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S.NO.	TOPIC
1.	ULFA PEACE ACCORD
2.	CORE SECTORS INDUSTRIES
3.	PRELIMS POINTERS

ULFA PEACE ACCORD

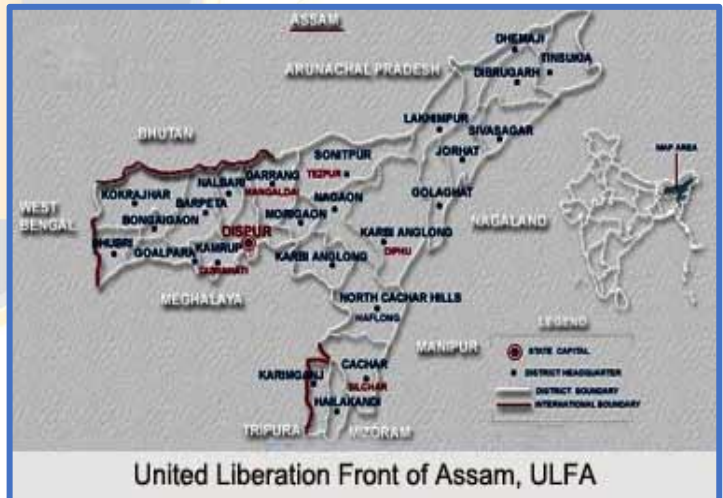
SOURCE: [INDIAN EXPRESS](#), [PIB](#)

WHY IN NEWS?

- *The recent signing of a historic tripartite peace deal involving the Government of India, the Assam state government, and the pro-talks faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) has garnered significant attention.*
- *In last 5 years, 9 peace and border related agreements have been signed with different states in the Northeast, these have established peace in large part of the Northeast.*
- *In ULFA conflict, about 10 thousand people from both sides were killed, who were citizens of this country, but today this problem is being completely resolved.*
- *After formation of Modi government in 2014, violent incidents in Assam decreased by 87%, deaths by 90% and kidnappings by 84%.*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ULFA (UNITED LIBERATION FRONT OF ASOM):

- **Overview:**
 - ✓ The **United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)**, an extremist organization formed in 1979, has been a prominent player in the northeastern Indian state of Assam.
 - ✓ The group's primary objective has been the establishment of a separate and sovereign Assamese nation independent of Indian rule.
 - ✓ Over the years, ULFA has been involved in numerous terrorist operations in Assam and other northeastern states, making it a significant security concern.
- **Formation and Early Years:**
 - ✓ Formed on **April 7, 1979**, by students associated with the **All Assam Students' Union**, ULFA aimed to promote an armed struggle against the Indian government for the creation of an independent socialist Assam.
 - ✓ The group remained relatively inactive until the mid-1980s, with some reports of recruitment but no major activities.
- **Links and Funding:**
 - ✓ In 1986, ULFA established connections with organizations like the *Kachin Independence Army (KIA)* and the *Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN)*, leading to increased fund-gathering activities.
 - ✓ Funding reportedly involved extortions from businesses and trading houses, with claims of strong links with the ruling Assam Gana Parishad (AGP) in the late 1980s.
- **Government Ban and Violent Tactics:**



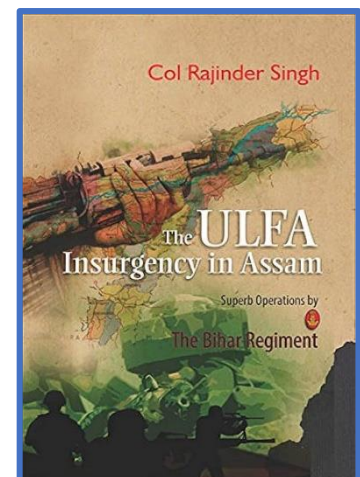
United Liberation Front of Assam, ULFA



- ✓ **Banned by the Indian government in 1990**, ULFA turned to violent tactics in the 1990s and early 2000s.
- ✓ The group targeted state government buildings, security personnel, rail infrastructure, and politicians opposing their ideologies.
- **Military Wing and Training Camps:**
 - ✓ **In 1996**, ULFA formed its military wing, **the Sanjukta Mukti Fouj (SMF)**, specifically for planning and executing terrorist activities.
 - ✓ **Training camps** were reportedly set up in **neighboring countries like Bhutan and Bangladesh during the 1990s**.
- **Philosophy and Tactics:**
 - ✓ ULFA's aim is to **"liberate" Assam from India**, proposing a **socialist government** for an independent Assam.
 - ✓ The **group employs violent tactics, targeting government officials**, security forces, and civilians, believing that armed struggle is the only means to achieve liberation.
 - ✓ **Extortion, kidnappings, and drug trafficking are cited as funding sources**, with legal business holdings in other countries, particularly Bangladesh.

