







JEWELS OF THE MONTH



| S.No. | TOPIC | PAGE NO. |
|-------|---|----------|
| 1. | CHANDRAYAAN-3: INDIA'S LUNAR MISSION | 5 |
| 2. | ADITYA-L1 | 7 |
| 3. | STATE OF BIRDS | 9 |
| 4. | REFORMING COUNTRY'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM | 13 |

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE:

| S.No. | TOPIC | PAGE NO. | | |
|-------|--|----------|--|--|
| 1. | THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF 17 | | | |
| | DELHI (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023 | | | |
| 2. | UNMUTE THE OPPOSITION | 20 | | |
| 3. | A TENTATIVE RETHINK | 22 | | |
| 4. | JAN VISHWAS ACT 2022 | 25 | | |
| 5. | J&K CONSTITUTION LIMITED EXECUTIVE POWERS OF | 27 | | |
| | UNION OF INDIA, SAYS SC | | | |
| 6. | NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY, 2020 & PM-USHA 30 | | | |
| 7. | BILKIS BANO CASE: SC ASKS WHY REMISSION POLICY IS 32 | | | |
| | 'SELECTIVE' | | | |
| 8. | WITH HUGE ALLOCATION, TECH. WILL TRANSFORM | /34 | | |
| | JUDICIARY, SAYS CJI | | | |
| 9. | MEDIATION BILL: AN INCOMPLETE SETTLEMENT 37 | | | |
| 10. | AS MANY AS 189 TRIBAL COLONIES IN KERALA STILL LACK 39 | | | |
| | INTERNET ACCESS | | | |
| 11. | NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL 42 | | | |
| | EDUCATION (NCF-SE) | | | |

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:

| S.No. | TOPIC | PAGE NO. |
|-------|------------------------|----------|
| 1. | COUP IN NIGER | 45 |
| 2. | IT'S TIME FOR AFRICA | 47 |
| 3. | INDIA-GREECE RELATIONS | 50 |

| 4. | INDIA AND THE NORTHEN SEA ROUTE | 53 |
|----|---------------------------------|----|
| 5. | BRICS GETS SIX NEW MEMBERS | 55 |

ECONOMY:

| S.NO. | TOPIC | PAGE NO. |
|-------|---|----------------|
| 1. | FORMAL JOB CRISIS | 59 |
| 2. | GOVT. IMPOSES CURBS ON IMPORT OF LAPTOPS AND TABLETS | 62 |
| 3. | SUGAR PRODUCTION IN INDIA | 64 |
| 4. | FARM REFORMS | 67 |
| 5. | PM LAUNCHES REVAMP OF 508 AMRIT BHARAT STATIONS | 69 |
| 6. | HOUSE PANEL TELLS GOVT. TO ENSURE FERTILIZER AVAILABILITY, INCREASE LOCAL PRODUCTION | 71 |
| 7. | NEW SOIL HEALTH CARD SCHEME | 74 |
| 8. | TO CONTROL THE INCREASE IN PRICES, THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO RELEASE ADDITIONAL STOCKS OF GRAINS THROUGH OPEN MARKET SALES. | 76 D |
| 9. | TEXTILE EXPORTS CONTINUE TO DECLINE | 77 |
| 10. | LIVESTOCK SECTOR IS CONSISTENTLY GROWING AT A HIGH COMPOUND ANNUAL GROWTH RATE (CAGR) OF 7.67% DURING 2014-15 TO 2021-22 | 80 |
| 11. | IRRIGATION IN FOCUS AS INDIA MOVES TOWARDS DRIEST- EVER AUGUST | 83 |
| 12. | SMARTPHONE MANUFACTURING IN INDIA | 86 |
| 13. | CENTRE FOR MONITORING INDIAN ECONOMY (CMIE) DATA: A DISSONANT NOTE | 88 |
| 14. | 9 YEARS F JAN DHAN YOJANA | 91 |
| 15. | UNDERSTANDING CURBS ON RICE EXPORTS | 93 |

