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TATHASTU

Institute of Civil Services



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Zo Tribes of Manipur and Mizoram

News: According to a conglomerate's statement (based in Mizoram), while the Meitei community lives peacefully in Mizoram, the Zo people endure daily killings in the neighbouring state of Manipur.

Who are Zo people?

- The Zo people are a large ethnic group that inhabit areas of **India, Myanmar and Bangladesh**. They speak various languages that belong to the **Kuki-Chin branch** of the **Tibeto-Burman family**.
- They are also known by different names such as **Chin, Mizo, Kuki, Zomi** and others, depending on their geographic location and political affiliation.
- The Zo people share a common ancestry and culture that can be traced back to Sinlung or Chhinlung, a mythical place of origin that is believed to be somewhere in China or Tibet. They migrated southwards and settled in the hills and valleys of present-day Northeast India, Northwest Myanmar and Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh over several centuries.



What are the cultural practices of the Zo people?

- They have a **clan-based social structure**, where each clan has its name, emblem, origin myth and ancestral village.
- The clans are **exogamous**, meaning that marriage within the same clan is forbidden.
- They have a **rich oral tradition** of folktales, legends, songs, proverbs and riddles that reflect their history, culture, values and beliefs. They also have **their own scripts**, such as the **Cin Hau script** and the **Zo script**.
- They have a diverse religious landscape, with most of them following Christianity, while some still adhere to animism, Judaism or Buddhism.

Source - Eastmojo

Internationalization of Rupee

News: The Reserve Bank of India's inter-departmental group said that the Indian rupee has the potential to become an "internationalized" currency.

Background:

- While we have already discussed about recommendations of the RBI's IDG earlier. Today we will discuss about internationalization of rupee, its benefits and challenges in the Indian context.

What is Internalization of Rupee?

- Internationalization is a process that involves the use of a currency for more and more cross-border transactions such as trade, investment, remittances and tourism. For the rupee, it means that more and more international payments start taking place in the Indian currency.
- This involves promoting the rupee for current account transactions and foreign trade.

What are the benefits of Internalization of Rupee?

- It can **reduce the currency risk** for Indian enterprises that engage in international dealings, as they can avoid the fluctuations and uncertainties of exchange rates.
- It can also **lower their transaction costs** and **increase their competitiveness** in global markets.
- It can **save foreign exchange reserves for India**, as it can reduce the need for holding large amounts of foreign currencies to meet its external obligations.
- It enhances **India's economic sovereignty** and **reduces its vulnerability** to external shocks.

- It can boost India's trade and investment relations with other countries, especially in its neighbourhood and in Africa, where there is a demand for an alternative to the US dollar. It can also **promote regional integration and cooperation** among South Asian countries.
- It can **enhance India's soft power and influence in the world.**
- It can also increase India's role in global financial governance and institutions, such as the IMF and the World Bank.

What are the challenges to Internationalizing the Rupee?

- **India's small export footprint.** If there is no demand for Indian goods, countries will not use the Rupee. For example, India's share in Global exports is 2.4% while China (is 12.5%), and the USA (is 9.84%).
- Other challenge is **Convertibility of Rupee.** In some countries, currency is fully convertible. The dollar, Euro, Pound and Yen are fully convertible. While, Indian rupee is partially convertible which means there are exchange limits on how much you can convert.
- India has to **liberalize its capital account and allow free movement of capital** in and out of the country.
- Easier to convert currencies are **increasingly vulnerable** to shocks of Global economy. Thus, economists are suggesting India to be patient and build requisite reserves before full convertibility of Indian rupee.
- India also has to maintain **macroeconomic stability, fiscal discipline and low inflation** to ensure confidence in the rupee.
- India has to develop its financial markets and infrastructure to support the global demand and supply of the rupee. This includes enhancing the liquidity, depth and diversity of the rupee market.

Way Forward

- Internationalization of Rupee will eventually happen as we further make economic strides and liberalize our capital markets. It will take its own time but in the short term we can work upon the suggestions given by RBI's IDG, strengthen our domestic manufacturing and work upon integrating our financial markets with that of the world.