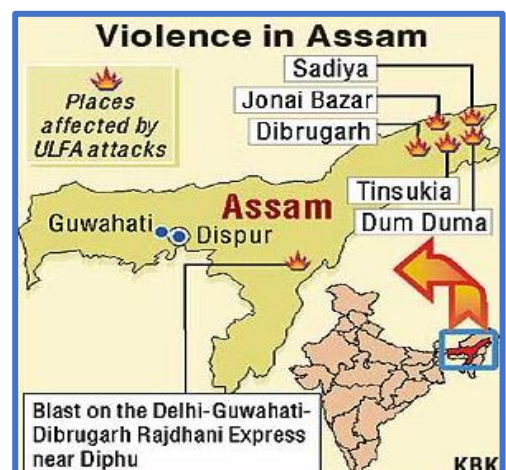
BACKGROUND OF ULFA INSURGENCY:

- **Assamese Anxieties:**
 - ✓ Assamese people, with their **distinct culture and language**, began **feeling insecure as the 19th-century economy** attracted migrants.
 - ✓ This insecurity **intensified with the Partition and subsequent influx of refugees** from East Pakistan.
- **Assam Accord:**
 - ✓ The **six-year-long mass movement** led to the **signing of the Assam Accord in 1985**, aimed at addressing the **issue of foreigners in Assam**.
- **Formation of ULFA:**
 - ✓ **In 1979**, radical thinkers, including Bhimakanta Buragohain, Arabinda Rajkhowa, Anup Chetia, Pradip Gogoi, Bhadreswar Gohain, and Paresh Baruah, **founded ULFA to establish a sovereign Assamese nation through armed struggle**.



CONFLICT AND CONCERNS:

- **Violent Struggle:**
 - ✓ ULFA's armed **struggle included kidnappings, extortion, executions, and bomb blasts**, causing tragic loss of life in Assam and beyond.
- **Government Response:**
 - ✓ The Indian state responded with **Operation Bajrang in 1990**, declaring Assam a **'disturbed area'**, imposing **President's rule**, and invoking the **Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)**.
- **Internal Divisions:**
 - ✓ ULFA faced internal divisions, with **factions like Surrendered ULFA (SULFA)** allegedly supporting the government, **leading to secret killings of ULFA insurgents**.





- **International Support:**
 - ✓ Despite government actions, **ULFA survived with support from outside India**, maintaining camps in Myanmar and previously in Bangladesh and Bhutan.
- **Global Connections:**
 - ✓ **ULFA had links with insurgent outfits in the Northeast, Myanmar, and terrorist groups like Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami and Al-Qaeda.**
 - ✓ **Paresh Baruah, ULFA's military chief, reportedly met Osama Bin Laden.**

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR THE PEACE AGREEMENT IN NORTH-EASTERN REGION:

Major Initiatives and Peace Process in North Eastern Region (NER):