ENVIRONMENT AND GEOGRAPHY:

| S.NO | TOPIC | PAGE NO. |
|------|--|----------|
| 1. | ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA- 75 ENDEMIC BIRDS OF INDIA | 96 |
| 2. | RECALIBRATING INDIA CLEAN COOKING STRATEGY | 97 |
| 3. | BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AMENDMENT BILL 2021 | 99 |
| 4. | CLIMATE EVENTS AND AN UMBRELLA FOR URBAN HEALTH | 101 |
| 5. | CAN SMRS (SMALL MODULAR REACTORS) HELP INDIA ACHIEVE NET ZERO? | 104 |
| 6. | MISSION AMRIT SAROVAR | 106 |

SOCIAL ISSUES:

| S.NO. | TOPIC | PAGE NO. |
|-------|--|----------|
| 1. | COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN INDIA | 109 |
| 2. | MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN SECURITY FORCES | 111 |
| 3. | COMBATING STEREOTYPES | 113 |
| 4. | NATIONAL MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX: A PROGRESS 115 OF REVIEW 2023 | |
| 5. | NEEDED, A WELL-CRAFTED SOCIAL SECURITY NET FOR ALL 117 | |
| 6. | 6. SMART CITIES AWARDS: MP ADJUDGED BEST STATE, INDORE BEST CITY FOR 6TH YEAR IN ROW | |
| 7. | MIGRANT WORKERS FORCED TO FLEE BACK HOME, GURUGRAM HIGH-RISES FEEL THE PINCH | 122 |

INTERNAL SECURITY:

| S.NO 1. | TOPIC MONEY LAUNDERING | PAGE NO. 126 |
|------------|---|-----------------|
| 2. | INDIA'S ROHINGYA REFUGEE CHILDREN ARE NOT CRIMINALS | 129 |

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:

| S.NO. | TOPIC | PAGE NO. |
|-------|--|----------|
| 1. | THE HYBRID EV IMPERATIVE | 132 |
| 2. | SUPERCONDUCTING HYPE: ON SOUTH KOREA'S LK-99 | 134 |
| 3. | STARLINK: THE NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW DOMINANT FORCE IN LOW-EARTH ORBIT | 136 |
| 4. | IS ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE BEING MADE WORSE BY AIR POLLUTION? | 138 |
| 5. | INDIA SETS UP IT'S FIRST 3D-PRINTED POST OFFICE | 141 |
| 6. | TUBERCULOSIS (TB) | 143 |

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES:

VISHWAKARMA YOJANA

TEST YOUR QUEST &

(A MYSTRY INSIDE!!!)



147



JEWELS OF THE MONTH



☐ CHANDRAYAAN-3: INDIA'S LUNAR MISSION

India took a giant leap as the Chandrayaan-3 lander module successfully landed on the moon's South Pole, making it the first country to have achieved the historic feat

OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION & RECENT FINDINGS:

- > To demonstrate Safe and Soft Landing on Lunar Surface
- To demonstrate Rover roving on the moon and
- > To conduct in-situ scientific experiments.

RECENT FINDINGS: Chandrayaan-3 confirmed the presence of several elements on the lunar surface near the south pole, including sulphur, aluminium, calcium, iron, chromium, titanium, manganese, oxygen, and silicon

LAUNCH VEHICLE: LVM3- INDIA'S HEAVIEST ROCKET

It is India's heaviest rocket with a gross lift-off weight of 640

- tonnes, an overall length of
 - 43.5m and 5m- diameter payload fairing (the nose-shaped equipment to protect the rocket from aerodynamic forces)
- > The launch vehicle can carry up to 8 tonnes of payload to the lower earth orbit (LEO), which is about 200 km from the earth's surface
- It is a three-stage launch vehicle, including two solid boosters(S200), the core liquid fuelbased stage(L110), and the cryogenic upper stage(C25)
- ISRO renamed the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) Mark-III as Launch Vehicle Mark III in October last year. It was done to identify its task of placing satellites into a variety of orbits.



