TATHASTU
Institute of Civil Services

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Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

News: The cultural department of the Maharashtra government organized a series of programs to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the coronation of the great Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

Who was Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj?

- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was the founder of the Maratha Empire in western India in the 17th century. He is regarded as one of the greatest warriors and administrators of Indian history.
- He fought against the Mughal Empire and established a strong and efficient administration based on the principles of justice, welfare and security for his subjects.
- He was crowned as the King of Marathas n 1674, at Raigad. He took several titles such as Chhatrapati, Shakakarta, Kshatriya Kulavantas, and Haidanva Dharmodhharak.

What was his administration like?

- His **revenue administration** was based on the **Kathi system** of land measurement (pattern of Malik Amber). He abolished the Jagirdari system and replaced it with the Ryotwari system, in which the peasants paid taxes directly to the state. He also implemented two taxes called **Chauth** and **Sardeshmukhi**, which were levied on the territories that were not under his direct control but acknowledged his sovereignty. Chauth was one-fourth of the land revenue and Sardeshmukhi was an additional one-tenth of the land revenue. He also appointed **revenue officials** such as **Amatya**, **Deshmukh**, **Deshpande**, **Patil and Kulkarni** to collect and audit the taxes.
- His **political administration** was based on a **centralized monarchy**; in which he was the supreme sovereign. He appointed eight ministers, known as **Ashtapradhan**, who were responsible for various aspects of governance such as finance, military, foreign affairs, justice and religion. The ministers were not hereditary or permanent but were appointed and removed by the king at his discretion. They were also expected to lead military campaigns when required.
- His **military administration** was based on a disciplined and well-trained army, which consisted of cavalry, infantry, artillery and navy. He paid **cash salaries** to his soldiers and gave **revenue grants** to his chieftains. He was an **expert in guerrilla warfare**, which involved swift and surprise attacks on the enemy using the terrain and speed as advantages.

- He also built a **strong navy** and **dockyards** to protect his coastal regions from foreign invaders and to promote trade.
- Shivaji revived **Hindu traditions** and promoted Marathi and Sanskrit.
- He ensured **Competent civil rule** and was a **compassionate king** for his people.

What are some ethical lessons we can learn from him?

- Shivaji Maharaj was **proud of his culture** and **heritage**, and he revived Sanskrit and Marathi as official languages of his court. He protected temples from invaders and he never forced anyone to convert.
- He was a champion of women's rights and dignity. He issues strict orders to never harass any women during their raids.
- He was a pragmatic ruler who knew how to deal with adversaries. He wasn't shy to use diplomacy, deception or force to achieve his goals. But, he never compromised on his principles.
- He fought against injustice, oppression, and tyranny, and established a sovereign state based on the ideals of **Swarajya** (self-rule) and **Sushasan** (good governance).

Pulses and Edible Oil in India

News: There are two agricultural commodities in which India is significantly import-dependent: Edible oil and pulses.

Background:

- But, in recent years it is seen that India has become relatively Atmanirbhar in Pulses production, credited mainly to the increased chana production.

About Pulses in India:

- India is the **largest producer** (25% of global production), **consumer** (27% of world consumption) **and importer** (14%) of pulses in the world.
- Though pulses are grown in both Kharif and Rabi seasons, Rabi pulses contribute more than 60% of the total production.
- In quantity terms, India's imports of pulses came down from 6.61 mt in 2016-17 to 2.52 mt in 2022-23.
- India's pulses output has increased from 19 mt in 2013-14 to 28 mt in 2022-23, which translates into a self-sufficiency ratio of over 90% in pulses (40% for edible oils). Thus, increased domestic production is one reason.

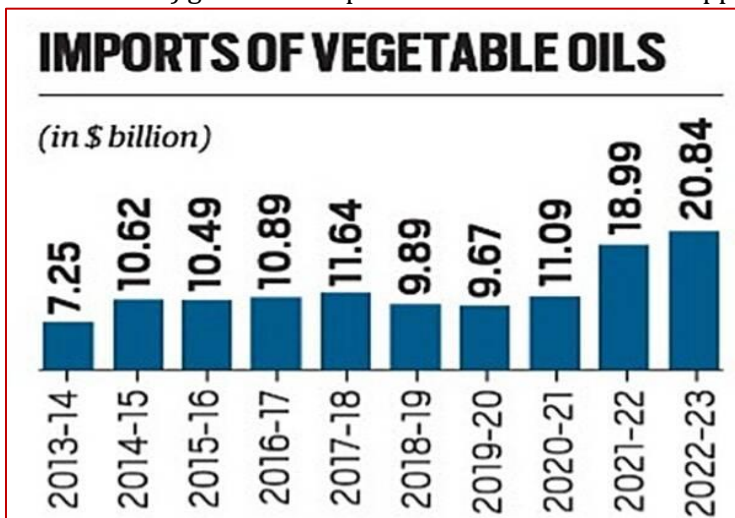**IMPORTS OF MAJOR PULSES** (in thousand tonnes)

