BRICKS FROM MARTIAN SOIL**
- + **JUPITER'S MOON EUROPA**
- + **BLUE STRAGGLER STARS**
- + **SMALL SATELLITE LAUNCH VEHICLE (SSLV)**
- + **NUCLEAR MISSILE SARMAT**

## ***CULTURE***

- + RAJA RAVI VARMA (1848-1906)
- + LINGARAJA TEMPLE
- + DEOGHAR BADYANATH JYOTIRLINGA
- + NEW YEAR FESTIVALS OF INDIA

## ***MISCELLANEOUS***

- + STATE OF INEQUALITY IN INDIA 2021 REPORT)
- + SECTION 144 OF CRPC AND HATE SPEECH
- + CRS REPORT 2020
- + SECTION 124A OF IPC
- + DECLINE IN LFPR: A SERIOUS CONCERN
- + RUPEE DEPRECIATION
- + INDIA - FRANCE TO EXPAND THEIR COOPERATION
- + INDIA, GERMANY TO WORK ON PROJECTS IN THIRD COUNTRIES
- + INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK
- + QUAD LEADERS' SUMMIT 2022

# SOCIETY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

## 1. BILL ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

A private member bill was introduced in Lok Sabha, to amend *Special marriages act (1954)*, that seeks to give equal rights of marriage to the LGBTQ community. In this context, let us analyse the issues related to LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer) community.

### SPECIAL MARRIAGE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2022

- **Solemnization of special marriages between same sex:** Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act or any other law for the time being in force, a marriage between any two persons of same sex may be solemnized under this Act, if at the time of marriage.
  - in case both the parties are male, each has completed 21 years of age.
  - in case both the parties are female, each has completed 18 years of age.
- Proposed to replace the words "husband" and "wife" with spouse in the Act.

### NEED FOR THE AMENDMENT

- The objective of the bill is to ensure the right to freedom, privacy and equality to homosexual couple in terms of marriage as heterosexual couple are entitled to.
- Though homosexuality was effectively decriminalised by Supreme Court through its landmark judgement *Navtej Singh Johar Case*, LGBTQ individuals are still unable to marry and create their own families and they have no access to rights that heterosexual couples are entitled to upon marriage, such as succession, maintenance and pensions, etc.
- SC in *K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) Case* observed that 'family, marriage, procreation and sexual orientation are all integral to the dignity of the individual and the privacy of the individual recognizes an inviolable right to determine how freedom shall be exercised'.
- It will also ensure that article 14 and article 21 of the Constitution are upheld and ensure that LGBTQ couples are provided with the rights they are entitled to.

## LGBTQ ISSUES

- **Marginalization and Social Exclusion:** Due to the stigma attached to sexual orientation, LGBT people are relegated to the margins of the society. This marginalisation often excludes them from accessing basic services like Education, Healthcare, Housing, Justice etc.
- **Poor economic condition:** Dropping out of school due to harassment and discrimination at the workplace results in poor socioeconomic status for LGBT persons.
- **Psychological distress:** Stigmatization, discrimination and harassment in the daily lives of LGBT would have an impact on their Mental health.
- **Criminalization:** Lacking other means of support, many LGBT youth are forced to turn to criminalized activities to survive.
- **Legal injustice:** Homosexuality had been criminalised till few years ago. Even after it was decriminalised, there is still lack of legal recognition to the same sex marriages.

## LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS IN FAVOUR OF LGBTQ

- In 2014, Supreme Court issued a sweeping judgment in *NALSA vs Union of India*, which held that transgender people should be legally recognised according to their gender identity, enjoy all fundamental rights, and receive special benefits in education and employment.
- In 2018, Supreme Court in *Navtej Singh Johar Case* decriminalised homosexuality under Section 377 of IPC, as it is violative of right to freedom of life, privacy and equality of sexual minorities.

## TRANSGENDER PERSONS (PROTECTION OF RIGHTS) ACT, 2019

- **Definition of Transgender:** The act defines a transgender person as one whose gender does not match the gender assigned at birth. It includes transmen and trans-women, persons with intersex variations, genderqueers, and persons with sociocultural identities, such as kinnar and hijra.
- **Self-identification:** A transgender person may make an application to the District Magistrate for a certificate of identity, indicating the gender as 'transgender'.

- **Prohibition against discrimination:** Prohibits discrimination against a transgender person in
  - Education, employment and healthcare.
  - Access to goods, facilities, opportunities available to the public.
  - Right to movement, reside, rent, or otherwise occupy property.
  - Opportunity to hold public or private office.
- **Welfare measures by the government:** Mandated government to undertake measures to ensure the full inclusion and participation of transgender persons in society. It must also take steps for their rescue and rehabilitation, vocational training and self employment, create schemes that are transgender sensitive, and promote their participation in cultural activities.
- **Offences and penalties:** Recognize the offences against transgender persons like forced or bonded labour; denial of use of public places; physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or economic abuse. Penalties for these offences vary between 6 months and 2 years, and a fine.
- **National council for transgender persons** to advise the central government as well as monitor the impact of policies, legislation and projects with respect to transgender persons. It will also redress the grievances of transgender persons.

## 2. GENDER BIAS IN PERSONAL LAWS

*Supreme Court is hearing a plea challenging gender bias in Hindu inheritance law. The petition draws attention to Section 15 of Hindu Succession Act, 1956 Act which mandates how the husband's heirs have the first right over the self-acquired property of a woman who dies intestate.*

### GENDER BIAS IN PERSONAL LAWS

#### **In Marriage:**

- Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 prohibits marriage of any women before the age of 18 but Muslim Personal Law mentions puberty or age of 15 years as minimum age of marriage for women. These differences between the age of consent for marriage contributes to the stereotype that wives must be younger than their husbands.
- Practice of Polygamy is permitted in Islamic law but only to the men and is frequently misused by persons

of other religions also who convert as Muslims solely to solemnize another marriage.

#### **In Succession:**

- Under Hindu Succession Act, property of male and female intestates devolves differently. Section 15 of Hindu Succession Act, 1956 gives priority to the heirs of the husband over the parents of the deceased. If a Hindu woman dies without making a will, her husband can take all her property without leaving any share for her own mother or father. On the other hand, when a Hindu man dies, his blood relationship is given priority.

#### **In Custody:**

- Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956 requires women to take consent of their living husband to adopt a child is discriminatory. This gender bias in personal laws reflects patriarchy inherent to many religions.

### PATRIARCHY AND RELIGION

Religion perpetuates patriarchy through

- **Sacred Texts:** Gender roles and status of women and men in society are deeply tied to the way religious texts are interpreted. In many religious teachings, women are given the role of nurturing, caring and giving birth reinforcing the gender norms in society.
- **Religious Organisations:** Despite widespread engagement of women in other religious activities, religious leaders and those authorized to interpret religious doctrine are predominantly men. There is conspicuous absence of women in position of religious authority. Ex: Barring entry of women into places of worship.
- **Religious Laws & Customs:** Religion also has an influence on cultural norms that lead to unequal treatment in terms of marriage, divorce, succession etc.

## 3. HATTI DEMAND FOR ST

*Hatti community from Trans-Giri region of Himachal Pradesh has been demanding Scheduled Tribe Status since decades. Recently, Centre has assured to 'favourably consider' Hatti community's inclusion among Scheduled Tribes.*

### SCHEDULE TRIBES

- **Article 342 of the Constitution** provides for specification of tribes or tribal communities which shall, for the purposes of the constitution, deemed to be scheduled tribes in relation to that State or UT.
- In pursuance of these provisions, the list of



Scheduled Tribes is notified for each State or UT and are valid only within the jurisdiction of that State or UT and not outside.

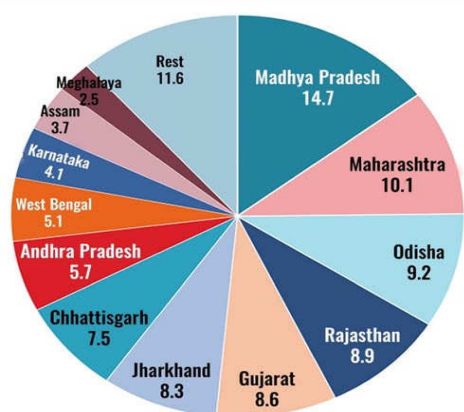
- Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled tribes specified in a notification.

#### **CRITERIA FOR SCHEDULED TRIBE STATUS**

For a community to be given Scheduled Tribe Status, it should meet the following markers:

- Indications of primitive traits
- Distinctive culture
- Geographical isolation
- Shyness of contact with the community at large
- Backwardness.

These criteria are not spelt out in the Constitution or laid out under any law but have become well established and accepted. There are over 700 ethnic groups notified as Scheduled tribes across the states/UTs. According to 2011 census, Scheduled tribes consist of around 8.6% of the total population of India.



*States' Share of ST population out of India's ST population*

Top 5 States/UTs	
Lakshadweep	94.8%
Mizoram	94.4%
Nagaland	86.5%
Meghalaya	86.1%
Ladakh	79.5%

*States/UTs ranked by proportion of STs*

#### **PROBLEMS FACED BY TRIBES IN INDIA**

- **Loss of communal rights over forest:** Forest policies and regulations have snatched away traditional community rights of STs over forest produce. This has impacted the economic activities of tribes like food gathering, hunting, shifting cultivation.
- **Land alienation:** Acquisition of tribal lands for

extraction of minerals and expansion of infrastructure projects alienated tribes of their lands.

- **Indebtedness and Bonded labour:** With the loss of communal rights over forest & agricultural land and lack of skill, they are forced to work as bonded labour.

- **Health and Nutrition:** According to NFHS-4, Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Under Five Mortality Rate (U5MR) and anemia in women for STs higher than other social groups. They also suffer from other diseases in higher proportions such as Sickle Cell Anemia, Malaria etc.

- **Literacy:** According to 2011 census, literacy rate of STs is around 59% which is way below the literacy rate of total population (73%).

- **Poverty:** As per NSSO estimates, ST people living below the poverty line in 2011-12 were 45.3% in the rural areas and 24.1% in the urban areas as compared to 25.7% persons in rural areas and 13.7% persons in urban areas below poverty line for all population.

- **Loss of tribal culture and identity:** Conversion of tribes into other religions; Industrialisation; urbanisation; Migration etc. resulted in loss of tribal way of life and their identity.

#### **CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS PROVIDED TO SCHEDULED TRIBES**

- **Educational & Cultural Safeguards**
  - **Article 15(4):** Special provisions for advancement of other backward classes (which includes STs).
  - **Article 29:** Protection of Interests of Minorities (which includes STs).
  - **Article 46:** State shall promote, with special care, the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.
  - **Article 350:** Right to conserve distinct Language, Script or Culture.
  - **Article 350:** Instruction in Mother Tongue.
- **Social Safeguards**
  - **Article 23:** Prohibition of traffic in human beings and beggar and other similar form of forced labour.
  - **Article 24:** Forbidding Child Labour.
- **Economic Safeguards**
  - **Art.244:** Provisions of Fifth Schedule shall apply to the administration & control of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in any State other than the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura which are covered under Sixth Schedule, under

Clause (2) of this Article.

- **Article 275:** Grants in-Aid to specified States (Tribal Areas & Scheduled Areas) covered under Fifth and Sixth Schedules of the Constitution.

- **Political Safeguards**

- **Article 164(1):** Provides for Tribal Affairs Ministers in Bihar, MP and Orissa
- **Article 330:** Reservation of seats for STs in Lok Sabha
- **Article 337:** Reservation of seats for STs in State Legislatures
- **Article 334:** 10 years period for reservation (Amended several times to extend the period.)
- **Article 243:** Reservation of seats in Panchayats.
- **Article 371:** Special provisions in respect of NE States and Sikkim

- **Service safeguards**

- **Article 16(4)** allowed the states to make any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the state.
- **Article 335** claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.

#### 4. LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Recently, Home Minister suggested that states should communicate with each other in Hindi rather than English, while stressing that Hindi should not be an alternative to local languages. This led to the debate of "Hindi imposition". In this context, let us understand the linguistic diversity of India and India's official language policy.

##### LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY OF INDIA

There is a popular aphorism that depicts India's linguistic diversity rather well: *Kos-kos par badle paani, chaar kos par baani* (The language spoken in India changes every few kms, just like the taste of the water).

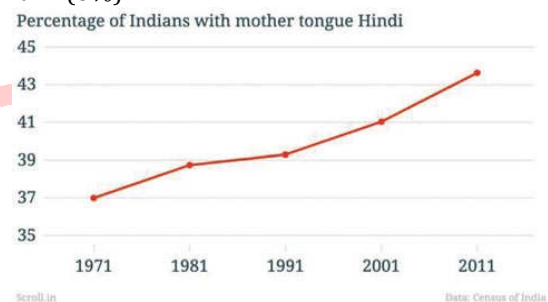
- The 2011 linguistic census accounts for 121 mother tongues, including 22 languages listed in the 8<sup>th</sup> Schedule of Constitution.
- Indian constitution accommodated this

linguistic diversity:

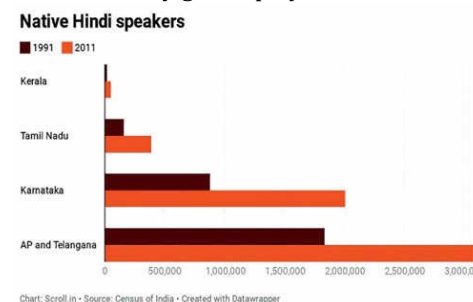
- While Article 343 says "the official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script," it also empowers the use of English indefinitely.
- The provision coexists with the Eighth Schedule, which, as per Articles 344(1) and 351, permits the use of 22 languages as official languages.
- Article 347, provides for the recognition and use of even those languages that are not the 'official language' of the State, allowing for greater State autonomy.

##### GROWTH OF HINDI

- Hindi is the most widely spoken language, with 52.8 crore individuals, or 43.6% of the population, declaring it as their mother tongue. The next highest is Bengali, mother tongue for 97 lakh (8%).



- Hindi has been India's predominant mother tongue over the decades, its share in the population rising in every succeeding census. In 1971, 37% Indians had reported Hindi as their mother tongue, a share that has grown over the next four censuses to 38.7%, 39.2%, 41% and 43.6% at last count.
- Between 1991 and 2011, the number of Hindi native speakers in South India has nearly doubled. This, when the total population in these states has only gone up by 28%.



### **EXPLANATION OF THIS RISE IN HINDI SPEAKING POPULATION**

- Population growth in native Hindi speaking states such as Uttar Pradesh (20%), Bihar (25%), Madhya Pradesh (20%), Rajasthan (21%), Jharkhand (22%) above the national average growth rate of 17%.
- Increasing migration of Hindi speaking population to other states. According to the census, four states, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh accounted for 50% of India's total inter-state migrants.

### **THREE LANGUAGE FORMULA UNDER NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020**

- Keeping in view of the needs arising from increasing inter-state migration and to strengthen national integration, National Education policy (2020) suggested implementation of 3- language formula.
- New National Education Policy (NEP) recommends that all students will learn three languages in their school under the 'formula'. At least two of the three languages should be native to India. **Ex:** If a student in Mumbai is learning Marathi and English, he/she will have to choose to learn another Indian language.
- There will be a greater flexibility in the three-language formula, and no language will be imposed on any State. The three languages learned by children will be the choices of States, regions, and of course the students themselves, so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India.

### **CONCERNS WITH THREE LANGUAGE FORMULA**

- **Cognitive burden on young children:** Several surveys, like ASER, have shown that a vast majority of children are failing to learn to read with comprehension even in one language and script. It is completely unrealistic to expect children to acquire oral fluency and reading skills in three different languages.
- **Poor Implementation:** Earlier three-language formula was not implemented properly in most parts of the country.
- **Back Door Entry for Hindi:** Tamil Nadu has two language systems. The introduction of the new policy creates a fear among them that this would lead to the entrance of Hindi into the state from

the back door.

- **Shortage of Non-Hindi teachers:** Scarcity of non-Hindi language teachers throughout the country.

### **ADVANTAGES OF PRESERVING LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY**

- Prevents regionalism, separatism and enhances national integration
- Administration becomes easier
- Access to education in mother tongue
- Preservation of traditional knowledge
- Cognitive ability of the children improves
- Social inclusion

### **THREATS TO LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN INDIA**

According to People's Linguistic Survey of India (PSLI) report, more than half of India's languages may die out in 50 years. Around 190 languages are in various stages of endangerment in our country, more than any other country in the world. The reasons are:

- **Globalization:** Influence of transnational corporations has resulted in a central common language mainly English, which dominates regional dialects, and minority languages.
- **Nuclear family culture:** Grants less opportunities for youngsters to learn mother tongue, especially when both parents are working and grandparents are living separate.
- **Inter-culture, caste, race marriages:** Where a couple is from different cultural backgrounds, language of communication is often not the mother tongue, which impacts the next generation's exposure to the native language.
- **Migration:** Towards metropolitans for accessing better education and employment opportunities, is preference to cosmopolitan language.
- **Increased use of Internet:** Nowadays, most of the communications and business is carried out online forcing the people to consume digital content in English as the cyber presence regional languages is negligible.
- **Lack of Education in Mother tongue** results in neglecting of many languages
- **Lack of script for tribal and languages spoken by fringe groups:** Only 6 tribal languages — Santali, Ho, Soura, Munda and Kui, have a written script. Lack of script makes it difficult to pass the language from generation to generation.

- **Assimilation policies of the Government:** States often try to assimilate linguistic minorities by imposing majority language upon them.

Example: Compulsory Bengali in Gorkhaland.

### **CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTION GIVEN TO LINGUISTIC MINORITIES**

#### **Article 29:**

- Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.
- No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

#### **Article 30:**

- All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
- The state shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.

**Article 345:** Legislature of a State may by law adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State.

**Article 347:** President, subjected to his satisfaction, may demand any state govt to officially recognise any language, on which popular demand is made by the language speakers.

#### **Article 350 A & B:**

- It shall be the endeavour of every State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups.
- Special officer for linguistic minorities.

## **5. SHRESHTA**

- Scheme for Residential Education for Students in High Schools in Targeted Areas
- Implemented by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) Under the scheme, every year a specified number of meritorious SC students in States/UTs, whose parents' annual income is up to Rs. 2.5 Lakh, are selected for providing quality residential education in Top-class Private Residential High Schools, including Hostel facilities for SC students at free of cost from class 9th to class 12th. Entire cost of school fee and residential charges including mess charges, ranging from Rs. 1 Lakh to 1,35,000/- p.a. for each student, are paid to the Reputed Private Schools by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment.

## **6. PRADHAN MANTRI ANUSUCHIT JAATI ABHYUDAY YOJANA (PM AJAY)**

The scheme has been created after merger of three schemes under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE)

- Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCA to SCSP)
- Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY)
- Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (BJRCY)

#### **Objectives:**

- Reduce poverty of the Schedule caste communities by generation of additional employment opportunities through skill development, income generating schemes and other initiatives.
- To improve socio-economic developmental indicators by ensuring adequate infrastructure and requisite services in the SC dominated villages.
- To increase literacy and encourage enrolment of SCs in schools and higher educational institutions by providing adequate residential facilities in quality institutions, as well as residential schools where required; in the aspirational districts/SC majority blocks and elsewhere in India.



# ECONOMY

## 1. REPORT OF SC APPOINTED COMMITTEE ON FARMLAWS

Recently, the Supreme Court Appointed Committee on farm laws has made its report public. According to this committee, more than 85% of the farmers in India supported the Farm laws introduced by the Government. Hence, the repeal of these farm laws has gone against the interests of "silent majority" who had supported these marketing reforms. Keeping in mind the importance of agricultural marketing from the perspective of UPSC Prelims and Mains, we would focus on the following dimensions:

- Importance of Agricultural Marketing
- Problems with Agricultural Marketing
- Critical Analysis of the 3 farm Acts (now repealed)
- Observations and Recommendations of SC appointed Committee
- Way Forward



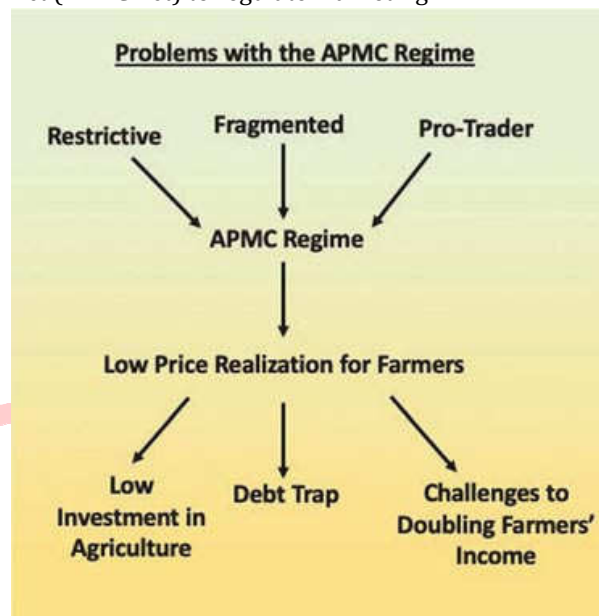
### IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURAL

#### **Importance:**

- Enables the farmers to buy agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, seeds etc. at affordable prices.
- Provides price signals to the farmers with respect to planning for sowing of crops.
- An integrated domestic marketing system would considerably reduce the price variations in the agricultural commodities across India.
- 25 to 30 % of fruit and vegetables and 8 to 10 % of food grains are wasted annually due to lack of postharvest losses.

### PROBLEMS WITH AGRICULTURAL MARKETING IN INDIA

Agricultural is a subject placed under State List and accordingly, most of the State governments have enacted the Agricultural Produce Market Regulation Act (APMC Act) to regulate marketing.



**Restrictive Regime:** Under the present APMC Act, farm produce should be sold only at APMCs to the traders and middlemen. The farmers do not have the freedom to sell their produce outside APMCs directly to exporter, processor or end consumer. Hence, it leads to exploitation of the farmers by the middlemen and traders.

**Fragmented Agricultural Marketing** with about 2500 regulated APMCs, 5000 sub-market yards and thousands of Rural Markets or Grameen Haats. Hence, due to this fragmented marketing the agricultural commodities pass through multiple middlemen and traders leading to escalation in prices and also prevents the farmers from getting remunerative prices.

**Lack of Access to APMCs:** An average APMC in India serves an area of around 450 sq.km as against the recommendation of 80 sq.km given by M.S. Swaminathan Committee. On account of this, the farmers are forced to sell their produce at lower prices outside the APMCs.

**Against Interests of Small and Marginal farmers** who are forced to sell at lower prices due to their low marketable surplus and poor bargaining power.

**Poor Infrastructure of the APMCs** leading to improper storage and consequently higher post-harvest losses; No electronic auction platform

**Imposition of Multiple Fees in APMCs** which is estimated to be around 15% of the value of the agricultural produce; Increased prices and affect food processing Industries

**Higher Post-harvest Losses** in the range of 20-25% of produce accounting for Rs 92,000 crores loss.

### **1. Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 (Now Repealed)**

IMPORTANT PROVISIONS	CONCERNS RAISED
<p><b>Freedom to the farmers:</b> This act enabled the farmers to sell their agricultural produce outside the APMCs anywhere in India and thus promote barrier free inter state and intra-state trade. This had the potential to create "One Nation, One Market".</p> <p><b>Definition of Trade Area:</b> The Farmers were given freedom to sell their produce in the trade area outside APMCs. The trade Area included (a) farm gates (b) factory premises (c) warehouses (d) silos (e) cold storages etc. located anywhere within India.</p> <p><b>No Market fee or cess</b> to be imposed on the sale of agricultural produce in the APMCs.</p> <p><b>Dispute resolution mechanism</b> to be set up in the form of conciliation board by the sub-divisional</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Autonomy of States:</b> Agriculture is a State Subject and the Central Acts would override State APMC Acts</li> <li>• <b>Exploitative:</b> Freedom to farmers to sell outside the APMCs would lead to exploitation by private sector.</li> <li>• <b>Phasing out of MSP:</b> With the decline of APMCs, the procurement at MSP would be phased out.</li> <li>• <b>Absence of Price Discovery:</b> The APMC prices serve as a reference price for price discovery for one's produce. If farmers sell produce outside APMCs, then it is difficult for a farmer to have a benchmark price.</li> <li>• <b>Loss of Revenues:</b> Various States raised the concern that mandi revenues will be affected due to lower mandi</li> </ul>

magistrate. Affected due to lower mandi transactions in APMCs.	transactions in APMCs.
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### **OBSERVATIONS OF SC APPOINTED COMMITTEE**

**Flexibility to the States:** State APMC Acts will continue to govern the APMCs/regulated markets under that Act. The Central Acts would provide alternative marketing channels to farmers. So, a farmer would have option to either sell the produce within APMCs regulated through State APMC Act or in the trade area regulated under the Central act.

#### **Redundant APMC Regime:**

- Presently, Livestock and fishery form 40 percent of the Gross Value of Agricultural output. This sector is outside the procurement support through MSP. These sectors are also growing much faster than other crops. Hence, the argument that only the APMCs and procurement support through MSP can offer remunerative price to farmers is flawed.
- Even for commodities that come under the purview of MSP, only around 25-30 percent of the production is transacted through the APMCs/regulated mandis. So, already a major chunk of agricultural commodities are sold outside the APMC regime.
- Hence, the Central act seeks to regulate the sale of agriculture produce outside APMCs.

**Procurement of Rice and Wheat:** Around 90 percent of rice production and 70 percent of wheat production is procured in Punjab and Haryana through the APMCs. This has in turn led to skewed cropping pattern with more emphasis on Rice and wheat and less focus on agricultural diversification in Punjab and Haryana.

**Higher Mandi Charges and Cess** imposed by the state Governments lead to increase in prices of agricultural commodities.

### **2. Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 (Now Repealed)**

Important Provisions	Benefits	Potential Problems and Challenges
<b>Objective:</b> Promote Contract Farming between Farmers and other stakeholders	<b>Streamlines the supply chain</b> by connecting the farmers directly with the buyers and reduce post-harvest losses.	<b>Exclusionary in Nature</b> due to fragmented land holdings and lower marketable surplus of small and

such as agribusiness firms, processors, wholesalers, exporters or large retailers. <b>Contract period:</b> Minimum period of the farming agreement shall be for one crop season and the maximum period shall be five years. <b>Minimum guaranteed price:</b> The price to be paid for the purchase of a farming produce may be determined and mentioned in the farming agreement itself. <b>Registration of contracts:</b> A State Government may notify a Registration Authority to provide for electronic registry for that State that provides facilitative framework for registration of farming agreements. <b>Dispute resolution mechanism</b> to be set up in the form of conciliation board by the	<b>Enhancement of Incomes</b> by integrating farmers with bulk purchasers such as exporters and food processing industries. <b>Access to Inputs</b> such as Seeds, Capital, Fertilisers, technology etc. <b>Promote higher Investment</b> by providing price certainty. <b>Address Rural Indebtedness</b> by reducing dependence of the farmers on moneylenders for meeting their credit needs. <b>Boost to Food Processing</b> by providing access to good quality raw materials and hence provide greater fillip to the sector.	marginal farmers; Exclude women farmers. <b>Exploitation of Farmers</b> due to lower bargaining power; Could lead to development of Monopsony market (one buyer dealing with multiple sellers and thus benefitting buyer). <b>Adverse Impact on Environment:</b> Promote Monoculture farming; Promote harmful agricultural practices such as excessive water usage, fertilizer consumption; Destruction of forests and wildlife etc.
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sub-divisional magistrate.		
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### **OBSERVATIONS OF SC APPOINTED COMMITTEE**

**Existing legal framework:** All States except Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi, Chandigarh and Puducherry already have legal provisions for contract farming in their APMC Acts. Punjab and Tamil Nadu have separate contract farming Acts. Hence, the argument that the Central Act to promote contract farming would be exploitative seems flawed.

**Success of Contract farming:** Contract farming is not new in India and various variants exist in several sectors. For example, contract farming has transformed the poultry sector from a mere backyard activity into a major organized commercial one with almost 80 percent production coming from organized commercial farms. Similar, NESTLE's contract farming with the dairy farmers in Punjab has led to improvement in livelihood opportunities for the farmers.

### **3. Amendments to Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955 (Amendments- Repealed) ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES ACT AND ITS**

Used by the Government to regulate the production, supply and distribution of commodities which are declared as essential under the act. The list of items under the Act includes drugs, fertilizers, pulses and edible oils, and petroleum and petroleum products. The Central Government may add or remove a commodity from the schedule in consultation with the State Governments.

#### **HOW DOES IT WORK?**

If the Centre finds that a certain commodity is in short supply and its price is increasing, it can notify stockholding limits on it for a specified period. Anybody trading or dealing in a such a commodity, be it wholesalers, retailers or even importers are prevented from stockpiling it beyond a certain quantity. This improves supplies and brings down prices.

#### **HOW ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES ACT HINDERS THE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING?**

**Fails to realize stocking is essential:** The fear of bringing the agricultural commodities under the act has prevented the traders and processors from undertaking bulk procurement of agricultural

commodities during bumper harvest season. Further, since almost all crops are seasonal, ensuring round-the-clock supply requires adequate build-up of stocks during the season.

**Poor investment in Storage infrastructure:** With frequent stock limits, traders have not invested in better storage infrastructure.

**Adverse impact on Food Processing Industry** since Stock limits curtails their Operations.

**Impact on agriculture exports:** Whenever the Government declares an agricultural commodity as essential, it imposes several restrictions on it including ban of export of such commodities.

#### **AMENDMENTS TO EC ACT, 1955 (REPEALED)**

**Reduced Scope of ECA, 1955:** Agricultural commodities to be outside the purview of Essential commodities Act, 1955. They would be brought out ECA only under exceptional circumstances such as war, famine, extra ordinary price rise, and natural calamity of grave nature .

**Stockholding Restrictions:** Stockholding restrictions to be based on price rise - 100 percent increase in retail price for horticulture products or 50 percent increase in retail price in case of non-perishable agri products;

#### **OBSERVATIONS OF SC APPOINTED COMMITTEE**

The Amendment attempts to balance the interests of all stakeholders – farmers, traders, food processors, exporters and consumers – to enable agri-produce to move up the value chain. As agriculture is a seasonal activity, it is essential to store produce for the off-season to ensure smoothened availability of a product at stable prices throughout the year.

#### **BROAD RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON 3 FARM LAWS**

**Need for Farm laws:** A repeal of these Farm Laws would be unfair to the 'silent' majority who support the Farm Laws.

**Flexibility to States:** States may be allowed some flexibility in implementation and design of the Laws, with the prior approval of the Centre, so that the basic spirit of these Laws for promoting effective competition in agricultural markets and creation of 'one nation, one market' is not violated

**Dispute Resolution Mechanism:** Alternative mechanisms for dispute settlement, via Civil courts or arbitration mechanism, may be provided to the stakeholders.

**High level Coordination body:** Agriculture Marketing Council, under the chairpersonship of Union Minister

of Agriculture, with all States and UTs as members may be formed on lines of the GST Council to reinforce cooperative efforts to monitor and streamline the implementation of these Acts.

**Compensation Mechanism:** The implementation of Central Acts would lead to loss of revenues which states earn from APMCs. Hence, to compensate the states for their loss, a compensation mechanism on the lines of GST compensation mechanism may be incorporated.

**Essential Commodities Act, 1955:** The Government should consider in favour of completely abolishing the ECA Act, 1955 or take steps to substantially liberalize its provisions.

## **2. DRAFT POLICY ON BATTERY SWAPPING**

*Despite rapid adoption of electric mobility, the share of electric vehicles sold in India is hardly around 1.3%.*

*Hence, in the Union Budget 2022-23, the finance minister had announced for the Battery Swapping policy to encourage faster switch to Electric Mobility. In pursuance of such an announcement, the NITI Aayog has recently come out with the Draft Policy on Battery Swapping.*

#### **HOW BATTERY SWAPPING WORKS?**

**Step 1:** People would be allowed to buy electric vehicles without batteries.

**Step 2:** People would lease or subscribe to batteries provided by battery recharging companies. People would either pay monthly or yearly subscription for the batteries or may decide to pay as per the use basis.

**Step 3:** Replace drained batteries with recharged batteries.

#### **SUCCESS STORY**

Bounce Infinity is a Bangalore based startup in the field of Electric Two-wheelers. It offers two choices to the customers -

(a) Purchase electric scooter with a battery

(b) Purchase Electric Scooter without a battery.

Battery can be subscribed on a monthly or yearly basis. Apart from manufacturing electric scooters, this company also operates network of battery charging stations. Hence, customers can easily replace their drained batteries with the newly charged batteries. Recently, it has become the first



Indian company to achieve the feat of 10 lakh battery swaps in India.

### **BENEFITS OF BATTERY SWAPPING**

**Reduce cost of Electric Vehicles:** The Battery alone accounts for more than 50% of the cost of electric vehicles. Hence, Battery swapping policy would lead to decrease in the initial cost of the vehicles and encourage more people to adopt electric mobility.

**Reduce Maintenance Cost:** The Electric batteries can be recharged for only finite cycles. Beyond 4-5 years, the older batteries would have to be replaced with the new ones. This can lead to higher maintenance costs. In case of Battery Swapping, Customers do not own batteries and hence this maintenance cost gets eliminated.

### **Address anxiety issues related to Charging and Range:**

Normally, people are reluctant to buy electric vehicles due to lower range (250-300 km) of electric vehicles and higher time taken for charging batteries. The introduction of Battery swapping would enable seamless travel without the need to worry much about range and charging. As people move from one place to another, they can simply switch their drained batteries with recharged ones and continue their travel without hassles.

### **PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES**

**Demand-Supply Mismatch:** Presently, we need one electric battery for one vehicle. However, with the introduction of battery swapping, the number of batteries needed would increase.

**Non-Removable batteries:** Only few companies provide for removable batteries. If the batteries are in-built and cannot be removed, then battery cannot be swapped. For example, In case of Ola e-scooter, batteries cannot be removed from the vehicles and hence drained batteries cannot be replaced with the recharged ones.

**Lack of interoperability standards:** If the battery swapping policy has to be successful, batteries should be made interoperable across different manufacturers. For example, it should be possible for the batteries used in Ola e-scooters to be used in any other electric scooters such as Bounce infinity, Bajaj etc. Such interoperability standards would make it easier for the people to adopt electric mobility.

**Higher GST rate on Electric Batteries:** Presently, the GST rate on stand-alone electric batteries is quite

higher at 18% and hence higher tax rate can be a disincentive for the battery recharging stations.

**Waste Management:** At the end of the battery lifespan, enormous amounts of electronic wastes such as cobalt, lithium, manganese oxide, nickel etc. get generated. Hence, there is a need to put in place efficient waste recycling programme aimed at optimum recovery and minimal destruction of environment.

### **NITI AAYOG' DRAFT BATTERY SWAPPING POLICY**

**Interoperability standards:** Battery swapping services will need to ensure interoperability between EVs and batteries for the successful mainstreaming of battery swapping as an alternative. Accordingly, the policy aims to lay down the interoperability standards.

### **Registration of vehicles with swappable batteries:**

The policy provides for easier registration of the vehicles without electric batteries.

**Unique Identification Number (UIN)** to be assigned to the electric batteries for their tracking and monitoring. Similarly, a UIN number will be assigned to each Battery Swapping Station.

### **Fiscal Support:**

- Demand side incentives offered under FAME Scheme for EV purchase can be made available to EVs with swappable batteries.
- Subsidies may be given by the Centre to the entities setting up battery swapping stations.
- State Governments may provide additional capital subsidies for the setting up of battery swapping stations.

**Rationalise GST Rates:** The GST council may recommend for the reduction in the GST rates on the electric batteries.

**Re-use and Recycling Ecosystem:** The Policy aims to promote the re-use of swap batteries after their End-of-Life (EOL) and fix the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).

**Nodal agencies:** The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) will be responsible for the implementation of battery swapping networks across the country. States and union territories (UTs) are responsible for the implementation and governance of the battery swapping ecosystem. Appointed state nodal agencies (SNAs) for EV public charging infrastructure will facilitate the rollout of battery swapping.

### 3. DECODING RBI'S STANDING DEPOSIT FACILITY (SDF)

In its latest Monetary policy, the RBI has decided to introduce Standing deposit Facility (SDF). So, what exactly is SDF and how does it work??

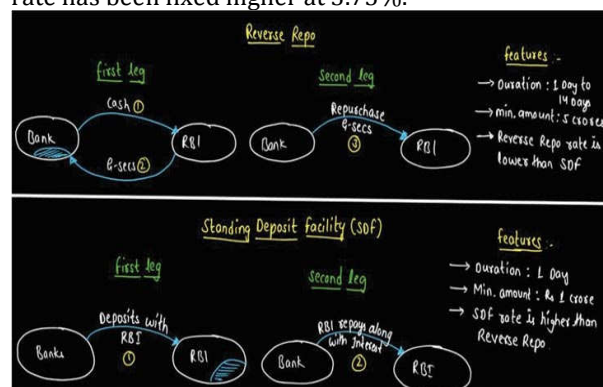
#### UNDERSTANDING REVERSE REPO

The Reverse Repo is the rate at which the RBI absorbs liquidity from the economy. Under this route, the Banks can park their surplus funds with the RBI and earn an interest which is equal to Reverse Repo. However, when the Banks Park their funds under this route, the RBI would be required to give G-Secs as collateral to the Banks. So, the problem with the Reverse Repo route is that the RBI has to provide G-Secs every time the banks provide funds. During times such as recent Demonetization, the RBI may not have adequate G-Secs to absorb huge amount of liquidity from the economy. Hence, to handle such kind of situations, the Urjit Patel Committee had recommended for the introduction of new tool known as "Standing Deposit Facility".