MISSION COMPONENTS:

- > Chandrayaan-3 comprises an indigenous lander module (LM), propulsion module (PM), and a rover.
- Three Modules: Propulsion, Lander (VIKRAM), and Rover (PRAGYAN).
- > Propulsion Module: Carries the lander and rover to the Moon.
- > Lander Module: Contains the rover, which will explore the lunar surface.

| ISRO'S PLANETARY | Y EXPLORATIONS: |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Mission | Description |
| Chandrayaan-1 | ISRO shifted focus to planetary exploration with Chandrayaan-1 in 2008. Moon Impact Probe intentionally crashed on the lunar surface, marking India's lunar presence. ISRO became the fifth country to reach the Moon. Orbiter detected lunar water indications. |
| Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM) | In 2013, ISRO launched Mangalyaan, its maiden interplanetary mission, reaching Mars orbit. ISRO stood as the fourth entity to achieve this feat after Russia, USA, and EU. |
| Chandrayaan-2 | Chandrayaan-2's 2019 mission included an orbiter, lander (Vikram), and rover (Pragyan). Vikram's soft-landing attempt failed due to communication loss and improper velocity reduction, resulting in a lunar surface crash. |
| Chandrayaan-3 | Launched on July 14, 2023, Chandrayaan-3 accomplished a successful soft landing near the lunar south pole, a remarkable achievement that made India the pioneer in reaching this lunar region. |

| OTHER LUN | OTHER LUNAR MISSIONS: | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Country | Mission Name | Description | |
| United States | Apollo Program | A series of missions, including Apollo 11, which successfully landed astronauts on the Moon. Neil Armstrong became the first human to set foot on the lunar surface in 1969. | |
| Soviet Union | Luna Program | The Luna series of missions included Luna 2, the first human-made object to reach the Moon in 1959, and Luna 24, which successfully brought lunar soil samples back to Earth in 1976. | |
| China | Chang'e Program | Chang'e missions include orbiter , lander , and rover components . Chang'e 4, launched in 2018, achieved the first soft landing on the far side of the Moon . | |
| United States | Surveyor Program | A series of robotic spacecraft that conducted soft landings on the Moon's surface to gather data for future human missions. Surveyor 1 successfully landed in 1966. | |
| European Union | SMART-1 | Launched by the European Space Agency (ESA), SMART-1 was the first European spacecraft to orbit the Moon and conducted scientific observations from 2004 to 2006. | |
| China | Chang'e 5 | Launched in 2020, Chang'e 5 successfully collected lunar samples and returned them to Earth, marking a significant milestone in China's lunar exploration efforts. | |
| United States | Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter | Launched in 2009, it orbited the Moon to gather detailed maps, images, and data about the lunar surface, assisting in planning future lunar missions. | |

ISRO'S ACHIVEMENTS OVER THE YEARS:

| ISRO'S SATELLITE PROGRAMMES: | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Satellite Programme | Description and Purpose | |
| Aryabhata (1975) | India's first satellite, focused on scientific and technological research. | |
| Rohini Satellite Series (1980s) | A series of satellites for Earth observation, remote sensing, and scientific research. | |
| INSAT Series (1983 onwards) | Communication, broadcasting, and meteorology satellites for India. | |
| IRS Series (1988 onwards) | Earth observation and remote sensing satellites for various applications. | |
| GSAT Series (2001 onwards) | Communication satellites to provide various telecommunication services. | |
| Cartosat Series (2005 onwards) | High-resolution Earth observation satellites for cartographic applications. | |
| NavIC (2018 onwards) | India's regional satellite navigation system, providing accurate positioning and timing. | |
| Astrosat (2015) | India's first dedicated multi-wavelength space observatory for astronomical studies. | |

| ISRO'S LAUNCH VEHICLE PROGRAMMES: | | |
|---|--|--|
| Launch Vehicle Programme | Description | |
| SLV (Satellite Launch Vehicle) | India's first experimental satellite launch vehicle, developed to demonstrate the capability of placing satellites into orbit. | |
| ASLV (Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle) | An improved version of SLV designed to enhance payload capacity and orbital capabilities. | |
| PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle) | A versatile launch vehicle used for launching satellites into polar and sun-synchronous orbits. Known for its reliability and adaptability. | |
| GSLV (Geosynchronous | Designed to launch heavier payloads into geosynchronous | |
| Satellite Launch Vehicle) | transfer orbit (GTO) for communication satellites. | |
| GSLV Mark III (LVM3) | ISRO's heaviest and most powerful launch vehicle, capable of carrying larger payloads to GTO and beyond. Also known as "Bahubali". | |
| | Of Civi | |