- **Improved Security Situation in NER (2014-2022):**
 - ✓ **76% reduction in insurgency incidents.**
 - ✓ **90% decrease in Security Forces casualties.**
 - ✓ **97% drop in civilian deaths.**
- **Reduction of 'Disturbed Areas' under AFSPA (2022):**
 - ✓ **AFSPA removed from 24 districts in Assam.**
 - ✓ **Partial removal from 1 district in Assam, 15 Police Station areas in 6 districts of Manipur, and 15 Police Station areas in 7 districts of Nagaland.**
 - ✓ **Gradual reduction in Arunachal Pradesh.**
- **Peace Accords/Agreements in NER:**
 - ✓ **NLFT(SD) Agreement (2019):** Memorandum of Settlement signed with NLFT(SD), leading to **surrender of 88 cadres.**
 - ✓ **Bru Agreement (2020):** Agreement for permanent **settlement of Bru (Reang) families in Tripura.**
 - ✓ **Bodo Accord (2020):** Memorandum of Settlement signed with Bodo Groups, **resulting in the surrender of 1615 NDFB cadres.**
 - ✓ **Karbi Accord (2021):** Memorandum of Settlement signed to **end the crisis in Karbi Anglong, leading to over 1000 armed cadres abjuring violence.**
 - ✓ **Adivasi Peace Accord (2022):** Memorandum of Settlement **signed with 8 Adivasi Groups, resulting in the surrender of 1182 cadres.**
- **Other Peace Processes in NER:**
 - ✓ **ULFA (Pro Talks):** Under Suspension of Operation (SoO) agreement with the Government of India.
 - ✓ **NSCN(IM) Framework Agreement (2015):** Signed on 03.08.2015.
 - ✓ **Ceasefire Agreements in Nagaland (2022):** Extended with NSCN(NK), NSCN(R), and NSCN(K-Khango).
 - ✓ **Ceasefire Agreement with NSCN(K)Niki group (2022):** Extended for one year.
 - ✓ **SoO Agreements in Manipur (2023):** Extended with UPF and KNO.
 - ✓ **CoO Agreement with ZUF (2022):** Signed on 27.12.2022.
- **Mass Surrender:**
 - ✓ Various outfits' **cadres surrendered in 2020, 2021, and 2022**, including ULFA/I, NDFB, KLO, RNLF, CPI/Maoist, NSLA, ADF, and NLFB.
- **Inter-State Boundary Agreements:**
 - ✓ **Assam-Meghalaya (2022):** MoU signed to resolve **interstate boundary issues.**
 - ✓ **Assam-Arunachal Pradesh (2022):** Declaration signed to minimize border disputes, with 12 Regional Committees formed for resolution.



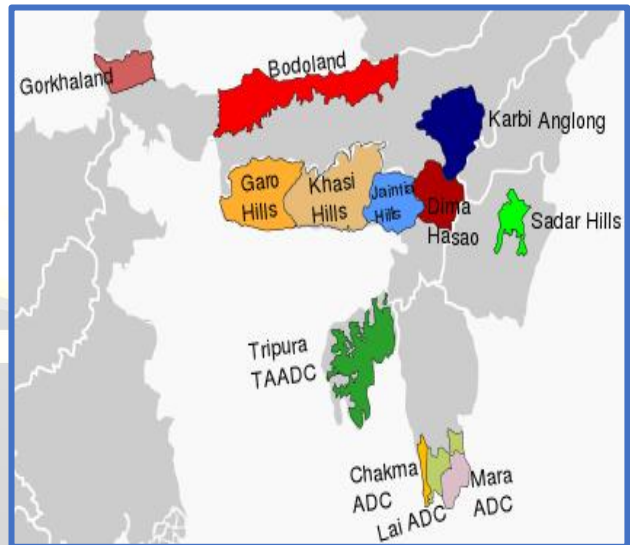
Peace Agreement for ULFA:



- **People's Consultative Group (PCG):**
 - ✓ In 2005, **ULFA formed PCG to mediate talks**, but ULFA later walked out, unleashing a new wave of terror.
- **Pro-Talks Faction:**
 - ✓ **Some ULFA commanders**, led by **Arabinda Rajkhowa**, sought **peace talks from 2008 onwards**, leading to a split with **Paresh Baruah** opposing dialogue.
- **Peace Talks Initiated:**
 - ✓ The pro-talks faction **submitted a 12-point charter of demands in 2012**, responded to by the government earlier this year, **culminating in the tripartite peace agreement in 2023**.

CHALLENGES IN THE PEACE DEAL:

- **Government's Commitment:**
 - ✓ **Rajeev Bhattacharya** emphasizes that the **success of the peace deal depends on the commitment of the government**.
 - ✓ **Uncertainty about the government's sustained effort** to address the root causes and implement the agreed-upon measures.
- **Incompleteness of the Deal:**
 - ✓ **Bhattacharya refrains from assessing the completeness of the deal**, pointing to lingering uncertainties.
 - ✓ **Unresolved issues and potential obstacles** that might arise **during the implementation phase remain a concern**.
- **Anti-Talks Faction's Demands:**
 - ✓ Assam CM **Himanta Biswa Sarma** expresses a **willingness to engage with the anti-talks faction**.
 - ✓ **Paresh Baruah's insistence on Assam's sovereignty poses a significant challenge** to achieving a comprehensive resolution.
- **Sovereignty Demand:**
 - ✓ **Baruah remains steadfast in his demand for Assam's sovereignty**, indicating a potential stumbling block in **reaching a final and universally accepted settlement**.
- **Divergent Views:**
 - ✓ Divergence in perspectives **between the government's confidence in a "complete solution" and the reservations** expressed by experts and factions raises questions about the shared understanding of the agreement's depth.
- **Future Engagements:**
 - ✓ The **intent to engage with the anti-talks faction** raises questions about the **nature and scope of these engagements**.
 - ✓ Ensuring the **participation and cooperation** of all relevant stakeholders remains a challenge.
- **Long-Term Development and Stability:**
 - ✓ The success of the peace deal **should be measured not only by the immediate cessation of hostilities** but also by its **long-term contribution** to the development and stability of Assam.
- **Public Sentiment:**
 - ✓ Public sentiment, **especially among the Assamese people**, will play a crucial role in determining the sustainability of the peace deal.
 - ✓ Ensuring that the **local population supports** the accord is essential for its success.