#### UNDERSTANDING STANDING DEPOSIT FACILITY (SDF)

Introduced through an amendment to the RBI Act, 1934. The SDF works similar to Reverse Repo. However, SDF would be different from Reverse Repo in the following ways:

1. Under the SDF route, the RBI would not be required to provide G-Secs as collateral to the Banks. Hence, it would enable RBI to absorb huge amount of liquidity from the economy without G-Secs acting as collateral.
2. The SDF would be available for parking funds with the RBI on an overnight basis. But the duration of Reverse Repo could be longer.
3. Presently, Reverse Repo is 3.35%, while the SDF rate has been fixed higher at 3.75%.



### CHANGES IN THE MONETARY POLICY CORRIDOR

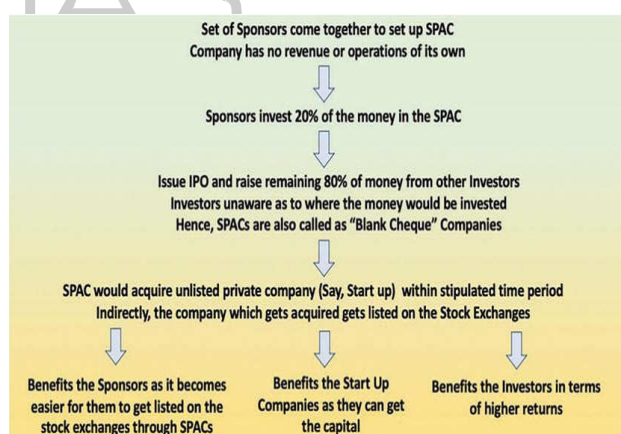
The RBI has also decided to replace Fixed Rate Reverse Repo in the monetary policy corridor with the Standing Deposit Facility.

Earlier Monetary Policy Corridor	Modified Monetary Policy Corridor
Repo placed in middle; MSF at 25 basis points higher and Reverse Repo at 65 basis points lower than Repo (Asymmetric Corridor)	Repo placed in middle; MSF at 25 basis points higher and SDF at 25 basis points lower than Repo (Symmetric Corridor)
MSF = 4.25%	MSF = 4.25%
Repo = 4%	Repo = 4%
Reverse Repo = 3.35%	SDF = 3.75%

### 4. SPECIAL PURPOSE ACQUISITION COMPANIES (SPACs)

Recently, the company law committee headed by Rajesh Verma has recommended the Government to amend the companies act to facilitate the entry of Special Purpose Acquisition Companies (SPACs). The SPACs have become the latest buzzword in the US Stock markets raising more than 50% of the capital in 20220.

#### WHAT ARE SPECIAL PURPOSE ACQUISITION COMPANIES?



### PRESENT STATUS OF SPECIAL PURPOSE ACQUISITION COMPANIES

**Global:** SPACs are currently regulated and recognised across multiple jurisdictions such as the UK, USA, Canada, Singapore and Malaysia. The SPACs have

raised more than 50% of the capital in the stock market in USA in 2020.

**India:**

**International Financial Services Centre (IFSC):** The GIFT city located in Gujarat enables raising of Capital through SPACs. The International Financial Services Centre Authority (IFSCA) has already provided regulatory clarity on listing SPACs in International Financial Services Centre.

**Domestic Market:** The Capital market regulator i.e., SEBI has so far not enabled raising of capital through SPACs. Hence, the current regulatory framework of India is not supportive of the SPAC structure.

- **Need to have Operations:** The Companies Act 2013 requires that companies must commence operation within one year of incorporation. SPACs typically take 2 years to identify a target and perform due diligence. If SPACs are to be made functional in India, enabling provisions will have to be inserted in the Companies Act.

- **Criteria for listing:** If a company must get listed on the stock exchanges, it must be able to fulfil the eligibility criteria in terms of having certain assets and minimum profits etc. The absence of operational profits and net tangible assets would prevent SPACs from making an IPO in India

## 5. PM MUDRA YOJANA COMPLETES 7 YEARS

*Recently, the Government celebrated 7 years of providing financial inclusion through Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY)*

### ABOUT MUDRA SCHEME

**Need:** Small scale enterprises lack access to formal credit from the Banks. Over 60% of such units are owned by persons belonging to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe or Other Backward Classes. Hence, MUDRA scheme aims to promote financial inclusion and socio-economic development.

**Launched in:** 2015

**Implemented by:** Ministry of Finance

**Objective:** Provide loans of up to Rs. 10 lakhs to NonCorporate Small Business Sector (NCSBS) which includes small manufacturing units, shopkeepers, fruits / vegetable vendors, truck & taxi operators, food-service units, repair shops, machine operators, small industries, artisans, food processors, street vendors and many others.

**Who can provide loans?:** Loans are provided by last

mile financiers such as Public Sector Banks, Regional Rural Banks, Cooperative Banks, Private and Foreign Banks, Small Finance Banks, NBFCs and Micro-finance institutions.

**Benefits for last mile financiers:** The loans provided by last mile financiers get refinanced by Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency Ltd (MUDRA). Hence, MUDRA does not directly lend to individuals/Microenterprises. MUDRA is a refinancing institution. **Eligible borrowers:** Both Individuals and Companies.

### PURPOSE OF LOANS

- Business loan for Vendors, Traders, Shopkeepers and other Service Sector activities
- Working capital loan.
- Equipment Finance for Micro Units.
- Transport Vehicle loans such as auto rickshaws, small goods transport vehicles, tractors, tiller, two wheelers used for commercial use only
- Loans for agri-allied non-farm income generating activities such as pisciculture, bee keeping, poultry farming, etc. It does not include crop loans and loans for land improvement.

### TYPES OF LOANS

- Shishu (loans up to Rs. 50,000);
- Kishore (loans from Rs. 50000 to Rs. 5 lakh);
- Tarun (loans from Rs.5 lakh to Rs. 10 lakh)

**Note:** The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) provides for overdraft facility on Jan Dhan accounts. Overdrafts of up to Rs 5000 availed on such Jan Dhan accounts are also classified as MUDRA Loans.

**Rate of Interest on MUDRA loans:** The interest rates are deregulated and the banks have been advised to charge reasonable interest rates.

**Need for Collateral:** Banks have been mandated by RBI not to insist for collateral for the loans given under MUDRA Scheme. Hence, MUDRA loans are collateral free.

### DETAILS ABOUT MUDRA CARD

MUDRA Card is a debit card provided to the borrowers to withdraw the working capital given to them in the form of MUDRA loans. It is a RuPay debit card and can be used for withdrawing cash from the ATMs and to make payment through any 'Point of Sale' machines.

### DETAILS ABOUT MICRO UNITS DEVELOPMENT & REFINANCE AGENCY LTD (MUDRA)

**Genesis:** Announced in the Union Budget 2015-16 and later incorporated as a company under the Companies Act. Registered as a NBFC with the RBI.

**Ownership:** Subsidiary of Small Industries Development bank of India (SIDBI). Presently, the authorized capital of MUDRA is 1000 crores.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

- Refinance support to the last mile financiers involved in giving MUDRA loans.
- Credit Guarantee support for the micro-loans.
- Imparting Financial Literacy at the grassroots level.
- Development support to micro-enterprises in terms of addressing knowledge and skill gaps.

## **6. RBI'S GUIDELINES ON DIGITAL BANKING UNITS**

*In the Union Budget 2022-23, the finance minister had announced setting up of 75 Digital Banking Units (DBUs) by Scheduled Banks across 75 selected districts in India. In accordance with such a proposal, the RBI has recently issued guidelines related to setting up of such DBUs in India.*

### **MODELS OF DIGITAL BANKS**

**(Front-End Only) Neo-banks:** These neo-banks partner with existing Banks to offer Banking services such as Deposits and loans. These neo-Banks do not have funds of their own, but they collaborate with the traditional banks to offer various banking related services. Examples: RazorPayX, InstantPay, Open, Niyo etc.

**(Licensed) Digital banks:** These entities are fully functional banks, regulated by the banking regulator and issue deposits and make loans on their own balance sheet. Presently, RBI does not allow such fully digital Banks to operate in India. Earlier, the NITI Aayog had argued in favour of such Banks in India.

**(Autonomous) unit of traditional banks:** These entities are essentially neo-banking operations of traditional banks that function autonomously and compete with stand-alone neo-banks. Examples include SBI's Yono, 811 of Kotak Mahindra, DigiBank of DBS etc.

### **PRESENT STATUS IN INDIA**

Presently, only those entities which are licensed by the RBI can undertake Banking related operations. As of now, the RBI does not allow Banks to be 100% digital. Hence, even though Banks can provide Banking services by leveraging technology (such as imobile of ICICI), the Banks must have mandatorily

have physical branches. Hence, there is no provision for Licensed 100% Digital Banks in India.

### **PROPOSAL OF 100% DIGITAL BANKS BY NITI AAYOG**

- To be licensed under Banking Regulation Act, 1949 as 100% Digital Banks.
- Provide Banking Services- Acceptance of Deposits, Giving Loans, provide insurance etc. *without the need to have physical branches.*
- No Physical Branches (No Brick and Mortar)
- Leverage Technology to provide Banking Services
- Also called as Challenger Banks- Newly created Banks which compete with longer established Banks through use of Digital Technology. Global Examples: Challenger Banks such as Starling Bank, Monese Banks in UK.

### **UNION BUDGET 2022-23**

Proposal to set up Digital Banking Units (DBUs). However, these Digital Banking Units would not be set up by issuing licenses to 100% Digital Banks. Only the existing Banks in India which already have physical presence are allowed to open DBUs.

### **RBI'S GUIDELINES ON DIGITAL BANKING UNITS (DBUs)**

**Definition of Digital Banking Unit:** A specialised fixed point business unit having certain minimum digital infrastructure for delivering digital banking products & services. So, just like how Banks can physical branches, the Banks can also open DBUs with minimal human interface.

**Who can open DBUs?:** All Domestic Scheduled Commercial Banks (excluding Regional Rural Banks, Payments Banks and Local Area Banks).

#### **Products and Services offered by DBUs:**

- Account Opening
- End to end digital processing of loans
- Internet Banking Kiosk
- Cash withdrawal and Cash Deposit only through ATM
- Digital Kit for customers: Mobile Banking, Internet Banking, Debit Card, Credit card and mass transit system cards
- Digital enrolment of customers for Atal Pension Yojana, PM Jeevan Jyoti Yojana etc.

**Where can DBUs be opened?** Both Rural and Urban areas without the need to get separate license from RBI.

## **7. TAX REVENUES HIT RECORD HIGH**



Recently, the Ministry of Finance has published the data related to Tax revenue collections for the financial year 2021-22. According to the latest data, the Tax-to-GDP ratio has increased to its highest level of 11.7% in 2021-22.

#### **IMPORTANT TERMS RELATED TO TAXATION**

**Gross Tax Revenue:** The Gross Tax revenue includes all the taxes imposed and collected by the Centre. It includes both Direct Taxes (such as Corporate Tax, Income Tax etc.) and Indirect taxes (such as GST, Customs Duty, Union Excise Duty etc.)

**Net Tax Revenue:** The Net Tax Revenue is calculated as Gross Tax Revenue - (Transfer of States' share of Taxes + Transfer to National Disaster Response Fund)

**Tax-to-GDP ratio:** Ratio of Total Tax Revenues to the Nominal GDP in a particular year. For example, if the tax-to-GDP ratio is 10%, then the Government gets 10% of its GDP in the form of Direct and Indirect taxes.

**Tax Buoyancy:** Measures the Responsiveness of Tax collections in response to changes in GDP. It is calculated as (Percentage change in Tax Collections / Percentage Change in GDP).

- Tax buoyancy of 1 denotes that, for every 1% increase in GDP, tax collections have also increased by 1%.
- Tax buoyancy of less than 1 denotes that, for every 1% increase in GDP, tax collections have increased by less than 1%.
- Tax buoyancy of more than 1 denotes that, for every 1% increase in GDP, tax collections have increased by more than 1%.

#### **IMPORTANT PRELIMS POINTERS ON PUBLIC FINANCE**

**Tax-to-GDP Ratio:** As per the Union Budget 2022-22, the share of Direct taxes has been usually higher than the share of indirect taxes in the last decade. However, for two financial years i.e. 2016-17 and 2021-22 (Revised Estimates), the share of direct and indirect taxes was almost same. However, as per the latest data, the Tax-to-GDP ratio in 2021-22 has increased to its highest level of 11.7%.

**Share of Direct and Indirect taxes:** The latest data published by Ministry of Finance is different from the Budget Figures. Now, the share of Direct Taxes is 6.1% and share of indirect taxes is 5.6%. As far as Prelims exam is concerned, we need to go by the latest data published by Ministry of Finance.

**Tax Buoyancy:** The Tax buoyancy for the year 2021-22 is 1.9 (2.8 for direct taxes and 1.1 for indirect taxes)

**Contribution of different taxes in descending order:** GST (including CGST, UTGST and GST Compensation

Cess), Corporate Tax, Income Tax, Union Excise duty and Customs duty. Amongst the direct taxes, corporate tax accounts for the highest share.

### **8. FEDERAL TENSIONS OVER TAXES ON PETROL AND DIESEL**

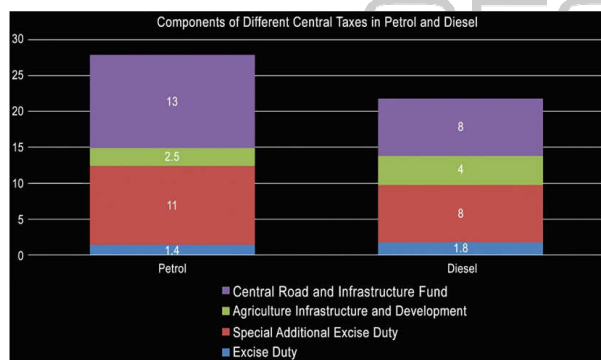
The taxes on Petrol and Diesel have led to tensions between Centre and States. On one hand, the Central Government feels that the states are not reducing their VAT rates in line with the centre's cut in the excise duty. While on the other hand, states have expressed their inability to reduce the VAT rates since their financial position is poor due to the pending GST compensation dues from the Centre.

#### **UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS: AD VALOREM VS SPECIFIC DUTIES**

Types of Indirect Taxes		
Criteria	Ad Valorem	Specific tax
<b>Tax rate</b>	Tax rate is defined in terms of value of the product	Tax rate is defined in terms of unit of product
<b>Example:</b>	GST: 3%, 5%, 12%, 18% and 28% State's VAT on Petrol and Diesel	Central Excise duty on Petrol: Rs 27.9 per litre Central Excise duty on Diesel: Rs 21.8 per litre
<b>Collections depend upon</b>	Value of Product	Volume of Sales
<b>Impact of Increase in Prices of product (Assuming demand remains same)</b>	Increase in collection	Remains same

Impact of increase in	Increase in collection	Increase in collection
<b>Demand</b>		
<b>Contribution to Inflation</b>	<p>Much higher impact on Inflation.</p> <p>Earlier: 5% VAT on Fuel. Fuel prices = Rs 100. VAT applicable: Rs 5.</p> <p>Total Mkt prices = Rs 105</p> <p>Now: 5% VAT on Fuel. Fuel Price = Rs 200. VAT Applicable: Rs 10.</p> <p>Total Mkt Price = Rs 210.</p>	<p>Minimal impact on Inflation.</p> <p>Earlier: Rs 5 Excise duty on Fuel. Fuel price= Rs 100.</p> <p>Excise duty applicable: Rs 5.</p> <p>Total Mkt price= Rs 105</p> <p>Now: Rs 5 Excise duty on Fuel. Fuel Price = Rs 200.</p> <p>Excise duty applicable: Rs 5.</p> <p>Total Mkt price= Rs205.</p>

### PRESENT TAX REGIME ON PETROLEUM PRODUCTS



Presently, both the Central and State Government impose taxes on Petrol and Diesel. The Central taxes on Petrol and Diesel include **Basic Excise Duty**, **Special Additional Excise Duty**, **Road and Infrastructure Cess** and **Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess**. This comes to be around Rs 27.9 per litre of petrol and Rs 21.8 per litre of diesel. Apart from these central taxes, even the state governments impose their own tax in the form of VAT. Hence, there is a high incidence of Central and State taxes on Petrol and Diesel. These taxes alone

account for almost around 60% of the cost of the petrol and diesel.

### GOVERNMENT'S TAX POLICY TOWARDS PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

Whenever there is decline in the international crude oil prices, the Central Government usually increases the tax rates. Such a Government's policy has a number of advantages:

1. The Higher Excise duty on Petrol and Diesel acts as an implicit carbon tax and nudges the economy to move towards greener fuels.
2. Enables the Government to earn more revenue, which can be used later as buffer, in event of increase in crude oil prices.
3. Enables the Government to raise revenue to undertake higher expenditure towards green energy projects.

### PRESENT REASONS FOR INCREASE IN THE PETROL AND DIESEL

Last year, in 2020, the international crude oil prices were at all time low due to decline in the global demand due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, since then, the global crude oil prices have been rising on account of growing demand and Russia-Ukraine war.

### IMPACT OF INCREASE IN PETROL AND DIESEL

**Higher rate of Inflation:** Petrol and Diesel are important inputs in our economy. They are not only used for the purpose of transportation, but they are also used as raw materials in number of Industries. Hence, increase in their prices would inevitably lead to increase in the rate of Inflation.

**Rupee Depreciation:** Higher import bill would lead to Depreciation in Rupee.

**Higher Current Account Deficit:** As the Rupee depreciates, the imports become costly. The demand for oil is relatively inelastic i.e. in spite of increase in its prices, its demand would not reduce. Hence, as the import of oil becomes costly due to Rupee Depreciation, current account deficit would get further widened.

### STEPS TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT

In 2021-22, the Centre had slashed the taxes on Petrol and Diesel by Rs 10. Now, the Centre has been asking the state Governments to reduce the VAT rates on the petrol and diesel to reduce the burden on the consumers. However, state governments are reluctant to reduce the VAT rates since their tax collections would get adversely affected. Moreover, the state governments have also been arguing that

they have so far not received the GST compensation dues from the Centre for the financial year 2021-22 and hence their fiscal position is already strained.

#### **WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?**

Presently, Petroleum products such as Crude oil, Petrol, Diesel etc. are outside the ambit of GST. The GST council has been empowered to recommend the date on which these Petroleum products can be brought under the GST regime. Inclusion of these petroleum products under GST would do away with cascading effect of taxes on taxes and benefit the consumers. However, the states are reluctant to bring petroleum products under GST since it may lead to loss in their revenues.

### **9. EXTENSION OF ATAL INNOVATION MISSION**

The Union Cabinet has recently approved continuation of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) till March 2023. Atal Innovation Mission is set up under the (**PRELIMS 2019**)

- (a) Department of Science and Technology
- (b) Ministry of Labour and Employment
- (c) NITI Aayog
- (d) Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

#### **DETAILS ABOUT ATAL INNOVATION MISSION**

**Year of launch:** 2016

**Objective:** Promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.

**Implemented by:** NITI Aayog

#### **IMPORTANT PROGRAMMES**

- **Atal Tinkering Labs:** Create a problem-solving mindset in the school going students.
- **Atal Incubation Centres:** Support startups in terms of labs and mentoring
- **Atal New India Challenge:** Support innovations based on advanced technologies in areas of National Importance and Social relevance
- **Atal Community Innovation Centre (ACIC):** Promote innovation in Tier-II and Tier III cities
- **Applied Research and Innovation for Small and Medium Enterprises (ARISE):** Promote innovation and research in MSMEs.

### **10. SLOW PROGRESS IN PMKUSUM: CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS**

*With prices of Diesel skyrocketing, farmers are struggling to irrigate the crops using diesel run pumps. Solar pump sets are affordable and environment friendly, however, progress of the PM KUSUM has been tardy. Only 23% of the sanctioned 3.59 lakh solar water pumps have been installed so far.*

#### **ABOUT PM KUSUM SCHEME**

KUSUM Scheme seeks to incentivise the farmers to set up solar powered plants in their fields so as to enable them to meet their energy needs and supplement their farm incomes. The idea is to enable "Annadata" to become "Urjadata". The PM KUSUM scheme is

#### **Three Components:**

1. **Setting up of 10,000 MW of Grid-Connected Solar and Other Renewable energy plants** on Barren/Uncultivable land. The surplus power generated can be sold to the DISCOMs.
2. **Off-Grid Areas:** Replacement of diesel agriculture pump sets with 20 lakh Solar Agriculture Pumps--> Reduce the dependence of farmers on diesel and meet their irrigation needs.
3. **Grid-connected Areas:** Replacement of diesel agriculture pump sets with 15 lakh Solar Agriculture Pumps--> Use the generated solar power to meet the irrigation needs and the excess solar power will be sold to DISCOMs.

#### **GOVERNMENT'S FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

**Component A:** In order to encourage DISCOMs to purchase power from the farmers, the Government provides performance based incentive to the DISCOMs.

**Component B and C:** Central Government: 30%; State Government: 30%; remaining 40% of the cost of the project would be incurred by Farmers themselves.

#### **BENEFITS**

**Environmental Benefit:** Saving of about 27 million tonnes of CO2 emission per annum.

**Economic Benefit:** Reduce financial burden on DISCOMs; Promote Renewable Energy; Reduce import of Crude Oil and improve Trade Deficit.

**Social Benefit:** Supplement Farm Income; Generate SelfEmployment; Empowerment of Farmers.

#### **PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES**

According to a report from Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), PM KUSUM scheme is not a silver bullet to overcome challenges of irrigation supply,

subsidy burden on DISCOMs and farmer distress.

**Missing financing mechanism:** The scheme requires up to 40 per cent financing by the farmer. In absence of access to formal credit in the rural India, farmers are finding it difficult to raise finances on their own.

**Over-Exploitation of Ground water:** Large scale deployment of solar pump sets could lead to overexploitation of ground water.

**Inadequate Irrigation:** Solar pump sets may not be able to provide adequate irrigation in water scarce regions.

**Higher benefits for large farmers:** Income benefits through setting up solar power plants on the fields would benefit the large farmers more than the small and marginal farmers.

#### **STRATEGIES NEEDED**

**Reducing Inter-state Disparity:** Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan together account for half of two lakh solar pumps currently deployed in the country; Target linked financial assistance to reduce the disparities.

**Reducing Intra-state Disparity:** Share of central financial assistance should be appropriated for small and marginal farmers/Women farmers.

**Give up One Size Fits-all approach:** Small and marginal farmers should be given a higher capital subsidy and long term loans with interest subsidies.

**Focus on Efficiency of Pumps:** Solarizing grid connected pumps must include replacement of the pump with more energy efficient newer age pumps.

**Focus on Post-harvest losses:** Use solar power for postharvesting processes to promote local value addition and enhanced income levels.

### **11. PM DAKSHA YOJANA**

*The Government has recently highlighted that around 2.7 lakh people belonging to poor and marginalized sections would be skilled under the PM Daksha Yojana*

**Objective:** Enhance the skill set of the youths in the age group (18-45 years)

**Target Beneficiaries:** Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes/Economically Backward Classes/De-notified Tribes and Safai karamcharis including Waste picker

**Time period:** Implemented over the period of 2021-22 to 2025-26.

#### **KEY FEATURES**

- Free of cost training for the trainees through 100% grants by the Government.
- Stipend of Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 1,500 per month per

trainee for trainees.

- Wage compensation of Rs.3000 per trainee
- Trained candidates to be provided with certification after successful completion of training and assessment. Trained candidates to be provided placement after assessment and certification.

**Implemented by** National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC), National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC) and National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation (NSKFDC).

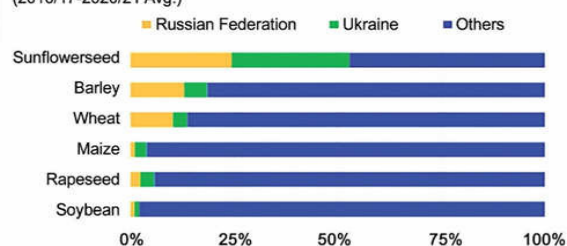
**Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

### **12. IMPORTANCE OF UKRAINIAN CRISIS ON GLOBAL AGRICULTURAL MARKETS**

*Russia and Ukraine are among the most important producers of agricultural commodities in the world.*

*Hence, the Russia-Ukraine war has led to supply side bottlenecks and rising global food inflation.* Russia and Ukraine account for almost 50% of sunflower, 20% of barley, 15% of wheat and 4% of maize production at the global level. In 2021, either the Russian Federation or Ukraine (or both) ranked amongst the top three global exporters of wheat, maize, rapeseed, sunflower seeds and sunflower oil, while the Russian Federation also stood as the world's top exporter of nitrogen fertilizers, the second leading supplier of potassium fertilizers and the third largest exporter of phosphorous fertilizers.

Figure 1: Share in global production of selected crops (2016/17-2020/21 Avg.)



Source: FAO XCBS system

**Top Exporters of wheat:** Russia, EU and USA

**Top Exporters of Barley:** EU, Australia and Ukraine

**Top Exporters of Maize:** USA, Argentina and Ukraine

**Top Exporters of Sunflower:** Ukraine, Russia and Argentina.



# Polity And Governance

## 1. UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

*As the tenure of President Ram Nath Kovind as he completes 5 years in office in July 2022. The election for the office of the President of India will be notified in mid-June and polling will begin in July.*

### ELECTORAL COLLEGE FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

- **Article 54:** President is elected by an Electoral College, which consists of elected members of both Houses of Parliament and elected members of Legislative Assemblies of all States and of NCT of Delhi and UT of Puducherry.
- This means the number of electors will be 4,896, 543 Lok Sabha MPs, 233 Rajya Sabha MPs, and 4,120 MLAs of all States, including NCT of Delhi and UT of Puducherry.

### TERM OF OFFICE OF PRESIDENT

**Article 56:** President shall hold office for a term of 5 years from the date on which he enters upon his office. He shall, however, continue to hold office notwithstanding the expiry of his term, until his successor enters upon his office.

### NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION OF

- **According to Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Act, 1952 – Section 4(3):** Notification calling election of the President can be issued by Election Commission on any day within the period of 60 days before expiry of the term of office of the outgoing President. The election schedule shall be so fixed, that the President-elect is able to enter upon his office on the day following the expiry of the term of the outgoing President.
- **Article 324:** Authority to conduct elections to Office of President is vested in Election Commission.

### ELECTORAL SYSTEM/PROCESS IN THE ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

- **Article 55(3):** Election of President shall be held in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of single transferable vote and secret ballot.

### QUALIFICATIONS FOR A CANDIDATE TO CONTEST ELECTION FOR PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

- **Article 58** lays down following eligibility conditions to contest the election to the Office of President:
  - (i) Must be a citizen of India.
  - (ii) Must have completed 35 years of age.
  - (iii) Must be eligible to be a member of Lok Sabha.
  - (iv) Should not be holding any office of profit under Government of India or Government of any State or under any local or other authority subject to the control of any of the said Governments.
- However, candidate may be holding office of President or Vice-President or Governor of any State or Ministers of the Union or any State and shall be eligible to contest election.

### MANNER OF ELECTION OF PRESIDENT & VALUE OF VOTES

- Constitution stipulates that there shall be uniformity, as far as practicable, in the scale of representation of the different States at the election (Article 55).
- For securing such uniformity among the States inter-se as well as parity between the States as a whole and Union, a formula based on the population of each State is given in Constitution for determination of the value of vote which each elected MP and MLA of Legislative Assembly of each State.
- **Constitution (Eighty-fourth) Amendment Act, 2001** provides that until the publication of first census after the year 2026 have been published, the population of

the States for the purposes of calculation of value of votes for Presidential Election shall mean the population as ascertained at the 1971-census.

- Total Value of votes of all members of each State Assembly is worked out by multiplying the number of elective seats in the Assembly by the number of votes for each member, e.g.,  $175 \times 159 = 27,825$  for Andhra Pradesh.

- Uttar Pradesh for instance, has the highest vote value for each of its MLAs, at 208. The value of one MLA's vote in Maharashtra is 175, while that in Arunachal Pradesh is just 8.

- The total value of votes of all the States added together is divided by the total number of elected members of Parliament (Lok Sabha 543 + Rajya Sabha 233) to get the value of votes per each Member of Parliament.

- Thus, fixed value of each vote by an MP of the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha is 708. Meanwhile, the vote value of each MLA differs from State to State based on a calculation that factors in its population vis-a-vis the number of members in its legislative Assembly.

- Finally, based on these values, total number of votes of all Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha MPs would be 5,59,408 ( $776 \text{ MPs} \times 708$ ), and total votes of all MLAs from State Legislative Assemblies would come up to 5,49,495.

Thus, the grand total vote value of the whole electoral college comes up to 10,98,903.

#### **NOMINATION STAGE**

- Before the voting, comes the nomination stage, where the candidate intending to stand in the election, files the nomination along with a signed list of 50 proposers and 50 seconders.

- These proposers and seconders can be anyone from the total of 4,896 members of the electoral college from the State and national level. An elector cannot propose or second the nomination of more than one candidate.

#### **SECURING VICTORY**

- A nominated candidate does not secure victory based on a simple majority but through a system of bagging a specific quota of votes. While counting, EC totals up all the valid votes cast by the electoral college through paper ballots and to win, the candidate must secure 50% of the total votes cast + 1.

- Unlike general elections, where electors vote for a single party's candidate, the voters of the Electoral College write names of candidates on the ballot paper in the order of preference.

## **2 . UNIFORM CIVIL CODE**

*Article 44 of Indian Constitution states that State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code in India. However, it is not so easy to make a uniform law on personal laws of all religions as each aspect of personal life like marriage, divorce, succession etc. are governed differently. So, Uniform Civil Code is an attempt to unify all civilian laws including personal laws for people of all faith living in India. UCC is the proposal to administer same set of secular civil laws to govern all people irrespective of their religion, gender, domicile, caste, etc. This law will be distinguished from public law and will subsume all laws covering marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption and maintenance of different religions into one codified law. However, so far it has been difficult to achieve uniformity in personal laws of all religion.*

#### **PRESENT PUSH FOR UCC**

- **Proposal to Examine UCC by Uttarakhand CM:** Uttarakhand Chief Minister announced an expert panel to examine the possibility of applying the UCC in the State.

- **Private Members' Bill proposed on UCC:** Rakesh Sinha, a Rajya Sabha MP had moved a private member's Bill for a law on the UCC. A similar petition by Ashwini Upadhyaya is before the Delhi High Court as well.

- **Matter to be taken by 22nd Law Commission:** Law Minister Kiren Rijiju in response to a written question, said "the matter is sub judice". The Law Minister further stated that the matter requires an in-depth study of the personal laws governing different communities and could be taken up by the 22nd Law Commission Report.

- **Supreme Court's View on UCC:** Even Supreme Court has indicated that government should explore the UCC to secure gender justice, equality and dignity of women. Supreme Court's view is based on several petitions claiming that personal laws governing the followers of certain faiths discriminate against women.

- **Proposal by Chancellor of Maulana Azad National Urdu University,** Firoz Ahmed Bakht, asked Supreme Court to direct the government to constitute a judicial commission or a high-level expert committee to prepare a draft UCC in tune with international conventions which protect the rights of women. Mr.

Bakht, who is also the grandnephew of Independent India's first Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, says it is time to shed personal laws based on "patriarchal stereotypes".

### UCC AND INDIAN CONSTITUTION

- UCC has been provided for as a Directive Principle of State Policy (DPSP) under part IV of the Indian constitution. **Article 44** provides of a Uniform Civil Code and reads "State shall endeavor to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India."
- The objective of this endeavour is to harmonise diverse cultural practices and address the discrimination meted out to various vulnerable groups under the garb of religious practices.
- During the drafting of the constitution, UCC met with stiff opposition from various corners. Various minority religions especially the Muslims felt that UCC would curtail their freedom of religion, hence were apprehensive of replacing their personal laws with UCC.
- It was due to this apprehension that UCC was included as a DPSP rather than a Fundamental Right and it was envisaged that it will be achieved gradually and not all at once.
- Nevertheless, having UCC embodied in DPSP reflects the intention of securing justice and equality for all citizens.

### BENEFITS OF UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

- Protection of vulnerable sections, including women and religious minorities
- Promote nationalistic fervor through unity" as well as simplify the complex personal laws.
- Doing away with diversity in matrimonial laws, simplifying the Indian legal system and make Indian society more homogeneous.
- De-linking law from religion.
- Create a national identity and will help in containing fissiparous tendencies in the country.
- Establishing social justice and gender equality in family matters.
- Promote monogamy among all the citizen of India including Muslim and it will lead to betterment in the position of women.
- Remove prejudices against women regarding personal laws on divorce and maintenance.
- Strengthening the secular fabric of the country and promote unity.

### UCC AND SUPREME COURT

**a) Shah Bano case:** In 1985, Supreme Court ruled in

favour of Shah Bano, who had moved the apex court seeking maintenance under Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure after her husband divorced her. The then Chief Justice observed that a Common Civil Code would help the cause of national integration by removing disparate loyalties to law. The Court directed Parliament to frame a Uniform Civil Code. *Despite the Judgment, government in 1986, enacted Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, which nullified the Shah Bano judgment. The Act allowed maintenance to women only for 90 days after the divorce*".

**b) John Vallamattom case (2003):** Chief Justice Khare observed: "It is a matter of regret that Article 44 of Constitution has not been given effect to. Parliament is still to step in for framing a common civil code in the country."

**c) S.R. Bommai case:** SC warned against "mixing politics with religion". The court had worried whether a secular state should bring a code which can be perceived to be a threat to personal laws based on the religious beliefs of individual religions.

### CASE OF GOA

Goa is the only state where Uniform Civil code exists. Goa Civil Code collectively called Family Laws, was framed and enforced by the Portuguese colonial rulers through various legislations in the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. After the liberation of Goa in 1961, Indian State scrapped all the colonial laws and extended the central laws to the territory but made the exception of retaining the Family Laws.

### LAW COMMISSION REPORT ON UCC IN 2018

- **UCC Neither Necessary nor Desirable:** Law Commission said that UCC is currently neither necessary nor desirable in India.
- **Need for Religion wise Amendment:** Law commission has recommended religion-wise amendment in personal laws to end discrimination against women within the communities.
- **Ensure Equality Within Community:** Urged the legislature to "first consider equality within communities i.e., between men and women rather than equality between communities". This way some of the differences within personal laws which are meaningful can be preserved and inequality can be weeded out to the greatest extent possible without absolute uniformity.
- **Preserve Diversity of Personal laws in absence of Consensus through Codification:** In the absence of any consensus on a uniform civil code the

Commission felt that the best way forward may be to preserve the diversity of personal laws (*Legal Pluralism*) but at the same time ensure that personal laws do not contradict fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India. To achieve this, it is desirable that all personal laws relating to matters of family must first be codified to the greatest extent possible, and then the inequalities that have crept into codified law, should be remedied by amendment.

#### **ARGUMENTS AGAINST UNIFORM CIVIL CODE**

- **Against Right to Freedom of Religion:** It will introduce State interference in religious affairs hence against the concept of secularism and may violate Article 25. This may go against S.R. Bommai Judgment which held - *Constitution has chosen secularism as its vehicle to establish an egalitarian social order. Secularism is part of the fundamental law and basic structure of the Indian political system.*
- **May impact the cultural practice of some tribal communities in India.**
- **Considering the plural society of India,** it will be a complex task to unify all personal laws of all religions, castes, communities, tribes etc. across the country.

#### **WAY FORWARD**

- Hence, when and if Uniform civil Code is brought into effect, it will have to ensure a balance between the protecting of fundamental rights and religious principles of different communities. Before enacting a common personal law, it is necessary to take into confidence all religion and communities of India.
- Further, steps can be taken to legislate on such common matters which are least controversial but with complete consent of every community in India. The idea is to provide uniformity in set of rules by consent and not to create more fissures and fault lines in the name of enforcing a uniform common law for India.

### **3 . HOME MINISTRY ASK MORE TIME TO FRAME CAA RULES**

Ministry of Home Affairs has sought another six months to frame rules of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA). CAA was notified on 12.12.2019 and has come into force w.e.f. 10.01.2020.

#### **CHANGE OF DEFINITION OF "ILLEGAL MIGRANT"**

- CAA primarily changes the definition of "illegal migrant" as provided in **Citizenship Act, 1955** by

providing a condition or stipulation for persons belonging to 3 countries and 6 religions.

- Prior to the amendment, Citizenship Act, 1955 defined illegal migrant as a foreigner who has entered India -
  - (i) Without a valid passport or other documents/ authority as prescribed by law in that behalf; or
  - (ii) With a valid passport or other documents /authority as prescribed by law in that behalf but remains therein beyond the permitted period of time.
- But, 2019 amendment has changed this abovementioned definition by adding a condition or stipulation.
- The condition as per 2019 Amendment –Any person belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian communities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan, shall not be treated as illegal migrant for the purposes of this Act. If,
  - o They entered India on or before the 31st day of December 2014 and
  - o They have been exempted by the Central Government under
    - ♣ Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 or
    - ♣ from the application of the provisions of the Foreigners Act, 1946 or any rule or order made under the Foreigners Act, 1946,
- Citizenship granted through Naturalization: Government in India has reduced the period of residency from "not less than 11 years" to "not less than 5 years."
- Exception: If the applicant has rendered distinguished service to the cause of science, philosophy, art, literature, world peace or human progress, then the central government may waive all or any of the conditions specified in the Third Schedule.
- CAA shall not apply to the following: The provisions of CAA shall not apply to tribal area of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram or Tripura as included in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution and the area covered under "The Inner Line" notified under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.