Source – Moneycontrol, Business Standard, Firstpost

One Health Priority Research Agenda on AMR

News: The 'Quadripartite' — comprising the United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) has released the One Health Priority Research Agenda on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

What is One Health approach?

- One Health is an **integrated, unifying approach** that aims to balance and optimize the **health of people, animals and ecosystems.** It recognizes that the health of humans, domestic and wild animals, plants, and the wider environment (including ecosystems) are closely linked and interdependent.
- One Health is not a new concept, but it has become more important in recent years due to the increasing interactions between people, animals and the environment as a result of factors such as population growth, urbanization, deforestation, globalization, travel and trade.
- These factors can create conditions for the emergence and spread of new or re-emerging diseases that can have serious impacts on human health, animal health, food security, biodiversity and economic development.

What is One health priority research agenda on AMR?

- The research agenda covers four main areas - **epidemiology, burden and drivers of AMR;** context-specific and cost-effective strategies to prevent infections and emergence of resistance; **discovery of new diagnostic tests** and improved treatment

INTERNATIONALIZING ₹

Pros:

- Will ease foreign trade, aid capital flows
- Mitigate exchange rate risks
- Reduce dependence on FX reserves

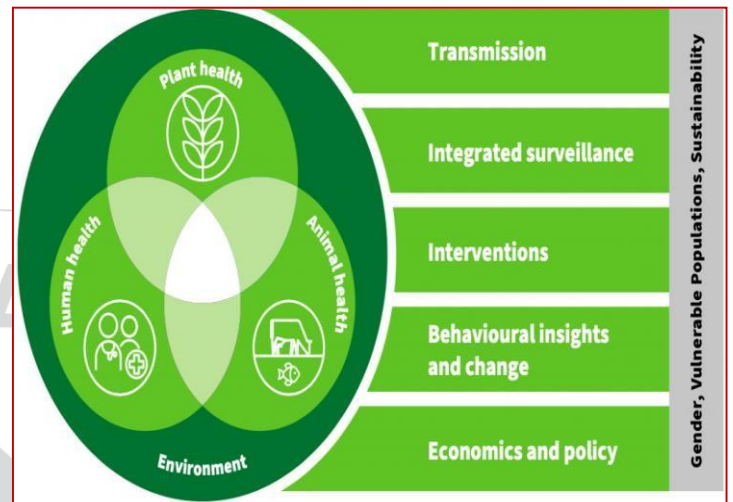
Cons:

- Complicates monetary policy
- Exchange rate stability is challenging
- Could bring uncontrolled capital flows