➤ **Implementation Hurdles:**

- ✓ The practical challenges of **implementing the terms of the agreement**, such as **integrating former insurgents into mainstream society** and addressing socioeconomic issues, may pose obstacles.

Way forward:

➤ **Sustained Government Commitment:**

- ✓ The government **must demonstrate unwavering commitment** to addressing the **root causes of insurgency**, ensuring that promises made in peace agreements are fulfilled.
- ✓ **Continuous engagement with all stakeholders**, including the **anti-talks faction**, is vital for building trust and sustaining peace efforts.

➤ **Inclusive Dialogue and Reconciliation:**

- ✓ **Foster inclusive and meaningful dialogue** that addresses the concerns of all factions, including those demanding sovereignty.
- ✓ **Prioritize reconciliation efforts to bridge ideological gaps and promote a shared vision** for the future, ensuring that diverse voices are heard and considered.

➤ **Implement Comprehensive Development Plans:**

- ✓ **Focus on long-term socio-economic development** initiatives that **benefit the local population**.
- ✓ **Address issues related to unemployment, poverty, and disparities**, contributing to a more equitable and stable environment.

➤ **Community Involvement and Public Awareness:**

- ✓ Engage **local communities actively in the peace process**, seeking their **input and involvement** to ensure grassroots support.
- ✓ **Raise public awareness about the benefits of peace, dispelling any misconceptions** and garnering support for the government's initiatives.

➤ **International Cooperation and Monitoring:**

- ✓ **Collaborate with neighbouring countries**, particularly those with **historical links to insurgent groups**, to prevent external support for insurgency.
- ✓ **Establish mechanisms for international monitoring and assistance** to ensure the transparent implementation of peace agreements and prevent any backsliding.



CORE SECTORS INDUSTRIES

SOURCE: [THE ECONOMIC TIMES](#)

WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ Output from **India's eight core sectors** expanded at a **six-month low pace of 7.8% in November**, compared to the **robust 12% recorded in October**.
- ❖ The **Index of Core Industries (ICI)** witnessed a **decline of 3.34% from October levels**, reaching 150.3, marking its lowest point since March 2023.

ABOUT CORE SECTOR INDUSTRIES:

➤ Overview:

- ✓ The Index of Core Industries (ICI) is a crucial measure that tracks the production volume in eight fundamental sectors of the Indian economy.

➤ Core Industries Included:

- ✓ The eight core sectors are **Coal, Natural Gas, Crude Oil, Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement, and Electricity**.

➤ Weightage in the Index:

- ✓ Each sector in the index is assigned a different weight, with **Refinery Products having the highest weight**, followed by Steel and Electricity.
- ✓ Cement carries the lowest weight.

➤ Economic Health Indicator:

- ✓ The ICI is a **reliable indicator of the health of the broader economy** because these industries are essential for its functioning.
- ✓ **Slow growth** in these sectors often indicates a **broader economic slowdown**.

➤ Interpretation of Data:

- ✓ **Examining the growth rates in individual sectors** provides insights into the overall economic performance.
- ✓ For instance, **Refinery Products, being a heavyweight, significantly influences the index**.

➤ Comparison and Trends:

- ✓ Comparing data with the previous year's performance helps **gauge the economy's trajectory**. Additionally, a focus on the **trend over the past months can reveal ongoing patterns and potential recovery from economic downturns**.



INDIA'S CORE INDUSTRIES PERFORMANCE - NOVEMBER 2023:

➤ Overall Growth:

- ✓ The **combined Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI)** increased by **7.8%** in November 2023 compared to the same month in 2022.