#### **CHANGES MADE FOR OVERSEAS CITIZENS OF INDIA UNDER CAA**

- CAA has added new provisions under section 7D of Citizenship Act, 1955 which deals with cancellation of registration as overseas citizen of India on certain grounds.
- The new provision says that Central government may cancel the registration of overseas citizen of India if such person has violated any of the provisions



of CAA or any other law for time being in force as may be specified by the Central Government.

- Further, no order for cancellation of registration of OCI shall be passed unless the Overseas Citizen of India Cardholder has been given a reasonable opportunity of being heard.

#### **Relation between Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 & Inner Line Permit**

- According to Section 3 of Citizenship Amendment Act, provisions of CAA shall not apply to tribal area of *Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram or Tripura* as included in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution and the area covered under "*The Inner Line*" notified under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.

#### **ABOUT INNER LINE PERMIT & RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

- The Inner Line Permit was established by the British government under *The Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations, 1873* to safeguard tribals of eastern part of Bengal. The 1873 regulation is also known as Inner Line Regulation (ILR) or Inner Line Permit (ILP).
- The system requires outsiders to obtain a permit from the government to enter the designated territory.
- It can be issued for travel purposes solely.
- The main objective of the ILP system is to *provide a special protection of the distinct identity and safeguard for the peaceful existence of the indigenous people of the state where it is applicable.*
- System of ILP is applicable in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram. State of Manipur was added in the Inner Line Permit System in 2019.
- Last Year, the Meghalaya Assembly adopted a resolution for implementing the Inner Line Permit (ILP) regime in the state, which will impose restrictions on the entry and movement of 'outsiders' in the hill state.

#### **IMPORTANCE OF CITIZENSHIP**

- The Indian Constitution accommodates a very diverse society and integrates the notion of nationalism by providing each member full and equal citizenship, bestowed Indian citizens with fundamental rights including right to life, liberty, speech and equality (which cannot be unreasonably taken away by state without procedure established by law) and also provided each citizen who has attained the age of 18 years the right to vote.
- There is also a provision that the state should not discriminate against citizens on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, or any of them.

The rights of religious and linguistic minorities are also protected.

- Granting of Indian citizenship to a diverse population is not based on any conditions whereby the person must give up their caste, religion, culture, tradition or practices.

- The provisions about citizenship in the Constitution can be found in Part Two and in subsequent laws passed by Parliament namely the Citizenship Act, 1955.
- The Constitution adopted an democratic and inclusive notion of citizenship as citizenship can be acquired by birth, descent, registration, naturalisation, or inclusion of territory. The rights and obligations of citizens are listed in the Constitution.

#### **CONSTITUTION OF INDIA**

- Part II of the Indian Constitution from Article 5 to 11 deals with Citizenship and provides three modes of acquiring Indian Citizenship:

1. By Domicile
2. Cases of Migration
3. Process of Registration

##### **1. Domicile**

- Article 5 mentions of acquiring Indian Citizenship through domicile. Article 5 mentions that at the commencement of this Constitution, every person shall be a citizen of India who has his domicile in the territory of India and
  - (a) who was born in the territory of India; or
  - (b) either of whose parents was born in the territory of India; or
  - (c) who has been ordinarily resident in the territory of India for not less than five years immediately preceding the commencement of the Constitution.

##### **2. Migration**

- Article 6 mentions about rights of citizenship of certain persons who have migrated to India from Pakistan.
- A person who has migrated to India from the territory now included in Pakistan shall be deemed to be a citizen of India at the commencement of this Constitution if –
  - (a) He or either of his parents or any of his grandparents was born in India as defined in the Government of India Act, 1935.
  - (b) If such person has migrated from Pakistan before 19th July 1948, he has been ordinarily resident in the territory of India since the date of his migration, or
  - (c) For persons migrated on or after 19th July 1948, he must be registered as citizens of India.

- However, no person shall be registered as Indian citizen, unless he has been resident in the territory of India for at least six months immediately preceding the date of his application. **Citizenship by Registration – Migrants & Persons of Indian origin residing outside India**

- **Article 7 allows citizenship by registration** to such migrants who had after 1st March 1947 (during partition) migrated to Pakistan but returned to India under a permit for resettlement or permanent return issued by or under the authority of any law.

### **3. Registration**

- **Article 8** provides for acquiring Indian Citizenship by Registration for persons of Indian origin residing outside.
- Such persons of Indian Origin can register themselves with the diplomatic or consular representative of India in the country where he is for the time being residing.

### **Dual or Multiple Citizenship Prohibited**

- **According to Article 9**, no person shall be a citizen of India by virtue of article 5, Article 6 or Article 8, if he has voluntarily acquired the citizenship of any foreign State. **Rights of Citizenship can be Regulated by Law Made by Parliament**

- **Article 10** – Every Citizen of India by virtue of this constitution shall continue to be Indian citizen subject to the provisions of any law that may be made by Parliament.

- **Article 11** – Parliament has power to make any provision with respect to the acquisition and termination of citizenship and all other matters relating to citizenship.

### **CITIZENSHIP ACT, 1955**

*Parliament in its exercise of power under Article 11 enacted the Citizenship Act, 1955 which regulates modes of acquiring and terminating Indian Citizenship.*

### **Acquiring Citizenship**

- The Citizenship Act, 1955 provides for acquiring citizenship of India through the following ways:
  - Citizenship by birth
  - Citizenship by descent
  - Citizenship by registration
  - Citizenship by naturalisation
  - Special provisions as to citizenship of persons covered by Assam Accord
  - Citizenship by incorporation of territory

### **Terminating Citizenship**

- The Citizenship Act, 1955 terminates Indian Citizenship through Renunciation, Termination and Deprivation.

### **Renunciation of Citizenship**

- Indian citizens including Persons of Indian Origin and Overseas Citizen of India must surrender Indian Passport immediately after they gain nationality of the other country.
- When a person ceases to be citizen of India, every minor child of that person also ceases to be citizen of India. However, such minor children within one year of attaining full age (18 years) can resume their Indian citizenship.
- According to official gazette of 2015, all existing Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) card holder registered as such under new PIO Card scheme 2002 shall be deemed to be Overseas Citizens of India Cardholder.

### **Termination of Citizenship different from Renunciation**

- Any citizen of India:
  - who by naturalisation, registration or otherwise voluntarily acquires citizenship of another country or
  - has at any time between 26th January 1950 and commencement of Citizenship Act 1955 had voluntarily acquired the citizenship of another country shall cease to be citizen of India upon acquisition of foreign citizenship.
- Termination of citizenship operates as per law because Indian Constitution does not allow for dual citizenship.

### **Deprivation of Citizenship**

- If any person has acquired citizenship of India by fraudulent means, then the government of India is empowered to deprive the person of Indian citizenship if:
  - Registration or naturalisation certificate was obtained by fraud.
  - Citizen through his act or speech has shown disloyalty or disaffection towards the Constitution of India.
  - During any war, such citizen helped the enemy country through unlawful trade or communication.
  - The citizen within five years of naturalisation or registration has been sentenced to imprisonment in another country for a term of not less than 2 years.
  - If such citizen has not registered annually at an Indian consulate with an intention to retain Indian citizenship.

## **4. ELECTORAL BONDS MUST GO**

*Opaqueness in election funding not only distorts the level playing field among political parties but also snatches from the voters their right to knowledge or information on electoral funding. Electoral Bonds brought as an alternative for cash donations and prevent flow of black money in elections has on the contrary made the fundings more opaque and corporate friendly as donations to electoral bonds are anonymous and limitless. For this reason, it has been alleged that electoral bonds are deeply destructive of democracy, compromise fair and democratic elections and violate core principles of the Indian Constitution.*

#### **WHAT ARE ELECTORAL BONDS?**

- Electoral Bonds are bearer instrument in the nature of a Promissory Note and are an interest free banking instrument.
- Electoral Bond shall be issued for any value, in multiples of Rs 1000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 crore from the Specified Branches of the State Bank of India (SBI).
- The purchaser would be allowed to buy Electoral Bonds only on due fulfilment of all the extant KYC norms and by making payment from a bank account. It will not carry the name of payee.
- The Electoral Bonds would have a life of only 15 days during which it can be used for making donation only to political parties which has secured not less than one per cent of the votes polled in the last general election to the House of the People or to Legislative Assembly.
- Every political party in its returns will have to disclose the amount of donations it has received through electoral bonds to the Election Commission.

#### **OPAQUENESS OF ELECTORAL FUNDING IMPACTS DEMOCRACY**

- In a Parliamentary democracy, citizens have the right vote and send their representatives to Parliament on sound knowledge and complete information about the representative and his political party.
- Political funding specially during elections is one of the most crucial information which a voter must know. Money is the most effective way of buying policy, of engaging in regulatory capture, and of skewing the playing field in one's own favour.
- This is enabled to a far greater degree when citizens are in the dark about the source of money. Supreme Court has long held that the "right to know", especially in the context of elections, is an integral part of the right to freedom of expression under the Indian Constitution.

- By keeping this knowledge from citizens and voters, the electoral bonds scheme violates fundamental tenets of our democracy.
- It is equally important that if a democracy is to thrive, the role of money in influencing politics ought to be limited.

#### **OTHER DEMERITS OF ELECTORAL BONDS**

- **Identity of Donor Unknown** - The identity of the donor will not be known to the receiver of the electoral bonds. Thus, through the disguised process of electoral bonds, the identity of the person will never be known. While the identity of the donor is captured, it is not revealed to the party or public. So, transparency regarding electoral funding is not enhanced for the voter.
- **No Upper Limit for Donation** - Any individual or company can make any amount of donations as there is no upper limit on donations. This will increase corruption as any money can be raised anonymously even by registering a fictitious or through shell companies.
- **Strengthen Corrupt Nexus** - This process of redeeming money through bonds without disclosure of name will penetrate and strengthen the nexus between corporate houses and political parties. Political parties may also start taking care of the highest bidder in such scenario and may grant them unreasonable favours which may affect our economy and business environment in the long run.
- **Aid Corruption & Red Tapism** - Business houses will expect favourable policies from the future government and the political party shall be obliged to obey when it comes to power. This nexus shall further increase corruption and red tapism in the society.
- **Frivolous Donations**: If identity of persons donating cash to political parties is not revealed, then it may lead to frivolous donations from unaccounted source.
- **Formation of Shell Companies to route funds**: Persons also includes companies and organisations. Hence shell companies can be formed just to route funds to buy electoral bonds without revealing the identity of such companies. Companies are also included as person as per Income Tax Act, 1961.
- **Restrictions on Company Removed**: Earlier only those companies which were in existence for at least 3 years were allowed to make contributions. Such a restriction was laid down to prevent the shell companies from influencing the political parties. Even this restriction has now been removed and hence concerns have been raised that the shell companies

would end up influencing the policies of the Government.

- **Corporate Funding of Elections:** Earlier, the companies were prohibited from donating more than 7.5% of their average net profit over the previous 3 years to the Political parties. However, this restriction has now been removed. Going forward, even the loss-making companies could also make contributions through the Electoral Bonds.

- **Against Equality & Rule of Law:** Uncapping political donations and introducing a structural bias into the form of the donations violate both the guarantee of equality before law, as well as being manifestly arbitrary.

- **Lack of Transparency:** In a democratic country, voters need to be aware of how the political parties are funded to ensure greater transparency in the elections. However, by keeping the political donations anonymous, the electoral bonds violate the right of the citizens to know the information related to political funding.

- **Foreign Influence:** Election Commission cannot monitor the funding through Electoral Bonds as there is secrecy of donor, therefore it becomes difficult to know what is coming in is black money or not. Electoral Bonds can be misused for routing foreign money and thereby increase ability of other countries to influence Indian elections.

- **FCRA Amendment:** The amended Foreign Contribution Regulation (FCRA) rules enable the political parties to accept donations from foreign companies. This leaves a scope for the foreign companies in influencing Indian Politics.

- **Only Government can trace the donor:** As the donations are routed through the State Bank of India. So, it is possible for the Government to find out who is donating to which party, but this advantage is taken away from the opposition.

#### **PETITION FILED AGAINST CONSTITUTIONALITY OF ELECTORAL BOND STILL PENDING**

- Courts must be particularly sensitive to and cognizant of laws and rules that seek to skew the democratic process and the level playing field, and that seek to entrench one-party rule over multi-party democracy.

- In this regard, taking up the matter to settle the constitutionality of Electoral Bond by the Supreme Court before the next general elections will ensure parity in electoral funding for all political parties.

- This will also ensure level playing field where democratic norms and practices will not be distorted in favour of only those in power.

### **5. PUNJAB STAKING CLAIM ON CHANDIGARH**

*Punjab Reorganisation Act 1966 resulted in formation of a new state Haryana whose areas were carved out of Punjab, formation of UT of Chandigarh and transfer of certain territory from Punjab to Himachal Pradesh. Since then, Chandigarh has been the joint capital of both Punjab and Haryana. However, the present Chief Minister of Punjab has passed a resolution in Punjab Assembly urging the central government to transfer Chandigarh to the state of Punjab. This has started a political slugfest between Haryana and Punjab.*

#### **ABOUT CHANDIGARH**

- The city was commissioned by the government in independent India to replace Lahore, which went to Pakistan after Partition, as the capital of Punjab. The city was designed by **Le Corbusier in association with Pierre Jeanneret**.

- Chandigarh is located on the foothills of the Shivalik Himalayas on village land acquired from what was then the Kharar tehsil of Ambala district. It was the capital of undivided Punjab from its inauguration in 1953 till 1966.

- Under the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966 following the Punjabi Suba movement, Haryana was carved out of the Hindi-speaking regions as a separate State while the hill regions of Punjab were merged with what was then the UT of Himachal Pradesh.

- Chandigarh was made a UT and has remained the joint capital of Haryana and Punjab with State assets divided between Punjab and Haryana in the ratio of 60:40.

#### **DEBATE ON THE STATUS OF CHANDIGARH**

- The resolution staking claim on Chandigarh was passed by Punjab Assembly after the Centre passed two rules impacting appointing of local officials.

- **First, the Centre amended the rules governing the functioning of the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB)** constituted under the Punjab Reorganisation Act.

- According to the 1966 Act, Bhakra Management Board consists of

- (a) a whole-time Chairman and two whole-time members to be appointed by the Central Government.



(b) a representative each of the Governments of the States of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan and the UT of Himachal Pradesh to be nominated by respective Governments or Administrator.

(c) two representatives of the Central Government to be nominated by that Government.

- Recently, Ministry of Home Affairs has amended the rules governing the functioning of Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB).

- The amended rules changed the eligibility criteria for the two full-time members of the Board which by convention has gone to officials from Punjab and Haryana. Based on the changed criteria, it will become

difficult for the officers from the two states to meet all the technical qualifications.

- **Second, Centre issued a notification bringing Chandigarh UT administration employees under Central Services Rules** with effect from April 1, 2022 replacing the Punjab Services Rules.

- The decision of the centre is being viewed and interpreted as politically motivated.

#### **VARIOUS RESOLUTIONS/AGREEMENTS/ACCORD**

- **Anandpur Sahib resolution 1973:** Working committee of Shiromani Akali Dal constituted a 12-member subcommittee in 1972 to formulate comprehensive policies. The resolution included political, religious and raised the issue of Chandigarh and other areas which were not part of Punjab.

- **Dharam Yudha Morcha** was a political movement launched by Akali Dal in partnership with Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. It raised the concern of Chandigarh being converted into a UT and Punjabi speaking areas being transferred to Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.

- **Views of Indira Gandhi:** When Chandigarh was made joint capital of Punjab & Haryana, the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi indicated that the UT status to Chandigarh was temporary and that it would be transferred to Punjab with funds for Haryana for building its own capital.

- **Rajiv-Longowal Accord (1985):** As per the accord, Chandigarh was to be handed over to Punjab in 1986 but this never fructified after the assassination of Longowal and the long militancy till the mid-1990s.

#### **HARYANA TOO PASSED A RESOLUTION ON CHANDIGARH**

- Haryana state assembly also passed a resolution on the transfer of Chandigarh to Haryana.

- Haryana Government has urged the Centre to address unresolved issues which arose out of reorganization of Punjab and to ensure balance till

the issues are resolved.

- Haryana government also urged the central government to take measures for the construction of the Sutlej Yamuna Link Canal in compliance with the Supreme Court's orders

## **6. DARLONG COMMUNITY INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULED TRIBE LIST**

Parliament has passed a Bill for the inclusion of the Darlong community as a sub-tribe of Kuki in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Tripura. Both houses of Parliament passed the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill-2022 with a voice vote.

### **INCLUSION OF DARLONG COMMUNITY**

- *Darlongs is a small community of around 11,000 people in Tripura.*
- *Inclusion of the Darlong community as a sub-tribe of Kuki will give it an identity in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Tripura.*
- *Kuki is one of the main tribal communities in Northeast India and the Darlong community in Tripura will become its 18th sub-tribe.*
- *The group is a small tribal clan but has produced a high number of educated people proportionate to its population in the state.*
- *People from the Darlong community, like many other tribal communities, are now serving in high positions in the state administration, academia, and public services.*
- *Tribal musicologist and Rosem (tribal instrument) maestro Thanga Darlong were conferred the prestigious Padma Shri award a few years back for his contribution to culture.*

### **DEMAND FOR SEPARATE ST STATUS**

- *Darlongs, despite being Scheduled Tribes, were never given ST certificates. Since they were considered a generic tribe under the Kuki community, they were handed their tribal certificates as members of 'Kuki' community.*
- *The subsequent identity crisis among them, especially Darlong youths, who were equipped with modern education, culminated in the demand for a separate statutory identity of their own in 1995.*

### **SCHEDULED TRIBES**

- *The framers of the Constitution realised that certain communities in the country were suffering from*

extreme social, educational and economic backwardness on account of the primitive agricultural practices, lack of infrastructure facilities and geographical isolation.

- The Constitution of India in **Article 366 (25)** prescribe that the Scheduled Tribes means such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under **Article 342** of the Constitution to be Scheduled Tribes.

#### **ARTICLE 342 (1)**

- The President may - with respect to any State or Union Territory,
- and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof,
- by a public notification,
- specify the tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within tribes or tribal communities as Scheduled Tribe

#### **ARTICLE 342 (2)**

- Parliament may be law
  - include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Tribes (prepared through Presidential notification)
  - any tribe or tribal community or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community
- Based on Article 342, Parliament enacted **THE CONSTITUTION (SCHEDULED TRIBES) ORDER, 1950** which contains a list of tribes or groups designated as Scheduled Tribes. This Order is amended from time to time to include more groups or communities within the ST Fold.

#### **CRITERIA TO DESIGNATE AS ST**

The criteria presently followed for specification of a community as a Scheduled Tribe are:

- (i) indications of primitive traits
  - (ii) distinctive culture
  - (iii) geographical isolation
  - (iv) shyness of contact with the community at large, and
  - (v) backwardness
- While the Constitution is silent about the criteria for specification of a community as a Scheduled Tribe. The words and the phrase 'tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within tribes or tribal communities' in **Article 342** must be understood in terms of their historical background of backwardness.
  - Primitiveness, geographical isolation, shyness and social, educational & economic backwardness due to these reasons are the traits that distinguish Scheduled Tribe communities of our country from other communities.
  - It considers the definitions of tribal Communities

adopted in the 1931 Census.

- These facts are the basis for the provision in Article 342(1) which mandates to specify the tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within tribes or tribal communities as Scheduled Tribe in relation to that State or Union Territory as the case may be.
- Thus, the list of Scheduled Tribes is State/UT specific and a community declared as a Scheduled Tribe in a State need not be so in another State.
- The Presidential notifications under **Clause 1 of Article 342 of the Constitution** are issued as the **Constitution Orders**.

## **7. TWITTER GOVERNANCE IN TELANGANA**

Twitter and other social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook are being regularly used by government officials as a mechanism to reach out to public in a transparent and accountable way. Let us understand the positives and drawback of use of social media for governance.

#### **CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

- **Connectedness:** This attribute highlights the media's ability to connect and reconnect like-minded people or people interested in same topics and domains.
- **Collaboration:** The connections achieved on this media, enable people to collaborate and create knowledge. Such collaborations can be either open or closed. Wikipedia is an example of open collaboration which enabled creation of an open web-based encyclopedia through contribution from hundreds of thousands of people. GovLoop is an example of closed collaboration wherein experts' groups contribute on specific policy matters.
- **Community:** Connectedness and collaboration helps create and sustain communities. These communities can create awareness about various issues and can be used for seeking inputs into policy making, building goodwill or even seeking feedback into delivery of public services.

#### **USE OF TWITTER TO ADDRESS GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

- **Governance Outreach** - Telangana is the first State in India to experiment with 'Twitter governance', a model of governance which uses the social media site

for outreach. Under this set-up, citizens facing health, social or civic issues post their concerns site and tag officials. Their problems are quickly resolved and news of this is often amplified by sections of the mainstream media.

- Twitter handle - At the heart of this set-up is the State Industry and Commerce Minister, K.T. Rama Rao, who is known by his handles @KTR, @KTRoffice and @KTRTRS. Mr. Rao has a reputation for quickly responding to concerns. He tags the officials concerned to ensure that necessary action is taken.
- Attracting Investments in State - Besides responding to citizens, Mr. Rao even reached out to the CEO of Tesla, Elon Musk, asking him to set up a Tesla unit in the State. "Our state is a champion in sustainability initiatives & a top notch business destination in India," he tweeted on January 14. Earlier, he successfully got Kitex Garments to set up a unit in Warangal by using Twitter to communicate with the company officials.
- Managed Response during COVID - At the height of the migrant and food crisis during the first two waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Minister's team was very efficient.

#### **BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR GOVERNANCE**

- Increases Transparency and accountability: citizens have used social media to communicate, report and map issues in society. This has made the administration more accountable to meet citizens' demands.
- Acts as a platform for communication: Government uses various twitter handles to communicate important message or information about policies to the citizens. It also acts as a platform for communication during crisis situations – epidemic, disasters, accidents etc.
- Results in citizens' awareness on issues pertaining to administration and law and order situation in cities.
- Can lead to better and improved governance especially at local level.

#### **LEGAL PROVISIONS**

- RTI Act & IT Act: Social Media interaction by the government comes under the purview of the Right to Information Act 2005, Information Technology Act 2000 and other Rules and Regulations.
- Intermediary under IT Act: When Government department provides such social media facilities on its network, receives, stores or transmits any particular electronic record on behalf of another person or provides any service with respect to that

record, they become intermediary under Section 2(1)(w) of the amended Information Technology Act, 2000.

- Section 79 of the amended Information Technology Act, 2000 provides the broad principle that intermediaries like Government departments providing social media facilities are generally not liable for third party data information or communication link made available by them.
- Section 79 of Information Technology Act, 2000: *Exempts intermediaries from liability in certain instances. It states that intermediaries will not be liable for any third-party information, data or communication link made available by them.*

#### **CONCERNS ON GOVERNANCE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLES**

- No Checks & Balances: Despite success of twitter governance as a model, this is far from being a perfect system. Twitter governance model has no checks and balances. Officials can ignore issues that they cannot act on or do not wish to act on. For instance, Right to Information (RTI) Act, which is fully offline in the State, is barely functional due to stamp shortage as well as reluctance on the part of officials.
- Adhoc Approach: While government does ensure immediate action and transparency by using Twitter model of governance, it could be criticised for using an ad-hoc approach for solving problems.
- Lack of Accessibility for common citizens as only techsavvy people and those with social media access can benefit from this model. Telangana has a literacy rate of 72.8%. Twice the number of men use the Internet compared to women.
- Urban-rural divide is also sharp, with 60% of the people living in villages which have limited broadband access.

#### **CONCLUSION**

While Twitter governance is a starting point for delivering good administration, it must be accompanied by regular governance mechanisms which have built-in regulations.

### **8 . NEW VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR NITI AAYOG**

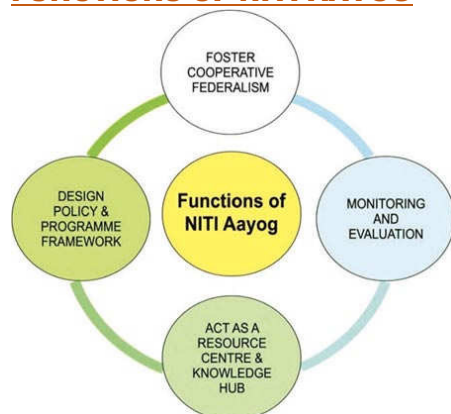
Government has appointed Suman K. Berry as the Vicechairman of the NITI Aayog following the resignation of Rajiv Kumar. Appointments Committee of

the Cabinet has accepted “the resignation of Rajiv Kumar.

### **FORMATION OF NITI AAYOG**

- NITI Aayog was formed by resolution of Union Cabinet in 2015 under Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961.
- The Aayog has been mandated to foster cooperative and competitive federalism, evolve a national consensus on developmental goals, redefine the reforms agenda, achieve SDG goals, function as a platform for resolution of cross-sectoral issues between Center and State Governments, capacity building and to function as a Knowledge and Innovation hub.

### **FUNCTIONS OF NITI AAYOG**



### **WORK DONE BY NITI AAYOG**

- NITI Aayog actively participates in designing strategic policies, fostering cooperative federalism, providing knowledge and innovation support and undertaking evaluation and monitoring of major investments.
- It has formulated the Make in India Strategy for Electronics Industry, a Model Land Leasing Law, laid down a National Energy Policy, prepared a Roadmap for Revitalizing Agriculture, designed a Developmental Strategy for Northeast and Hilly areas and undertook an appraisal of the 12th Five Year Plan.
- Recommended closure of sick PSUs, strategic disinvestment of other CPSUs and pushed for reforms in Medical Council of India and the University Grants Commission. It has also prepared a Model Agri Land Leasing Act, 2016.

### **GOVERNING COUNCIL OF NITI AAYOG**

- **Composition:** Governing Council of NITI Aayog,

comprising Chief Ministers of all the States and Union Territories with legislatures and Lt Governors of other Union Territories, came into effect on 16 February 2015 via a notification by the Cabinet Secretariat.

- The meetings of Governing Council have been held under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Prime Minister with Chief Ministers/Lt Governors of the States/UTs and other members of the Governing Council.
- **The Governing Council is the premier body tasked with evolving a shared vision of national priorities and strategies**, with the active involvement of States, in shaping the development narrative. The Governing Council, which embodies the objectives of cooperative federalism, presents a platform to discuss intersectoral, inter-departmental and federal issues to accelerate the implementation of the national development agenda.

### **STEPS TAKEN IN COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM**

- Governing Council (Chief Ministers- States and UT's) to resolve differences and chart a common course to progress and prosperity.
- **Subgroups of Chief Minister for**
  - MGNREGS & Agriculture - Five critical areas for improving MGNREGA were suggested:
    1. Reducing the cost of cultivation
    2. Enhancing production through the efficient use of water or other inputs.
    3. Providing remunerative price to farmers by incentivising aggregation and market infrastructure.
    4. Rehabilitating agricultural land and assets after natural disasters.
    5. Re-planting using the MGNREGA fund and bringing diversification in agriculture.
  - Centrally Sponsored Schemes
  - Skill Development
  - Swachh Bharat
- **Task force on Agriculture Development** for recommending strategies to reinvigorate agriculture and suggest reforms, innovation and technology diffusion.
- **NITI Forum for North-East** to address various challenges in the region and recommend requisite interventions to achieve sustainable economic growth.
- **Sustainable Development in the Indian Himalayan Region**
- **Development Support Services for States and UTs** to achieve transformational and sustained delivery of



infrastructure projects. DSSS has the following key objectives:

- Establish Centre-State partnership model for cooperation
- Reimagine and transform delivery of infrastructure projects
- Establish PPPs as governance tools supporting larger development agenda
- Address key structural issues that States face in conceiving, structuring and implementing infrastructure projects.
- Build institutional and organisational capacities of States and State-level institutions to conceive, conceptualise, structure and implement infrastructure projects.
- **Project SATH-E**, 'Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital-Education' – aims to identify and build three 'role model' States for the school education sector.
- **E-Amrit** is a one-stop destination for all information on electric vehicles—busting myths around the adoption of EVs, their purchase, investment opportunities, policies, subsidies, etc.
- The portal has been developed and hosted by NITI Aayog under a collaborative knowledge exchange programme with the UK government and as part of the **UK-India Joint Roadmap 2030**, signed by the Prime Ministers of the two countries.

#### **COMPETITIVE FEDERALISM**

- NITI Aayog endeavours to promote competitive federalism by facilitating improved performance of States/UTs.
- It encourages healthy competition among states through transparent rankings, in various sectors, along with a hand-holding approach.
- Some of the indices launched by NITI Aayog are School Education Quality Index, State Health Index, Composite Water Management Index, Sustainable Development Goals Index, India Innovation Index and Export Competitiveness Index.
- NITI Aayog also releases delta rankings for the performance of Aspirational Districts every month.
- The ranking of States in various social sectors based on quantitative objective criteria encourages them, and even districts, to improve their performance.
- NITI Aayog collaborates closely with all stakeholders, including the State/UT Governments, concerned Ministries/Departments in developing indicator frameworks, review mechanisms and capacitybuilding.

#### **CRITICISM OF NITI AAYOG**

- It has no role in influencing private or public investment.
- It does not seem to influence policymaking with longterm consequences. E.g., Demonetization and GST.
- As a think-tank, it should maintain a respectable intellectual distance from the government. Instead, it is seen doing uncritical praise of the Government-sponsored schemes and programs.
- It does not have the power to analyze the performance of various government schemes.
- It has not been able to meet its mandate in terms of fulfilling needs of the states.
- It has been granted too-wide mandate and too-many powers which can be counter-productive and prone to misuse.

**WAY FORWARD** – NITI Aayog has played an important role not only in fostering cooperative federalism but also in encouraging states through rank-based monitoring to improve their performance in diverse sectors.

#### **9. UNFOUNDED APPREHENSIONS AGAINST CRIMINAL IDENTIFICATION ACT**

*The purpose of the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act 2022 is to collect measurements to help law enforcement agencies to come to the right conclusions while solving the case. Criminal Procedure Code also provides for collection of specimens of the accused through examination. So, let us understand whether taking measurements or examination of the accused violates Article 20(3) of the Indian Constitution which states that no person accused of any offence shall be compelled to be a witness against himself.*

#### **EXAMINATION OF ACCUSED BY MEDICAL PRACTITIONER AT THE REQUEST OF POLICE OFFICER (CR. PC)**

- Registered Medical Practitioner at the request of police officer can examine an arrested person to afford necessary evidence to prove the crime.
- Whenever the person of a female is to be examined the examination shall be made only by or under the supervision of a female registered medical practitioner.
- **"Examination"** shall include the examination of

blood, blood stains, semen, swabs in case of sexual offences, sputum and sweat, hair samples and fingernail clippings using modern and scientific techniques including DNA profiling and such other tests which the registered medical practitioner thinks necessary in a particular case.

- In case of rape, the registered Medical Practitioner has to make a detailed report.

#### **CONCERNS AGAINST CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (IDENTIFICATION) ACT, 2022**

- **Taking Measurements:** The Act authorises police and prison authorities to take 'measurements' of convicts and others for identification and investigation in criminal matters and to preserve records.
- The Act seeks to repeal the Identification of Prisoners Act (IPA) of 1920, whose scope was limited to recording measurements which include finger impressions and footprint impressions of certain convicts and nonconvict persons.
- Critics believe that the act is unconstitutional and may be subject to misuse.
- **According to the 2022 Act Measurement -** "includes finger-impressions, palm-print impressions, foot-print impressions, photographs, iris and retina scan, physical, biological samples and their analysis, behavioural attributes including signatures, handwriting or any other examination of accused by the medical practitioner at the request of police officer or examination of person accused of rape by medical practitioner."
- **Identification of Prisoners Act (IPA) 1920:** The scope of the 'measurements' in the 1920 Act was limited as "measurements" included only finger impressions and foot-print impressions.
- **The 2022 Act now includes physical measurements** such as finger impressions, palm prints, footprint impressions, photographs, iris and retina scans; biological samples and their analysis; and behavioural attributes including signatures, handwriting; or any other examination referred to in Sections 53 or 53A of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973.
- **Cr. PC provides for 'examination' of the accused** by a medical practitioner using modern and scientific techniques including DNA profiling and other necessary tests which could provide evidence as to the commission of an offence.
- **Section 311A of the Cr. PC** empowers a magistrate to direct any person including an accused person to

give a specimen signature or handwriting for the purpose of any investigation or proceedings.

- **Merger of Scope of Examination & Measurements:** The enlarged scope of 'measurements' under 2022 Act

merges the scope of 'measurements' in the IPA and provisions of the Cr. PC under Section 53A and 311 with the addition of modern techniques of identification such as an iris and retina scan.

- Thus, the Act does not empower the enforcement agencies additionally but only explicitly provides for various measurements and includes the use of the latest scientific techniques.

#### **SUPREME COURT JUDGMENTS**

- **State of Bombay vs Kathi Kalu:** SC held that the person in custody giving his specimen handwriting or signature or impression of his thumb, finger, palm or foot, to the investigating officer, cannot be included in the expression "to be a witness" under Articles 20(3) of the Constitution.
- SC in number of cases has held that taking a blood sample for the purpose of a DNA test, taking a hair sample or voice sample will not amount to compelling an accused to become a witness against himself, as such samples by themselves are not harmful and do not convey information within personal knowledge of the accused.

#### **PROHIBITION UNDER ARTICLE 20(3)**

- **Selvi vs State of Karnataka (2010):** The only exceptions are scientific techniques, namely narcoanalysis, polygraphy and brain fingerprinting which the Supreme Court held to be testimonial compulsions if conducted without consent and thus prohibited under Article 20(3) of the Constitution.
- These tests do not fall under the scope of expression "such other tests" in Explanation of Section 53 of the CrPC. Thus, taking measurements under the Act for the purpose of investigation of a crime will not violate Article 20(3). However, validity of any new scientific technique, to be applied in future, would need to be evaluated on the touchstone of permissible restrictions on fundamental rights.

#### **CONCERNS HIGHLIGHTED**

- **Does not explicitly bar taking measurements of juveniles.** However, measurements if taken cannot be used for future reference based on Section 3 of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act (General principles to be followed in administration of Act.)

- **Principle of fresh start:** All past records of any child under the Juvenile Justice system should be erased except in special circumstances. (THE JUVENILE JUSTICE (CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN) ACT, 2015)

- **Access to biometrics collected by Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** has been refused to law enforcement agencies on the pretext of 'technology issues' and strict provisions of the concerning law.

#### **CONCLUSION**

- Use of better technology will only help in minimising the probability of errors.
- Rights of an individual will have to be considered in the background of the interests of society.
- Data proposed to be collected through measurements of convicts and others does not appear to be disproportionate with the stated objectives of the Act.

### **10. AMENDING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION ACT**

Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005 was enacted to prohibit unlawful activities in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. The Act was passed to meet an international obligation enforced by the **UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540 of 2004**.

- In 2004, UN Security Council adopted **Resolution 1540 to address the growing threat of non-state actors gaining access to WMD material, equipment or technology to undertake acts of terrorism**.
  - To address this challenge to international peace and security, UNSCR 1540 established binding obligations on all UN member states under **Chapter VII of the UN Charter - Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression**
  - Nations were mandated to take and enforce effective measures against proliferation of WMD, their means of delivery and related materials to non-state actors.
- WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION ACT, 2005**
- It covers unlawful activities relating to biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and their delivery systems.
  - **Restriction provided under 2005 Act:** Provides for integrated legal measures to exercise controls over the

export of materials, equipment and technologies in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and for prevention of their transfers to non-State actors or terrorists.

#### **REASON FOR AMENDMENT**

- In recent times, regulations relating to proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems by international organisations have expanded.
- United Nations Security Council's targeted financial sanctions and recommendations of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) have mandated against financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.
- Thus, there is a need to amend the 2005 Act to provide against financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems to fulfil our international obligations.

#### **WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AND THEIR DELIVERY SYSTEMS (PROHIBITION OF UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES) AMENDMENT BILL, 2022**

- Prohibits financing of any activity in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.
- Empowers Central Government to:
  - o Freeze, seize or attach funds or other financial assets or economic resources for preventing such financing.
  - o Prohibit making available funds, financial assets or economic resources for any prohibited activity in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems

### **11. RESOLVING ASSAM ARUNACHAL DISPUTE**

Chief Ministers of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh have decided to form district-level committees for settling their inter-state boundary disputes. The two States have decided to form 12 committees involving the districts sharing the boundary to come up with a solution. The boundary dispute between Meghalaya and Assam was solved based on the "fifty-fifty" or "give-and-take" model and the same model is being tried to solve the inter-state boundary dispute between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

#### **INTER-STATE DISPUTE (LOCALS NOT CONSULTED)**

- Assam has had boundary disputes with all other northeastern States that were carved out of it as these divisions were based on administrative decisions where local tribals were not consulted.
- While Nagaland became a State in 1963, Meghalaya first became an Autonomous State in 1970 and a full-fledged State in 1972.
- Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram were separated from

Assam as UTs in 1972 and as States in 1987.