moneycontrol

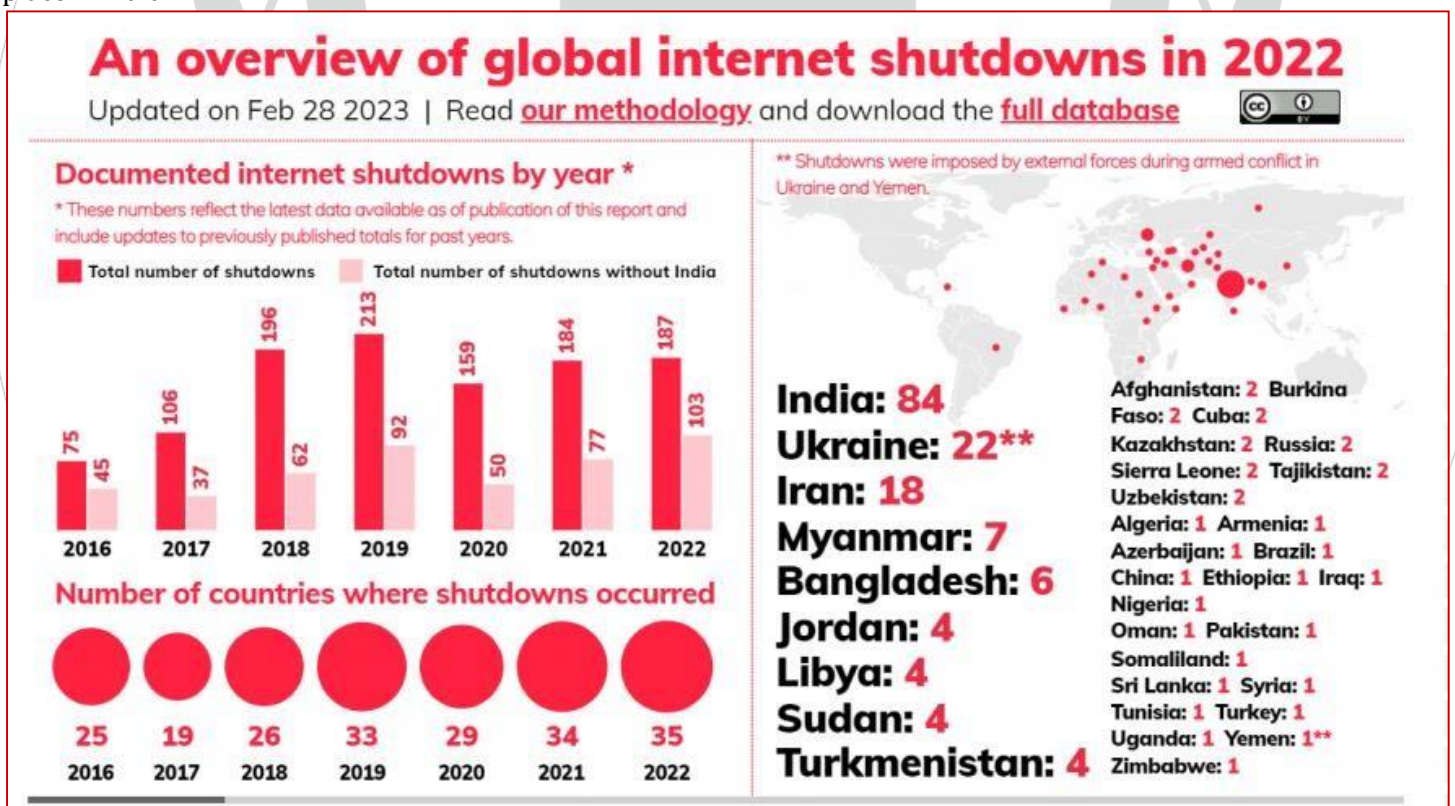
regimens; and **cost-effective methods** to collect data and translate it into policy.

- The research agenda also identifies cross-cutting issues, such as gender, equity, ethics, governance, communication and education.
- The research agenda aims to catalyze innovation and implementation research, generate evidence that informs policy and practice, and foster collaboration and coordination among various stakeholders.
- It focuses on 5 key pillars – Transmission, Integrated surveillance, Interventions, Behavioral insights and change, Economics and Policy, and Significance of the agenda.



Internet shutdown

News: Over the past few years, the Indian government has increasingly been trying to control law and order by shutting down access to the Internet. Between 2016 and 2022, 60% of Internet shutdowns across the world took place in India.



Background:

- According to a report by **Access Now** and the **#KeepItOn** coalition, India enforced as many as **84 Internet shutdowns in 2022** and was on top of the list for the fifth year in a row.

What is an Internet shutdown?

- An Internet shutdown is an **intentional disruption of Internet-based communications**, rendering them inaccessible or effectively unavailable, for a specific population, location, or mode of access, often to exert control over the flow of information.

- Internet shutdowns **can take various forms**, such as blocking specific websites, applications or services, throttling the speed or bandwidth of the Internet, or cutting off the power or infrastructure that supports the Internet.

What are the laws and regulations governing Internet shutdowns in India?

There are two main laws and regulations governing Internet shutdowns in India, namely.