➤ Cumulative Growth Rates:

- ✓ Cumulative growth for April to November 2023-24 stands at 8.6%, with a **revision of the final growth rate for August 2023 to 13.4%**.

Sector-wise Performance:

➤ Cement:

- ✓ **Declined by 3.6%** in November 2023, with a cumulative **index increase of 10.3%** from April to November 2023-24.

➤ Coal:

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- ✓ **Marked a 10.9% increase** in November 2023, contributing to a **cumulative index rise of 12.8% during April to November 2023-24.**
- **Crude Oil:**
 - ✓ **Experienced a 0.4% decline** in November 2023, with a **cumulative index decrease of 0.2%** from April to November 2023-24.
- **Electricity:**
 - ✓ **Grew by 5.6%** in November 2023, and the cumulative index showed a **7.7% increase during April to November 2023-24.**
- **Fertilizers:**
 - ✓ **Registered a 3.4% increase** in November 2023, contributing to a cumulative index rise of **6.3% during April to November 2023-24.**
- **Natural Gas:**
 - ✓ **Witnessed a 7.6% increase** in November 2023, with a **cumulative index rise of 5.4% during April to November 2023-24.**
- **Petroleum Refinery Products:**
 - ✓ **Recorded a 12.4% increase** in November 2023, and the **cumulative index showed a 5.0% rise** during April to November 2023-24.
- **Steel:**
 - ✓ **Grew by 9.1% in November 2023**, contributing to a **cumulative index increase of 14.2%** during April to November 2023-24.

Slowing core

Output from eight core sectors grew 7.8% in November compared with 12% in October

- Crude oil slipped back into contraction in Nov., sliding 0.4%

- Fertilizer output grew 3.4%, the slowest in 3 months

- Natural gas output growth slowed to 7.6%



- Power generation growth slowed to 5-month low of 5.6% in November

Growth Trends:

- **Positive growth** was observed in the **production of Coal, Electricity, Fertilizers, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, and Steel.**
- **Crude Oil** production showed a **slight decline.**



PRELIMS POINTERS:

TOPIC	DISCRIPTION
<p>Navy unveils new epaulettes for Admirals</p>	<p>WHY IN NEWS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The Navy has introduced a new design for epaulettes worn by senior officers to break away from colonial legacies in customs and traditions. ❖ The design draws inspiration from the naval ensign and reflects the rich maritime heritage of the Marathas, inspired by the Rajmudra of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. <p>FOR WHICH RANKS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The new epaulettes are designed for Admiral, Vice Admiral, Rear Admiral, Surgeon Vice Admiral, and Surgeon Rear Admiral ranks. <p>KEY DIFFERENCES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ The new epaulettes feature the golden Navy button with the updated naval crest, a red octagon backing the national emblem, and symbols of a sword and a telescope. ☛ Medical officers' epaulettes have an additional red border. ☛ Unlike the old epaulettes, the new ones exclude the colonial-era fouled anchor and present an Indian sword and telescope. ☛ The design of stars on the epaulettes is also revamped. <p>SIGNIFICANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The new Navy button signifies the updated crest, shedding colonial vestiges. ❖ The red octagon symbolizes an all-round long-term vision, inspired by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's Rajmudra. ❖ The Indian sword represents the cutting edge of national power, emphasizing dominance and victory, while the telescope symbolizes foresight and a long-term vision. <p>REASONS FOR CHANGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The transformation aligns with the broader effort in the Indian Armed Forces to discard colonial-era customs. ❖ The Navy is embracing more Indian attire and reviewing British-inherited ranks. ❖ Previous changes include replacing the Christian hymn Abide With Me with Aye Mere Watan Ke Logon at the Beating Retreat ceremony and incorporating indigenous texts in military training.
<p>ISRO's PSLV-C58 Mission</p>	<p>WHY IN NEWS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to commence the New Year with the launch of the PSLV-C58 X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat) mission on January 1, 2024.





- ❖ *The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) will carry XPoSat along with 10 additional payloads, lifting off at 9:10 a.m. from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.*

XPOSAT MISSION DETAILS

❖ Key highlights:

- ☛ The PSLV-C58 Mission aims to **launch XPoSat** into an eastward low inclination orbit.
- ☛ **After XPoSat's injection, the PS4 stage will be restarted twice to adjust the orbit into a 350 km circular orbit.**
- ☛ The satellite will be **maintained in a 3-axis stabilized mode** for orbital platform experiments.
- ☛ The mission includes the **PSLV Orbital Experimental Module-3** experiment to fulfill the objective of **10 identified payloads** supplied by ISRO and IN-SPACe.