- None of the new States accepted the “constitutional boundary” that they said was dictated by partisan administration of undivided Assam without consulting the tribal stakeholders.
- They also claimed that the disputed areas were traditionally under control of tribal chieftains who were not consulted before demarcating boundaries of states.

#### **ASSAM-ARUNACHAL BOUNDARY DISPUTES**

- Arunachal Pradesh and Assam have disputes at about 1,200 points along their 804 km boundary.
- The boundary issue dates back to 1873 when the British government introduced the inner-line regulation separating the plains from frontier hills that were later designated as North-East Frontier Tracts in 1915.
- In 1951, a Report was prepared by a sub-committee headed by Assam’s first Chief Minister, Gopinath Bordoloi. The Committee transferred 3,648 sq. km of the “plain” area of Balipara and Sadiya foothills to the Darrang and Lakhimpur districts of Assam.
- North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) came into being in 1954, after a notification based on the 1951 report saw 3,648 sq. km of the “plain” area of Balipara and Sadiya foothills being transferred to the Darrang and Lakhimpur districts of Assam.
- Leaders in Arunachal Pradesh claim the transfer was done arbitrarily without consulting its tribes who had customary rights over these lands. While leaders in Assam say that the 1951 demarcation is constitutional and legal.

#### **STEPS TAKEN BY ASSAM & ARUNACHAL TO RESOLVE BOUNDARY DISPUTES**

- Several efforts were made to demarcate boundary between Assam and NEFA/Arunachal Pradesh between 1971 and 1974.
- To end the stalemate, a high-powered tripartite committee involving Centre and the two States was formed in April 1979 to delineate the boundary based on Survey of India maps.
- About 489 km of the inter-state boundary north of Brahmaputra River was demarcated by 1984, but Arunachal Pradesh did not accept recommendations and staked claim to much of the areas transferred in 1951. Assam objected and approached Supreme Court in 1989, accusing Arunachal Pradesh of “encroachment”.
- Supreme Court appointed a local boundary commission in 2006. In its September 2014 report, the commission recommended that Arunachal Pradesh should get back some of the areas transferred in 1951 besides advising both the States to find a middle path through discussions. However, the suggestion did not work out.

#### **VARIOUS MECHANISMS TO SETTLE DISPUTES**

- **National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC)**
  - Constitution contemplates a variety of mechanisms for the settlement of inter-State disputes.

- Concept of Dispute has wide coverage in the Constitution and covers not only disputes that come up before the judiciary, but also disputes for whose resolution an extra-judicial machinery is contemplated by the Constitution.

• Constitutional Mechanisms includes:

1. *Judicial Mechanism under Article 131*
2. *Solving dispute through Inter-State Council under Article 263*
3. *Parliament altering the boundary under Article 3*

#### **JUDICIAL MECHANISM – ARTICLE 131**

- **Article 131** confers **original jurisdiction** to Supreme Court of India to deal with disputes involving legal rights.
- Article 131 covers any dispute between:
  - (a) Government of India and one or more States; or
  - (b) Government of India and any State or States on one side and one or more other States on the other; or
  - (c) *Two or more States*

#### **SOLVING DISPUTES THROUGH INTER-STATE COUNCIL – ARTICLE 263**

- Under Article 263, there is provision for the formation of an inter-State Council. Although this Council has several functions, it is also competent to tender advice regarding the resolution of inter-State disputes including boundary disputes.
- Functions to be discharged by the Council are:
  - (a) inquiring into and advising upon disputes which may have arisen between States.
  - (b) investigating and discussing subjects in which state/s and Union have common interest; or
  - (c) make recommendations for better co-ordination of policy and action among states. However, this function has not been given to the Interstate council in the Presidential notification.

#### **GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED SARKARIA COMMISSION REPORT**

- **Commission on Centre-State Relations (Sarkaria Commission)** in its report 1988 recommended that:
  - (a) *A Permanent Inter-State Council called the Inter-Governmental Council (IGC) should be set up under Article 263.*

(b) *IGC should be charged with the duties set out in clauses (b) and (c) of Article 263, other than socio-economic planning and development.*

- Government of India accepted recommendations of Sarkaria Commission to set-up an Inter-State Council and notified the establishment of the Inter-State Council through Presidential Order in 1990.

• Government also established Inter-State Council Secretariat in 1991 headed by a Secretary to the Government of India.

#### **COMPOSITION OF THE INTER-STATE COUNCIL**

- Consists of:
  - Prime Minister – Chairman
  - Chief Ministers of all States – Members
  - Chief Ministers of Union Territories having a Legislative Assembly and Administrators of UTs not having



a Legislative Assembly – Members

- Six Ministers of Cabinet rank in the Union Council of Ministers to be nominated by the Prime Minister – Members
- Presidential Order of 1990 has been amended twice providing for Governor of a State under President's rule to attend the meeting of the Council and nomination by the Chairman of permanent invitees from amongst the other Union Ministers, respectively.

#### **FUNCTIONS OF THE INTER-STATE COUNCIL**

- Making recommendations upon such subject and for better coordination of policy and action regarding any issue or subject matter.
- Inquiring into and advising upon disputes which may have arisen between/among States.
- Investigating and discussing subjects in which some or all the States, or the Union and one or more of the States have a common interest.
- Deliberating upon other matters of general interest to the states as may be referred by Chairman.

#### **STANDING COMMITTEE**

- Inter-State Council decided to set up a Standing Committee for continuous consultation and processing of matters for consideration of the Council.
- A Standing Committee was set up under the Chairmanship of the Home Minister in 1996.
- **Functions of Standing Committee - The Standing Committee will**
  - Have continuous consultation and process matters for consideration of the Council.
  - Process all matters pertaining to Centre-State Relations before they are taken up for consideration in the Inter-State Council.
  - Monitor the implementation of decisions taken on the recommendations of the Council. &
  - Consider any other matter referred to it by the Chairman/Council.
  - Invite experts and persons eminent in specific fields to have the benefit of their views while deliberating upon the related subjects.

#### **PARLIAMENT ALTERING BOUNDARY UNDER ARTICLE 3**

- **Parliament may by law**

- (a) form a new State (or UT) by separation of territory from any State or by uniting two or more States (or UT) or parts of States or by uniting any territory to a part of any State (or UT)
- (b) increase the area of any State
- (c) diminish the area of any State
- (d) alter the boundaries of any State
- (e) alter the name of any State .

## **12 . SUPREME COURT RESTRICTS FOREIGN DONATIONS**

*Supreme Court has upheld restrictions made through an amendment in the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act and held that no one has a fundamental or absolute right to receive foreign contributions.*

#### **NEED FOR FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION (REGULATION) AMENDMENT ACT, 2020**

- Increase in Annual Flow of Income: Annual inflow of foreign contribution had almost doubled between the years 2010 and 2019. However, many recipients of foreign contribution have not utilised the same for the purpose for which they were registered or granted prior permission under the said Act.
  - Lack of Compliance such as submission of annual returns and maintenance of proper accounts. Due to this, the Central Government had to cancel certificates of registration of more than 19,000 recipient organisations, including non-Governmental organisations, during the period between 2011 and 2019.
  - Criminal investigations due to misappropriation of funds by NGOs was initiated against dozens of such non-Governmental organisations which indulged in outright misappropriation or mis-utilization of foreign contribution.
  - Need to strengthen compliance mechanism, enhancing transparency and accountability in the receipt and utilisation of foreign contribution worth thousands of crores of rupees every year.
  - Facilitate genuine NGOs or associations who are working for the welfare of the society.
- #### **FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION (REGULATION) AMENDMENT ACT, 2020 SEEKS TO PROVIDE FOR**
- (a) Include "public servant" within its ambit, to provide that no foreign contribution shall be accepted by any public servant.
  - (b) Prohibit any transfer of foreign contribution to any association/person.
  - (c) Reduce the limit for defraying administrative expenses from existing "fifty per cent" to "twenty per cent."
  - (d) Insertion of a new Section 12A empowering the Central Government to require Aadhaar number, etc., as identification document.
  - (e) Enabling the Central Government to permit any person to surrender the certificate granted under the Act.
  - (f) Ensure that every person who has been granted certificate or prior permission under section 12 shall receive foreign contribution only in an account designated as "FCRA Account" which shall be opened by him in such branch of the State Bank of India at

New Delhi, as the Central Government may, by notification, specify and for other consequential matters relating thereto.

#### **SUPREME COURT JUDGMENT**

- **Strict Regulatory Framework:** The amendments only provide a strict regulatory framework to moderate the inflow of foreign funds into the country.
- **Uncontrolled flow of money may Impact socioeconomic structure:** The presence/inflow of foreign contribution in the country ought to be at the minimum level, if not completely avoided. The influence may manifest in diverse ways, including in destabilizing the social order within the country,
- **NGOs must look within for donors:** The court said charity could be found at home and NGOs could look within the country for donors.
- **Foreign Donation Not Good for a Self-Reliant Country like India:** The third-world countries may welcome foreign donations, but it is open to a nation, which is committed and enduring to be self-reliant and variously capable of shouldering its own needs, to opt for a policy of complete prohibition of inflow/acceptance of foreign donation from a foreign source.
- **Reflects Badly on the Country:** Unregulated inflow of foreign donations would only indicate that the government was incapable of looking after its own affairs and needs of its citizens.
- **Unregulated foreign funding strains government's efforts in regulation:** The court noted how 19,000 certificates of registration under the FCRA were cancelled for violating statutory compliances. The annual inflow of foreign contribution had almost doubled between the years 2010 and 2019. There was a spurt of criminal investigations. Donations had been re-routed. Successive transfers and creation of a layered trail of money had made it difficult to trace the flow and final utilisation of foreign donations despite the "firm regime" in place since 2010.
- **The amendments do not prohibit inflow of foreign contributions but are a regulatory measure to permit acceptance by registered persons or persons having prior permission to do so with condition that they must themselves utilise the entire contribution.**
- **Restricts are Reasonable:** The court held that the restrictions in the amendments were "reasonable" and "founded on intelligible criteria". It fixed accountability on the recipients, increased the efficacy of "continual supervision" over foreign contributions, did not discriminate and served the purpose of the FCRA 2010.
- **Court allowed use of Indian Passport instead of**

Aadhaar: The court read down one of the provisions - *Section 12(A) of 2020 Amendment Act*, which *mandated the production of Aadhaar card for registration*. The Bench allowed the office-bearers of NGOs to use their Indian Passports as an identification document.

#### **FCRA ACT, 2020 INCOMPATIBLE WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW**

*International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)* has observed that the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Act, 2020 passed by Parliament is incompatible with international law.

- UN Human Rights Council in its Resolution 22/6 on Protecting Human Rights Defenders declared that "*no law should criminalize or delegitimize activities in defence of human rights on account of the origin of funding*".

- UN Special Rapporteur on Assembly and Association has clarified that controls in laws should not "unduly obstruct the legitimate work" and need to be "fair, objective and non-discriminatory, and not be used as a pretext to silence critics".

#### **CLAIMS MADE BY ICJ**

- **Fail to comply with International Legal Obligations:** ICJ claimed that FCRA Amendment fails to comply with India's international legal obligations and constitutional provisions to respect and protect the rights to freedom of association, expression, and freedom of assembly.
- **Impose Arbitrary Obstacles by the Government:** ICJ stressed that the Bill's provisions would impose arbitrary and extraordinary obstacles on the capacity of human rights defenders and other civil society actors to conduct their important work.
- **Against Civil Societies in India:** ICJ noted that the restrictions in the Bill continued a larger pattern of threats and harassment faced by civil society in India. The Indian Government has sought to restrict human rights defenders from traveling outside India and used overbroad laws like sedition (Section 124A, Indian Penal Code) and Unlawful Activities Prevention, 1967 Act to arbitrarily arrest human rights defenders.
- **Restrict Access to Foreign Funding:** FCRA 2020 provides for overly broad rules and measures which would effectively restrict access to foreign funding particularly for public servants and smaller nongovernmental organizations.
- **Adds government's oversight:** Adds onerous governmental oversight, additional regulations and certification processes, and operational requirements, while simultaneously reducing the

limit of administrative expenditure that can be allocated to foreign contributions to 20% from previous 50%.

### **BASICS OF FCRA**

#### **APPLICABILITY OF FCRA**

- As per Section 1(2) of FCRA, 2010, the provisions of the act shall apply to:

- (i) Whole of India
- (ii) Citizens of India outside India.
- (iii) Associate Branches or subsidiaries, outside India, of companies or bodies corporate, registered or incorporated in India.

#### **ENTITIES THAT CAN RECEIVE FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION**

- Any "Person" can receive foreign contribution subject to following conditions

- (a) It must have a definite cultural, economic, educational, religious or social program.
- (b) It must obtain FCRA registration/prior permission from Central Government, specifically Ministry of Home Affairs.
- (c) It must not be prohibited under Section 3 of FCRA, 2010.

#### **ENTITIES PROHIBITED UNDER FCRA**

- As defined in Section 3(1) of FCRA, 2010, the following are prohibited to receive foreign contribution:

- (a) Candidate for election.
- (b) Correspondent, columnist, cartoonist, editor, owner, printer or publisher of a registered newspaper.
- (c) Judge, Government servant or employee of any corporation or any other body controlled or owned by the Government.
- (d) Member of any legislature.
- (e) Political party or office bearer thereof.
- (f) Organization of a political nature as may be specified by the Central Government.
- (g) Association or company engaged in the production or broadcast of audio news or audiovisual news or current affairs programmes through any electronic mode, or any other electronic form or any other mode of mass communication.
- (h) Correspondent or columnist, cartoonist, editor, owner of the association or company referred to in point (g).
- (i) Individuals or associations who have been prohibited from receiving foreign contribution.

#### **PERMISSION TO ACCEPT FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION**

- There are two modes of obtaining permission to accept foreign contribution according to FCRA, 2010:

- (i) Registration
- (ii) Prior Permission

#### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR GRANT OF REGISTRATION**

- For grant of registration under FCRA, 2010, the association should:

- (i) Be registered under an existing statute like the Societies Registration Act, 1860 or Indian Trusts Act, 1882 or Companies registered under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013 for Charitable Purposes

- (ii) Normally be in existence for at least 3 years and has undertaken reasonable activity in its chosen field for the benefit of the society for which the foreign contribution is proposed to be utilised.

#### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR GRANT OF PRIOR PERMISSION**

- Prior permission is granted for receipt of a specific amount from a specific donor for conducting specific activities/projects. For this purpose, the association should meet following criteria:

- (i) Be registered under an existing statute like the Societies Registration Act, 1860 or the Indian Trusts Act, 1882 or section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 etc.
- (ii) Submit a specific commitment letter from the donor indicating the amount of foreign contribution and the purpose for which it is proposed to be given; and
- (iii) For Indian recipient organizations and foreign donor organizations having common members, FCRA Prior Permission shall be granted to the Indian recipient organizations subject to it satisfying the following:
  - (i) The Chief Functionary of the recipient Indian organization should not be a part of the donor organization.
  - (ii) At least 75% of the office-bearers/ members of the Governing body of the Indian recipient organization should not be members/employees of the foreign donor organization.
  - (iii) In case of foreign donor organization being a single person/individual that person should not be the Chief Functionary or office bearer of the recipient Indian organization.
  - (iv) In case of a single foreign donor, at least 75% office bearers/members of the governing body of the recipient organization should not be the family members and close relatives of the donor.

#### **CONDITIONS TO BE MET FOR THE GRANT OF REGISTRATION AND PRIOR PERMISSION**

- In terms of Sec.12 (4) of FCRA, 2010, the following

shall be the conditions for the grant of registration and prior permission:

(a) The 'person' making an application for registration or grant of prior permission-

(i) is not fictitious or benami.

(ii) has not been prosecuted or convicted for indulging in activities aimed at conversion through inducement or force, either directly or indirectly, from one religious faith to another.

(iii) has not been prosecuted or convicted for creating communal tension or disharmony in any specified district or any other part of the country.

(iv) has not been found guilty of diversion or misutilization of its

(v) is not engaged or likely to engage in propagation of sedition or advocate violent methods to achieve its ends;

(vi) is not likely to use the foreign contribution for personal gains or divert it for undesirable purposes;

(vii) has not contravened any of the provisions of this Act;

(viii) has not been prohibited from accepting foreign contribution;

(ix) the person being an individual, such individual has neither been convicted under any law for the time being in force nor any prosecution for any offence is pending against him.

(x) the person being other than an individual, any of its directors or office bearers has neither been convicted under any law for the time being in force nor any prosecution for any offence is pending against him.

(b) Acceptance of foreign contribution by association/ person is not likely to affect prejudicially

(i) the sovereignty and integrity of India;

(ii) the security, strategic, scientific or economic interest of the State;

(iii) the public interest;

(iv) freedom or fairness of election to any Legislature;

(v) friendly relation with any foreign State;

(vi) harmony between religious, racial, social, linguistic, regional groups, castes or communities.

(c) the acceptance of foreign contribution

(i) shall not lead to incitement of an offence;

(ii) shall not endanger the life or physical safety of any person.

### **IMPORTANCE OF NGOs AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

- Key Drivers of inter-governmental negotiations ranges from regulation of hazardous wastes to a global ban on land mines and the elimination of slavery.
- Promotes legal reforms pushes government to undertake important reforms through legislations affecting rights and services for vulnerable sections of the society.
- Helps in Capacity Building and filling development deficit in diverse sectors health, education, environment awareness, social inclusion, skill enhancement etc.
- Helps alleviation of Poverty & Hunger
- Supplements electoral democracy by updating governments regularly of public opinion in favour of certain issues or concerns on certain welfare schemes.
- Ensures Community Participation by raising awareness on important national, Regional or Local Issues helps to strengthen participatory democracy in India.
- Helps government to understand challenges of industry eg: Finance Ministry organise sessions with FICCI, IFICI to understand concerns and challenges of different industrial sector
- Competition among civil societies is beneficial and productive for citizens & government.
- Provides platform for vulnerable sections to raise their voice eg concerns of prostitutes, LGBT, HIV victims, victims of custodial torture, manual scavenging, dalit violence
- Ensures Women Empowerment by providing livelihood measures

### **CRITICISM OF NGOs**

- Unnecessary PIL filed in Courts without sufficient evidence. This has led to an increase of PIL culture in the High Courts & Supreme Court.
- Promote Vested Interests of groups whom they wish to support.
- Some NGOs involved in misuse of foreign funding received under FCRA.
- Create additional pressure on the government by providing misleading arguments.
- Cannot be said to be truly democratic as they represent small section of the society including those who fund their functioning

# INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

## 1. INDIA – UK RELATIONS

Prime Minister of UK Boris Johnson visited India in April 2022. India and UK have been collaborating bilaterally as well as on issues of global importance. UK has been reasserting itself on the global stage post Brexit, which can be seen from its membership of AUKUS in the Indo-Pacific. In the Post-Brexit Economic Agenda both the countries expect to double the trade by 2030 along with early finalization of the Free Trade Agreement. In this backdrop let us understand the broad contours of India-UK relations.

Issues	Highlights
<b>Trade</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merchandise trade between the two countries was \$15.5 billion in 2019-20 with the trade balance in favour of India.</li> <li>• India is the second-largest source of foreign direct investment after the US in the UK.</li> <li>• UK is the 6th largest investor in India, after Mauritius, Singapore, Netherlands, Japan and USA.</li> </ul>
<b>Defence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India and the UK signed <b>Defence and International Security Partnership (DISP)</b> in 2015 to provide a strategic roadmap and direction to the evolving India-UK Defence Relations.</li> <li>• UK is deploying Carrier Strike Group in Indian Ocean region this year in line with its strategic tilt to Indo Pacific.</li> <li>• UK will join the Indian-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).</li> </ul>
<b>Climate change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>India-UK Green Growth Equity Fund</b> is mobilising institutional investments</li> </ul>

	in renewable energy, waste management, electric mobility and environment sub-sectors in India. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early operationalisation of the <b>Global Green Grids-One Sun One World One Grid Initiative (OSOWOG)</b> under ISA and IRIS platform under CDRI which were jointly launched by India and UK at COP26.</li> </ul>
<b>Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful partnership between Oxford University, AstraZeneca and Serum Institute of India (SII) on Covid19 vaccine demonstrated the potential of Indian and UK expertise working together to solve international challenges</li> </ul>
<b>Multilateral</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK has been supportive of India's</li> </ul>

<b>Collaboration</b>	permanent membership of UNSC and voted favourably in the roll-over decision on UNSC reforms to the 70th session of UNGA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK is also a strong supporter of India's membership of the NSG, MTCR, Australia Group and Wassenaar Arrangement.</li> <li>• UK and India are current co-chairs of Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). UK is also a member of ISA and supports its activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Diaspora</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indian Diaspora in UK is one of the largest ethnic minority communities in the country, including approximately 1.6 million British nationals of Indian origin and about 3,51,000 NRIs living in the UK</li> </ul>



equating to almost 2.5 percent of the UK population and contributing 6% of the country's GDP.

- At present there are sixteen Indian origin MPs in the UK Parliament and, out of these, five of them hold key Ministerial posts in the Government.

### **TEN YEAR ROADMAP FOR INDIA-UK RELATIONS**

- Negotiate a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA)
- Doubling India-UK trade by 2030.
- Strengthening defence partnership, focusing on maritime and industrial collaboration
- Closer cooperation in a free and open Indo-Pacific.
- Maritime Domain Awareness, which includes new agreements on maritime information sharing
- Conclusion of a Logistics Memorandum of Understanding
- Cooperation and coordination in the UN, including at UNSC and UNFCCC, and other multilateral fora such as G-20, WTO, WHO, Commonwealth, IMF and World Bank.
- Promote and uphold a rules-based international system and work together to promote reformed multilateralism

### **UK'S RENEWED ASSERTION POST BREXIT**

- UK is focusing to significantly **increase its nuclear stockpile** to counter threats posed by increasing military might of Russia and assertiveness of China.
- UK is looking towards India and Indo-Pacific Region to ensure that its strategic interests are protected and impact of Brexit on the economy is minimized.
- Britain has expressed its desire to acquire partner status of ASEAN.
- It is part of the AUKUS security Partnership that aims at countering China in the Indo – Pacific.

### **IMPLICATIONS OF UK'S TILT**

Will declare the UK's political commitment to the region, thereby developing a consensus against an assertive China.

- By aligning with US and Australia, it is amplifying its efforts by entering the regional security architecture.
- On intelligence gathering and sharing – a field the UK leads in – there is potential to cooperate more with key Indo-Pacific states such as Japan and India. Ex – 5 eyes
- Trade and investment will be a key dimension of the UK's tilt and the UK's changing relationship with China requires a diversification of trading partners.

### **STAKES FOR INDIA – UK RELATIONS**

- Both view Indo – Pacific as an emerging theatre of Geo-politics. It provides an opportunity for a closer UK-India partnership.
- UK's post-Brexit meritocratic immigration policy, along with its move to co-sponsor a motion at the UN that called out Pakistan's failure to prevent the financing of terrorism, have helped put the relationship on a healthier footing.
- India has come to the realisation that, alone, the US is incapable of constraining China.
- Compared to its ties with Japan, Australia and France, the UK remains a relatively untapped strategic partner for India.
- On cybersecurity, the UK and India will be working multilaterally under the proposed D 10 to combat Huawei's lead in 5G.
- The partnership between Oxford University, AstraZeneca and India's Serum Institute serves as a blueprint for future cooperation on global health initiatives.
- Post Brexit – when UK is trying to diversify its economic partners – India can play a crucial role.
- Both are partnering on the issues of Climate change. Ex- Green Grid initiative and one sun on world one Grid at Glasgow COP26. As India seeks to carve out a new role for itself in the evolving global order as a 'leading power' and the U.K. recalibrates its strategic outlook post-Brexit, this is a unique moment in India-U.K. ties.

## **2 . INDIA NEPAL**

PM of Nepal Sher Bahadur Deuba concluded his maiden visit to India recently. Various issues of bilateral and regional concerns were discussed besides the boundary dispute between both the leaders. In this backdrop let us understand various facets of India – Nepal relations in the context of India's neighbourhood first policy and the associated challenges.

### **BACKGROUND OF INDIA-NEPAL RELATIONS**

India Nepal relations are rooted in geography and history characterized by the term **Roti - Beti ka sambhandh**. Nepali elites are wary of the Big Brother attitude of India, while India views it from the view of being an elder brother. The Nepal treaty of Peace and friendship of 1950 provides the citizens of both the countries 'National treatment'. However, the issues

between the two nations spring up because of the Nepali nationalism which breeds upon the Anti - India sentiment. This attitude is clearly reflected in some recent issues between the countries including the **2015 Blockade, and the boundary dispute in the Kalapani region.**

Issues	Key Points
Defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India has been assisting the Nepal Army in its modernisation by supplying equipment and providing training.</li> <li>Assistance during disasters, joint military exercises, adventure activities and bilateral visits are other aspects of India's defence cooperation with Nepal.</li> <li>The 'Indo-Nepal Battalion-level Joint Military Exercise SURYA KIRAN' is conducted alternately in India and in Nepal.</li> <li>The Gorkha regiments of the Indian Army are raised partly by recruitment from hill districts of Nepal.</li> </ul>
Disaster Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Earthquake 2015 –</li> <li>India sent the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams and special aircrafts with rescue and relief materials to Nepal.</li> <li>India helped in restoring 3 power sub-stations in Kathmandu valley. The total Indian relief assistance to Nepal amounted to over US\$ 67 million.</li> <li>The Government of India announced a post-earthquake reconstruction package of US\$ 1 billion (which comprises US\$ 250 million grant and US\$ 750 million concessional Line of Credit).</li> </ul>
Connectivity & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India has been assisting Nepal in development of border infrastructure through upgradation</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>of 10 roads in the Terai area; development of cross-border rail links at Jogbani-Biratnagar, Jaynagar Bardibas; and establishment of Integrated Check Posts at Birgunj, Biratnagar, Bhairahawa, and Nepalgunj.</li> <li>The total economic assistance earmarked under 'Aid to Nepal' budget in FY 2019-20 was INR 1200 crore.</li> <li>The 'India-Nepal New Partnership in Agriculture' was launched with a focus on collaborative projects in agricultural research, development and education.</li> </ul>
Energy Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nepal has 40000 MW of Hydropower potential. However, presently it produces only 1000 MW and imports about 600 MW electricity from India.</li> <li>Arun III project being undertaken by the Sutlej Jal Vidyut Nigam would generate 900 MW in the coming years.</li> <li>South Asia's first cross-border petroleum products pipeline, constructed and funded by Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., connecting Motihari in India to Amlekhgunj in Nepal was remotely inaugurated recently.</li> </ul>
Economic Ties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At around \$8 billion, India accounts for about two third of the Nepal's external trade and provide transit for Nepal's external trade.</li> <li>Indian firms are among the largest investors in Nepal, accounting for more than 30% of the total approved foreign direct investments.</li> </ul>

#### **CONTENTIOUS ISSUES BETWEEN INDIA AND NEPAL**

- India's refocus on BIMSTEC amidst stalled SAARC has

not been well received by the Nepali political leaders. It is being alleged that India wants it to join a military alliance of the BIMSTEC countries when India called for a military exercise of the BIMSTEC countries.

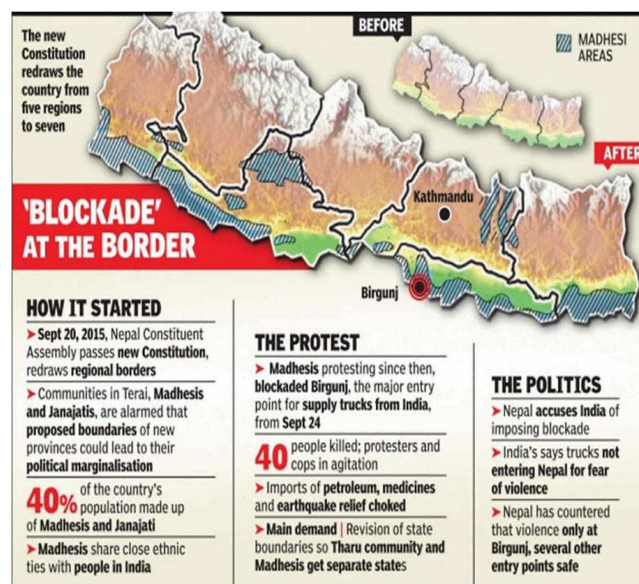
- Nepal did not call out Pakistan for fostering terrorism in the aftermath of Pulwama attacks of 2019.

#### **SLOW PROGRESS ON DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS**

- There has been no progress on the 5000 MW Pancheshwar multipurpose project on Mahakali River because of Nepal's reluctance.
- Progress has also not been witnessed on the dam on Kosi River which would prevent flooding in both India and Nepal because of lack of willingness on the part of Nepal.
- India announced Rupees 100 crore grant for the development of Janakpur in 2018, but no proposal has been received from the Nepalese side.
- Such incidence highlights the lack of progress on the various development projects.

#### **2015 BLOCKADE**

- 2015 Nepal adopted a new constitution declaring it to be a Federal democratic republic.
- **Seven provinces** were carved out creating **only one in the Madhesi region in the Terai foothills along the Indian border.**
- The Madhesi community has been targeted by the hill people of Nepal for having close relationship with India. Their **marriage rights were curbed by denying the citizenship rights to the foreigners marrying Nepalese.**
- Madhesi's have had age old custom of marrying across the border and this restriction is targeted at the age-old Roi - Beti ties.
- Madhesi's were disaffected and there was great deal of unrest and andolan.
- This led to disruption of supply chain of goods, petroleum along the border region from India. The hill Nepalese blamed India for orchestrating this blockade.
- This event has led to a strongly negative feeling in the Nepalese minds against India, which they accuse of being responsible for the blockade.



#### **BORDER ISSUE**

- Nepal's parliament gave approval to second constitutional amendment which gave legal status to the new political map of Nepal and its boundaries with India near the Lipu-Lekh pass.
- For the Nepal the Kali River originates from **Limpiyadhura** in the higher Himalayas, giving it access to a triangular-shaped land defined by **Limpiyadhura Lipulekh and Kalapani**. (Originating from Treaty of Sugauli, (1814).



#### **TILT TOWARDS CHINA**

- Nepal shares a border of 1400 km with China in the Tibet region. China is Nepal's second largest trading partner. It has undertaken various projects including the development of airports, hydropower etc.
- Nepal has been using the China card in its dealing with India under the pretext of balancing its relation between the two big neighbours.
- With increasing economic influence of China, Nepal

does not want to be left out of this success story. It signed a MoU with China on the BRI in 2017.

- China has also started to intrude in the affairs of Nepal Army by providing training and supply of equipment. This is one of the biggest causes of concern for India because of Indian army's links with the Nepal army.
- China is leveraging ties with the Maoist parties of Nepal and occasionally using the cheque book diplomacy to increase its influence.

#### **GLOBALISATION**

- **Post 1990 Nepalese diaspora** has moved out globally. A quarter of Nepalese population is living overseas. Due to this the young leaders of Nepal are not schooled in India.
- This was particularly important because the **Nepalese leadership which studied in India provided constant communication and better understanding and empathy between the two neighbours.**

#### **POLITICS DURING LOCKDOWN**

- **Victory of Nepalese Communist Party in 2017 was mainly based on the anti-India rhetoric after the Blockade of 2015.**
- The two left parties Unified Marxist Leninist and the communist party of Nepal - Maoist Centre (CPN-MC) merged. However, issues started after such a merger about Power sharing and this opportunity was grabbed by China to meddle into the internal affairs of Nepal.
- However, such interference by China did not last long and the NCP unity did not last long and led to dissolution of Nepal's Parliament and the softening stance of the leadership towards India. This was followed by visits of RAW chief, Indian Army Chief and Foreign secretary.
- Finally, the PM KP Oli was removed with President inviting the Sher Bahadur Deuba, leader of the Nepali Congress as the PM. The new PM is being seen as closer to India. India has been accused of meddling in the internal politics of Nepal.

#### **WAY FORWARD FOR INDIA'S POLICY TOWARDS NEPAL**

- India should remain fully engaged with Nepal at all levels and across the political spectrum.
- A hands-off policy will only create space for other external influences, some of which, like China, may prove to be hostile.
- However, such engagement should not be seen as intervention in the internal affairs of Nepal.
- India's engagement with Nepal, the Terai belt and its large Madhesi population plays a critical and

indispensable role.

- Our engagement with Nepal must find a prominent place for Nepali citizens who are our immediate neighbours.
- The engagement should not just be limited to the political elites.
- India needs to appreciate that the people-to-people links between our two countries have an unmatched density and no other country, including China, enjoys this asset.
- To counter the Chinese influence, India needs to speed up unfinished projects that India has committed and create conditions of mutual trust which makes it difficult for China to leverage any dispute that arises in future.
- India cannot be complacent about its historical geographical and cultural ties with Nepal.
- India needs to understand that the Nascent Nepalese democracy will assert independence in its Foreign Policy. But it is important for India to create conditions which makes it a go to country for Nepal in times of need.
- India also needs to work on its perception in the hill population of Nepal.

### **3. RAISINA DIALOGUE 2022**

*The seventh edition of India's premier global conference on global affairs was inaugurated by PM Modi with the chief guest for this edition - Ursula von der Leyen, the European Union Commission President. Let us glance through the key takeaways from this edition of the Raisina dialogue.*

#### **ABOUT THE DIALOGUE**

- It is India's premier conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics committed to addressing the most challenging issues facing the global community.
- The Dialogue is structured as a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral discussion, involving heads of state, cabinet ministers and local government officials, who are joined by thought leaders from the private sector, media, and academia.
- The conference is hosted by the think tank **Observer Research Foundation** in partnership with **Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.**



FOCUS AREAS	TAKEAWAYS
<b>Raisina dialogue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is India's premier conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics committed to addressing the most challenging issues facing the global community.</li> <li>• The Dialogue is structured as a multi stakeholder, cross-sectoral discussion, involving heads of state, cabinet ministers and local government officials, who are joined by thought leaders from the private sector, media, and academia.</li> <li>• The conference is hosted by the think tank <b>Observer Research Foundation in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Theme of 2022</b>	"Terranova: Impassioned, Impatient, and Imperilled."
<b>Six Thematic pillars</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rethinking democracy: Trade, Tech and Ideology</li> <li>2. End of Multilateralism: A Networked Global Order?</li> <li>3. Water Caucuses: Turbulent Tides in the Indo-Pacific</li> <li>4. Communities Inc: First Responders to Health, Development, and Planet</li> <li>5. Achieving Green Transitions: Common Imperative, Diverging Realities</li> <li>6. Samson vs Goliath: The Persistent and Relentless Tech Wars</li> </ol>
<b>Remarks by External Affairs minister</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strategic Autonomy:</b> Engaging the world with confidence about its identity, rather than behaving as a "pale imitation" of other nations. Stopping fighting and returning to Dialogue was key to resolve the Ukrainian crisis.</li> <li>• <b>Global role for India:</b> Over the next 25 years an India that will be "more international" in terms of its commitments and responsibilities.</li> <li>• <b>Soft Power:</b> Choices made by India had a larger influence globally and contributed to the spread of democracy in South Asia.</li> </ul>

- **Supply Chains:** India should do more to develop reliable and resilient supply chains and transparent and trusted technologies that can benefit the world.
- **Rule based World Order:** The world order was impacted by several big shocks in the past two years, including the Covid-19 pandemic, the situation in Afghanistan and Ukraine, and the frictions between the West and Russia and the US and China. A self-reliant India should have the capabilities to take on greater responsibilities around the world.

#### 4. NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY STRATEGY

The Data Security Council of India (DSCI) has prepared a report focussing on 21 areas to ensure a safe and vibrant cyberspace for India. Some of the focus areas are large scale digitisation of public services, State-level cyber security etc. The report recommends a national framework which should be set in collaboration with institutions like the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and ISEA (Information Security Education and Awareness) to provide global professional certifications in security.

##### NEED FOR INDIA'S CYBER SECURITY STRATEGY

- Increasing number of Cyber-attacks: According to American cybersecurity firm Palo Alto Networks' 2021 report, Maharashtra was the most targeted State in India — facing 42% of all ransomware attacks in India.
- One in four Indian organisations suffered a ransomware attack in 2021. Indian organisations witnessed a 218% increase in ransomware — higher than the global average of 21%.
- Software and services (26%), capital goods (14%) and the public sector (9%) were among the most targeted sectors
- Cyber-attacks Undermine the data privacy of the citizens.
- Cyber security threat is an emerging concern for India's National Security.
- India has been victim to the Cyber-attacks number of times in the recent past:
  - o 2017: WannaCry and Petya Ransomware
  - o 2018: Aadhaar Software hacked and Aadhaar details of the people leaked online



o 2021: Pegasus issue

• India is the third most vulnerable country to Cyberattacks according to Internet Security Threat report published by Symantec.