	Peas (Matar)	Chickpea (Chana)	Lentil (Masoor)	Pigeonpea (Tur/Arhar)	Urad & Moong
2014-15	1951.97	418.88	816.47	575.22	622.89
2015-16	2245.39	1031.49	1260.19	462.71	581.6
2016-17	3172.76	1080.63	829.44	703.54	574.52
2017-18	2877.03	981.32	796.62	412.95	346.97
2018-19	851.41	185.95	248.97	530.67	574.24
2019-20	666.7	370.67	854.46	449.78	381.52
2020-21	46.33	294.53	1116.17	442.62	416.63
2021-22	0.85	202.1	667.43	840.46	807.17
2022-23	0.86	62.92	858.44	894.42	556.71

Source: Department of Commerce

- Secondly, the import of chana has dropped significantly. The boost came from 2 government measures i) the levy of a 60% import duty on chana since March 2018 and ii) government procurement at minimum support prices (MSP). It has incentivised Indian farmers to expand the area under the pulses crop grown during the rabi (winter-spring) season.

About Edible oil in India:

- The quantum of imports of edible oils has surged from 8 mt to 16 mt between 2013-14 and 2022-23 (from ~$7 to 21 billion in value terms).
- To keep a check on it the government has intervened through National Mission on Edible Oils (Oil Palm) [NMEO (OP)] and National Food Security Mission – Oilseeds and Oil Palm (NFSM-OS and OP): The government has been implementing this Centrally-sponsored scheme from 2018-19 to increase the production and productivity of oilseeds in the country.

IMPORTS OF VEGETABLE OILS
(in $ billion)

Year	Value
2013-14	7.25
2014-15	10.62
2015-16	10.49
2016-17	10.89
2017-18	11.64
2018-19	9.89
2019-20	9.67
2020-21	11.09
2021-22	18.99
2022-23	20.84

Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report 2023

News: The world is facing challenges in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG 7) by 2030. (As per the Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report 2023 report)

Background:

- The report has been released by a collaborative effort of the International Energy Agency (IEA), International Renewable Energy Agency, United Nations Statistics Division, World Bank and the WHO.

About SDG 7:

- SDG 7 refers to Sustainable Development Goal 7, which aims at reaching **universal access to electricity** and **clean cooking**, doubling historic levels of efficiency improvements, and substantially **increasing the share of renewables** in the global energy mix.

What are the factors stopping you from achieving SDG 7?

- Factors such as high inflation, uncertain macroeconomic outlook, debt distress, and limited financial flows have contributed to the world falling off-track in achieving SDG 7.
- Several economic factors such as Uncertain macroeconomic outlook and high levels of inflation, Currency fluctuations and debt distress in many countries, Lack of financing and supply chain bottlenecks and Tighter fiscal circumstances and soaring prices for materials.

Key recommendations:

- Scale up efforts to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency to meet the targets of SDG 7.
- Accelerate progress in energy intensity improvement to exceed the targeted rate and ensure sustainable energy consumption patterns.
- Monitor and track progress regularly to identify gaps and take necessary corrective measures.
- Increase financial flows and investment in clean energy technologies, especially in developing countries.

India and SDG 7:

- India is 'On-Target' to meeting universal access to electricity. In April 2018 India achieved its goal, ahead of schedule, of providing electricity to every village in India
- However, despite a national policy push for clean fuel for cooking, more than two-thirds (479) of districts remain 'Off-Target'.

- India's initiatives for SDG7 include - Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (also known as Saubhagya), Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) (separation of agricultural and non-agricultural feeders to improve supply), Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY) (for financial restructuring and turnaround plan for state DISCOMs), Atal Distribution System Improvement Yojana (ADITYA) and PM-KUSUM.

Reforms in the Education sector

News: From a new policy that outlines the education roadmap for the next 20 years to sweeping changes in school textbooks and the opening up of the Indian higher education space to foreign players, the Modi government's second term has proven to be more eventful in terms of education compared to the first.

What is done?

NEP 2020 and Reforms:
- The NEP 2020 is a policy document outlining a series of reforms to be pursued in education till 2040. India has had three policies to date.
- The NEP 2020 proposes vital shifts from creating a system in which "children not only learn but more importantly learn how to learn" to one in which "pedagogy must evolve to make education more experiential, inquiry-driven, flexible" and in which there is "no hard separation between arts and sciences".

National Curriculum Framework:
- The National Curriculum Framework (NCF), is a crucial policy document for **revising textbooks** and **classroom pedagogy**. Among its key recommendations are conducting board examinations twice a year, creating a semester system for Class 12 students, and providing students with the freedom to pursue a combination of science and humanities, aiming to reduce the rigid boundaries between arts, commerce, and science in classes 11 and 12 across all school boards.

GER IN HIGHER EDUCATION (GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO)

2014–15 **24.3**

2019–20 **27.1**

2020–21 **27.3**

Source: Parliament reply & AISHE 2020–21

Foreign Universities:
- Currently, The UGC is giving the final touches to a regulation that would allow foreign universities to establish campuses in India that have their own admission process, the freedom to determine fee structures and recruit faculty and staff from here and abroad.