XPOSAT FEATURES:

- ❖ **XPoSat marks ISRO's first dedicated scientific satellite** for space-based polarization measurements of X-ray emission from celestial sources.
- ❖ **It carries two payloads:**
 - ☛ **POLIX (Polarimeter Instrument in X-rays)**, developed by the Raman Research Institute.
 - ☛ **XSPECT (X-ray Spectroscopy and Timing)**, developed by the Space Astronomy Group of URSC, Bengaluru.
- ❖ **Additional Payloads:**
 - ☛ The PSLV will **deploy 10 payloads developed by startups**, educational institutions, and ISRO centers.
- ❖ **Some of the payloads include-**
 - ☛ **Dust Experiment (DEX)** by PRL, ISRO;
 - ☛ **Fuel Cell Power System (FCPS)** by VSSC, ISRO;
 - ☛ **Si-based High Energy Cell** by VSSC, ISRO;
 - ☛ **Radiation Shielding Experimental Module (RSEM)** by TakeMe2Space;
 - ☛ **WESAT** by the LBS Institute of Technology for Women.

Discovery of 11th Century Jain Sculptures

WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ *Three Jain sculptures dating back to the 11th century were unearthed at Varuna village in Mysuru district.*
- ❖ *The discovery occurred during excavation work for drainage in the village.*

JAIN SCULPTURAL RELIEFS: AN OVERVIEW

Mathura School of Sculptures:



❖ **Geographical Context:**

- ☛ Developed around Mathura, a significant city on the Uttarapatha and the second capital of the Kushanas.
- ☛ Red spotted sandstone from the nearby Aravalli region was used for sculpting.

❖ **Religious Diversity:**

- ☛ Sculptures from Mathura School encompass Buddhism, Brahmanism, and Jainism.



FEATURES OF JAIN SCULPTURES IN MATHURA SCHOOL

❖ **Jina Representation:**

- ☛ Depiction of Jina (Jain Tirthankaras), with Parshvanatha, Rishabanatha, or Mahavira being popular subjects.

❖ **Postures:**

- ☛ Standing Jina characterized by straight posture, with hands extending to the knees.
- ☛ Seated Jina in padmasana (lotus position) with hands in dhyana mudra (meditation gesture); typically depicted nude.

❖ **Emblems for Tirthankaras:**

- ☛ Different emblems on throne or chest distinguish 24 Tirthankaras, e.g., lion for Mahavira, bull for Rishabh.

❖ **Ayagapatas:**

- ☛ Jain contributions to stupas in the form of square slabs (ayagapatas) depicting Jina stupa, swastika, twin fish symbols, scenes, etc.
- ☛ Notable findings at Kankali Tila, a mound in Mathura.

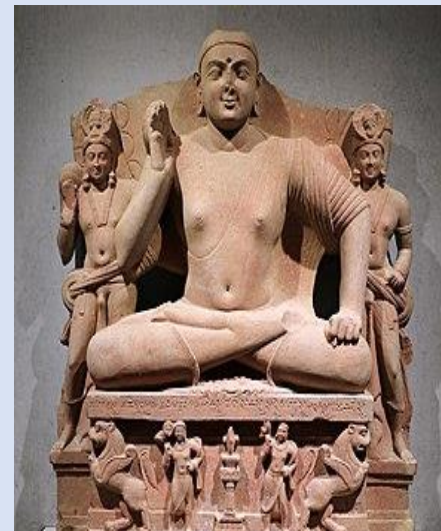
EXAMPLES OF JAIN SCULPTURES:

❖ **Lohanipur Torso:**

- ☛ Polished sandstone statue in Patliputra, Bihar, representing a damaged Jain Tirthankara.

❖ **Gopachal Rock-cut Jain Monuments:**

- ☛ Located around Gwalior Fort, Madhya Pradesh.
- ☛ Depict Tirthankaras in seated Padmasana and Kayotsarga postures, following the typical naked form.



❖ **Vasantgarh Hoard:**

- ☛ Located in Rajasthan, revealing a strong Jain presence.
- ☛ Discovery of 240 Jain bronze idols depicting Tirthankaras, sashandevatas (yaksha and yakshi), and Jain deities in Shwetambar iconography.