#### **OUTDATED CYBER SECURITY POLICY 2013**

- It was created in the wake of Surveillance scandal of the American National Security Agency leaks by Edward Snowden back in 2013. Since then, new challenges have emerged which need to be addressed.
- India is among the top ten countries facing cyberattacks.
- Cyber landscape has witnessed growing digitization as part of the Government's Digital India push, as well as more sophisticated cyber threats, particularly the WannaCrypt and Petya ransomware attacks.
- The government must also proactively address India's ability to respond effectively to cyber threats by outlining an institutional framework ensure the country's digital safety.
- There is a need for outlining mechanisms for coordination between multiple agencies responsible for cyber security.
- There is great crunch of cyber security professionals that needs to be addressed.
- There has been little progress in the Public private partnership envisaged by the 2013 Policy.
- Another area of priority for a new cyber security policy must be fostering greater civil-military cooperation on cyber security.

#### **CYBER THREATS CAN BE OF FOUR TYPES**

- Cyber Espionage: The act or practice of obtaining secret information i.e., personal, sensitive, classified nature from individuals, competitors or governments using malicious software such as Trojan horses and spyware. Motive is to obtain secret information which could go against our national security.
- Cyber Attack: Targets computer information systems, infrastructures, computer networks. Motive is to damage or destroy targeted computer network or system. Impact: Destruction of Communication network.
- Cyber Terrorism: Convergence of terrorism and cyber space. Cyberspace has been used by terrorists for number of purposes such as Planning terrorist attacks, recruitment of sympathizers, spreading propaganda to radicalise people and to raise funding etc.
- Cyber warfare: Warfare conducted by a country or its proxies to attack the computer systems in other

countries. Can Include- Theft, Vandalism (Defacing Web Pages), Destruction of Critical information infrastructure.

#### **FOCUS AREAS OF CYBER SECURITY STRATEGY**

- Large scale digitisation of public services: There needs to be a focus on security in the early stages of design in all digitisation initiatives and for developing institutional capability for assessment, evaluation, certification, and rating of core devices.
  - Supply chain security: There should be robust monitoring and mapping of the supply chain of the Integrated circuits (ICT) and electronics products. Product testing and certification needs to be scaled up, and the country's semiconductor design capabilities must be leveraged globally.
  - Critical information infrastructure protection: The supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) security should be integrated with enterprise security. A repository of vulnerabilities should also be maintained.
  - Digital payments: There should be mapping and modelling of devices and platform deployed, transacting entities, payment flows, interfaces and data exchange as well as threat research and sharing of threat intelligence.
  - State-level cyber security: State-level cybersecurity policies and guidelines for security architecture, operations, and governance need to be developed.
- #### **SUGGESTIONS BY THE REPORT**
- Budgetary provisions: A minimum allocation of 0.25% of the annual budget, which can be raised up to 1% has been recommended to be set aside for cyber security. In terms of separate ministries and agencies, 15-20% of the IT/technology expenditure should be earmarked for cybersecurity. The report also suggests setting up a Fund of Funds for cybersecurity and to provide Central funding to States to build capabilities in the same field.
  - Research, innovation, skill-building and technology development:
    - o Investing in modernisation and digitisation of ICTs, setting up a short- and long-term agenda for cyber security via outcome-based programs and providing investments in deep-tech cyber security innovation.
    - o A national framework should be devised in collaboration with institutions like the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and ISEA (Information Security Education and Awareness) to provide global professional certifications in security.
    - o Creating a 'cyber security services' with cadre

chosen from the Indian Engineering Services.

- Crisis management: Holding cybersecurity drills which include real-life scenarios with their ramifications. In critical sectors, simulation exercises for cross-border scenarios must be held on an inter-country basis.
- Cyber insurance: Developing cyber insurance products for critical information infrastructure and to quantify the risks involving them.
- Cyber diplomacy: Cyber diplomacy plays a huge role in shaping India's global relations. To further better diplomacy, the government should promote brand India as a responsible player in cyber security and create 'cyber envoys' for the key countries/regions.
- Cybercrime investigation: Unburdening the judicial system by creating laws to resolve spamming and fake news. Charting a five-year roadmap factoring possible technology transformation, setting up exclusive courts to deal with cybercrimes and remove backlog of cybercrimes by increasing centres providing opinion related to digital evidence under section 79A of the IT act.
- Advanced forensic training for agencies to keep up in the age of AI/ML, blockchain, IoT, cloud, automation. Law enforcement and other agencies should partner with their counterparts abroad to seek information of service providers overseas.

#### **DRAFT NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY STRATEGY 2021**

- In response to a question in parliament, the Centre clarified that it has "formulated a draft National Cyber Security Strategy 2021 which holistically looks at addressing the issues of security of national cyberspace." Without mentioning a deadline for its implementation, the Centre added that it had no plans yet "to coordinate with other countries to develop a global legal framework on cyber terrorism."

#### **NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL**

- All aspects of national security are deliberated upon by the National Security Council (NSC), the apex body, headed by the Prime Minister.
- Ministers of Home Affairs, Defence, External Affairs and Finance are its members.
- National Security Adviser is its Secretary.

- Three tier structure of the NSC comprises
  - i. the Strategic Policy Group (SPG),
  - ii. the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) and
  - iii. the National Security Council Secretariat.
- The SPG chaired by the Cabinet Secretary is the principal forum for inter-ministerial coordination and integration of the relevant inputs.
- The NSAB undertakes long-term analysis and provides perspectives on issues of national security.

### **5. AL AQSA MOSQUE**

- Located in Old city of Jerusalem, Israel
- Considered to be third holiest site in Islam after Mecca and Medina.
- It is in proximity of Second Temple, the holiest site of Judaism. Hence, a flash point of Israeli-Palestine conflict.
- The site has been in news due to Abraham Accords which plan to open the Mosque to all faiths and not just for Muslims.



## 6. GOLAN HEIGHTS, WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP

US drops the term Israeli-occupied from references to the Golan Heights, West Bank and Gaza **U.S. Says Israeli Settlements in West Bank Do Not Violate International Law. US has asserted to fully recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights.**

**Note:** The Golan - like the West Bank and Gaza Strip, territories also taken by Israel in the June 1967 conflict -

is regarded internationally as occupied under a U.N. Security Council resolution passed later that year.

### LOCATION : ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

- **Gaza Strip** is a self-governing Palestinian territory on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, which borders Egypt on the southwest for 11 km and Israel on the east and north.
- **Golan Heights** is a fertile plateau which lies to the north and east of the Sea of Galilee.
- **West Bank** is a landlocked territory near the Mediterranean coast of Western Asia, bordered by Jordan to the east and Israel on the south, west and north.

# SUMMITS AND ORGANISATIONS

## 1. 2ND INDIA-NORDIC SUMMIT

- PM Modi participated in the **second India-Nordic summit** in Copenhagen, hosted by Denmark, along with the Prime Ministers of Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Sweden and Norway.

- The first India-Nordic summit took place in Stockholm, Sweden, in **2018**.

- The summit provided a unique opportunity for India to expand cooperation with the Nordic nations.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF NORDIC COUNTRIES FOR INDIA

- The Nordic nations of Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland are believed to be some of the *most advanced economies in Europe*.
- It can play a crucial role in India's quest for **clean energy, sustainability, digitisation and innovation**.
- At present, India's trade with the Nordic countries is more than **\$5 billion** (2020-21). Cumulative FDI stood at over \$3 billion between April 2000 and March 2021.
- India-Nordic cooperation holds immense significance for **India's Arctic Policy**. This will provide opportunities

for increased co-operation in the Arctic on polar research, climate and environmental issues.

### BILATERAL MEETING ON THE SIDELINES OF INDIA-NORDIC SUMMIT

PM Modi held a series of bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Nordic countries which includes Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Finland.

#### Meeting Norwegian counterpart Jonas Gahr Store

- This was the first meeting between the two leaders since the assumption of office by Prime Minister Store in October 2021.

- PM Modi highlighted that *Norway's skills and India's scope* provided natural complementarities.

- Both leaders discussed the potential for deepening engagement in areas like *Blue Economy, renewable energy, green hydrogen etc.*

#### Meeting with Prime Minister of Sweden, Magdalena Andersson

- During this meeting, the two leaders expressed satisfaction at the progress made by the Lead IT initiative.

○ This was an India-Sweden joint global initiative to set up a **Leadership Group on Industry Transition (LeadIT)** in September 2019.

○ It was set up at the *UN Climate Action Summit* to help guide the world's heaviest greenhouse gas (GHG) emitting industries towards the low-carbon economy.

- Technology, Investment and R&D collaborations provide the bedrock of the current relationship between these two countries.

- During the 2018 visit of PM Modi to Sweden, the two sides had adopted a wide-ranging Joint Action Plan and signed a *Joint Innovation Partnership*.

○ In 2018, PM Modi visited Sweden on the occasion of the 1st India-Nordic Summit.

**Meeting with Prime Minister of Iceland, Katrin Jakobsdottir**

- This year both countries are **celebrating the 50th anniversary of establishment** of diplomatic relations.

- Both leaders discussed ways to further strengthen economic cooperation especially in the sectors of *geothermal energy, Blue Economy, Arctic, etc.*

- Geothermal energy, in particular, is an area where Iceland has special expertise.

- In this regard, both sides stressed on collaboration between universities of both countries in this sector.

- Discussions also took place on expediting the India – EFTA (European Free Trade Association) trade negotiations.

**Meeting with Prime Minister of Finland, Sanna Marin**

- This was the first in-person meeting between the two leaders.

- Both leaders noted that areas like *sustainability, digitalization and cooperation in science and education* were important pillars of the bilateral partnership.

- They discussed opportunities to expand cooperation in the fields of new and emerging technologies like AI, quantum computing, future mobile technologies, clean technologies and smart grids.

## **2. INDIA ELECTED AS CHAIR OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ASIAN ELECTION AUTHORITIES**

- India has been unanimously elected as the new Chair of the Association of Asian Election Authorities (AAEA) for 2022-2024.

- It was elected at the recently held meeting of the

Executive board and General Assembly at Manila (current chair of AAEA), Philippines. About AAEA

- AAEA was conceived to promote and institutionalize ***open and transparent elections, independent and impartial election authorities, professionalization of Asian election authorities.***

- This important process to establish AAEA began with the January 1997 Symposium in Manila.

- In pursuance of the resolution passed by participants of the Symposium, the Association of Asian Election Authorities (AAEA) was finally established in 1998.

- Election Commission of India is a founder member of the AAEA and also served on the Executive Board of the AAEA as the Vice Chair during 2011-13 and Chair during 2014-16.

- Currently, 20 Asian Election Monitoring Bodies are members of AAEA.

- AAEA is an Associate Member of 118 members Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB).

- The mission of the AAEA is

- **To provide a non-partisan forum in the Asian region for sharing experiences and best practices among election authorities.**

- **To act upon ways to promote open and transparent elections with the objective of supporting good governance and democracy.**

## **3. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION REVIEW FORUM**

- The first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. It was hosted by the President of the UN General Assembly.

- The Forum serves as the primary intergovernmental global platform for Member States to assess and deliberate on implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Global Compact for Migration

- In December 2018, UN General Assembly adopted the historic Global Compact for Migration.

- It is considered as a blueprint for helping millions of migrants worldwide achieve a life of safety and dignity.

- It is a non-binding agreement, which aims to better

manage migration at **local, national, regional and global levels**, including reducing the risks and vulnerabilities the migrants or refugees face at different stages of their journey.

#### 4. WEF ANNUAL MEETING 2022

The World Economic Forum Annual Meeting was held at Davos, Switzerland. Theme of this year's summit was - **'Working Together, Restoring Trust'**.

##### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

##### Global Digital FDI Flows Launched

- The summit saw launching of a new initiative to boost flows of *digital foreign direct investments* globally.
- It is a joint initiative of the **Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO)** and the **WEF**.
  - The DCO focuses on digital economy initiatives supporting youth, start-up entrepreneurs and women.
  - It has nine member states with a combined GDP of nearly USD 2 trillion and a population of nearly 600 million.
- The agreement will see the DCO and WEF work together to identify methods to **increase digital adoption**, investment in new digital activities, and investment in digital infrastructure.
- Under the initiative, DCO and WEF will launch Digital FDI Enabling Projects in countries around the world.

##### Defining and Building the Metaverse

- The Forum announced a new initiative, **Defining and Building the Metaverse**.
  - The metaverse refers to a **virtual world** where people can live, work and play via an avatar.
  - It doesn't actually exist yet, but tech companies are investing billions of dollars into developing the technology.
- This initiative brings together key stakeholders to build an economically viable, interoperable, safe, and inclusive metaverse.
- Research suggests that the metaverse is expected to grow into an \$800 billion market by 2024.

##### INDIA AT DAVOS 2022

##### **1. Launch of Indian CEO Alliance**

- The Forum launched the India chapter of the Alliance of CEO Climate Action Leaders to supercharge India's climate action and decarbonization efforts.
- Part of the WEF's Climate Action Platform, the Alliance will continue efforts to achieve the vision of **Mission 2070: A Green New Deal for a Net Zero India**, on India's low-carbon transition by 2070.

##### **2. India Leading The Transition To Green Energy**

- The participating Indian leaders highlighted the fact that:
  - 60 million people go to fill up their tanks every day in India; 5 million barrels a day is the Indian consumption.
  - The aim of a 20% ethanol blend has been pushed **ahead** from 2030 to **2025**.
  - Green hydrogen, biofuel discovery, and production from alternate sources are being prioritised.

##### **3. New \$15 Million Investment To Tackle Freshwater Crisis**

- With record-breaking heatwaves and droughts affecting the country, the meeting took some substantive action on *freshwater conservation and management*.
- Global conglomerate HCL announced a partnership with **UpLink**, the open innovation platform of the WEF.
- Through a \$15 million investment over five years, HCL will accelerate the innovation agenda for water.
- It will create a first-of-its-kind innovation ecosystem for the global freshwater sector on UpLink.

##### **4. Maharashtra Joins WEF in the Fight Against Plastic Pollution**

- Maharashtra, India's largest state in terms of GDP, has joined the World Economic Forum's *Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP)*.
- It has joined the platform to drive localized solutions for the circular economy..



# DEFENSE AND SECURITY

## 1. TOUR OF DUTY SCHEME

- The Army is finalising the finer details of the Tour of Duty plan, which is planned to replace the existing structure of joining the force. The final structure of the programme could be ready as early as by May end.
- Once the Army approves the plan, it will be up to the government to announce and implement it.
- Defence officials are hopeful that the government will give a go ahead soon as no new recruitment has taken place for two years.

### TOUR OF DUTY SCHEME

- Under this scheme, the Defence Ministry is starting a new recruitment process for the armed forces that will be for a short span of three-years.
- It will allow civilians of the country to join the Indian Army for three years and serve the country as an army soldier.
- The Indian Army will be the first of the three-armed forces to recruit some soldiers for a fixed period of three years.

### KEY FEATURES

#### **A. Selection**

- o The selected candidates will get a chance to serve the nation as officers and/or other ranks in Army.

- o Initially, the number of vacancies in Indian Army would be around 100 which could be expanded later.
- o The draft of the scheme states that all soldiers in Army would eventually be recruited under the model.

#### **B. Time Period**

- o While initially planned as a three-year Tour of Duty, the final structure could make it for 4-5 years.
  - One-year training and two-year service after that was too short a time period.
  - At the moment jawans retire after 17 years of service.

- o As per the reports, around 25% of them would serve in the Army for three years and 25% troops would serve for five years.

- o The remaining 50% would continue to serve in the Army for the full term till they reach their retirement age.

#### **C. Perks & Benefits**

- o Proposal states that 50% of soldiers released at the end of three and five years will be included in National Pension Scheme.

- o Such soldiers will be given certain medical benefits, applicable to Armed Forces veterans, for a fixed period.

- o A Tour of Duty Army officer will be earning somewhere around Rs 80,000 to Rs 90,000 per month salary.

#### **D. Current Structure Overhauled**

o Under the current structure, soldiers are inducted into the regiments based on their caste and the region where they come from.

➤ This structure is an inheritance of the days of the British empire.

o However, the new structure will make it pan-India and independent of the caste.

Significance	Challenges
<p>1. Foundation Stone for New India The scheme will ensure that a trained, disciplined, confident, and committed workforce is available for government jobs and to the corporate world.</p> <p>2. Reduction in Defence Expenditure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scheme is also expected to reduce the Army's pension burden, as the country has a large population of retired servicemen.</li> <li>• For the current fiscal, the government has allocated nearly Rs 1.2 lakh crore for pensions for the Defence Ministry and the armed forces.</li> <li>• This is about a quarter of the total defence budget and larger than the capital acquisition allocation.</li> </ul> <p>3. Address The Issue Of Shortage In Army There is a vacancy of more than 1 lakh Junior Commissioned Officers of Other Ranks in the Army at the moment. It will make up for the shortage of officers in the Army.</p> <p>4. Increased Nationalism and Patriotism At a time, when India is grappling with various secessionist tendencies, this scheme will imbibe a nationalistic feeling among youths.</p>	<p>1. Might Erode Operational Readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to timing constraint, a Tour of Duty Officer is unlikely to be given more than 3-6 months pre-commission training.</li> <li>• Also, they might not get any post-commission training.</li> </ul> <p>2. Commitment Will Not Be The Same As That Of A Normal Officer</p> <p>A tour of duty officer will consider himself in transit. He will be more concerned about what happens after three years than about his role in the army.</p> <p>3. Neither Here Nor There</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minimum of five years is necessary to enable the individuals to earn gratuity as per government policy.</li> <li>• Besides the experience and salary during the term of services, the candidate will gain nothing.</li> </ul> <p>4. Similar Schemes Already Exist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India has a well-established Territorial Army which has performed creditably in war and counter-insurgency.</li> <li>• To give military experience even to the</li> </ul>

This will be helpful in promoting unity and integrity of India.

youth, we have the National Cadet Corps (NCC).

### CONCLUSION

- An attractive short-term scheme, which strikes a balance between the standards of training and operational requirements of the armed forces and needs of the individual, is the most cost-effective method of managing military budgets.
- Israel has successfully implemented a mandatory three-year military service for its youths. This has helped in the nation-building process of Israel.
- However, we must keep in mind that Israel model is conscripted mandatory in national service and is not driven by patriotism per se.
- Focusing only on neo-nationalism as the sole motivator to join the scheme will only end up creating potential political militias.

## 2. ARMY'S FIRST WOMAN COMBAT PILOT

- Captain Abhilasha Barak became the first woman combat aviator in the Indian Army.
- Captain Barak has been assigned to the second flight of the 2072 Army Aviation Squadron that operates the **Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopter**.
- Women officers in the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy have been flying helicopters for long.
- However, the Indian Army paved the way for women pilots in 2021 by starting the 'Army Aviation course'. Till recently, women were only part of ground duty in the Indian Army.
- o The Supreme Court opened the doors of the academy to women in an order in October 2021 along with making them eligible for permanent commission too.

## 3. INS SURAT AND INS UDAYGIRI

The Defence Minister launched Indian Navy destroyer warship INS Surat and frigate INS Udaygiri in Mumbai.

### ABOUT INS SURAT

- It is the **4th ship of Project 15B destroyers** which

marks the beginning of a significant overhaul of the P15A (Kolkata class) destroyers

- The only physical distinction between the P-15A (Kolkata class) destroyer warships and the P-15B (Visakhapatnam class) destroyer warships is the bridge layout; the bridge of the P-15B warships is vastly different from that of the P-15A. It was designed to minimise radar cross-section (RCS) and enhance resilience.

- The **1st ship was Visakhapatnam** (commissioned in 2021), the **2nd Mormugao** and **3rd Imphal**.

- Mormugao) and Imphal ships have been launched and are at different stages of outfitting/ trials.

- Mormugao is set to be commissioned in 2023 while the other two INS Imphal and INS Surat are planned to be inducted by 2025.

- The ship Surat has been built using the **Block construction methodology**.

- This methodology includes hull construction at two different geographical locations and has been joined together at MDL, Mumbai.

#### **ABOUT INS UDAYGIRI**

- It is the **3rd ship of Project 17A** frigates.

- The ship Udaygiri is named after a mountain range in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

- It will be **more advanced than the P17 Shivalik Class Frigates** with advanced weapons, improved Stealth features, sensors and platform management system.

#### **PROJECT 17A**

- It is follow-on of the **P17 Frigates (Shivalik Class)** with **improved stealth features, advanced weapons and sensors and platform management systems**.

- Total of **seven ships** are under construction under this project.

- The main advanced stealth features of P-17A pertain to the **smaller Radar cross-section** of the ship achieved through the use of a special super structure shape which reduces radar wave reflections.

- These have **low acoustic noise** emanating from propellers, operating machinery like Diesel Generators etc., which prevents sonars to detect its presence.

GEO IAS

## **GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **1. FOREST FIRES**

*Prolonged dry spell coupled with unusually elevated temperatures in recent days has triggered many wildfires in Himachal Pradesh, destroying several hectares of forest cover across many parts of the hill State. The early onset of summer this year in the hills posed a major challenge to the State government's efforts to control forest fires and with dry weather*

*conditions and high temperatures expected to continue, the task has become more difficult.*

#### **FOREST FIRE FACTS**

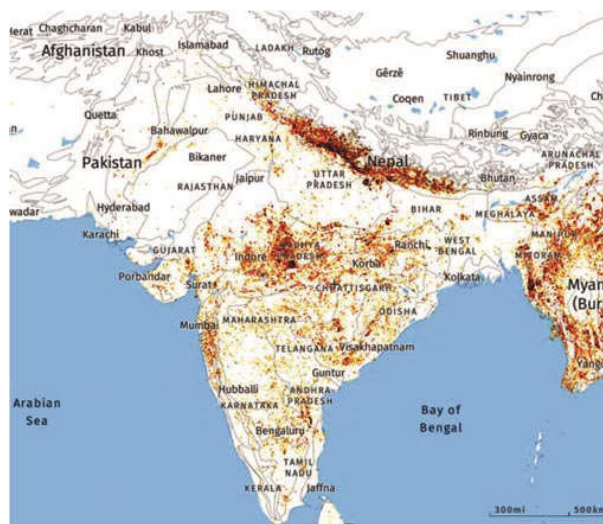
India recorded 82,170 forest fire alerts nearly double the number reported during the same period past year, according to **Global Forest Watch (GFW)**, an open-source monitoring application.

Warmer weather leads to rapid desiccation of fuel (wood, leaves and other inflammable materials found in forests). In such a scenario, even a small ignition is likely to become widespread.

Fires in forests are not unnatural. Small and controlled fires in the form of prescribed burning are very useful and essential for good natural forest development and regeneration. As they keep forest floor free from the natural annual buildup of the litter thereby reducing risk of catastrophic forest fire, improving silvicultural opportunities, increasing forage and habitat opportunities for wildlife, enhancing biodiversity etc.

#### LOSSES FROM EXTENSIVE FOREST FIRES

- **Biodiversity change:** In the Himalayas, fires have made the situation less favorable for oaks to grow and more favorable for chir pine to grow.
- **Reduced soil moisture** creates a possibility of forest fire in future.
- **Reduce water infiltration** due to heat induced chemical and physical changes in upper layer of soil which makes it impervious.
- **Enhanced global warming** due to destruction of forest Carbon sequestration potential and addition of newer emissions such as carbon monoxide, methane hydrocarbons, nitric oxide and nitrous oxide that led to global warming and ozone layer depletion. Locations of frequent forest fires in India



- **Microclimate change** caused by removal of litter and duff, opening of the canopy by killing over storey shrubs and trees and darkening of the soil surface by residual soot and charcoal can increase insulation causing temperature increase.
- **Soil erosion:** Intense Forest fire always has a direct heating effect on the soil at the depth below 7 to 10

cm. As a result, the soil of the fire affected area loses its water holding capacity and becomes vulnerable for erosion.

- **Flooding** due to water repellent soils and cover loss give rise to higher chances of floods.

#### WAY FORWARD

- **Recognise forest fires as a disaster type and integrate them into national, sub-national and local disaster management plans:** National Plan on Forest Fires was launched by the Government of India in 2018 under the National Afforestation Program. This plan touches upon a wide range of activities, but financial constraints and operational dynamism remains a challenge. Forest fires should be recognised as a disaster type under the NDMA act. The recognition will enhance and strengthen the National Plan on Forest Fires by improving its financial allocation and through the creation of a cadre of trained forest firefighters under the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF).
- **Develop a forest fire-only alert system:** Currently, Forest Survey of India (FSI) and National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) use MODIS and Suomi NPP VIIRS information for near real-time monitoring of forest fires which does not segregate forest fires from other fires such as waste burning and crop burning. Hence, ground validation takes time and the scope for misinformation increases. As a first step, a forest fire ONLY alert system needs to be developed that can provide real-time impact-based alerts.
- **Enhance adaptive capacity:** Capacity-building initiatives targeted at district administrations and forest-dependent communities can avert the extent of loss and damage due to forest fires. Training on high technology-focused equipment (like drones) and nature-based modules such as creating effective forest fire lines can effectively mitigate the spread of forest fires.
- **Provide clean air shelters:** The state government/state forest departments (SFDs) should repurpose public buildings like government schools and community halls by fitting them with clean air solutions – like air filters – to create clean air shelters for communities worst impacted by fires and smoke from forest fires.
- **Prescribed burning approach:** Mitigation of forest fire through fire suppression is only increasing the fuel load

of the system, often resulting in out-of-control fires. Prescribed burning unless conducted in checks and balances has the risk of spreading across the forests.

- **Engagements of local communities:** Local communities may be engaged in the process to ensure livelihood and develop a sense of ownership towards the forest. There should be clear protocol for alarming people living near forest to save lives and livelihood.
- Firefighting action plans must be prepared for each forest range considering the climate, terrain, type of vegetation, availability of water, etc. Drought remediation measures should also be taken into considerations while making these action plans. Creating a bioeconomy through community-engaged creation of functional value chains based on wood, non-wood products, agroforestry, and ecosystem services can help ensure livelihood security as well as to control forest fire

## 2. HEAT WAVES

*India's weather department issued a severe heatwave warning as temperatures soar, throwing millions of lives and livelihoods out of gear.*

### MAINS FACTS

It is expected that extreme heat waves will become more common worldwide because of rising average global temperature. Since the beginning of the 21st century, this has increased by a degree Centigrade. This weather pattern, coupled with the El-Nino effect, is increasing the temperatures in Asia. Further, high humidity compounds the effects of the temperatures being felt by human beings.

### HEAT WAVE

- A Heat Wave is a period of abnormally high temperatures, more than the normal maximum temperature that occurs during the summer season in the North-Western parts of India.
- Heat Waves typically occur between March and June, and in some rare cases even extend till July. The extreme temperatures and resultant atmospheric conditions adversely affect people living in these regions

as they cause physiological stress, sometimes resulting in death.

### CRITERIA FOR HEAT WAVE

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has given the following criteria for Heat Waves:

**There are two conditions which need to be satisfied:**

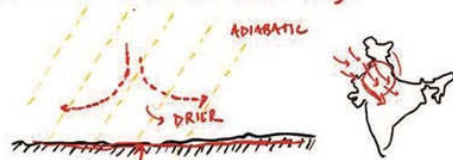
- Heat wave is considered if maximum temperature of a station reaches at least 40°C or more for Plains, 37°C or more for coastal stations and at least 30°C or more for Hilly regions. Following criteria are used to declare heat wave:
    - Based on Departure from Normal
    - Heat Wave: Departure from normal is 4.5°C to 6.4°C
    - Severe Heat Wave: Departure from normal is 6.4°C or more
  - Based on Actual Maximum Temperature (for plains only)
    - **Heat Wave:** When actual maximum temperature 45°C
    - **Severe Heat Wave:** When actual maximum temperature 47°C
- Declare heat wave, the above criteria should be met at least in 2 stations in a Meteorological subdivision for at least two consecutive days and it will be declared on the second day.

### FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS FOR HEAT WAVE

- Transportation / Prevalence of hot dry air over a region (There should be a region of warm dry air and appropriate flow pattern for transporting hot air over the region).
- Absence of moisture in the upper atmosphere (As the presence of moisture restricts the temperature rise).
- The sky should be cloudless (To allow maximum insulation over the region).
- Large amplitude anti-cyclonic flow over the area.
- Heat waves develop over Northwest India and spread gradually eastwards & southwards but not westwards (since the prevailing winds during the season are westerly to north westerly). But on some occasions, heat wave may also develop over any region in situ under the favourable conditions.



### FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS FOR HEAT WAVE,



- + TRANSPORTATION / PREVALENCE OF HOT DRY AIR OVER A REGION
- + ABSENCE OF MOISTURE IN THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE
- + ANTI CYCLONIC FLOW OVER THE AREA
- + CLEAR SKIES

### IMPACTS OF HEAT WAVES

#### • Health Impacts:

- The health impacts of Heat Waves typically involve dehydration, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and/or heat stroke. The signs and symptoms are as follows:
  - **Heat Cramps:** Edema (swelling) and Syncope (Fainting) accompanied by fever below 39 i.e., 102°F.
  - **Heat Exhaustion:** Fatigue, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, muscle cramps and sweating.
  - **Heat Stroke:** Body temperatures of 40°C i.e., 104°F or more along with delirium, seizures or coma. This is a potentially fatal condition.

#### • Agriculture:

- High temperatures can be damaging to agriculture. Plant growth is negatively impacted by high daytime temperatures and some crops require cool night temperatures.
- Heat waves also increase the chances of livestock experiencing heat stress, especially when night time temperatures remain high, and animals are unable to cool off.
- Heat-stressed cattle can experience declines in milk production, slower growth, and reduced conception rates.
- Heat waves can exacerbate droughts and wildfires, which can lead to negative impacts on the agriculture sector.

#### • Energy

- Warmer temperatures affect many aspects of energy system, including production, transmission, and demand. While higher summer temperatures increase electricity demand for cooling, at the same time, they can lower the ability of transmission lines to carry power, leading to electricity reliability issues like rolling blackouts during heat waves.

In the ultimate analysis, we have no option but reduce the emission of greenhouse gases to tackle the climate crisis. But till a lasting solution is found, it is important to roll out heat action plans in regions vulnerable to heatwaves. Mitigation is of immediate concern regarding high summer temperatures and subsequent heatwaves. Both short term measures like advisories and long-term measures like afforestation must be simultaneously acted upon.

High-pressure circulation in the atmosphere acts like a dome or cap, trapping heat at the surface and favouring the formation of a heat wave.

A heat dome is caused when atmosphere traps hot ocean air, as if bounded by a lid or cap. They can be linked to climate change. The upper air weather patterns are slow to move referred to by meteorologists as an Omega block.

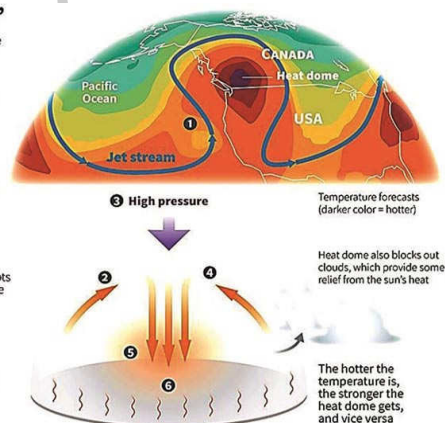
In still, dry summer conditions, a mass of warm air builds up. The high pressure from the Earth's atmosphere pushes the warm air down. The air is compressed, and as its net heat is now in a smaller volume, so it must get hotter. As the warm air attempts to rise, the high pressure above it forces it down, to get hotter, and its pressure grows higher.

The high pressure acts as if a dome, causing everything below it to get hotter and hotter.

#### The 'heat dome'

Occurs when the atmosphere traps hot ocean air like a lid or cap

- 1 In summer, the Jet stream (which moves the air) shifts northward
- 2 Hot and stagnant air expands upwards
- 3 Strong and high-pressure atmospheric conditions combine with influences from La Nina act like a dome or cap
- 4 In a process known as convection, hot air attempts to escape but high pressure pushes it back down
- 5 Under the dome, the air sinks and compresses, releasing more heat
- 6 As winds move the hot air east, the jet stream traps the air where it sinks, resulting in heat waves



### RESILIENCE STRATEGIES FOR EXTREME HEAT

- Identifying vulnerable populations and creating heat preparedness plans with all residents in mind, that may include steps like opening cooling centers during periods of extreme heat and adopting workplace heat stress standards.

- Installing cool and green roofs and cool pavement to reduce the urban heat island effect.
- Planting trees to provide shade and to cool the air through evapotranspiration.
- Pursuing energy efficiency to reduce demand on the electricity grid, especially during heat waves.

### 3. PREDICTING INDIAN MONSOON

*India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast a 'normal' monsoon for this year, or 99% of Long Period Average (LPA) of 87 cm. The IMD has a multi-stage monsoon forecast system. The April forecast usually has little detail on how much rain is expected during each of the monsoon months, and whether the rain will be lopsided or evenly distributed geographically. The IMD usually shares this in late May or early June, just around the time the monsoon is imminent over Kerala. The forecast in April is thus only a general indicator and of little public utility. A normal monsoon forecast this year is also predicated on the absence of an El Niño, a warming of the Central Pacific linked to the drying up of monsoon rains. However, another ocean parameter called the Indian Ocean Dipole, the positive phase of which is associated with good rains, has also been forecast to be 'neutral' or unhelpful for the monsoon.*

**IMD has changed its definition of the LPA**, which is an indication of the average rainfall over a 50-year interval and, as per the norms of the World Meteorological Organization to which India is a signatory, should be updated every 10 years.

For myriad reasons, the IMD stuck with an LPA number of 89 cm (the average monsoon rain from 1951-2000) until 2018, when it was updated to 88 cm (to reflect the average from 1961-2010). And now, to count for the 1971-2020 interval, the number is 87 cm.

While on the surface, it might look like India is losing just a centimetre of rainfall every decade, **it must be remembered that this conceals wide shifts in rainfall when computed at the State** and district levels as the monsoon rain is highly uneven. The IMD explains the loss of a centimetre every decade as part of a natural cycle of the monsoon where 30 years of less rain, or a 'dry' epoch, is followed by 30 years of a 'wet epoch'. India began a dry epoch in the 1970-80 decade, the

IMD says; it is now in a neutral phase and will enter a wet epoch in the decade, 2030-2040.

The IMD has presented research over the years documenting the changes in the weather and rainfall in recent years down to sub-district levels, and has said that global warming, in its tendency to heat the oceans, has certainly had a role to play. Much like the update to the average, the IMD must update some processes and lay stress on shorter forecasts, a month or a fortnight ahead, rather than maintain anachronistic traditions of long-range forecasts that are neither accurate nor useful.

#### **ONSET & ADVANCE OF MONSOON**

The guidelines to be followed for declaring the onset of monsoon over Kerala and its further advance over the country are enlisted below:

##### **a) Rainfall**

If after 10th May, 60% of the available 14 stations enlisted\*, viz. Minicoy, Amini, Thiruvananthapuram, Punalur, Kollam, Allapuzha, Kottayam, Kochi, Thrissur, Kozhikode, Thalassery, Kannur, Kudulu and Mangalore report rainfall of 2.5 mm or more for two consecutive days, the onset over Kerala be declared on the 2nd day, provided the following criteria are also in concurrence.

##### **b) Wind**

field Depth of westerlies should be maintained upto 600 hPa, in the box equator to Lat. 10°N and Long. 55°E to 80°E. The zonal wind speed over the area bounded by Lat. 5-10°N, Long. 70-80°E should be of the order of 15 – 20 Kts. at 925 hPa. The source of data can be RSMC wind analysis/satellite derived winds.

##### **c) Outgoing Longwave Radiation (OLR)**

INSAT derived OLR value should be below 200 w<sub>m</sub>-2 in the box confined by Lat. 5-10°N and Long. 70-75°E.

##### **Northern Limit of Monsoon (NLM)**

Southwest monsoon normally sets in over Kerala around 1st June. It advances northwards, usually in surges, and covers the entire country around 15th July. The NLM is the northern most limit of monsoon upto which it has advanced on any given day.

##### **Withdrawal of SW Monsoon**

a) Withdrawal from extreme north-western parts of the country is not attempted before 1st September.

b) After 1st September:

The following major synoptic features are considered for the first withdrawal from the western parts of NW India.

i) Cessation of rainfall activity over the area for continuous 5 days.

ii) Establishment of anticyclone in the lower

troposphere (850 hPa and below)

iii) Considerable reduction in moisture content as inferred from satellite water vapour imageries and tephigrams.

#### **FURTHER WITHDRAWAL FROM THE COUNTRY**

Further withdrawal from the country is declared, keeping the spatial continuity, reduction in moisture as seen in the water vapour imageries and prevalence of dry weather for 5 days.

Withdrawal of SW monsoon is from the southern peninsula and hence from the entire country only after 1st October, when the circulation pattern indicates a change over from the south-westerly wind regime.

#### **(a) Criteria for describing activity of southwest Monsoon**

<b>Descriptive term</b>	<b>Specification</b>
Weak monsoon	Rainfall less than half the normal.
Normal monsoon	Rainfall half to less than 1½ times the normal (Mention of "normal" monsoon may not be necessary in general).
Active monsoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rainfall 1½ to 4 times the normal.</li><li>i. The rainfall in at least two stations should be 5 cm, if that sub-division is along the west coast and 3 cm, if it is elsewhere.</li><li>ii. Rainfall in that sub-division should be widespread to widespread.</li></ul>
Vigorous monsoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rainfall more than 4 times the normal.</li><li>i. The rainfall in at least two stations should be 8 cm if the sub-division is along the west coast and 5 cm if it is elsewhere.</li><li>ii. Rainfall in that sub-division should be widespread or widespread.</li></ul>
Subdued Monsoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spatial distribution of rainfall remains dry, isolated or scattered for two consecutive days.</li><li>i. Mean actual rainfall of that sub division remains less than the normal for the consecutive two days.</li><li>ii. The Forecast issued for the next 48 hrs on the day for the sub-division is also dry, isolated or scattered. Upon satisfying all the above criteria simultaneously, monsoon activity be described as subdued on the second</li></ul>

day.