Female Representation:
- The **supernumerary seats** were introduced for women at IITs and NITs in 2018, resulting in a rise in female representation from 9% in 2017 to 20% in 2022 at IITs over five years.
- Additionally, in 2021, all 33 **Sainik Schools** transitioned from being all-male to admitting girl cadets, following a successful pilot in 2018.
- According to AISHE data, there has been a reduction in gender disparity in higher education enrolment since 2014.

CHART 5
Female student representation in IITs after introduction of supernumerary quota

Academic Year	% of women in IITs
2018-19	14.70%
2019-20	17.60%
2020-21	18.80%
2021-22	19.70%
2022-23	19.80%

Other reforms:
- **Scrapping of no-detention policy** under the Right to Education Act, 2009.
- A single agency to conduct all entrance tests to higher education, the **National Testing Agency**, was set up in 2017.
- **Higher Education Financing Agency** or HEFA was set up in 2017 to leverage funds from the market to finance infrastructure development in educational institutions through long-term loans.
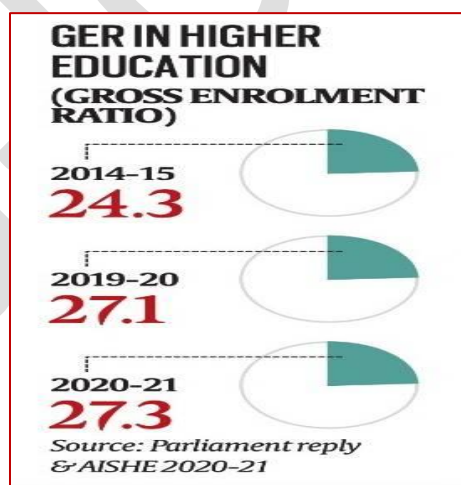
What reforms are needed?

- The **National Research Foundation** (NRF), intended to incentivise interdisciplinary research, **has not materialised** despite being announced in consecutive union budget speeches from 2019 to 2021.
- Since 2015, the overall allocation towards education has been stagnant at **2.8% to 2.9%** of the GDP. The ruling party had promised to raise public spending on education to 6% of GDP in its election manifesto so did the NEP 2020.
- The **Higher Education Commission of India**, intended to replace UGC and AICTE as overarching regulator, has yet to be established even five years after its initial announcement.
- No update on Digital University as was announced in last year's budget speech.
- Vacant faculty and leadership positions are on the rise.
- Despite provisions of autonomy under the Institutions of Eminence scheme, it has failed to materialize on the ground.

Facts for Prelims

The Ocean Census initiative

News: A new initiative called 'The Ocean Census initiative' aims to discover 100,000 new marine species within ten years, utilizing advanced technologies like high-resolution imagery, DNA sequencing, and machine learning.

About:
- The Ocean Census plans to conduct multiple expeditions to marine biodiversity hotspots, with the first expedition already underway in the **Barents Sea**. The initiative seeks to build upon previous efforts such as the Challenger Expeditions and the Census of Marine Life (between 2000 to 2010).
- It is jointly established by The Nippon Foundation (a non-profit philanthropic organization in Japan) and Nekton Foundation (marine science and conservation institute in the U.K) to discover unknown marine life.

Trivia:
- World Oceans Day was celebrated by the UN on the 8th of June every year.
- Theme – "Planet Ocean: Tides are changing"

Varunastra

News: The Indian Navy and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) achieved a significant milestone as an indigenous heavy-weight torpedo, Varunastra, successfully engaged an underwater target in a live test on June 6, 2023.

About Torpedo:
- A torpedo is a self-propelled underwater weapon designed to target and destroy enemy vessels or submarines. It is typically cylindrical in shape and equipped with explosives, propulsion systems, and guidance mechanisms.

About Varunastra:
- It is an indigenously designed and developed ship-launched anti-submarine torpedo. It was designed and developed by the Vizag-based Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL) under the DRDO and is manufactured by Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL).
- It has a maximum speed of 40 knots and a maximum operating depth of 600 m, and has a long range with multi-manoeuvring capabilities
- It features advanced capabilities such as low drift navigational systems, acoustic homing, and autonomous guidance algorithms.

Suriname

News: President of Suriname recently conferred their nation's highest civilian honour 'Grand Order of the Chain of the Yellow Star' to President Murmu.

About:

- Suriname is a small country in northern South America, with a coastline on the Atlantic Ocean.
- It was formerly a colony of the **Netherlands** and gained its independence in 1975.
- It is bordered by 3 countries - Guyana, Brazil, and France (via French Guiana). The borders with Guyana and France are in dispute, but the border with Brazil has been uncontroversial since 1906.
- Capital – **Paramaribo** (UNESCO WHS)
- Its economy is largely based on its natural resources, especially **bauxite** (the main source of aluminium), gold, oil, and timber.