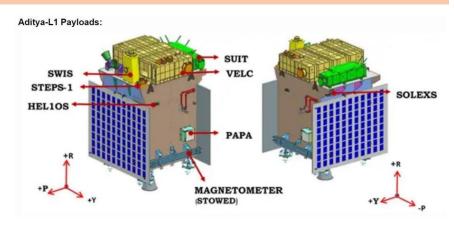
□ ADITYA-L1

ABOUT ADITYA-L1: Aditya L1 is India's first space mission to study the Sun.

- On September 2, ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C57) successfully launched Aditya-L1
- ➤ It will orbit around Lagrange point 1 (L1) in the Sun-Earth system, 1.5 million km away. Halo orbit around L1 allows continuous Sun observation without eclipses. This offers real-time insights into solar activities and space weather. Will provide insights into particle and field propagation.

THE MAJOR SCIENCE OBJECTIVES OF ADITYA-L1 MISSION ARE:

- Study of Solar upper atmospheric (chromosphere and corona) dynamics.
- Study of chromosphere and coronal heating, physics of the partially



ionized plasma, initiation of the coronal mass ejections, and flares

- > Observe the **in-situ particle and plasma environment** providing data for the study of particle dynamics from the Sun. Physics of solar corona and its heating mechanism.
- ➤ **Diagnostics of the coronal and coronal loops plasma**: Temperature, velocity and density. Development, dynamics and origin of CMEs.
- ➤ Identify the sequence of processes that occur at multiple layers (chromosphere, base and extended corona) which eventually leads to solar eruptive events. ¬ Magnetic field topology and magnetic field measurements in the solar corona.
- > Drivers for space weather (origin, composition and dynamics of solar wind).

| OTHER SOLAR MISSIC | NS: | |
|---|---|---|
| MISSION | COUNTRY | DISCRIPTION |
| Solar and Heliosphere Observatory (SOHO) | NASA (USA) and ESA (European Space Agency) | - Launched in 1995 Studies the Sun's outer atmosphere, solar wind, and interior Provides data on solar activity and coronal mass ejections. |
| Solar Dynamics Observatory (SDO) | NASA (USA) | - Launched in 2010 Observes the Sun in multiple wavelengths with high resolution Studies solar magnetic activity, flares, and coronal mass ejections. |
| Parker Solar Probe | NASA (USA) | - Launched in 2018 Approaches the Sun closer than any previous spacecraft Aims to study solar corona, solar wind, and energetic particles. |
| Solar Orbiter | ESA (European Space Agency) and NASA (USA) | - Launched in 2020 Observes the Sun from various angles, including polar regions Studies solar wind, magnetic fields, and heliosphere's dynamics. |
| Hinode (Solar-B) | JAXA (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency), NASA (USA), ESA (European Space Agency) | - Launched in 2006 Studies solar magnetic fields and their role in solar activity Provides high-resolution images of solar surface and corona. |
| Yohkoh (Solar-A) | ISAS (Institute of Space and Astronautical Science, Japan) | - Launched in 1991 Studies solar flares, X-rays, and coronal temperature Provided insights into solar activity and dynamics. |

LAGRANGE POINTS:

- Definition: Lagrange points are locations where gravitational forces between two large bodies, like the Earth and the Moon, create areas of gravitational equilibrium.
- Stable Points: Five Lagrange points exist in a Sun-Earth system. Three are aligned with the Earth and Sun, and two are 60 degrees ahead and behind Earth in its orbit.
- L1 (Lagrange Point 1): Located between the Earth and the Sun. Objects placed there are influenced by both bodies' gravity, allowing continuous solar observation.
- L'3
 L'1
 L'2
 L5
- L2 (Lagrange Point 2): Positioned on the opposite side of Earth from the Sun. Provides a stable point for telescopes or observatories that need an unobstructed view.
- L3 (Lagrange Point 3): Lies on the other side of the Sun from Earth. Harder to maintain, as objects here are influenced by both Earth and Sun.
- L4 and L5: Found 60 degrees ahead and behind Earth in its orbit. They form equilateral triangles with Earth and Sun, providing stable regions.
- ➤ **Uses:** Lagrange points are ideal for space telescopes, solar observatories, and interplanetary missions due to their stable nature and unobstructed