Sukanya Samridhi Yojana

WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ According to a **finance ministry circular**, the **deposit under Sukanya Samridhi scheme would attract an interest rate of 8.2 per cent from the existing 8 per cent**, while the **3-year term deposit would become 7.1 per cent from the current 7 per cent**.

SUKANYA SAMRIDDI YOJANA: OVERVIEW

❖ About:

- ☛ Sukanya Samridhi Yojana is a **small deposit scheme of the Government of India** meant **exclusively for a girl child** and is **launched as a part of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Campaign**.
- ☛ The scheme is **meant to meet the education and marriage expenses of a girl child**.

❖ Objective:

- ☛ Government-backed **small savings scheme**.
- ☛ Launched under the **'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao'** campaign to **secure the future of girl children**.

❖ Account Opening:

- ☛ **Parents or legal guardians can open an account in the name of the girl child**.
- ☛ Accounts can be opened at **post offices or designated private/public banks**.

❖ Age Criteria:

- ☛ Girl child **should be below 10 years** at the time of account opening.
- ☛ Account remains operational **until the girl reaches 21 years**.

❖ Withdrawal for Education:

- ☛ **Partial withdrawal of 50% of the balance** allowed **after the girl turns 18**.
- ☛ Aimed at **meeting higher education expenses**.

❖ Investment Limits:

- ☛ Investment can **range from Rs. 250 to Rs. 1,50,000 annually**.

❖ Single Account Limit:

- ☛ A single girl child **cannot have multiple Sukanya Samridhi accounts**.

❖ Family Limit:

- ☛ Limited to **two Sukanya Samridhi Yojana accounts per family**.
- ☛ One account allowed for **each girl child in the family**.

Sukanya Samridhi Account
New Saving Scheme for Girl Child

1. The account can be opened by Natural or legal guardian of girl child.
2. The age of the girl at the time of opening of account should not be more than 10 year. One year relaxation available this year.
3. Minimum deposit amount is 1000 and maximum amount is 150000 per annum.
4. Money must be deposited for 14 years.
5. Amount can be deposited in cash of cheque.
6. Interest is 9.1 % per month.
7. Maturity date is 21 year from date of opening or date of marriage of girl child whichever is earlier.
8. 50% withdrawal can be made for higher studies of girl child after her age of 18 years.
9. Account shall be closed premature in the case of death of girl child.

DONKEY ROUTES

WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ **Serbia modified its visa rules due to illegal migrants, including Indians, exploiting the visa-free regime to enter Europe.**



- ❖ *To establish a credible travel history, Indian migrants, primarily men aged 25-40, enter Serbia via destinations like Nepal, Dubai, and Armenia.*

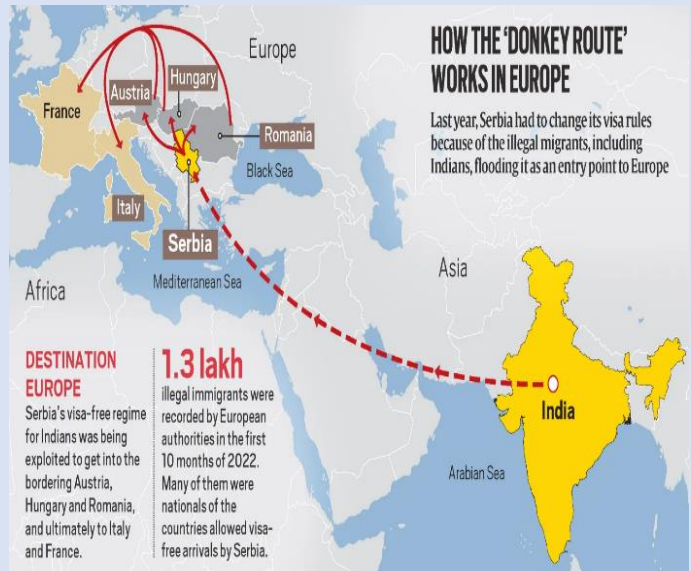
UNDERSTANDING OF DONKEY ROUTE:

- ❖ **Donkey Route Phenomenon:**

- ☛ The 'donkey route' involves **connecting migrants with 'donkers' (smugglers)** upon arrival in the **transit country**, who assist in **illegal entry to the final destination.**

- ❖ **Harsh Conditions and Tragedies:**

- ☛ Migrants endure **inhumane conditions, transported in cramped spaces, facing risks of suffocation and exploitation by smugglers.**



- ❖ **Historical Tragedies and UN Report:**

- ☛ Historical incidents include **migrants drowning, suffocating, or falling victim to smuggling gangs.**
- ☛ **A 2009 UN report** highlights such cases.