#### **4. BIO-DIGESTERS**

*The bio-decomposer namely Pusa Decomposer developed by The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has been used by the States of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and NCT of Delhi to total of 978,713 acres (3,91,485 ha) equivalent to about 2.4 million tonnes of straw management in this year.*

Human waste disposal in innocuous form is an ever growing problem leading to aesthetic nuisance, threat of organic pollution & several infectious diseases in epidemic proportions due to contamination of ground water and drinking water resources in highly populated and developing countries, like India. Less than 30% of Indians have access to the toilets. In rural areas about 10% of houses have toilets and rest of the people go to open defecation. Population in the cities although have better access to the toilets but only to the tune of ~70%. Untreated waste is responsible for several diseases like, dysentery, diarrhoea, amoebiasis, viral hepatitis, cholera, typhoid etc. taking the life of lakhs of children annually. Bio decomposers degrade and converts the human waste into usable water and gasses in an eco-friendly manner. The generated gas can be utilized for energy/ cooking and water for irrigation purposes.

The process involves the bacteria which feed upon the faecal matter inside the tank, through anaerobic process which finally degrades the matter and releases methane gas that can be used for cooking, along with the treated water.

#### **BIOMASS AS ENERGY**

Biomass has always been an important energy source for the country considering the benefits it offers. It is renewable, widely available, carbon-neutral and has the potential to provide significant employment in the rural areas. Biomass is also capable of providing firm energy.

About 32% of the total primary energy use in the country is still derived from biomass and more than 70% of the country's population depends upon it for its energy needs. Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has realised the potential and role of biomass

energy in the Indian context and hence has initiated a number of programmes for promotion of efficient technologies for its use in various sectors of the economy to ensure derivation of maximum benefits. For efficient utilization of biomass, bagasse-based cogeneration in sugar mills and biomass power generation have been taken up under biomass power and cogeneration programme.

**Biomass power & cogeneration programme** is implemented with the main objective of promoting technologies for optimum use of country's biomass resources for grid power generation. Biomass materials used for power generation include bagasse, rice husk, straw, cotton stalk, coconut shells, soya husk, de-oiled cakes, coffee waste, jute wastes, groundnut shells, saw dust etc.

#### **POTENTIAL**

As per a recent study sponsored by MNRE, the current availability of biomass in India is estimated at about 750 million metric tonnes per year. The Study indicated estimated surplus biomass availability at about 230 million metric tonnes per annum covering agricultural residues corresponding to a potential of about **28 GW**.

This apart, about 14 GW additional power could be generated through bagasse-based cogeneration in the country's 550 Sugar mills, if these sugar mills were to adopt technically and economically optimal levels of cogeneration for extracting power from the bagasse produced by them.

#### **TECHNOLOGY**

##### **Combustion**

The thermo chemical processes for conversion of biomass to useful products involve combustion, gasification or pyrolysis. The most used route is combustion. The advantage is that the technology used is like that of a thermal plant based on coal, except for the boiler. The cycle used is the conventional rankine cycle with biomass being burnt in high-pressure boiler to generate steam and operating a turbine with the generated steam. The exhaust of the steam turbine can either be fully condensed to produce power or used partly or fully for another useful heating activity. The latter mode is called cogeneration. In India, cogeneration route finds application in industries.

##### **Cogeneration in Sugar and Mills**

Sugar industry has been traditionally practicing

cogeneration by using bagasse as a fuel. With the advancement in the technology for generation and utilization of steam at high temperature and pressure, sugar industry can produce electricity and steam for their own requirements. It can also produce significant surplus electricity for sale to the grid using same quantity of bagasse. For example, if steam generation temperature/pressure is raised from 400°C/33 bar to 485°C/66 bar, more than 80 KWh of additional electricity can be produced for each ton of cane crushed. The sale of surplus power generated through optimum cogeneration would help a sugar mill to improve its viability, apart from adding to the power generation capacity of the country.

##### **Deployment**

The Ministry has been implementing biomass power/cogeneration programme since mid-nineties. Over 800 biomass power and bagasse/non-bagasse cogeneration projects aggregating to **10170 MW** capacity have been installed in the country for feeding power to the grid. States which have taken leadership position in implementation of bagasse cogeneration projects are Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. The leading States for biomass power projects are Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.

#### **SALIENT FEATURES**

- No bad smell in toilets from the tanks
- Faecal matter in the tank not visible
- No infestation of cockroaches & flies
- No clogging of digester
- Effluent is free from off odour and solid waste
- Reduction in pathogens by 99%
- Reduction in organic matter by 90%
- No maintenance required
- No requirement of adding bacteria/ enzyme
- No need of removal of solid waste
- Use of phenyl is permitted upto 84 ppm

#### **AVAILABLE MODELS**

- **Microbial inoculum (cold-active)**
  - Isolated, screened, selected and enriched through acclimatization and bio-augmentation
  - Can withstand freezing and thawing
  - Ability to inactivate the intestinal pathogens
- **High altitude model**
  - Material: Metal/FRP of cylindrical shape
  - Works at low temperature as well as high



temperature

- **Glacier model**

- Material: Metal/FRP of cylindrical shape
- Provided with insulation and heating arrangement with solar system

- **Plain area model**

- Material: Material: FRP/MS
- Suitable for existing/independent toilet
- Also available with top mounted toilets
- Can be installed for single house/apartment/society/community

- **Island model**

- Material: FRP
- Design involves longer path for treatment
- Suitable for high water usages and areas with high water table

- **Biotank model**

- Low cost, simple design for onsite construction
- Material: Brick / RCC structure/ FRP
- REED BED SYSTEM (optional) improves effluent quality & can also be used to treat kitchen and bathroom wastewater
- Final effluent safe and can be used for recycling or irrigation
- Can be installed for single house/ apartment/society /community

## **Biogas**

Biogas is produced when bio-degradable organic materials/wastes such as cattle-dung, biomass from farms, gardens, kitchens, industry, poultry droppings, night soil and municipals wastes are subjected to a scientific process, called Anaerobic Digestion (A.D.) in a Biogas Plants. Biogas Plant designs depend upon several factors and the feed stock to be processed is of paramount importance. Biogas is the mixture of gases (primarily methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and Carbon di-oxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and traces of Hydrogen Sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S), Moisture) produced by the decomposition/breakdown of bio-degradable organic matter in the absence of oxygen from raw materials such as agricultural waste, cattle dung, poultry droppings, municipal waste, plant material, sewage, green waste or food/kitchen waste. Biogas has a calorific value of about 5000 kcal per m<sup>3</sup>.

The digested slurry produced from Biogas Plants as a byproduct is a better source of nutrient enriched organic manure for use in Agriculture. It not only

helps in improving the crop yield but also maintain soil health.

There is ample potential of setting up biogas plants considering the livestock population of 512.06 million, which includes about 300 million (299.98 million) total population of bovines (comprising of cattle, buffalo, mithun and yak). The livestock sector contributes about significantly to India's GDP and will continue to increase. The dissemination of biogas technology is a boon for Indian farmers with its direct and collateral benefits.

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy promoted installation of biogas plants by implementing 2 Central Sector Schemes under Off-Grid/distributed and decentralized Renewable Power. The following schemes were valid upto 31/03/2021:

i) New National Biogas and Organic Manure Programme (NNBOMP), for Biogas Plant size ranging from 1 cu.m. to 25 cu.m. per day.

ii) Biogas Power Generation (Off-grid) and Thermal energy application Programme (BPGTP), for setting up biogas plants in the size range of 30 m<sup>3</sup> to 2500 m<sup>3</sup> per day, for corresponding power generation capacity range of 3 kW to 250 kW from biogas or raw biogas for thermal energy /cooling applications.

Biogas contains about 55-65 % of methane, 35- 44 % of carbon dioxide and traces of other gases, such as Hydrogen Sulphide, Nitrogen and Ammonia. Biogas, in its raw form, which is without any purification, can be used as clean cooking fuel like LPG, lighting, motive power and generation of electricity. It can be used in diesel engines to substitute diesel up to 80% and up to 100% replacement of diesel by using 100% Biogas Engines. Further, Biogas can be purified and upgraded up to 98% purity of methane content to make it suitable to be used as a green and clean fuel for transportation or filling in cylinders at high pressure of 250 bar or so and called as Compressed Biogas (CBG).

Initially, Biogas Plants were developed for digesting cattle dung. However, over a period, technology has been developed for the bio-methanation of various types of biomass materials and organic wastes.

Biogas plant designs are now available from 0.5 M<sup>3</sup> to 1000 M<sup>3</sup> unit size or more and multiples of that can be installed for achieving higher Biogas Plant sizes, depending upon availability of the raw material such



as for family/ household, small farmers, dairy farmers and for community, institutional and industrial/ commercial applications. The unit size of industrial and municipal wastes-based biogas plants may go up to 15000 M3 to 20000 M3 biogas production per day.

## 5. FOREST COVER IN INDIA

*National Forest Policy 1988 envisages to have a minimum of one-third of the total land area of the country under forest or tree cover. Continuous efforts are being made to achieve the goals as envisaged in the National Forest Policy and over the years the Forest and Tree cover of the country has been showing a positive trend. This increase may be attributed to plantation/ afforestation activities, better conservation and protection measures, natural regeneration and enhancement of existing forests. The Forest Cover reported in India State of Forest Report does not make any distinction between the origin of tree crops (whether natural or manmade) or tree species and encompasses all types of lands irrespective of their ownership, land use and legal status. Thus, all the tree species along with bamboos, fruit bearing trees, coconut palm trees etc. on all the areas including forest, private, community, government or institutional land where coverage is more than one hectare and canopy density is more than 10% are termed as Forest Cover.*

As per decision 19/Conference of Parties (CoP) 9- Kyoto Protocol, the forest can be defined by any country depending upon the capacities and capabilities of the country as follows: -

Forest- Forest is defined structurally based on

- Crown cover percentage: Tree crown cover- 10 to 30% (India 10%)
- Minimum area of stand: area between 0.05 and 1 hectare (India 1.0 hectare) and
- Minimum height of trees: Potential to reach a minimum height at maturity in situ of 2 to 5 m (India 2m)

India's definition of forest for India State of Forest Report (ISFR) purposes has been taken based on above three criteria only and very well accepted by United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

Change (UNFCCC) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for their reporting/communications. National Mission for a Green India (GIM) is one of the eight Missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change. It aims at protecting, restoring and enhancing India's forest cover and responding to Climate Change. The target under the Mission is 10 m ha on forest and non-forest lands for increasing the forest/tree cover and to improve the quality of existing forest. The detail of state wise funds released and utilized under the National Mission for a Green India during the last three years is given in Annexure- 1.

Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), NITI Aayog, has conducted the Evaluation of National Mission for a Green India in 2020-21 on aspects such as Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, Impacts and Equity within the scheme and has further recommended the continuation of scheme.

### FINDINGS OF THE REPORT

#### • **Forest cover changes:**

- The country's forest and tree cover has increased by 1,540 square kilometres in the last two years.
- India's forest cover has increased to 7,13,789 square kilometres, accounting for 21.71 percent of the country's land area, up from 21.67 percent in 2019.
- Tree cover has increased by 721 sq km.

#### • **Performance of states:**

- **Biggest increases:** Telangana (3.07 percent), Andhra Pradesh (2.22 percent), and Odisha (3.07 percent) have the biggest increases in forest cover (1.04 percent).

- **Deterioration:** Five states in the Northeast – Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland.

- **States with Highest Forest Area/Cover:**

♣ **Area-wise:** Madhya Pradesh > Arunachal Pradesh > Chhattisgarh > Odisha > Maharashtra.

♣ **Forest cover as percentage of total geographical area:** Mizoram > Arunachal Pradesh > Meghalaya > Manipur > Nagaland.

#### • **Carbon Stocks:**

- The total carbon stock in the country's forests is estimated at 7,204 million tonnes, an increase of 79.4 million tonnes since 2019.

- **Mangroves:**

- Mangroves have shown an increase of 17 sq km. India's total mangrove cover is now 4,992 sq km.

- **Forest Prone to Fires:**

- 35.46% of the forest cover is prone to forest fires. Out of this, 2.81% is extremely prone, 7.85% is very highly prone and 11.51% is highly prone.
- By 2030, 45-64% of forests in India will experience the effects of climate change and rising temperatures.
- Forests in all states (except Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Nagaland) will be highly vulnerable climate hot spots. Ladakh (forest cover 0.1-0.2%) is likely to be the most affected.

- **Bamboo Forests:**

- Bamboo forests have grown from 13,882 million culms (stems) in 2019 to 53,336 million culms in 2021.

- **Forest cover in Tiger reserves:**

- The forest cover in tiger corridors has increased by 37.15 sq km (0.32%) between 2011-2021 but decreased by 22.6 sq km (0.04%) in tiger reserves.
- Forest cover has increased in 20 tiger reserves in these 10 years and decreased in 32.
- Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh has the highest forest cover, at 97%

## **6. FRONTIERS 2022: NOISE, BLAZES AND MISMATCHES**

A February report commissioned by the United Nations Environment Program on the environmental challenges posed by noise, wildfires and the disruption of biological rhythms of plants, animals and ecological cycles became controversial on account of the mention of a single city, Moradabad.

### **EMERGING ISSUES ARE PRESENTED FRONTIERS REPORT, 2022: NOISE, BLAZES AND MISMATCHES**

- **Chapter titled Listening to Cities:** From Noisy Environments to Positive Soundscapes draws attention to noise pollution and its long-term physical and mental health impacts, along with measures that can be implemented to create positive and restorative soundscapes in urban areas.

- **Chapter titled Wildfires Under Climate Change:** A

Burning Issue discusses the role of climate change and human influence in the changing wildfire regimes around the world, the impacts of wildfires on the environment and human health, and the measures that can help to prevent, respond and build resilience to wildfires.

- **Chapter titled Phenology:** Climate Change is shifting the rhythm of nature looks at how climate change is disrupting the life cycle patterns of plant and animal species, its consequences, and the need to address this issue by restoring ecological connectivity and biological diversity and most importantly, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

### **NOISE POLLUTION**

- The first chapter of the report, called Frontiers 2022:

Noise, Blazes and Mismatches, deals with noise.

- It compiles studies about noise levels in several cities around the world and illustrates a subset of 61 cities and the range of dB (decibel) levels that have been measured.

• Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata, Asansol and Moradabad are the five Indian cities mentioned in this list and Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh was shown as having a dB range from 29 to 114. At a maximum value of 114, it was the second-most-noisiest city in the list.

- The first was Dhaka, Bangladesh at a maximum value of 119 dB.

### **CONTROVERSY IN THE REPORT**

The first chapter of the February UNEP report compiles studies about noise levels in several cities around the world. Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata, Asansol and Moradabad are the five Indian cities mentioned in this list. Moradabad had never been suggested as an unusually noisy city. The author of that chapter said that the confusion stemmed from errors in the bibliography. Adverse effects of noise pollution on public health range from mild and temporary distress to severe and chronic physical impairment.

## **7. SPECIES IN NEWS**

### **TUNA**

- It is a **saltwater fish** which is found in warm seas.
- It is **commercially fished extensively as a food fish**, and is popular as a blue water game fish.



- This fish species has a **high level of Vitamin B12, Omega 3**, minerals, and proteins.
- To raise awareness about the fish **World Tuna Day** is observed annually on **2nd of May**.

### GREY SLENDER LORIS

- It is a **species of primate, which is a nocturnal** and slow-moving animal.



- It is **native to India and Sri Lanka** and inhabits subtropical and tropical dry forests and subtropical or tropical moist lowland forests.
- It is threatened by habitat loss.
- It is listed as **Near Threatened in the IUCN Red List** and **Schedule I in the Wildlife Protection Act of India 1972**.

### MAIP MACROTHORAX

- The remains of the **largest dinosaur** named Maip macrothorax ever recorded have been found in Patagonia.



- It was **around 9-10 meters long**.
- It had an agile skeleton, a long tail, a long neck and an elongated skull with over 60 small teeth.

### EMPEROR PENGUIN

- It is the **tallest and heaviest of all living penguin** species and is **endemic to Antarctica**.
- They are the **world's deepest-diving birds**. They are capable of diving to depths of approximately 550 metres (1,800 feet).



- Their population is decreasing due to the climatic changes associated with global warming.
- It is listed as **Near Threatened in the IUCN Red List**

### MADTSOIIDAE

- Scientists have reported spotting of the **fossil of a Madtsoiidae snake from the Ladakh Himalaya for the first time**.



- It is mostly distributed in the Gondwanan landmasses.
- The **whole group disappeared in the mid-Paleogene across most Gondwanan continents except for Australia** where it survived with its last known taxon Wonambi till late Pleistocene.

### TRIMERESURUS MAYAAE

- A new species of snake has been discovered at Umroi Military Station in the Meghalaya.



- Locally it is known as U Thlen.
- It looked **very similar to Pope's Pit Viper** but the colour of the eyes was different.
- This new **species was relatively common in Meghalaya, Mizoram and even in Guwahati.**

### MONEY SPIDER

- It has been **reported for the 1st time in the India** from the Muthanga range of the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary.



- It is **commonly found in European meadows.**
- It **belongs to the family of dwarf spiders** under the genus Prosoponoides.
- Both sexes are dark brown and have irregular

silver patches and black spots on the elliptical abdomen.

### WILD BOAR

- It is the largest of the wild pigs.
- It is native to forests ranging from western and northern Europe and North Africa to India and China.



- It is **listed as Least Concern in the IUCN Red list and under Schedule III in the Indian Wildlife Protection Act 1972.**

### SELA MACAQUE

- A new species of old-world monkey **recorded from Arunachal Pradesh has been named after Sela Pass**, as Sela Macaque.



- They are **genetically closer to the Arunachal macaque** and both species have many similar physical characteristics such as heavy built and long dorsal body hair.
- This species is a **major cause of crop damage** in West Kameng district.

# SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## 1. NEAR FIELD COMMUNICATION (NFC) TECHNOLOGY

*In collaboration with Pine Labs, Google Pay has recently announced a new feature in India called 'Tap to pay for UPI,' which allows users to pay using their smartphones. Near Field Communication (NFC) technology is used to implement this functionality.*

### NFC TECHNOLOGY

- NFC technology is a short-range wireless networking technology that enables NFC-enabled devices to interact with one another and transmit information with a single touch.
- It makes it easy to pay bills, swap business cards, download coupons, and share a document with other people.

### WORKING OF NFC TECHNOLOGY

- It uses electromagnetic radio waves to communication to allow communication between two devices to take place. Because transactions take occur over such a small distance, both devices must be equipped with NFC technology.
- Devices must be physically **contacting or within a few centimetres of one another** for data transmission to take place between them.

### HISTORY OF NFC

- In 2004, consumer electronics firms Nokia, Philips, and Sony joined together to establish the NFC Forum, which specified the architecture for NFC technology to be used in new consumer-oriented devices.

- In 2007, Nokia introduced the world's first NFC-enabled phone.

### USE OF NFC FOR 'TAP TO PAY' WITH UPI

- Google Pay is the first UPI app to make the Tap to Pay functionality available on POS terminals, making it the first of its kind.
- Users having UPI accounts setup on Google Pay will be able to make payments simply by touching their NFC-enabled Android smartphones on any Pine Labs Android POS terminal.
- When customers touch their phones on the POS terminal, Google Pay app will instantly launch with the payment amount already pre-filled.
- Using their UPI PIN, users may then double-check the amount and merchant name, and then authenticate the transaction.
- The procedure is far quicker than scanning a QR code or manually inputting the UPI-linked cell phone number, which has been the customary method up till this point in time.

### APPLICATIONS OF NFC TECHNOLOGY

- Used in contactless banking cards to facilitate money transactions.
- Generation of contactless public transportation tickets.
- Network and building security
- Inventory and sales monitoring
- Preventing auto theft and keeping track of library books.
- In speakers, home appliances, and other electrical items that we can manage using our mobile devices.
- May also be used to set up Wi-Fi and Bluetooth



gadgets in our houses with a single touch.

- NFC-enabled wristbands may be used to track patient data in the hospital setting.
- Used for wireless charging.

#### **SAFETY OF NFC TECHNOLOGY**

- Using NFC technology, devices can communicate with each other while they are just a few centimetres apart from each other. This makes it more difficult for attackers to record the communication between devices when compared to other wireless technologies, which have a larger working distance.
- User of NFC-enabled device decides which entity NFC communication should take place with by using a touch gesture, making it more difficult for the attacker to establish a connection with the device.
- When compared to other wireless communication protocols, security of NFC communication is greater.

#### **COMPARISON OF NFC WITH OTHER WIRELESS TECHNOLOGIES**

- **IrDA technology (Infrared Data Association)** operates at small ranges (a few metres) and is based on the transmission of data through infrared light, and the two communication devices must be in direct line of sight to work. Currently, this technology is mostly used in the manufacture of remote-control devices. Bluetooth and Wi-Fi connections have mostly taken over for this technology in terms of big data transfer between computing devices.
- However, because of the longer operating distance required by these technologies, the receiver devices need their own power source. Consequently, the receiving device cannot be powered by the radiofrequency (RF) field, as is the case with Near Field Communication (NFC), according to the NFC forum.
- Another effect of the increased working distance is the need for the user to setup their device and link them together to communicate with the device.

## **2 . RECOMBINANT VARIANTS OF SARS-COV-2**

*Recently, World Health Organization (WHO) announced the detection of an emerging variety of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, known as the XE recombinant.*

#### **VARIANTS OF COVID-19**

- RNA viruses such as SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID- 19, develop by accumulating genetic mistakes in their genomes.

- When a virus infects a human and replicates itself inside the host's cells, sometimes some errors during replication process result in formation of new strains.
- These flaws (also known as mutations) are produced as a by-product of SARS-CoV-2 replication inside the cell and may be passed on to subsequent generations as the virus continues to infect individuals.
- When a certain combination of mistakes or mutations in a virus infects many individuals, this results in the formation of a cluster of infections that descend from a common parental viral genome, which is referred to as a lineage or a variation of the virus.
- When it comes to tracing the development of SARSCoV-2, epidemiologists pay close attention to these variations or lineages of virus.

#### **NAMING OF VARIANTS**

- Implement the dynamic nomenclature of SARS-CoV-2 lineages, known as the Pango nomenclature, the Pangolin programming language was created.
- PANGO network which is an open worldwide partnership of researchers from all over the globe works together to name distinct lineages of SARS-CoV- 2.

#### **RECOMBINANT VARIANT**

- Aside from mistakes in the viral genome, recombination is another way by which a virus may expand its genetic variety and hence its pathogenicity.
- It is possible for a virus to recombine when two separate lineages of the virus co-infect the same cell in the host and swap portions of their respective genomes, which happens in exceedingly uncommon instances.
- This results in the generation of a descendant variety that has mutations that happened in both virus's initial lineages.
- Recombination of lineages occurs in a range of different viruses, including those that cause influenza and various coronaviruses, among others.
- Such recombination occurrences are most common in scenarios when two or more lineages of SARS-CoV-2 may be co-circulating in each location at the same time over a given time.
- Having these two SARS-CoV-2 lineages near one another creates a possibility for recombination to occur between the two lineages.

#### **HOW MANY RECOMBINANT VIRUSES HAVE BEEN DETECTED?**

- While recombination events have not been detected

often in the SARS-CoV-2 virus throughout the pandemic, many recombinant lineages have been identified during the outbreak.

- Annotation of recombinant lineages by PANGO is indicated by a 'X' followed by an alphabet indicating the order in which they were discovered.
- Lineages such as XA, which was discovered in the United Kingdom and is a recombinant of B.1.177 and B.1.177, lineage XB discovered in the United States, and lineage XC discovered in Japan, which is a recombinant of B.1.1.7 (Alpha) and the AY.29 sub lineage of Delta, are examples of previously discovered and designated lineages.
- There are three novel recombinant lineages of SARS-CoV-2 that have been recently identified and are being tracked by the PANGO network. These are the XD, XE, and XF lineages.
- Even though XF is present in just a small fraction of the genomes in the United Kingdom, preliminary data from the nation indicate that the virus is transmitted across communities.

#### **EFFECT OF RECOMBINANT VARIANTS**

- Even though recombination has been discovered in SARS-CoV-2, it has not yet had a major influence on public health in a novel manner.
- When compared to the presently prevalent Omicron form, there is minimal evidence to imply that recombinant lineages have a more variable clinical result than the original.
- Determine the influence of these lineages on the epidemiology of COVID-19, further data will be required at this time, it is certain now.

#### **METHODS FOR IDENTIFICATION OF RECOMBINANTS**

- SARS-CoV-2 recombinant lineages are difficult to identify and track down, making this a difficult endeavour.
- Accomplish this, it would be necessary to have access to specialised tools and primary (or raw) data for genome sequences. This is necessary because similar variant combinations could arise from unintentional sequencing or analysis errors as well as contamination of sequencing experiments.
- Once the PANGO network has determined that samples in the cluster are descended from two distinct lineages of SARS-CoV-2, it may assign a lineage name to the group of recombinant genomes that formed the cluster.
- Additionally, there should be at least 5 genomes in

the public domain that are members of the cluster, showing that the lineage is still being transmitted.

- Furthermore, while evaluating the sequencing data of these samples, it should be clear that there is no evidence of contamination and that the samples satisfy the criteria of a recombinant gene.

#### **WAY AHEAD**

- It is unknown how and why the viruses recombine since recombination are infrequent events.
- Follow the recombination of SARS-CoV-2 lineages, which may result in the formation of a viral lineage that is more effective at infecting humans and spreading from host to host, it is necessary to do genetic analysis on the virus.
- The monitoring of circulating SARS-CoV-2 genomes for indications of recombination would aid in the development of a better understanding of the virus's continuous evolution, according to the researchers.
- It will also offer information if a more "disappointing" strain of the virus is discovered.

### **3 . MICROBOTS FOR DRUG DELIVERY**

*An Indian researcher has discovered that it is feasible to use light as a fuel to drive microbots in real-world situations with intelligent medication delivery that is selectively sensitive to cancer cells, according to the journal Science.*

#### **MICROSWIMMERS**

- These microbots, which are made of the twodimensional substance poly (heptazine-imide) carbon nitride (also known as PHI carbon nitride), are nothing like the miniaturised people they are based on.
- These nanoparticles vary in size from 1 to 10 micrometres (a micrometre is one-millionth of a metre), and when stimulated by light, they can drive themselves forward.
- In contrast to carbon nitride, which has strong photocatalytic characteristics, the two-dimensional PHI has a sponge-like structure that is replete of holes and voids and possesses charge storage properties.
- The researchers discovered that the ions in the saline solution were able to flow through the pores of PHI carbon nitride without being trapped. Because of this, there was little to no resistance from the sodium ions.

#### **HOW DO THEY SWIM ACROSS THE BLOOD?**

- PHI carbon nitride microparticles displays photocatalytic activity. The incident light is transformed into electrons and holes, just as it would be in a solar cell.
- These charges operate as catalysts for processes in the liquid around them. The charges interact with the fluid in which they are suspended.
- The microbots (micro-swimmers) swim because of this reaction, which is aided by electric field generated by the particle.
- Whenever there is light, electrons and holes are formed on surface of swimmers' bodies, which react with one another to form ions and an electric field surrounding the body of the swimmer.
- These ions migrate around the particle, causing fluid to flow around the particle in the process. As a result, the micro-swimmers are propelled by the fluid flow.

#### **ION MOVEMENT**

- The ions migrate from the light surface of the microswimmer to the back end of the device.
- The diffusion of the swimming medium in one direction causes the micro-swimmer to move in the opposite direction of the medium diffusion.
- This is analogous to a boat propelling itself in the opposite direction of the oar strokes.
- The particles are spherical in shape, and the incoming light lights one-half of the sphere while leaving the other half completely black.
- Since photocatalysis is light-driven, it can only occur on the brighter hemisphere.
- Micro-swimmers march in the direction of the light source as the ions flow from the bright side to the dark side of the ion channel.

#### **4. *GSLV-F10***

*Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV), which has had upgrades made to the Cryogenic Upper Stage of its cryogenic upper stage (CUS), is slated to be completed in the second part of this year.*

##### **ABOUT GSLV**

- ISRO's GSLV is an expendable space launch vehicle that is planned, produced, and operated to launch satellites and other space objects into Geosynchronous

Transfer Orbits.

- The GSLV is 49.13 metres tall, making it the tallest vehicle in the ISRO fleet.
- It is a three-stage vehicle with a lift-off mass of 420 tonnes and a maximum speed of Mach 1.
- ISRO launched the first GSLV in 2001 and has launched thirteen more since then.

##### **STAGES IN GSLV**

- Among the components of the first stage are the S139 solid booster, which uses 138 tonnes of propellant, and four liquid strap-on motors, which use forty tonnes of propellant each.
- The second stage consists of a liquid engine that can carry up to forty tonnes of liquid propellant in its tank.
- The third stage is the Cryogenic Upper Stage (CUS), which was constructed in-house and can carry up to fifteen tonnes of cryogenic propellants.

##### **Variants in GSLV**

- Russian Cryogenic Stage (CS) versions of the GSLV are labelled as the GSLV Mk I, whereas indigenous Cryogenic Upper Stage (CUS) versions are designated as the GSLV Mk II. The GSLV Mk I is the first generation of the GSLV family of rockets.
- Each one of the GSLV launches has taken place from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

##### **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PSLV AND GSLV**

- The Geostationary Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) has the potential of launching a bigger payload into orbit than the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).
- The PSLV can launch satellites into orbit with a total weight of up to 2000 kg and reaching altitudes of 600- 900 km.
- The GSLV has a carrying capacity of up to 5,000 kg and a range of up to 36,000 km.
- In contrast to the PSLV, which is primarily intended for the delivery of earth observation or remote sensing satellites, the GSLV is intended for the launch of communication satellites.
- GSLV is responsible for delivering satellites into higher elliptical orbits, such as Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) and Geosynchronous Earth Orbit (GEO) (GEO)

#### **5. *VACCINES ARE ADMINISTERED INTO THE UPPER ARM***

*Everyone who has gotten a Covid-19 vaccination in the previous 16 months will recall receiving a fast prick in the upper arm because of the procedure.*

#### **REASONS BEHIND VACCINE ADMINISTRATION INTO UPPER ARM**

- Most vaccinations are effective when delivered intramuscularly into deltoid muscle, in the upper arm.
- Deltoid the muscles have a well-developed blood supply system.
- The antigen is released by the muscle whenever a vaccination containing the antigen is put into it, and it is disseminated via the muscular vasculature, which is the arrangement of blood vessels in the muscle.
- An immune cell known as dendritic cells then picks up the antigen and transmits it to other cells in the immune system, which is how the antigen is detected in the first place.
- Antigen is transported to lymph node by dendritic cells, which are found in the lymphatic fluid.
- Immunogenicity — capacity of any cell or tissue to elicit an immune response — of certain vaccinations, such as the rabies vaccine, is increased when vaccine is delivered intravenously rather than orally.
- These vaccines have a decreased immunogenicity when injected in subcutaneous fat tissues situated at the thigh or hips, and there is a greater likelihood of vaccination failure when administered in these tissues.

#### **ROLE OF T CELLS**

- T cells (T lymphocytes) are leukocytes (white blood cell) and vital component of immune system.
- T cells are one of two basic kinds of lymphocytes (B cells are the other type), and they are responsible for determining the specificity of immune response to antigens (foreign substances). T cells are found in the bloodstream and lymph nodes.
- It has become clear that the lymph nodes include T cells and B cells, which serve as the body's principal protector cells.
- Once this antigen has been identified and distributed to T cells and B cells, we may begin to create an immune response against a specific virus.
- It might be any of the new viruses or any of the earlier viruses, for which we have been conducting vaccine campaigns in recent years.

#### **OTHER OPTIONS FOR VACCINATION**

- Contrarily, when vaccination is injected into subcutaneous adipose tissue [between the skin and muscle], which has a weak blood supply, absorption of the antigen vaccine is low and as a result, the

immunological response may be compromised, leading to failure of the immune system.

- Similarly, additives that may be harmful may create a local response in the presence of other substances.
- Similarly, when vaccination is delivered intradermally, same effect might happen (just below outermost skin layer, epidermis).
- As a result, intramuscular route is currently the preferred option for most vaccinations.
- The muscles also contain less pain receptors than epidermis or subcutaneous tissue, which means that an intramuscular injection does not hurt as much as a subcutaneous or an intradermal injection.

#### **VACCINES ARE NOT ADMINISTERED IN VEINS**

- This is done to guarantee 'depot effect,' or delayed release of drug over time, which allows for greater efficacy over a longer period.
- When administered intravenously, vaccine is absorbed into blood in a brief period. It takes some time for the vaccination to be absorbed via the intramuscular route.
- Wherever a vaccination program is implemented, it is implemented for benefit of public.
- The oral route would be most convenient method of delivering the vaccination (like the polio vaccine).
- The intramuscular method is preferred over the intravenous route for various vaccinations that must be provided intravenously or intramuscularly (allowing for more field-based administration). The intramuscular approach is preferred over the intravenous route from a public health standpoint.

#### **VACCINES ADMINISTERED THROUGH OTHER ROUTES**

- Scarification of the skin was used to administer one of the first vaccinations, which was for smallpox.
- Doctors eventually realised that there are better methods to vaccinate recipients.
- The intradermal route, subcutaneous route, intramuscular route, oral route, and nasal route were among options.
- There are just two exceptions to this rule, and both are medications that are still taken via the intradermal method. They are BCG (Bacillus Calmette-Guérin) and TB vaccinations, since both vaccines have been shown to be effective in clinical trials when delivered intradermally.

## **6. WHO & TRADITIONAL MEDICINE**

*In Jamnagar, Gujarat, Prime Minister Modi was joined by World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General*



*Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus for the ceremonial ground-breaking of the first-of-its-kind WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM).*

#### **ABOUT TRADITIONAL MEDICINE**

- Conventional medicine is defined by WHO as a "collective sum of Indigenous and other cultures' knowledge, skills and practises that have been utilised throughout time to preserve health and to prevent, diagnose and treat physical and mental disease."
- Its scope includes both traditional treatments such as acupuncture, ayurvedic medicine, and herbal mixes, as well as contemporary drugs like as chemotherapy and radiation therapy.
- According to WHO, traditional medicine is used by 80% of world's population.
- When it comes to Indian tradition, it is frequently characterised as comprising practises and treatments that have traditionally been a part of it, such as Yoga, Ayurveda, and Siddha. It also includes practises and therapies that have been a part of Indian tradition through time, such as homoeopathy.
- There is a lot of Ayurveda and Yoga practise all around the nation.
- Tamil Nadu and Kerala are the states where the **Siddha system** is most widely practised.
- Most people in Leh-Ladakh and Himalayan areas like as Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Darjeeling, Lahaul & Spiti practise the **Sowa-Rigpa System**, which originated in Tibet.
- In also has Islamic heritage of **Unani medicinal system**.

#### **GLOBAL CENTRE FOR TRADITIONAL MEDICINE (GCTM)**

- It will seek to maximise the contribution of traditional medicine to global health by focusing on evidence based research, innovation, and data analysis.
- Its primary priority will be the development of norms, standards, and recommendations.
- It will work to establish regulations and standards for traditional medicine goods, as well as to assist nations in developing a comprehensive, safe, and high-quality health-care infrastructure.
- It will assist efforts to execute the World Health Organization's Traditional Medicine Strategy (2014-23).
- It will function as the focal point for policy development, with a particular emphasis on developing a "convincing evidence foundation" for

policies and "assisting nations in integrating it as appropriate into their health systems."

#### **RATIONALE BEHIND WHO'S EMPHASIS FOR TRADITIONAL MEDICINE**

- WHO members have said that traditional medicine is widely used in their countries.
- They have requested its assistance in developing a body of trustworthy evidence and data on traditional medicine practises and products. European Union has agreed to provide this assistance.
- WHO has discovered that national health systems and plans do not yet completely integrate traditional medicine personnel, recognised courses, and healthcare facilities.
- It has emphasised the need of preserving biodiversity and long-term sustainability, given that around 40% of already licenced pharmaceutical products are derived from natural ingredients.
- It has been used for modernisation of methods through which traditional medicine is being explored. Evidence and trends in conventional medicine are being mapped using artificial intelligence (AI) technology.

## **7. INS VAGSHEER**

*The sixth and final of the French Scorpene-class submarines, INS Vagsheer, was launched into water at the Mazagon Docks in Mumbai.*

#### **INS VAGSHEER**

- It was launched and named by Veena Ajay Kumar (the wife of the Union Defence Secretary), in line with the naval custom of a woman launching and naming a ship or shipyards.
- The six submarines were being built by Mazagon Docks under technology transfer from Naval Group as part of a \$3.75 billion deal signed in 2005. INS Kalvari was commissioned in 2017, INS Khanderi in 2019, INS Vagir in 2020, the INS Karanj & INS Vela in 2021, all as part of Project-75.
- P 75 is one of two submarine lines, the other being the P75I, that were developed as part of a plan adopted in 1999 for indigenous submarine building using technology obtained from foreign companies.