☐ STATE OF BIRDS

WHY IN NEWS? -

- The "State of India's Birds, 2023" report indicates that some bird species are currently experiencing a decline, while others are projected to face a decrease in the long term.
- Several bird species like the Indian Peafowl, Rock Pigeon, Asian Koel, and House Crow are displaying an "increasing trend" in terms of their numbers and distribution. However, their
 - overall health in terms of abundance and distribution remains compromised.
- > The most significant declines have been observed in raptors, migratory shorebirds, and ducks.



ABOUT STATE OF INDIA'S BIRDS REPORT:

- Published after a span of three years, the report represents an evaluation of the distribution scope, variations in population size, and preservation status of 942 out of India's total of 1,200 bird species. This comprehensive assessment has been conducted by a consortium of 13 collaborating organizations, which include esteemed institutions like the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI).
- 2. The assessments hinge on three distinctive indices. Among these, two indices are associated with alterations in population size: the long-term trend, which spans across three decades, and the current annual trend, encapsulating alterations over the preceding seven years. The third index gauges the extent of distribution range within India.



KEY FINDINGS OF THE REPORT:

- 1. Lack of Trends for Many Species: The report highlights that for numerous among the 942 species, neither long-term nor current annual trends could be established.
- 2. **Long-Term Trends of 338 Species:** Among the 338 species with identifiable long-term trends, 204 (60%) have experienced decline, 98 remain stable, and 36 have shown an increase.
- 3. **Current Annual Trends of 359 Species:** Among the 359 species analysed for current annual trends, 142 (39%) are declining, 64 are rapidly declining, 189 remain stable, and 28 species are increasing.
- 4. **Range Size Assessment:** The assessment included measuring the range size, or territorial area, of all 942 bird species. Around 39% of species have a moderate range size, 33% possess a very large range, and 28% inhabit "restricted and very restricted" regions.
- 5. **Impact on Specialist Species:** Bird species specialized to specific habitats like wetlands, rainforests, and grasslands are rapidly declining. Birds with a broader habitat range like plantations and agricultural fields are faring better as a group.
- 6. **Threat to Insectivores:** Species that primarily feed on invertebrates, including insects, are declining rapidly, echoing global trends of decreasing insect populations. Birds feeding on fruits and nectar show more favourable trends.
- 7. **Endemic and Threatened Species:** Bird species endemic to the Western Ghats and Sri Lanka biodiversity hotspot have experienced significant decline in India in recent decades.
- **8. Vulnerability of Bustards:** All three species of bustards breeding in India, including the Great Indian Bustard, Lesser Florican, and Bengal Florican, are particularly vulnerable, even though half of all bustards globally face threats.

THREATS:

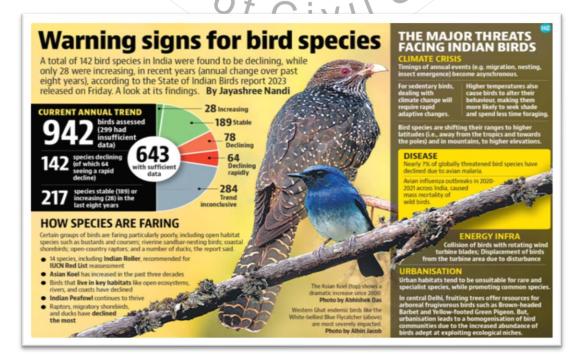
- 1. **Habitat Loss:** Destruction of natural habitats due to urbanization and deforestation. Conversion of land for agriculture and infrastructure.
- Pollution: Contamination of air and water by chemicals and pollutants. Adverse effects of pesticides and industrial waste on bird health.
- 3. **Climate Change:** Altered migration patterns and nesting times due to changing weather. Loss of suitable habitats and food sources.