- **Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CrPC)**, which empowers the District Magistrate or Executive Magistrate to issue orders to prevent any nuisance or disturbance of public tranquillity, such as by prohibiting the assembly of more than four people or restricting the use of any communication device or service.
- **The Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017***, which were issued under the **Indian Telegraph Act, 1885**, and provide a specific procedure for ordering Internet shutdowns in cases of public emergency or public safety.

According to these rules*, only the Home Secretary of the Union or a state can pass an order for suspension of telecom services, and the order must include the reasons for the decision. The order must also be reviewed by a committee within five working days to assess its compliance with Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, which allows the government to block the transmission of messages during a public emergency or for public safety

Why are internet shutdowns necessary?

- **To maintain public order and prevent violence** - Internet shutdowns are needed to stop the spread of rumours, misinformation, hate speech and incitement to violence that can fuel communal clashes, riots, protests and terrorist attacks.
- To protect **national security and sovereignty**
- It can **help control dissemination of harmful content**. For example, 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots were triggered by a fake video.
- It can help stop people from sharing information or organizing unnecessary protests.

What are negative points of Internet shutdown?

- It violates **Freedom of Expression** which is a Fundamental right. **Article 19** guarantees freedom of speech and expression.
- **Article 21** protects the right to life and liberty, which also encompasses the right to education and the right to exercise one's freedom to access the Internet.
- It **affects the delivery of essential services** such as health care, education and emergency response, and creates an environment of fear, uncertainty and misinformation.
- Internet shutdowns **harm the economy and society** of the country, as they disrupt trade, commerce, banking, tourism and other sectors that rely on the Internet. Few studies estimate the economic losses due to Internet shutdowns in India, such as \$1.3 billion in 2020 and \$1.9 billion in 2021.
- Internet shutdowns **may not solve the root cause of the problem** and rather aggravates the situation as they create more resentment, frustration and alienation among people.

What is Supreme Court's view on Internet shutdown?

- In January 2020, the Supreme Court delivered a landmark judgment in the case of **Anuradha Bhasin vs Union of India**, where it held that **access to information via the Internet is a fundamental right under Article 19** of the Constitution, and that any restriction on Internet access by the government **must be temporary, limited in scope, lawful, necessary and proportionate**.
- The court also reiterated that the government's orders restricting Internet access are **subject to judicial review** and **must comply with Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885**, which allows the government to block the transmission of messages during a public emergency or for public safety.

Facts for Prelims

Forever Chemicals

News: At least 45% of the nation's tap water could be contaminated with at least one form of PFAS known as "forever chemicals," according to a newly released study by the U.S. Geological Survey.

What are Forever chemicals?

- Forever chemicals are a class of chemicals collectively known as **per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances** (PFAS), which were first introduced in the 1940s.
- Their high thermal and chemical stability, coupled with their ability to repel grease and water, make these chemicals uniquely suited for a variety of engineering and commercial uses.
- They are used to make nonstick cookware, water-repellent clothing, stain-resistant fabrics, cosmetics, firefighting foams and many other products that resist grease, water and oil.
- Research has linked exposure to certain PFAS to adverse health effects in humans, from an increased risk of certain cancers, increased obesity and high cholesterol risk, decreased fertility and developmental effects like low birth weight in children.

SAFF Championship

News: Recently, India won the SAFF championship for a record **9th time** beating Kuwait in penalty shootout.

What is SAFF Championship?

- The SAFF Championship is the main international association football competition of the men's national football teams governed by the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF). It is held every two years and involves 7 countries from South Asia – Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Maldives, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- India is the most successful team in this tournament, having won it nine times, including the latest edition in 2023.
- The SAFF Championship was first held in 1993 in Pakistan as the SAARC Gold Cup and has evolved into South Asia's premier football tournament, promoting the regional development of the game.
- The **latest edition** of the tournament was held in India in 2023 and **featured eight teams for the first time**, with **Kuwait and Lebanon** joining as **guest teams**.
- **SAFF HQ – Dhaka, Bangladesh**