#### **WHY 'VAGSHEER'**

- Vagsheer is called after sandfish, which is a deep-sea predator living in the Indian Ocean's deep waters.



- The first submarine, the Russian-built Vagsheer, was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1974, and was decommissioned in 1997, after serving for over three decades.
- The official name of the new Vagsheer will be announced at the time of its commissioning.

#### **SPECIFICATIONS**

- Vagsheer has a capacity of eight officers and up to thirty-five men.
- It is 67.5 metres in length and 12.3 metres in height, with a beam that measures 6.2 metres in width. When underwater, Vagsheer can attain speeds of up to twenty knots, and when it resurfaces, it can reach speeds of up to 11 knots.
- It is powered by four MTU 12V 396 SE84 diesel engines, 360 battery cells, and a Permanently Magnetised Propulsion Motor that is completely quiet while in operation.
- The hull, fin, and hydroplanes are all engineered to have the least amount of underwater resistance possible, and all the equipment within the pressure hull is installed on shock-absorbing cradles to provide greater stealth and manoeuvrability.

#### **FEATURES**

- Vagsheer is a diesel-powered assault submarine that is meant to engage in sea denial as well as access denial warfare against its adversaries.
- It is outfitted with a C303 anti-torpedo countermeasure system for further protection.
- It has the capability of transporting up to eighteen torpedoes or Exocet anti-ship missiles, or thirty mines in lieu of torpedoes, depending on the configuration.
- Advanced acoustic absorption methods, low radiated noise levels, and a hydrodynamically optimised form are some of the attributes that make it an excellent stealth weapon.
- Precision directed weaponry, either below or on the surface, may be used to launch a debilitating strike, causing widespread devastation.

#### **VARIOUS CLASSES OF SUBMARINES IN INDIA**

- Since 2012, the Chakra Class has been on a 10-year lease with Russia.
- Submarines of the Arihant class, which are nuclearpowered ballistic missile submarines
- Diesel-electric attack submarines of the Shishumar Class, designed by the Indian Navy as a version of the Type 209 submarines produced by the German Navy.
- Kalvari DCNS Sindhuoghosh is a class of diesel-electric assault submarines developed by the French manufacturer DCNS. Kilo-class diesel-electric

submarines constructed with the assistance of the Russian Federation

- Scorpene-class submarines are French submarines that can conduct a wide range of duties, including anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, intelligence collection, mine laying and area monitoring, among others.

### **8. SPACE BRICKS FROM MARTIAN SOIL**

*With the aid of bacteria and urea, researchers from Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have created a method for making bricks from Martian soil.*

#### **ABOUT SPACE BRICKS**

- ISRO and IISc have teamed together to create a new scalable method for producing space bricks using Martian Simulant Soil (MSS).
- The slurry was originally generated by combining Martian soil with guar gum, *Sporosarcina pasteurii* bacteria, urea, and nickel chloride (NiCl<sub>2</sub>).
- This slurry may be put into any form mould, and bacteria will convert the urea into calcium carbonate crystals over the course of a few days.
- These crystals, in combination with biopolymers generated by bacteria, serve as a cement that holds soil particles together.
- This process makes the bricks less porous, which was a concern with previous Martian brick-making technologies.
- The bacteria enter deep into the pore spaces, binding the particles together with their own proteins, reducing porosity and resulting in stronger bricks.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE**

- Previously, researchers have used a similar process to make bricks from lunar dirt.
- These 'space bricks' may be used to form building-like structures on Mars, facilitating human settlement.

### **9. JUPITER'S MOON EUROPA**

*According to Stanford University researchers, Europa, one of Jupiter's moons, may contain an abundance of water pockets under structures known as double ridges, making it a potential contender for life in the solar system.*

### **ABOUT EUROPA**

- Europa is smaller than Earth's moon and has quarter of the Earth's diameter.
- Despite its scant oxygen atmosphere, Europa is regarded as one of the most promising locations in the solar system for finding circumstances suitable for life beyond Earth.
- Astronomers believe that underneath Europa's frozen surface, there is twice as much water as on Earth.
- Europa's ice shell 15-25 km thick and floating over an ocean that is 60-150 km deep.
- In 2024, NASA plans to launch the **Europa Clipper mission**. The module will circle Jupiter and travel close to Europa many times to collect data on the moon's atmosphere, surface and interior.

### **NEW FINDINGS**

- Europa, whose surface is primarily solid water ice, is known to possess water underneath it.
- The twin ridges – the structures that are most frequent on Europa's surface and are identical to those observed on Earth's Greenland ice sheet. These ridges have shallow water pockets.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RECENT FINDINGS**

- The shallow water pockets under the double ridge boost the moon's potential habitability.
- The ice layer, which might be kilometers thick, has proven challenging to sample for scientists.
- According to fresh data, the ice shell is thought to be more of a dynamic system than a barrier.
- This indicates that the ice shell does not act like a solid block of ice but undergoes geological and hydrological processes.
- This points to active volcanism and, by extension, the potential of life.

## **10. BLUE STRAGGLER STARS**

*The eccentricities of blue straggler stars have been investigated by researchers from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics in Bengaluru, India.*

### **ABOUT BLUE STRAGGLER STARS**

- When a main-sequence star in an open or globular cluster is brighter and bluer than other stars at the main sequence turnoff point for the cluster, the star is referred to as a "blue straggler."
- Allan Sandage found the first blue stragglers in 1953 while doing photometry on the stars in the globular cluster M3. He was working on the globular cluster M3 at the time of his discovery.

### **WHAT DID THE INDIAN RESEARCHERS STUDY?**

- Eccentricity is the divergence of a planet's or star's orbit from circularity, the higher the eccentricity, the greater the elliptical nature of the orbit. Eccentricity is measured in degrees per revolution.
- Additionally, UVIT instrument (Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope) of ASTROSAT, India's first scientific observatory in orbit, was used to gather this information.

### **STELLAR AGEING OF STARS**

- It is vital to understand how stars are categorised to grasp what blue stragglers are.
- Because our Sun is a main sequence star, it is predicted that after it has turned all its hydrogen into helium, its core will get denser and its outer layers will expand. This is because our Sun has a mass and age that are consistent with this expectation.
- As a result, it will swell to the size of a red giant. After this phase, with its fuel depleted, the star will shrink, eventually becoming a smaller, cooling star known as a white dwarf star towards conclusion of its life span.

### **SEQUENCING OF STARS**

- We may plot a graph of a star's colour, which indicates its surface temperature, against its magnitude, which is connected to total energy it emits, to examine star's behaviour.
- If we do this for all the stars in a globular cluster, we will see that a huge percentage of them fall into a band known as the main sequence.
- Our Sun is also a main sequence star, and all main sequence stars are expected to follow a path of development like that of our Sun.
- A few celebrities, just at the point in their life when they should be increasing in size and cooling off, do the exact opposite.
- They get brighter, hotter, and bluer in colour, standing out on the colour-magnitude diagram from the cooler red stars in their proximity.
- They are termed stragglers because they lag their fellows in evolution, and blue stragglers because of their bright blue colour.

### **REASONS FOR BLUE STRAGGLERS BEHAVIOUR**

- A blue straggler is larger and more active than predicted.
- One, they do not belong to cluster's star family and hence are not anticipated to exhibit group traits.
- Second, the straggler absorbs stuff from the gigantic partner and becomes larger, hotter, and bluer, while the red giant shrinks to a normal or smaller white dwarf.
- Third theory is that straggler takes stuff from a companion star, but that this process is aided by a third star.

## 11. SMALL SATELLITE LAUNCH VEHICLE (SSLV)

*Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) hopes to complete all three of its **Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)** development missions by 2022.*

### ABOUT SSLV

- SSLV is an ISRO-developed small-lift launch vehicle having a payload capability of 600 kg to Low Earth Orbit (500 km) or 300 kg to Sun-synchronous Orbit (500 km)
- It would aid in the launch of tiny satellites and allow for repeated orbital drop-offs.
- A specialised launch pad dubbed the Small Satellite Launch Complex (SSLC) will be built at Sriharikota in the future.
- SSLV launches will be managed after a new spaceport in Kulasekharapatnam in Tamil Nadu is completed.
- After entering the operational phase, a consortium of Indian companies, including New Space India Limited, would produce and launch the rocket (NSIL).

### VEHICLE DETAILS

- **Dimensions:** Height of thirty-four metres, diameter of 2 m and 120 tonne mass.
- **Propulsion:** The vehicle will launch in four stages. The first three stages will employ solid propellant based on hydroxyl-terminated polybutadiene (HTPB), with a Velocity-Trimming Module as the fourth stage (VTM).

### SSLV VS. PSLV

- The SSLV was created with the goal of commercially launching small satellites at a lower cost and with a greater launch rate than the Polar SLV (PSLV).
- The expected high launch rate is based on mostly autonomous launch operations and simplified logistics in general.
- A PSLV launch, for example, requires six hundred personnel, but the SSLV launch would be controlled by a tiny team of six individuals.
- Instead of months, the SSLV's launch readiness is predicted to be less than a week.
- SSLV can launch satellites weighing up to five hundred kilogrammes into low earth orbit, whereas PSLV can launch spacecraft weighing up to 1000 kg.
- The whole project would be completed in a brief period, and the cost to SSLV will be Rs 30 crore.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF SSLV

- SSLV is ideal for simultaneously launching several microsatellites and allowing for multiple orbital dropoffs.
- SSLV's development and production are intended to foster increased collaboration between the space industry and private Indian enterprises, which is a fundamental goal of the space ministry.

## 12. NUCLEAR MISSILE SARMAT

*The Russian military has successfully tested its new **Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)** in the face of intense opposition from Ukraine in the continuing conflict and heavy sanctions placed by the West on the country.*

### ABOUT SARMAT

- RS-28 Sarmat (NATO designation Satan-II) is capable of transporting ten or more warheads and decoys.
- Having a range of 11,000 to 18,000 kilometres, it is capable of shooting across either North or South Poles of the Earth.
- It will provide a substantial threat to the ground- and satellite-based radar monitoring systems of western nations, primarily USA.
- There are ten warheads in all, each of which is a Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle with a blast output of 0.75 MT.
- It will be the first Russian missile capable of transporting smaller hypersonic boost-glide vehicles. These are very manoeuvrable and difficult to intercept.
- It is a liquid-fueled missile, as opposed to the solid-fueled systems used by US intercontinental ballistic missiles.

### SARMAT TRIBES

- Nomadic tribes who roamed the steppes of present-day Southern Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan during the early mediaeval era gave its name to the Sarmat.
- The equestrian and fighting skills of the Sarmatians were very advanced.
- In addition, the administrative ability and political knowledge of the Sarmatians contributed to their attaining extensive dominance by the fifth century BC.

- They controlled the territory extending between Urals and Don River.
- They crossed the Don River in the fourth century

and defeated the Scythians, eventually displacing them as rulers of all southern Russia by the second century A.D

## CULTURE

### 1. RAJA RAVI VARMA (1848-1906)

One of Raja Ravi Varma's significant paintings, *Draupadi Vastraharan*, will be going for auction for the first time. Raja Ravi Varma is also called as Father of Modern Indian Art.

#### ABOUT RAJA RAVI VARMA

- He was born at Kilimanoor in Kerala in 1848.
- He learnt watercolour painting from the royal painter Ramaswamy Naidu, and later trained in oil painting from Dutch artist Theodore Jensen
- He specialised in Oil and water paintings. He focused on realised expression and skin tone.
- Varma combined European realism with Indian sensibilities.
- He was inspired from Indian literature, mythology and dance drama.
- He got three gold medals at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.
- He opened a Lithographic Press in Bombay in 1894 to take his art to masses. His lithographs increased the involvement of common people with fine arts and defined artistic tastes among common people.
- Important work: *Shakuntala*; *Nair Lady Adorning Her Hair*; *There Comes Papa*; *Galaxy of Musicians*; *Damayanti talking with a swan* and *Maharaj Shivaji*
- 2014 Indian Hindi-language film, *Rang Rasiya* (English title: *Colours of Passion*) explores Varma's inspiration behind his paintings.

### 2. LINGARAJA TEMPLE

Central government has told the Odisha government that its ordinance to bring the 11th-century Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar and its associated temples under a special law is outside the legislative competence of the state legislature.

#### ABOUT LINGARAJA TEMPLE

- It is a Shaivite temple of Kalinga style.
- It is the oldest temple of Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- Built by King Jajati Keshari in 10th Century and completed by King Lalatendu Keshari in 11th Century.
- Bhubaneswar is called the Ekamra Kshetra as the deity of Lingaraja was originally under a mango tree (Ekamra) as noted in *Ekamra Purana*, a 13th century Sanskrit treatise.
- Lingaraja temple is maintained by the Temple Trust Board and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- The harmony between the two sects of Hinduism, Shaivism, and Vaishnavism, is seen in this temple where the deity is worshipped as Harihara, a combined form of Vishnu and Shiva.
- One of the finest examples of purely Hindu Temple

in India" by noted critic and historian James Fergusson (1808-1886).

- Temple marks the culmination of the temple architecture in Bhubaneswar which was the cradle of the Kalinga School of Temple Architecture. The sprawling temple complex has one hundred and fifty subsidiary shrines.
- Temple can broadly be divided into four main halls. Garba Griha (Sanctum Sanctorum), Yajana Mandapa (the hall for prayers), Natya Mandapa (dance and music hall) and Bhoga Mandapa (where devotees can have the Prasad (offering) of the Lord).
- The other attraction of the temple is the Bindusagar Lake, located in the north side of the temple
- Festivals associated are Shivaratri and Ashokastami.

- An inscription in the Amrtesvara Temple at Holal in Karnataka refers to four temple styles, Nagara, Kalinga, Dravida and Vesara. This inscription is dated to 1231 CE and belongs to the reign of the Seuna king Singhana.

- Kalinga style is identified as a sub-class under the Nagara category.

- As the name suggests, this temple style was mostly confined within the then Kalinga region, present Odisha.

- N K Bose's "Canons of Orissan Architecture" was a milestone in understanding the Kalinga temple architecture.

- Silpaprakasha (written by Ramachandra Kaulachara in 10th-11th century CE) contains guidelines on Kalinga temple construction.

- Each temple has two sections, one describing the construction and decoration of **jagamohana (praying hall) and garbha-grha (sanctuary)**.

- Other structures included **nata-mandira (dance hall) and bhoga-mandira (kitchen)**.

#### **Structural forms:**

- Kalinga temple style is broadly classified into three main categories, namely **Rekha, Pidha and Khakhara**.

- **Rekha-deul** (temple) is distinguished with its square plan topped with a curvilinear tower.

- **Pidha-deul**, also referred as Bhadra deul, also has a square plan topped with a pyramidal tower composed of horizontal tiers arranged in receding manner.

- **Khakhara deul** is surmounted with a barrel-shaped (vault-shape) tower over a rectangular plan. Usually, these temples are dedicated to a form of Devi. (Note: Most of the Kalinga temples fall under the Rekha category.)

- **Pitha** is the platform over which the entire structure

of the temple stands. It was not a mandatory part of a temple and many temples, early as well as late, do not have pitha in their plan.

- **Bada** is the vertical wall over which tower is supported.

- **Gandi** is the lower part of the tower.

- **Mastaka** is the upper part of the tower.

- **Pabhaga** is consisted of a set of mouldings. Early period temples used to have three mouldings at pabhaga which later increased to four and five in the later period temples.

- **Jangha** is the main and the largest portion of the bada. It is portion where most of the images of subsidiary deities are placed.

- **Baranda** is composed of a set of mouldings, varying from seven to ten, connecting the bada to the gandi. In later period temples, the jangha portion got divided into two storeys, **tala-jangha and upara-jangha, separated by a madhya-bandhana**.

### **3. DEOGHAR BADYANATH JYOTIRLINGA**

*Recently, a ropeway accident took place at Deoghar Jotirlinga at in Jharkhand.*

#### **ABOUT DEOGHAR JYOTIRLINGA**

- It is one of the twelve Jyotirlings. Jyotirlingas are holiest sites of Shaivism.

- They are often connected by mythological stories with Lord Shiva.

- Deoghar Jyotirlinga is a place known for healing of Ravana by Lord Shiva. Hence, Lord Shiva was called Vaidya/Baidya.

- This place is also known as one of the Shaktipeeth.

- It was praised by Adi Shankara.

- Annual pilgrimage known as **Kanwar yatra** is organised.

- Mughal emperor Akbar's brother-in-law built a pond at Deoghar known as Mansarovar.

- The main temple has a **pyramidal tower** with three gold vessels set compactly. These were gifted by the Maharaja of Giddhaur, Raja Puran Singh. There are also five knives in a trident shape (Punchsula) as well as a lotus jewel with eight petals called Chandrakanta Mani.

- Along with the main temple of Baba Baidyanath, there are also 21 other temples. Some of the shrines you will find here are for Parvati, Ganesha, Brahma, Kalabhairav, Hanuman, Saraswati, Surya, RamLakshman-Janaki, Ganga, Kali, Annapurna, and Lakshmi-Narayan. The Maa Parvati temple is tied to the Shiva temple with red sacred threads.



#### OTHER ELEVEN JYOTIRLINGAS IN INDIA

1. Somnath - Gujarat
2. Mallikarjuna - Andhra Pradesh
3. Mahakaleshwar - Madhya Pradesh
4. Omkareshwar - Madhya Pradesh
5. Kedarnath - Himalayas
6. Bhimashankar - Maharashtra
7. Vishveshwar/Vishwanath - Uttar Pradesh
8. Triambakeshwar - Maharashtra
9. Nageshwar - Gujarat
10. Rameshwaram - Tamil Nadu
11. Ghrihsheshwar - Maharashtra

#### 4. NEW YEAR FESTIVALS OF INDIA

13-14 April is celebrated as new year in many cultures across India.

##### SOLAR NEW YEAR AND FESTIVALS

Solar	Mesha Sankranti/Vaisakhi (Hindu Solar New Year)	Punjab, Haryana, Jammu, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand (Garhwal and Kumaon), Nepal (Sikkim, Darjeeling)
Solar	Puthandu	Tamil Nadu
Solar	Vishu (traditional)	Kerala
Solar	1st Chingam (Kollam era calendar)	Kerala
Solar	Bisu Parba	Tulu Nadu
Solar	Buisu	Tripura
Solar	Bwisagu	Bodoland, Assam
Solar	Bohag Bihu	Assam
Solar	Pana Sankranti	Odisha
Solar	Pahela Baishakh	West Bengal and the wider Bengal region
Solar	Jur Sital	Mithila
Solar	Sangken	Arunachal Pradesh (Khamti, Singpho, Khamyang, Tangsa), Assam (Tai Phake, Tai Aiton, Turung)
Solar	Pateti	Parsis
Solar	Nowru	Zoroastrians

##### LUNAR NEW YEAR AND FESTIVALS

Lunar	Ugadi	Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka
Lunar	Gudhi Padwa	Maharashtra, Goa
Lunar	Navreh	Kashmir
Lunar	Ashadhi Bij	Kutah
Lunar	Nutan Varsh	Gujarat
Lunar	Cheti Chand	Sindhi
Lunar	Chaitra Navaratri (Hindu Lunar New Year)	Uttar Pradesh (Awadh, Braj, Bagelkhand, Bhojpur), Madhya Pradesh (Bundelkhand, Malwa, Mahakoshal, Gird), Bihar (Bhojpur, Magadh), Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand)
Lunar	Sajibu Cheiraoba	Manipur
Lunar	Losong/Namsoong	Sikkim (Bhutia, Lepcha)
Lunar	Galdan Namchot	Ladakh
Lunar	Losara	Arunachal Pradesh (Monpa)
Lunar	Gwalpo Lhosar	Sikkim (Sherpa)
Lunar	Tamu Lhosar	Sikkim (Gurung)
Lunar	Sonam Lhosar	Sikkim (Tamang)

#### BIHU, ASSAM

##### Types:

1. **Rongali or Bohag Bihu (April):** as a new year also for harvesting and sowing.
  2. **Kongali or Kati Bihu (October):** lighting lamp and praying for protection of crop.
  3. **Bhogali or Magh Bihu (January):** crop harvest festival where bonfire (*Meji*) is lit. Contemporary to Makarsankranti.
- **Festive food - pitha** (rice cake) and *larus* (traditional food made of rice, coconut)
  - **Attire:** Muga silk (golden silk)
  - **Dance:** Bihu *dhol* (traditional drum) is beaten with Bihu folk dance.

##### Puthandu, Tamil Nadu's New Year

Another name: Varsha Pirappu.

Who: Tamil community in India and Sri Lanka  
Significance: celebrating spring season.  
Rituals:  
• decorate their houses with 'Kolam' to welcome joy and prosperity in their homes.  
• Turmeric bath is common among Tamil women.  
**Vaisakhi**  
Celebrated on 13 or 14 April every year in

Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh.  
**Objective:**  
• Spring harvest festival for the Sikhs.  
• Commemorates the formation of Khalsa Panth by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699.  
**Rituals:** Holy dip in sarovars, canals and rivers before joining the Mela celebrations.  
**Dance:** Bhangra (Males) and Gidha (females)

## Miscellaneous

### 1. STATE OF INEQUALITY IN INDIA 2021 REPORT

A report, titled "The State of Inequality in India" has been released by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (**EAC-PM**).

#### **KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT**

##### **• Move Beyond Wealth Concentration As A Metric Of Inequality**

o The report presents the case for moving beyond wealth concentration as a metric of inequality.  
o Instead, emphasis should be given to **dynamic variables** like income distribution that determine capital flow and measure the purchasing power of the households.

##### **• Earnings Have Risen Over The Years, Benefits Remain Concentrated**

The report concedes that while earnings have risen over the years, the benefits of that growth have largely remained concentrated. This has marginalised the poor further.

##### **• Progress Has Been Made In Various Indicators**

The report noted that the progress has been made in various indicators such as labour participation (preCovid), health infrastructure, enrolment ratio of

students, and child mortality.

##### **• Wealth Concentration Has Worsened**

o The report also noted that wealth concentration has worsened.  
o 44.4% wealth concentration in the **highest quintile** in urban areas is contrasted with a meagre 7.1% concentration that in rural India.  
o The share of the top 1% accounts for 6-7% of the total incomes earned, while the top 10% accounts for one-third of all incomes earned.

##### **• Unemployment Rate & Different Employment Categories**

o In 2019-20, among different employment categories, the highest percentage was of self-employed workers (45.78%), followed by regular salaried workers (33.5%) and casual workers (20.71%).  
o The share of self-employed workers also happens to be the highest in the lowest income categories.  
o The country's unemployment rate is 4.8% (2019-20), and the worker population ratio is 46.8%.  
o The gender disparity in the labour market continues to be stark over the three years in 2019-20. The female LFPR was at 30%, in contrast the

male LFPR is recorded at 76.8%.

• **Nutrition Profile Among Children Has Improved Compared To 2015-16 (NFHS 4)**

- o As per the report, stunting in children has gone down from 38.4% and wasting from 21%, and 7.7% are severely wasted.
- o Additionally, 32.1% of children (under five years) were reported to be underweight.
- o There has been a considerable improvement in increasing the infrastructural capacity with a targeted focus on rural areas.

• **Education And Household Conditions Have Improved Enormously**

- o According to the report, education and household conditions have improved enormously due to targeted efforts.
- o It is emphasized that education and cognitive development from the foundational years is a long-term corrective measure for inequality.
- o The Gross Enrolment Ratio has also increased between 2018-19 and 2019-20 at the primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary.
- ✓ In 2019-20, the Gender Parity Index was more than 1 across all levels of education at the all-India level.
- ✓ This index reflects the representation of females in schools in relation to the population of girls in the corresponding age group.
- o In terms of improvement in household conditions, emphasis on providing access to sanitation and safe drinking water has meant leading a dignified life for most households.
- o According to NFHS-5 (2019-21), 97% of households have electricity access, 70% have improved access to sanitation, and 96% have access to safe drinking water.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

• **Demand-Based Guaranteed Employment Scheme For The Urban Unemployed**

- o The report has suggested that the Government should launch a guaranteed employment programme for the urban unemployed.
- o This demand-based guaranteed employment scheme should be launched on the lines of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). This will help in rehabilitation of the surplus-labour.
- o This step was recommended after analysing the

difference between the labour force participation rate in rural and urban areas.

• **Roll Out A Universal Basic Income (UBI) Scheme**

- o It also suggested to roll out a universal basic income (UBI) scheme to reduce income gaps.
- o UBI is a government program in which every adult citizen receives a set amount of money regularly.
- o The goals of a basic income system are to alleviate poverty and **replace** other need-based social programs that potentially require greater bureaucratic involvement.
- o In India, the idea of UBI was endorsed by former chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian in the Economic Survey for FY17 in place of subsidy transfer.
- o IMF, In October 2017, endorsed the idea of India launching a fiscally-neutral UBI scheme by eliminating food and fuel subsidies.
- o The report mentions that this step can reduce income gap and ensure equal distribution of earnings in the labour market.

• **More Expenditure Towards Social Services And The Social Sector**

- o The report said that the Government must allocate more percentage of the expenditure towards social services and the social sector.
- o This will make the most vulnerable population resilient to sudden shocks and stop their descent into poverty.
- **Other Recommendations:**
- o Creating income slabs that provide class information,
- o Creating jobs, especially among the higher levels of education and
- o Increasing the budget for social protection schemes.

**2. SECTION 144 OF CRPC AND HATE SPEECH**

Section 144 of CRPC was imposed to restrict a *religious gathering* in Roorkee to prevent communal tension there. SC has instructed the government of Uttarakhand to ensure that there would be no untoward incidents

or unacceptable statements (hate crimes) during the religious gathering.

#### **ABOUT SECTION 144 OF CRPC**

- It is a colonial era law, which was first brought in CrPC 1882 and retained in CrPC 1973.

- It empowers the DM, SDM or any other executive magistrate empowered by the state government to issue a prohibitory order to prevent and address urgent and emergency cases of possible danger and nuisance.

- The provision empowers magistrate to restrict the unlawful assembly (*gathering of four or more people*), movement and **carrying certain arms**.

✓ During **curfew**, people are instructed to stay indoors for a particular period. The government puts a **complete restriction** on traffic as well.

✓ Markets, schools, colleges and offices remain closed under the curfew and only essential services are allowed to run on prior notice.

- The written order by the magistrate may be directed against an *individual or group* residing in a particular area or to public at large.

- It also empowers the authorities to block internet access in the region.

- In urgent cases, the magistrate may pass order *without giving prior notice* to an individual or the section of population targeted.

- The order passed under Sec 144 of CrPC remains in force for a period of 2 months. However, state government can extend it for a period up to 6 months.

#### **CONCERNS**

- **Article 19(1)(a)** of the constitution guarantees the freedom of speech and expression. Though, provisions in clauses (2) to (6) of Article 19 authorizes the State to restrict the exercise of the freedom guaranteed under the article; yet Sec 144 of CrPC, if used in arbitrary and undemocratic manner by the concerned magistrate, violates the very provision of the constitution.

- The first remedy against the order is a *revision application* that must be filed before the same officer. This is against the principle of natural justice.

- An aggrieved individual can approach the High Court by filing a writ petition if his fundamental rights are at stake. However, fears exist that before the High Court intervenes, the rights could already have been infringed.

- Prohibitory orders are imposed over a large area to suppress the political dissent. This is unwarranted in a democracy.

#### **SC JUDGEMENTS ON SEC 144 OF CRPC**

- **Babulal Parate vs state of Maharashtra, 1961:** The SC upheld Section 144 of CrPC and said that it is not correct to say that the *remedy of a person aggrieved by an order under the section was illusory*.

- **Madhu Limaye vs SDM, 1970:** A seven-judge Bench held that the power under Sec 144 is not an ordinary power flowing from administration but a power used in a *judicial manner* and which can stand *further judicial scrutiny*. The court ruled that section 144 covers 'reasonable restriction' to the fundamental rights laid down in Article 19(2) of the constitution.

- **Ramlila Maidan vs Home Secretary of UOI case, 2012:** The perception of threat to public order should be real and not *imaginary or a mere possibility* for using Sec 144.

Thus, it is settled position of the law that the Sec 144 of CrPC should be imposed sparingly and only when the emergency is sudden and the apprehension of consequences are sufficiently grave. D Y Chandrachud has rightly said "*Dissent is the safety valve of democracy. If dissent is not allowed, then the pressure cooker may burst,*"

#### **ABOUT HATE SPEECH**

- Hate speech covers **many forms of expressions** which advocate, incite, promote or justify hatred, violence and discrimination against a **person or group of persons** based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor.

- It poses grave dangers for the cohesion of a democratic society, the protection of human rights and the rule of law.

- If left unaddressed, it can lead to acts of violence and conflict on a wider scale. In this sense, hate speech is an extreme form of intolerance which contributes to hate crime.

#### **LEGAL PROVISIONS ON HATE SPEECH**

- Hate speech has not been defined in any law in India. However, legal provisions in certain legislations prohibit select forms of speech as an exception to freedom of speech.

##### **• Indian Penal Code (IPC) Provisions**

✓ Under Section 153A of IPC, 'promotion of enmity between **different groups** on grounds of **religion**, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony', is an offence punishable with three years' imprisonment.

✓ **Sections 505(1) and 505(2)** make the publication and circulation of content which may cause ill-will or hatred between **different groups** an offence.

- Representation of the People Act, 1951 **Section 8** disqualifies a person from contesting election if he is convicted for indulging in acts amounting to illegitimate use of freedom of speech and expression.

- Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 **Section 7** penalizes incitement to, and encouragement of untouchability through words, either spoken or written,

or by signs or by visible representations or otherwise.

- Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988 **Section 3(g)** prohibits religious institution or its manager to allow the use of any premises belonging to, or under the control of, the institution for promoting or attempting to promote disharmony, feelings of enmity, hatred, ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.

### IMPORTANT JUDGEMENTS

- In **Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan v. Union of India 2014**, the Supreme Court held that the implementation of existing laws would solve the problem of hate speech to a great extent.

- In **Jafar Imam Naqvi v. Election Commission of India 2014**, the petitioners filed a writ petition challenging the vitriolic speeches made by the candidates in the election and prayed for issue of **writ of mandamus** to the Election Commission for taking appropriate steps against such speeches. However, the Court dismissed the petition on the ground that the petition under **Article 32** of the Constitution regarding speeches delivered during election campaign does not qualify as public interest litigation and that the Court cannot legislate on matters where the legislative intent is visible.

- In **Shreya Singhal v. Union of India 2015**, issues were raised about **Section 66A** of the Information Technology Act, 2000 relating to the fundamental right of free speech and expression guaranteed by **Article 19(1) (a)** of the Constitution, where the Court differentiated between **discussion, advocacy, and incitement** and held that the first two were the essence of Article 19(1).

### SUGGESTIONS

- The Law Commission has proposed that separate offences be added to the IPC to criminalize hate speech quite specifically instead of being subsumed in the existing sections concerning inflammatory acts and speeches.
- Similar proposals to add sections to the IPC to punish acts and statements that promote racial discrimination or amount to hate speech have been made by the **M.P. Bezbaruah Committee (2014)** and the **T.K. Viswanathan Committee (2019)**.
- At present, the Committee for Reforms in Criminal Laws, which is considering more comprehensive changes to criminal law, is examining the issue of having specific provisions to tackle hate speech.

## 3. CRS REPORT 2020

The **UT of Ladakh** has recorded **highest sex ratio at birth in 2020**, followed by **Arunachal Pradesh, A&N Islands, Tripura and Kerala**, according to annual report of Vital Statistics based on 2020 Civil Registration System Report.

### About Civil Registration System (CRS)

- ✓ The Annual Report on Vital Statistics of India based on Civil Registration System for 2020 has been published by the office of Registrar General of India on the basis of reports provided by the Chief Registrar of Births and Deaths of respective States/UTs as per the mandate of "The Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969".
- ✓ The implementation of the statute is vested with the State Governments.
  - The registration of births and deaths in the country is done by the functionaries appointed by the State Governments.
- ✓ It is the unified process of continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the vital events such as births, deaths and stillbirths, and their characteristics. Civil Registration records are the best source of Vital Statistics. A complete CRS system is a must for the country as it has important administrative and statistical uses.
- ✓ The data generated through CRS is essential for socio-economic planning and the evaluation of social sector programs. They also serve as the cornerstone of the public health system.
- ✓ The Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969 provides for the compulsory registration of births and deaths.
- ✓ The CRS records provides for the legal identity to an individual citizens and access to their rights and entitlements i.e., social benefits provided by the Government. Registration of birth is a right of every child and is the first step towards establishing her/his legal identity.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

#### **A. Sex Ratio:**

✓ Highest SRB (Sex Ratio at Birth): **Ladakh (1104)**, Arunachal Pradesh (1101), A&N Islands (984), Tripura (974) and Kerala (969).

✓ Lowest SRB: **Manipur (880)**, Dadar & Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu (898), Gujarat (909), Haryana (916) and MP (921).

#### **B. Birth Rate:**

✓ States such as **Nagaland, Puducherry, Telangana, Manipur, Delhi, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Kerala, Gujarat, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, TN, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Mizoram and Chandigarh** recorded a **decrease in the registered birth rate**.

✓ States such as **Bihar, Haryana, Sikkim, MP & Rajasthan** recorded an **increase** in registered birth rate.

#### **C. Death Rate:**

✓ States such as **Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, WB, Nagaland, Haryana, Karnataka, TN, Sikkim, Punjab, MP, Odisha, Rajasthan, A&N Islands and Assam** recorded an **increase** in death rate in 2020 compared to previous year. *Bihar saw the maximum increase in the death rate followed by Maharashtra and Assam.*

✓ States such as **Manipur, Chandigarh, Telangana, UP, Uttarakhand, Puducherry, Arunachal Pradesh and Kerala** saw a decrease in death rates in 2020 with respect to 2019.

#### **D. Infant Deaths:**

✓ The report noted that the share of infant death registration was only 23.4% for rural areas and **76.4%** for urban areas. *Non registration of infant deaths in rural*



areas was a cause of concern due to non-reporting of infant deaths to local registrars.

#### **Proposed Amendment To The Registration Of Births And Deaths Act, 1969**

According to the **2020-21** annual report of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the government is planning to automate (real time registration) the **Civil Registration System (CRS)**.

- The RGI has proposed amendment to the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969. This amendment will enable it to maintain the database of registered birth and deaths at the national level.
- According to the proposed amendment, the database may be used to update the **Population Register, Electoral Register, Aadhar, Ration Card, Passport and Driving License databases**

#### **Key Highlights Of The Report**

- **Challenges Faced By CRS In Current Form** The CRS system is facing challenges in terms of timelines, efficiency and uniformity, leading to delayed and under-coverage of birth and death.

#### **Need To Introduce Transformational Changes In CRS For Prompt Service Delivery**

✓ This will be done through an IT enabled backbone which will enable registration of birth and death in real-time basis with minimum human interface.

✓ The changes would be in terms of automating the **process delivery points**

✓ The changes would be sustainable, scalable and independent of the location.

#### **Need To Update The NPR Again**

✓ The CRS is linked to the National Population Register (NPR), which already has a database of **119 crore residents**.

✓ The report said there was a need to update the NPR again to incorporate the changes due to birth, death and migration.

✓ NPR was first collated in 2010 and updated in 2015 with Aadhaar, mobile and ration card numbers.

✓ The NPR was to be updated with the decennial Census exercise that has been postponed indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Registered Births And Deaths Had Witnessed A Steady Increase**

✓ The report noted that the proportion of total registered births and deaths had witnessed a steady increase over the years.

- The registration level of births has increased to

#### **89.3% in 2018 from 81.3% in 2009.**

- On the other hand, registration level of deaths has increased from **66.9% in 2009 to 86.0% in 2018**.

✓ It pointed out, adding that the level of total registration of deaths was lower than that of births in most of the States. This may partly be attributed to non-reporting of domiciliary deaths and deaths of females and infants.

## **4. SECTION 124A OF IPC**

- The Supreme Court (SC) has directed that all the proceedings on charges of sedition under **section 124A** of the IPC be kept in **abeyance** (temporary inactivity) until the government has completed re-examining the law under the section.
- The interim order issued **an absolute order staying all ongoing cases** under Section 124A of the IPC where a chargesheet had been filed.
- The court further stated that it expects the Centre and States to **refrain from filing FIRs, conducting investigations or taking coercive actions** under Section 124A while the colonial law is being reconsidered.
- **Persons charged in new cases were free to approach courts**, which would review their cases in light of the SC's judgement and the Union's clear position that the provision was abused and needed re-examination.

#### **Historical Background of Sedition law**

- 1870 – J. F. Stephen introduced Section 124A or the sedition law in the IPC as the original IPC Act of 1860 did not include the sedition law. However, it was the part of the draft prepared by Macaulay.
- 1891 – Queen vs Jogendra Chunder Bose Case was the **1st sedition case** in India. The editor of a Bengali magazine 'Bangobasi' was tried for sedition because he had criticized the 'age of consent Act 1891'. B.G. Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi were also charged and convicted under section 124A.
- 1947 – Sardar Patel proposed in constituent assembly that sedition law must serve an exception to the right to free speech.
- 1948 – K. M. Munshi did not agree with Sardar Patel's proposal. He advocated for not including the 'sedition' as a ground for reasonable restriction of fundamental rights. The constitution did not include 'sedition' as reasonable restriction to freedom of speech under Art 19(2) of the constitution. However, section 124A remained in IPC.
- 1950 – The SC ruled that the constitution does not include the word 'sedition' as an exception to the free speech. Thus, the decision of the State of Madras to ban the circulation of leftist journal violated the right to free speech under Art 19.
- 1974 – Sedition under section 124A of IPC made **cognizable offence** which means police can arrest without warrant.
- 1995 – SC observed, in **Balwant Singh vs State of Punjab Case**, that casually raising slogans without any violence resulting from them does not amount to sedition.