- 4. **Hunting and Poaching:** Illegal hunting for sport, food, or trade. Targeting migratory birds during their journeys.
- 5. **Invasive Species:** Competition and predation by non-native species. Disruption of ecosystems and food chains.
- 6. **Nest Destruction:** Disturbance and destruction of nests by humans and predators. Loss of breeding and nesting sites.
- 7. **Pesticides:** Harmful effects of pesticides on bird populations. Contamination of food sources and water bodies.
- 8. **Disease Outbreaks:** Spread of avian diseases, impacting wild and domestic birds. Transmission of diseases between bird populations.
- **9. Human Disturbance:** Disturbances from tourism, recreation, and development. Interference with nesting and feeding behaviours.

WAY FORWARD:

- Comprehensive Monitoring: Strengthen monitoring efforts for declining bird species, focusing on raptors, migratory shorebirds, and ducks.
- ➤ **Habitat Restoration:** Prioritize habitat conservation and restoration to support declining species and migratory birds.
- Research and Action: Conduct in-depth research to identify specific threats causing declines and take targeted conservation actions.
- ➤ **Policy Enhancement:** Advocate for stricter enforcement of wildlife protection laws and regulation ns to safeguard vulnerable species.



OTHER CONSERVATION EFFORTS:

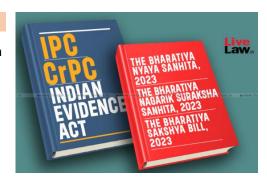
| Biodiversity Conservation | Description and Initiatives |
|--|---|
| Efforts in India | |
| National Biodiversity | Regulates access to biological resources and associated traditional |
| Authority (NBA) | knowledge to ensure conservation and equitable benefit-sharing. |
| Wildlife Protection Act (1972) | Provides legal protection to wildlife and their habitats, regulates hunting, and prohibits trade in wildlife and their products. |
| Project Tiger (1973) | Focuses on the conservation of Bengal tigers and their habitats through the establishment of tiger reserves and anti-poaching efforts. |
| Project Elephant (1992) | Aims to protect Asian elephants and their habitats, address human-elephant conflicts, and ensure the welfare of captive elephants. |
| Biosphere Reserves | Designated areas that aim to reconcile conservation of biodiversity with sustainable development, involving local communities. |
| National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries | Protected areas for conserving various species of flora and fauna, providing them safe habitats and facilitating research and ecotourism. |
| National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-2031) | A comprehensive strategy to safeguard wildlife and their habitats, addressing emerging threats and challenges. |
| Green India Mission (GIM) | Part of the National Action Plan on Climate Change, GIM focuses on increasing forest and tree cover, enhancing ecosystem services, and biodiversity conservation. |
| In-situ Conservation | Preserving species within their natural habitats, such as through protected areas, to ensure their survival and ecological balance. |
| Ex-situ Conservation | Conservation of species outside their natural habitats, often involving captive breeding programs and botanical gardens. |
| Conservation of Wetlands | Includes programs like the National Wetland Conservation Programme to protect and restore wetland ecosystems crucial for biodiversity. |
| International Collaboration | Partnerships with international organizations and agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), to promote global biodiversity conservation. |
| Community-Based | Involving local communities in conservation efforts, acknowledging |
| Conservation Riadiversity Pagisters and | their role in safeguarding biodiversity. |
| Biodiversity Registers and People's Biodiversity Registers (PBR) | Documentation of local biodiversity and traditional knowledge, facilitating community involvement and benefit-sharing. |

☐ REFORMING COUNTRY'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

WHY IN NEWS?

In a recent development, Union Home Minister Amit Shah presented three significant Bills in the Lok Sabha with the aim of nullifying and substituting crucial laws from the British colonial era within India's legal framework.

- ♣ The Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita Bill, 2023, which will replace the IPC, 1860
- ♣ The Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita Bill, 2023, which will replace the CrPC, 1898
- The Bharatiya Sakshya Bill, 2023, which will replace the Evidence Act, 1872



MAIN FEATURES OF THE BHARATIYA NYAY SANHITA BILL, 2023:

- Consolidation of Offenses: The bill consolidates various offenses like terrorism, separatism, armed rebellion against the government, and challenging the country's sovereignty, which were previously scattered across different legal provisions.
- Repeal of Sedition: It abolishes the offense of sedition, which was widely criticized for being a relic of the colonial era that restricted freedom of speech and dissent.