- ❖ **Destination Europe:**

- ☛ **Europe, especially the UK, is a preferred destination for irregular migration.**
- ☛ Transit countries include **Bosnia, Portugal, Poland, Czech Republic, and Hungary.**

- ❖ **US-Bound Migrants:**

- ☛ For those heading to the US, the route often involves **reaching a Latin American country first**, with Ecuador, Bolivia, and Guyana as common points.

- ❖ **Indian Nationals Stranded:**

- ☛ Significant numbers of **Indians are reportedly stranded in Spain**, seeking amnesty after illegal entry.

- ❖ **Government's Challenge:**

- ☛ The Indian government faces challenges as **foreign countries often do not provide information on illegal migrants** until deportation is imminent.

- ❖ **High Migration Regions:**

- ☛ **Irregular migration** is notably high from states like **Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu & Kashmir.**



BRICS

WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ **Argentine President Javier Milei has formally declined an invitation for Argentina to join BRICS, a significant development in the geopolitical landscape.**
- ❖ **BRICS, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, announced the admission of six new members, including Argentina, in August.**
- ❖ **President Milei sent official letters to BRICS leaders to communicate and formalize Argentina's decision not to become a part of the BRICS grouping.**

BACKGROUND: BRICS AND ITS EVOLUTION

- ❖ **Origins:**
 - BRICS originated from the earlier concept of BRIC, formed by **Goldman Sachs in 2006, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, and China.**
- ❖ **Economic Stages:**
 - BRIC countries were identified as **having similar stages of newly advanced economic development**, emphasizing China and India as future dominant suppliers.
- ❖ **South Africa's Inclusion:**
 - **In December 2010, BRIC expanded to BRICS with the inclusion of South Africa, aiming for an equitable, democratic, and multi-polar world order.**

- ❖ **Objectives:**

- BRICS focuses on **promoting peace, security, development, and cooperation**, contributing significantly to global development and a fairer world.

- ❖ **Economic Significance:**

- BRICS collectively represents **3.24 billion inhabitants** (41% of the world population) and a **GDP of \$26 trillion** (60% of G7 countries' combined GDP).

- ❖ **New Development Bank (NDB):**

- **Established in 2015, the NDB with \$100 billion capital funds sustainable development and infrastructure projects in member countries.**

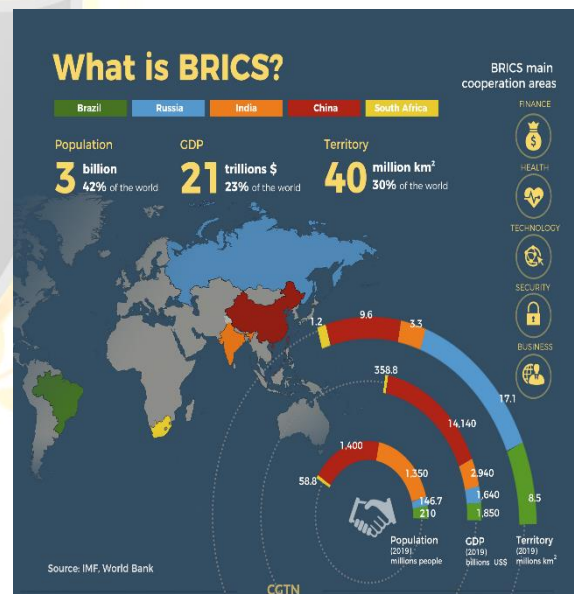
15TH BRICS SUMMIT: SOUTH AFRICA'S PRIORITIES

- ❖ **Theme:**

- The theme is **'BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Multilateralism.'**

BRICS EXPANSION: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- ❖ **BRICS Composition:**





- BRICS consists of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, representing **41% of the global population, 24% of GDP, and 16% of global trade.**

- ❖ **Interest from Other Countries:**

- Countries like **Argentina, Egypt, Indonesia, UAE, Saudi Arabia, etc.**, expressed **interest in joining BRICS, with around 40 countries exploring membership.**

- ❖ **Expansion Decision:**

- The **recent 15th BRICS Summit** saw the admission of Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE **as full members.**