## **ISSUES RELATED TO SEC 124A OF IPC**

- **High Pendency Of Cases:** In the year 2020 only, more than 95% of cases were pending with courts and 82%

cases were pending with police.

• **Low Conviction Rate:** The conviction rate fluctuated from 3-33% for sedition law in last 5 years as per NCRB data.

DISPOSAL OF CASES								
Year	Cases	Pending probe	Found false or mistaken	Shut for lack of evidence	Chargesheet filed	Pendency with police	Pendency with courts	Conviction rate
2014	47	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2015	30	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2016	35	86	2	6	16	72%	91%	33%
2017	51	156	5	6	27	76%	90%	17%
2018	70	190	2	15	38	71%	86%	15%
2019	93	229	8	21	40	69%	74%	3%
2020	73	230	6	10	23	82%	95%	33%
Total	399		23	58	144			

• **Chargesheet:** Police was able to file charge sheet in only 36% cases relating to sedition law in last 5 years.

• Mr. Sibal (opponent) had said the Kedar Nath judgment had only covered how sedition affected free speech and expression enshrined in Article 19 (1)(a) and did not touch upon how the provision would snuff out the Right To Life (**Article 21**) and Right To Equal Treatment (**Article 14**).

• In light of the issues mentioned above, a three-judge Bench led by the Chief Justice of India is debating whether the sedition law, in light of what is said in the **Kedar Nath verdict**, should be referred to a **five or seven-judge** Bench for reconsideration.

✓ In **Kedar Nath judgment (1962)**, a five-judge Bench allowed Section 124A (sedition) to remain in the IPC, however it confined its applicability to activities including *incitement to violence*.

### CENTRAL GOVT'S ARGUMENTS

• The Central Government has informed SC that the 1962 Constitution Bench ruling upholding the legitimacy of the sedition law must be recognised as a binding precedent that has stood the test of time. The government said the logic of the Kedar Nath judgment was tested and applied successfully in several cases

• Countering Mr Sibal arguments, the central govt informed that merely because Article 14 and 21 are not mentioned, would not undermine its final judicial conclusion. The five-judge Bench read down Section 124A **only to bring it in conformity with Article 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution**.

• Instances of abuse of Section 124A did not justify reconsideration of a binding judgment upholding the sedition law.

• **The remedy would lie in preventing such abuse** on a case-to-case basis rather than doubting a longstanding settled law for about six decades.

➤ **A senior officer** at the level of the Superintendent of Police (SP) **could scrutinise the facts** of individual cases prior to registration of FIRs in a bid to prevent abuse.

• Section 124A represented **a cognisable offence** and the authorities could not be prevented from registering cases under the provision.

• There **could not be a blanket ban** on the prosecution of pending cases under Section 124A, as gravity of offences involve charges of terrorism, money laundering, etc.

### CONCLUSION

The sedition law is a colonial relic, used in past to curb freedom and democratic voices. The recent step of SC is in the direction of upholding democratic ethos. It will limit the **autocratic tendencies to curb free speech** by people in power. By placing all the proceedings under sedition law in abeyance, **the court has provided protection from unwarranted prosecution**. The need of hour is to strengthen the democratic foundation of the country. Difference of opinion, dissent and criticism are vital for functioning of democracy. Sedition law has little relevance in modern day democracy. So, it should be used keeping Constitutional morality in mind by every stakeholder.

## 5. DECLINE IN LFPR: A SERIOUS CONCERN

• Data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) shows that India's labour force participation rate (LFPR) has fallen to just 40% from an already low 47% in 2016.

• This shows that more than half of India's population in the working-age group (15 years and older) is deciding to sit out of the job market. Moreover, this proportion of people is increasing.

### LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE (LFPR)

• As per CMIE, the labour force consists of persons who are of age 15 years or older, and belong to either of the following two categories:

• Thus, the LFPR is the percentage of the working-age (15 years or older) population that is asking for a job. It includes both employed as well as unemployed and represents the **demand for jobs** in an economy.

### CORRELATION BETWEEN LFPR AND UER

• **The Unemployment Rate (UER)** is the number of unemployed (category 2) as a proportion of the labour force.

- Typically, it is expected that the LFPR will remain largely stable. Thus, any analysis of unemployment in an economy can be done just by looking at the UER.
- But, in India, the LFPR is not only lower than in the rest of the world but also falling. This, in turn, affects the UER because LFPR is the base (the denominator) on which UER is calculated.
- This shrinkage implies that merely looking at UER will under-report the stress of unemployment in India.
- For example, if there are just 100 people in the working-age group but only 60 ask for jobs — that is, the LFPR is 60% — and of these 60 people, 6 did not get a job. This would imply a UER of 10%.
- If the LFPR falls to 40% and of these 40, only 2 people fail to get a job, the UER would reduce to 5%. Thus, it might incorrectly appear that the economy is doing better on the jobs front.
- Actually, beyond the 2 who are unemployed, a total of 20 people have stopped demanding work.
- Chart 1 shows that something similar has happened in India. Every time the LFPR falls, the UER also falls, giving the incorrect impression to policymakers that the situation has improved.

#### **REASONS FOR LOW LFPR IN INDIA**

- The **high UER** suggests that among those looking for jobs, proportion of **people unable to find jobs are high**. Also, many people have opted out of the labour force, as they are disappointed by the absence of remunerative, productive jobs.
- There are signs of increasing formalisation as indicated by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) data. However, a substantial share of the labour force continues to remain employed in the **informal sector**, lacking a safety net.
- One of the most important reasons is the significantly **low female LFPR**. According to CMIE, as of December 2021, while the male LFPR was 67.4%, the female LFPR was as low as 9.4%.
- Even data from the **World Bank** shows that India's female labour force participation rate is around 25% when the global average is 47%.

•Employed

•Unemployed **but** are willing to work and are actively looking for a job.

#### **REASONS FOR LOW FEMALE LFPR**

##### **• Occupational Segregation**

- ✓ Between 1977 and 2017, India's economy witnessed a surge in the contribution of services (39% to 53%) and industry (33% to 27%) to GDP.
- ✓ The proportion of rural men employed in agriculture fell from 80.6 percent to 53.2 percent, but rural women only decreased from 88.1 percent to 71.7 percent.

✓ Between 1994-2010, women received less than 19 percent of new employment opportunities generated in India's 10 fastest-growing occupations.

##### **• Increased Mechanisation**

- ✓ In agriculture, and as the use of seed drillers, harvesters, threshers and husking equipment increased, men displaced women.
- ✓ In textiles, power looms, button stitching machines and textile machinery phased out women's labour.
- ✓ Nearly 12 million Indian women could lose their jobs by 2030 owing to automation, according to a McKinsey Global Institute report.

##### **• Income Effect**

- ✓ With increasing household incomes, especially over the last three decades, the need for a "second income" reduced.
- ✓ Consequently, families withdrew women from labour as a signal of prosperity.
- ✓ This "income effect" can explain approximately 9 % of the total decline in the female LFPR between 2005 to 2010.

##### **• Gender Gaps in Higher Education & Skill Training**

- ✓ Tertiary-level female enrolment rose from 2 % in 1971 to only 30 % in 2019 (World Bank data).
- ✓ As of 2018-19, only 2 % of working-age women received formal vocational training, of which 47 % did not join the labour force (NSO, 2018-19).
- ✓ Consequently, women holds only 17 % of cloud computing, 20 % of engineering, and 24 % of data/artificial intelligence jobs (WEF, 2020).

##### **• Social Norms**

- ✓ Unpaid care work continues to be a women's responsibility, with women spending on average five hours per day on domestic work, vs. 30 minutes for men (NSSO, 2019).
- ✓ Women face inordinate mobility restrictions such that only 54 % can go to a nearby market alone (NFHS, 2015-16).
- ✓ Women regularly sacrifice wages, career progression, and education opportunities to meet family responsibilities, safety considerations, and other restrictions.

• **Working conditions:** Such as law and order, efficient public transportation, violence against women, societal norms etc — are not conducive for women to seek work.

• **Methodological issues:** Formally capturing women's contribution to the economy, since a lot of women in India are exclusively involved within their own homes.

#### **WAY AHEAD**

- When LFPR is falling as sharply as it has in India, it is

better to track the **Employment Rate (ER)**. The **ER** refers to the total number of employed people as a percentage of the working-age population.

- By using the working-age population as the base and looking at the number of people with jobs (instead of those without them), the ER captures the fall in LFPR to better represent the stress in the labour market.

✓ In December 2021, India had 107.9 crore people in the working age group and of these, only 40.4 crore had a job (an ER of 37.4%).

✓ Compare this with December 2016 when India had 95.9 crore in the working-age group and 41.2 crore with jobs (ER 43%).

✓ In five years, while the total working-age population has gone up by 12 crore, the number of people with jobs has gone down by 80 lakh.

- Policies should be designed to make working conditions conducive for women and create more job opportunities for them.
- The government should work towards developing a labour intensive manufacturing sector, which can not only absorb the millions entering the labour force each year, but also those moving out of agriculture.

## 6. RUPEE DEPRECIATION

The Indian rupee has been depreciating and recently hit an all-time low of 77.63 against the U.S. dollar.

**Currency depreciation** is a fall in the value of a currency in a floating exchange rate system. For example, if the value of 1 US dollar changes from Rs. 75 to Rs. 77, the rupee is said to have depreciated against the US dollar. India used to follow the administered or fixed rate of exchange until 1993, when it moved to a market determined process or floating exchange rate.

- However, in India, the exchange rate is not fully determined by the market.
- From time to time, the RBI intervenes in the foreign exchange (forex) market to ensure that the rupee “price” does not fluctuate too much or that it doesn’t rise or fall too much all at once. This is called **Managed floating exchange rate**.
- For example, the RBI sells dollars when Indian rupee depreciates too much, while it purchases dollars when the Indian rupee appreciates beyond a certain level.

### FACTORS AFFECTING RUPEE’S VALUE

- The value of any currency is determined by demand and supply of the currency. When the supply of a

currency increases, its value drops. On the other hand, when the demand for a currency increases, its value rises.

- In the wider economy, central banks determine the supply of currencies, while the demand for currencies depends on the amount of goods and services produced in the economy.
- In the forex market, the supply of rupees is determined by the demand for imports and various foreign assets. So, if there is high demand to import oil, it can lead to an increase in the supply of rupees (decrease in supply of dollars) in the forex market and cause the rupee’s value to drop.
- On the other hand, the demand for rupees in the forex market depends on foreign demand for Indian exports and other domestic assets.
- So, for instance, when foreign investors are positive about investing in India, it can lead to an increase in the supply of dollars in the forex market which in turn causes the rupee’s value to rise against the dollar.

### RBI INTERVENTION

- RBI’s policy is to allow the rupee to find its **natural value** in the market but without causing significant **volatility or unnecessary panic** among investors.
- Thus, the RBI has usually tried to slow down or smoothen, rather than reverse or prevent, the fall in exchange value of the rupee against the U.S. dollar.
- State-run banks are usually instructed by the RBI to **sell dollars** in order to offer some support to the rupee. Thus, by selling dollars in the open market in exchange for rupees, the RBI can improve demand for the rupee and support its fall.
- For example, recently, India’s forex reserves have also dropped below \$600 billion, dropping by about \$45 billion since September, 2021, when forex reserves were at an all-time high of \$642 billion.
- This drop is believed to be largely due to steps taken by the RBI to support the rupee.

### FACTORS CAUSING THE CURRENT DEPRECIATION

- Since March this year, the U.S. Federal Reserve has been raising its **benchmark interest rate**. Driven by higher treasury yields, the dollar has climbed to its highest levels in two decades.
- ✓ Due to this, foreign investors are pulling capital out from emerging markets such as India. Even developed market currencies such as the euro and the yen have depreciated against the dollar.
- ✓ The dollar index, which tracks the currency against a basket of major currencies, is up nearly 9% this year and hit its highest in 20 years.
- **China's zero-Covid policy and slowing economic**



**growth** have further unsettled forex markets that were already struggling to deal with the war in Ukraine.

✓ The effects of the lockdown in China, has led to slowed export growth as the curbs halted factory production, disrupted supply chains and triggered a collapse in domestic demand.

• Moreover, India's current account deficit, which measures the gap between the value of imports and exports of goods and services, is expected to hit a **10-year high of 3.3% of GDP** in the current financial year.

✓ India's trade deficit rose by **87.5% to a record ₹192 billion** in 2021-22 from ₹102 billion in the previous financial year (2020-21).

✓ This means that India's import demand amid **rising global oil prices** (\$110/barrel) is likely to negatively affect the rupee.

#### **IMPACT OF RUPEE DEPRECIATION**

• **Exports:** Rupee depreciation can give a boost to Indian exports, as it will be cheaper for other countries to buy goods from India.

✓ But in a scenario of weak global demand and lingering volatility, exporters are not cheering the currency dip.

✓ Further, India's key export items such as gems and jewellery, petroleum products, organic chemicals and automobiles, and machinery items have significantly high import content.

✓ With rising commodity prices due to supply shortages, the cost of production for exporters will go up, affecting their margins. Therefore, export sectors where the import intensity is high such as electronics, may not see a gain.

✓ Services sectors like IT and labour-intensive export sectors like textiles will indeed benefit.

• **Imports:** However, at the same time, India's imports will become more expensive, which will add to already rising trade deficit and the overall **inflation** in the short term.

• **Foreign portfolio investment (FPI) equity outflows** touch \$15 bn in Jan-March 2022, highest in last 15 years. This compares to net inflows of \$7 billion in 2021, \$14 billion in 2020 and \$19 billion in 2019.

• **Food inflation:** India is also heavily dependent on other countries for fertilizers and edible oils.

✓ Fertilizer subsidy bill is already set to hit a record high of as much as Rs 1.9 trillion in FY23, according to Crisil.

✓ A weaker currency will further escalate **imported edible oil prices** and lead to a **higher food inflation**.

• **Foreign Education:** It will also become expensive for people travelling abroad for foreign education.

#### **FUTURE OUTLOOK**

• Analysts believe that, over the long run, the rupee is

likely to continue to depreciate against the dollar due to the significant differences in long-run inflation between India and the U.S.

• In fact, the International Monetary Fund expects the rupee to weaken past the 94 rupees to a dollar mark by FY29.

• At the moment, as the U.S. Federal Reserve **raises rates** to tackle historically **high inflation** in the country, other countries and emerging markets in particular will be forced to raise their **own interest rates** to avoid capital outflows and to protect their currencies.

• As interest rates rise across the globe, the threat of a global recession also rises as economies readjust to tighter monetary conditions.

### **7. INDIA - FRANCE TO EXPAND THEIR COOPERATION**

PM Modi has paid an official visit to France on his way back from the 2nd India-Nordic Summit in Copenhagen. This was their first meeting after the French leader was recently re-elected in the presidential election.

#### **KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE VISIT**

##### **The Indo-Pacific Region**

• Both the leaders appreciated the fact that the **first Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum was held in Paris in February 2022**. It was launched during the French presidency of the Council of the EU.

• India and France decided to work together in the implementation of the India-EU Connectivity Partnership and the decisions made at the India-EU Leaders' Meeting in Porto in May 2021.

##### **Strategic Cooperation**

• India and France have agreed on **setting up a bilateral strategic dialogue on space issues**. The two sides agreed to hold the first dialogue by this year at the earliest.

• Both sides reaffirmed the commitment to the success of the strategic Jaitapur Nuclear project for access to reliable, affordable and low carbon energy.

• Counter-terrorism cooperation is a corner stone of Indo-French strategic partnership, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. In this regard, both sides expressed their willingness to coordinate actively in the run up to third edition of the **"No Money for Terror" international Conference** to be hosted by India in 2022.

##### **Climate, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development**



- India invited France to participate in its initiative to make India a Green Hydrogen Hub under its **National Hydrogen Mission**.
- India and France welcomed the efforts made by AFD and India Exim Bank to step up their support to sustainable finance in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The "**Indo-Pacific Parks Partnership**" was adopted in Feb' 2022. It displays both sides' ambition to promote a sustainable approach in Indo-Pacific region through development of protected areas and natural parks.

### **INDIA – FRANCE BILATERAL RELATION**

- In **1998**, India and France established a **Strategic Partnership** which has since emerged as a close and growing bilateral relationship.
- The areas of **defence & security cooperation, space cooperation** and **civil nuclear cooperation** constitute the principal pillars of this Strategic Partnership.
- In addition, India and France are increasingly engaged in new areas of cooperation such as - in the Indian Ocean region, climate change (including the International Solar Alliance) and sustainable growth & development, governance of cyberspace, among others.

### **Economic Relations**

- Bilateral trade practically doubled in a span of ten years, touching the **12-billion-euro** just before the pandemic. However, the overall volume of bilateral trade remains low; trade with France constituting only **1.41%** of India's total international trade.
- As a result of the public health crisis, the volume of bilateral trade between India and France fell significantly in 2020 to EUR 9 billion, a year-on-year reduction of 23.1%.
- ✓ French exports to India fell from EUR 5.4 billion to EUR 4.2 billion (-21.4% y-o-y), while imports fell from EUR 6.3 billion to EUR 4.8 billion (-23.5%).
- France has emerged as a major source of FDI for India with more than 1,000 French establishments already present in India.
- ✓ **France is the 9th largest foreign investor in India** with a cumulative investment of USD 7.10 billion from April 2000 to December 2019. This represents 1.55% of the total FDI inflows into India.
- ✓ Indian investments in France have been growing and the total stock of Indian investments in France is estimated to be around 1 billion Euros.

### **Defence Cooperation**

- In 2018, the two countries decided to create an **Annual Defence Dialogue at the Ministerial Level**, the first of which was held in October 2018.
- The three services also have regular defence exercises;

viz. **Exercise Shakti (Army), Exercise Varuna (Navy) and Exercise Garuda (Air Force)**.

- The major ongoing defense related projects are the following:

✓ Purchase of **Rafale aircraft**

✓ **P-75 Scorpene Project**: The contract for six Scorpene submarines was signed in October 2006.

### **Space Cooperation**

- A joint stamp was released to commemorate **fifty years** of bilateral space cooperation during the visit of Prime Minister Modi to France in April 2015.
- In March 2018, both India and France issued a "**Joint Vision for Space Cooperation**".
- The two sides have jointly developed **Megha-Tropiques satellite** providing valuable scientific data.
- The two countries are also cooperating in the training of medical support personnel for Indian astronauts, who will be part of India's manned space mission.

### **Civil Nuclear Cooperation**

- An agreement on civil nuclear cooperation was signed between India and France in September 2008.
- Under that framework, the French utility company will construct **six European Pressurized Reactor (EPR) units** at Jaitapur of 1650 MW each.

### **Academic And Scientific Cooperation**

- Scientific and technical cooperation brings together French and Indian researchers and research laboratories, particularly during the "**Knowledge Summit**".
- The latest edition of this summit was held in Pune in November 2021.

### **People to People Connect**

- The Partnership Agreement on Migration and Mobility entered into force on 1 October 2021.
- The 75th anniversary of the independence of India is being celebrated since March 2022 through the **Bonjour India festival**, with a series of events throughout India. For its part, India is organising the **Namaste France festival**.
- India was the Guest of Honour at the Paris Book Festival 2022 and France will be the Guest of Honour at the next New Delhi World Book Fair.

### **CHALLENGES**

- **Limitations of France in IOR** – Unlike USA, France is yet to increase its footprint in Indian Ocean Region (IOR). So far, the cooperation between these two countries on Indo-Pacific is merely symbolic – with no concrete plan.

### • **Increasing Cooperation between France and China**

– In February 2022, France became the first country to join China to jointly build seven infrastructure projects in Africa, South East Asia and Eastern Europe. This is a boost for Beijing in the face of its growing hostility with the US.

• **Perception Issue** – There is a perception in India that the European countries, including France, will always follow the U.S, because of a very strong trans-Atlantic partnership.

• **Economic engagement not upto the potential** – Bilateral trade volume between these two countries highlights the fact that there is enough scope of increased economic engagement. Even during the recent visit, there was no mention of any Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

### CONCLUSION

- France looks upon India to seek more relevance in the greater power dynamics of Asia and the IndoPacific. Similarly, India has a desire to become a “net-security provider” in the Indian Ocean.
- Also, there is a very rare cultural understanding between France and India that cause the Governments to understand each other’s impulses.
- This offers an opportunity for both the countries to further deepen their relationship.

## 8 . INDIA, GERMANY TO WORK ON PROJECTS IN THIRD COUNTRIES

Prime Minister Modi paid an official visit to Germany. During this visit, PM Modi held bilateral discussions with Chancellor Scholz, and co-chaired the **6th India-Germany Inter-Governmental Consultations (IGC)**. The *biennial* IGC is a unique dialogue format that also sees participation of several Ministers from both sides.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE VISIT

#### > **List Of Agreements Signed**

- ✚ **Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) on Green and Sustainable Development Partnership**
- ✚ **JDI on the implementation of Triangular Development Cooperation projects in Third Countries**
- ✚ **Indo-German Development Cooperation Regarding Renewable Energy Partnership**
- ✚ **Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership**

#### > **Virtual Signing**

Indo-German Green Hydrogen Task Force, JDI on

Agroecology, JDI on Forest Landscape Restoration

#### > **Biennial Ministerial Mechanism within the framework of the IGC**

- Both sides agreed to create a biennial Ministerial Mechanism within the framework of the IGC. It will provide high-level political direction to this Partnership.
- All existing bilateral formats and initiatives in the fields of *climate action, sustainable development, energy transition, development cooperation and triangular cooperation* will report on progress to the Ministerial Mechanism.

### GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

- The Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) establishing the Green and Sustainable Development Partnership envisages a whole-of-government approach to India-Germany cooperation on SDGs and climate action.
- Under this, Germany has agreed to make an advance commitment of 10 billion Euros of *new and additional development assistance* until 2030.
- As deliverables of the Indo-German Partnership for Green and Sustainable Development, both sides agreed to:
  - ✓ Develop an Indo-German Green Hydrogen Roadmap
  - ✓ Establish an Indo-German Renewable Energy Partnership focusing on innovative solar energy and other renewables
  - ✓ Establish a lighthouse cooperation on "Agroecology and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources"
  - ✓ Further examine collaboration on Green Energy Corridors, e.g. the Leh-Haryana transmission line and the project of a carbon neutral Ladakh.
  - ✓ Deepen cooperation in restoring forest landscapes under the **Bonn Challenge**.
  - ✓ Work together on Triangular Cooperation, based on individual strengths and experiences in development cooperation and offer sustainable, viable and inclusive projects in **third countries** to support the achievement of SDGs and climate targets.

### INDIA-GERMANY RELATIONS

- Germany is one of India’s most important partners in Europe, owing to the strength of bilateral relations and also Germany’s key role in the EU.
- India and Germany have a '**Strategic Partnership**' since **May 2000**.
- This has been further strengthened with the launch of Intergovernmental Consultations (IGC) in 2011 at the level of Heads of Government.
- On March 7, 2021, **India and Germany marked the**

**70th anniversary** of the establishment of diplomatic relations. As part of the celebrations, commemorative stamps were issued by both countries.

### Economic & Commercial Relations

- Germany is **India's largest trading partner in Europe**. It was India's seventh-largest trading partner in FY 2020-21.
- Bilateral trade in 2020-21 was USD 21.76 billion registering a marginal decline of about 1% over 2019-20.
  - ✓ Indian exports during this period decreased by 2% reaching USD 8.12 billion and Indian imports decreased by 0.35% to USD 13.64 billion.
- Germany is the **7th largest FDI source** for India. The total FDI from Germany to India from April 2000 September 2021 is over USD 13 billion.
  - ✓ Indian investments in Germany continue to grow, having surpassed the figure of USD 7 billion.

### Development Cooperation

- Germany has committed a total volume of new funding of USD 1,368.02 million for 2021 for Financial & Technical Cooperation.
- Energy, sustainable economic and urban development, environment & management of natural resources are priority areas.

### Security & Defence

- The MoU on Security Cooperation signed at the 3rd IGC held in Delhi in 2015 defines collaboration in this field.
- There are dialogue mechanisms on various aspects of security, including:
  - ✓ Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism;
  - ✓ Cyber Consultations;
  - ✓ Joint Steering Group on Disaster Management in Berlin (2016).

### Science & Technology

- Bilateral Science and Technology cooperation is implemented under an Inter-Governmental Agreement on '*Cooperation in Scientific Research and Technological Development*'.
- The jointly funded Indo-German Science and Technology Centre (IGSTC) was set up in Gurgaon in September 2008.

### Sister State/City Arrangements

- The States of Karnataka and Bavaria, Maharashtra and Baden Wuerttemberg, and the cities of Mumbai and Stuttgart have twinning arrangements.

- Twin city relations between Coimbatore and Esslingen were established in 2016.

### Culture

- Max Mueller, a German, was the first scholar of Indo-European languages to translate and publish Upanishads and Rigveda.
- A MOU for museum cooperation was signed during the 5th IGC held in Delhi in November, 2019.

### Education

- There are approximately 29,000 (2020) Indian students who are studying in Germany, a number which is rising each year. Around 800 German students are studying or doing internships in India.
- Instruments of faculty exchange and student mobility between India and Germany are:
  - ✓ **Visiting Advanced Joint Research (VAJRA)** from DST and **Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC)** from Ministry of Education (MoE)
  - ✓ New Passage to India (from the German side).

### CHALLENGES

- Germany finds India a **more complex partner to negotiate** and conduct business with. On the other hand, doing business with China is seen to be relatively simpler (even in the face of forced technology transfers, intellectual property rights violations etc.).
- It's commonplace in Germany to **point to the flaws in Indian democracy**, and thereby deem India an unworthy partner, at least in terms of shared values.
- Germany focuses **on trade and investment as the main conduit** to deepen its relations with India. As a result, Germany remains adamant on labour and environmental standards, at the expense of macro-level values of liberalism.

### CONCLUSION

- Similar geopolitical perceptions form the foundation for the expansion of Indo-German relations. Economically, India continues to present great growth potential for German companies.
- However, strategic alignments, mismatched capabilities and inability of Germany to reconcile its values with its strategic interests particularly in the field of social policy have prevented bilateral security competition from reaching their full potential.
- In this backdrop, both the countries require close consultations on issues that define their national interests, as well as broad-ranging cooperation and

coordination on security, commercial, and developmental issues.

## 9. INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORKOLYMPICS

### INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK (IPEF)

- According to an insight paper on IPEF, put out by the US Congressional Research Service, the IPEF is *not a traditional trade agreement*. **IPEF is not a free trade agreement. Neither is it a security pact.** The agreement is more of an **administrative arrangement**.
- Rather, it would include different **modules** covering:

- ✚ **Fair and Resilient Trade**
- ✚ **Supply chain resilience**
- ✚ **Infrastructure and Decarbonization**
- ✚ **Tax and Anticorruption**

- Countries would have to **sign up to all of the components within a module**, but do not have to participate in all modules.
- The *fair and resilient trade module* will be led by the US Trade Representative and include digital, labour, and environment issues, with some binding commitments.
- Under IPEF, no market access or tariff reductions have been outlined, although experts say it can pave the way to trade deals.
- After the launch, so far, **IPEF is being joined by 12 other countries including India.**
  - ✓ The other 11 countries are Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea (South Korea), Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
  - ✓ These countries, together, account for **40%** of the world's **GDP**.

### FOUR PILLARS OF IPEF

#### **Connected Economy**

- higher standards and rules for digital trade, such as cross-border data flows

#### **Resilient Economy**

- resilient supply chains that will withstand unexpected

disruptions like the pandemic

#### **Clean Economy**

- targeting green energy commitments and projects

#### **Fair Economy**

- implementing fair trade, including rules targeting corruption and effective taxation

US P

s East Asia trip, has launched Indo-Pac

### ORIGIN OF IPEF

- Biden first spoke about the IPEF at the **October 2021 East Asia Summit**.
- At this summit, he said that the United States will explore with partners the development of an Indo-Pacific economic framework.
- This framework will define our shared objectives around:
  - ✓ trade facilitation, standards for the digital economy and technology, supply chain resiliency, decarbonization and clean energy,
  - ✓ infrastructure, worker standards, and other areas of shared interest.

### WHY US IS KEEN ON LAUNCHING THE IPEF?

- Since then, there has been concern over the absence of a credible US economic and trade strategy to counter China's economic influence in the region.
- ✓ China is an influential member of the TPP, & has sought membership of its successor agreement *Comprehensive & Progressive Agreement on Trans Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)*.
- ✓ It is also in the 14-member Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), of which the US is not a member (India withdrew from RCEP).
- The Biden Administration is projecting IPEF as the new US vehicle for re-engagement with East Asia and South East Asia.

### WHY THE INDO-PACIFIC?

- As per the US President, the future of the 21st century economy is going to be largely written in the Indo-Pacific. About 60% of the world's population resides in the Indo-Pacific, and the region is expected to be the biggest contributor to global growth over the next three decades.
- The U.S. wants to **restore its economic leadership in the region** and is "presenting Indo-Pacific countries an alternative to China's approach."



## INDIA'S RESPONSE

• On the side-lines of the **Quad summit**, India announced it will join the bloc despite its concerns over certain aspects of the IPEF.

### • Concerns of India include:

✓ Analysts believe that India may be uncomfortable with the US perusing high-standard rules in digital economy, such as standards on cross-border data flows and data localisation.

✓ The IPEF talks about digital governance but the IPEF formulation contains issues that directly conflict with India's stated position. Among these are:

### • Prohibition / restrictions on cross-border data flows and data localization requirements, including for financial services;

- Prohibition of the levying of customs duties on digital products distributed electronically;
- Promotion of interoperability of privacy rules and related enforcement regimes, such as the APEC Cross-Border Privacy Rule, while respecting U.S. federal and state privacy laws and regulations.
- IPEF also wants to frame rules on labour standards, environment norms and decarbonisation, which India has never been keen on, including in its free trade pacts.

## WHY HAS INDIA CHOSEN TO JOIN THIS AFTER WALKING OUT OF RCEP?

- The main reason for India to walk out of RCEP was its concern that the pact would allow China to flood the country's market with cheap products at preferential import duties, leaving domestic producers uncompetitive.
- The IPEF, with a membership accounting for about 40% of the global GDP, is providing India another opportunity to be part of a mega economic arrangement, but outside the influence of China.

## ANALYSIS

### 1. IPEF Is More Suited To The 21st Century:

American officials have argued the IPEF is more suited to the 21st century than *traditional trade deals that cut tariffs*. They have also made clear that conventional agreements have become politically toxic in US politics, making it difficult to sign deals that grant market access.

### 2. Not An Initiative Of Quad:

Although Biden launched it on the sideline of Quad summit, IPEF is not going to be an initiative by Quad.

### 3. Does Not Include Access To The US Market:

Critics contend that some countries were reluctant because they did not see much value for them. This is

particularly because the IPEF will not include access to the US market.


### 4. Economic Complexity Involved:

Members of IPEF have a deep economic engagement with China. Given the fact that this platform is created to counter China, this engagement might increase the complexity.

## 10. QUAD LEADERS' SUMMIT 2022

- On January 30, India and Israel • The **second in-person Quad summit** took place at Tokyo, Japan. The summit saw the participation of leaders of *Australia, India, Japan and the United States*. India was represented by PM Modi
- Just over one year ago, the Quad Leaders met for the first time. However, the Tokyo was their fourth meeting (second in person meeting).

### KEY OUTCOMES

IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ \$50 billion of infrastructure assistance and investment in the Indo-Pacific over five years</li><li>➤ Launch of 'Quad Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Package (Q-CHAMP)' for tangible climate action</li><li>➤ Quad Fellowship that will bring 100 students from the 4 countries to the US each year to pursue graduate degrees in STEM fields</li></ul>	 <p>Albanese, Biden, Modi &amp; Kishida in Tokyo on Tuesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Launch of Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) for combating illegal fishing</li><li>➤ Quad partnership on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) in the Indo-Pacific</li></ul>

### COVID-19 and Global Health Security

- To date, the Quad partners have collectively pledged approximately **USD \$ 5.2 billion** to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC). It has delivered over 670 million doses, including at least 265 million doses to Indo-Pacific.
- The participating leaders welcomed the progress on the expansion of J&J vaccine production at the *Biological E facility in India* under the **Quad Vaccine Partnership**.  
✓ In March 2021, Quad leaders launched the Quad Vaccine Partnership for enhancing equitable access to vaccines. They had decided to donate more than 1.2 billion vaccine doses globally, in addition to the doses



we have financed through COVAX. **COVID-19 and Global Health Security**

✓ These vaccines were to be *developed in the US, manufactured in India, financed by Japan & US, and supported by Australia.*

### Infrastructure

- Quad leaders promised to extend more than **50 billion USD of infrastructure assistance** and investment in the Indo-Pacific, over the **next five years**.
- They also decided to promote **debt sustainability and transparency** through various means. This includes the *Quad Debt Management Resource Portal*, which consists of multiple bilateral and multilateral capacity building assistance.

### Climate

- The summit launched the "**Quad Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Package (Q-CHAMP)**" with mitigation and adaptation as its two themes.
- Q-CHAMP includes ongoing activities under the Quad Climate Working Group on:
  - ✓ **Green shipping and ports** aiming for a shared green corridor framework building on each Quad country's input;
  - ✓ **Clean energy cooperation** in clean *hydrogen and methane* emissions from the *natural gas sector*;
  - ✓ Strengthening **clean energy supply chains**, welcoming the contribution of the Sydney Energy Forum;
  - ✓ **Climate information services** for developing an engagement strategy with Pacific Island countries; and
  - ✓ **Disaster risk reduction**, including disaster and climate resilient infrastructure

### Cybersecurity

- The leaders decided to coordinate capacity building programs in the Indo-Pacific region under the Quad Cybersecurity Partnership.
- They also decided to initiate the **first-ever Quad Cybersecurity Day** to help individual internet users to better protect themselves from cyber threats.

### Critical & Emerging Technologies

- In the area of *5G and beyond 5G*, the participating leaders decided to advance interoperability and security through the signature of a new Memorandum of Cooperation on 5G Supplier Diversification.
- The **Common Statement of Principles on Critical Technology Supply Chains** was launched. This advances the cooperation among Quad countries on semiconductors and other critical technologies.

### Quad Fellowship

The **Quad Fellowship** was officially launched. The Fellowship will bring 100 students from Quad countries to the United States each year to pursue graduate degrees in **STEM fields**.

### Space

Quad countries decided to share space-based *civil Earth observation data*, along with providing a "**Quad Satellite Data Portal**" that aggregates links to their respective national satellite data resources.

### Maritime Domain Awareness and HADR

- A new maritime domain awareness initiative, the **Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA)**, was launched.
  - ✓ IPMDA would offer a *near-real-time, integrated, & cost-effective* maritime domain awareness picture.
  - ✓ It will respond to humanitarian and natural disasters, and combat illegal fishing. It will also allow the tracking of "**dark shipping**" across the Indo-Pacific region.
  - ✓ It will support and work in consultation with Indo Pacific nations and **regional information fusion centres** in the region.
- The summit also announced the establishment of the "**Quad Partnership on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) in the Indo-Pacific**". This Partnership will further strengthen the collaboration to effectively respond to disasters in the region.

### ADVANTAGES OF QUAD GROUP

#### 1. Greater Cooperation Among Democratic Nations In Changed Scenario

Since the tsunami, climate change has grown more perilous, new technologies have revolutionized our daily lives, geopolitics have become ever more complex, and a pandemic has devastated the world.

#### 2. Free, Open, Resilient And Inclusive Indo-Pacific

✓ Quad countries are striving to ensure that the Indo Pacific is accessible and dynamic, governed by international law.

✓ It wants to create an environment in which all countries are able to make their own political choices, free from coercion.

### CHALLENGES

#### 1. Assertiveness of China

✓ Chinese officials have **likened the group to a "mini-NATO"** and said its activities are aimed at targeting third parties.

✓ Beijing sees Quad as part of a **strategy to encircle China** and has pressured countries like Bangladesh to avoid cooperating with the group.

## **2. China as a Trading partner**

Beijing has emerged as the most important trading partner of the Indian Ocean region

## **3. Approach of Member Countries**

✓ While USA is quite vocal in naming the aggressive China, other members show restraint and avoid naming China directly.

✓ There is difference in the approach as well. E.g., **USA looks the Indo-Pacific region militarily. On the other hand, India views this region diplomatically.**

## **4. Different Areas of Prioritisation**

✓ The way that the four different Quad members view their interests in the Indo-Pacific leads them to prioritise different areas.

✓ For instance, for the US, South China Sea and East China Sea are vital. Same goes for Japan. And for Australia, it also includes the Western Pacific.

✓ But for India, the **Quad is about the Indian Ocean and South China Sea is a secondary theatre.**

## **5. ASEAN**

As of now there are no signs that the ASEAN is willing to take a united stand on many issues so far raised by Quad. It would be difficult for the Quad to execute any effective policy minus the cooperation from the ASEAN countries.

## **6. RCEP**

✓ Japan and Australia joined the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

✓ This is an indication of their desire to do business with China even as they seek to deter its growing clout in the region.