INDIAN PENAL CODE (IPC)

It is the official criminal code of India drafted in **1860** in the wake of the **first law commission** established in **1834** under the **Charter Act of 1833**.

- 3. **Capital Punishment for Mob Lynching:** The bill prescribes the maximum penalty of capital punishment for mob lynching, addressing the growing issue of mob violence in recent years.
- 4. **Penalty for Deceptive Sexual Intercourse:** It proposes a 10-year prison term for engaging in sexual intercourse with women under the false promise of marriage, targeting a common form of deception and exploitation.
- 5. **Introduction of Community Service:** The bill introduces community service as a punishment for specific crimes, aiming to reform offenders and reduce prison overcrowding.
- 6. **Timely Charge Sheet Filing:** The bill establishes a maximum time limit of 180 days for filing a charge sheet, streamlining the trial process and preventing indefinite delays.

MAIN FEATURES OF THE BHARTIYA NAGRIK SURAKSHA SANHITA BILL, 2023:

 Technology Integration: The bill encourages the utilization of technology for trials, appeals, and deposition recordings, permitting the use of video-conferencing for legal proceedings.

CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (CrPC)

provides procedures for administering criminal law in India. It was enacted in 1973 and became effective on 1 April 1974.

- 2. **Mandatory Video Recording:** It mandates the compulsory video-recording of statements from survivors of sexual violence, a measure aimed at preserving evidence and preventing coercion or manipulation.
- 3. **Complaint Status Disclosure:** The bill requires that the police provide information about the status of a complaint within 90 days, promoting transparency and accountability in the legal process.
- 4. **Restrictions on Arrest:** Section 41A of the CrPC will be renumbered as Section 35. This amendment includes an additional safeguard, stating that no arrest can occur without prior approval from an officer of at least the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), especially for offenses punishable by less than 3 years or involving individuals above 60 years.
- 5. **Victim Consultation:** The bill mandates that police consult with the victim before withdrawing cases punishable by seven years or more, ensuring that justice is not compromised or denied.
- 6. **In-Absentia Trials**: It enables courts to conduct trials and impose sentences on absconding criminals in their absence, acting as a deterrent for fugitives attempting to evade justice.
- 7. **Electronic Records Admissibility:** The bill empowers magistrates to acknowledge offenses based on electronic records, including emails, SMSs, WhatsApp messages, etc., simplifying evidence collection and verification.
- 8. **Swift Mercy Petitions:** Mercy petitions in death sentence cases must be submitted within 30 days to the Governor and within 60 days to the President. Additionally, there will be no appeal against the President's decision in any court.

MAIN FEATURES OF THE BHARATIYA SAKSHYA BILL, 2023:

1. **Electronic Evidence Definition:** The bill characterizes electronic evidence as any data generated or transmitted by any device or system capable of being stored or retrieved through any means.

- Admissibility Criteria for Electronic
 Evidence: It establishes specific conditions
 for the acceptance of electronic evidence,
 encompassing factors like authenticity,
 integrity, and reliability, thereby preventing
 potential misuse or alteration of digital
 information.
- 3. Special Provisions for DNA Evidence: The bill incorporates special provisions regarding the admissibility of DNA evidence, encompassing considerations such as consent and maintaining the chain of custody. These provisions aim to enhance the accuracy and trustworthiness of biological evidence.

INDIAN EVIDENCE ACT

The Indian Evidence
Act, originally passed in India by
the Imperial Legislative Council in
1872, during the British
Raj, contains a set of rules and
allied issues governing
admissibility of evidence in the
Indian courts of law.

- 4. **Recognition of Expert Opinions:** It acknowledges the value of expert opinions as a valid form of evidence, encompassing areas such as medical opinions and handwriting analysis. This recognition can aid in establishing pertinent facts or circumstances relevant to a case.
- 5. **Presumption of Innocence:** The bill introduces the presumption of innocence as a foundational principle within the criminal justice system. This principle signifies that every

individual accused of an offense is to be regarded as innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

ISSUES WITH THE PREVIOUS LAWS:

- 1. Historical British Influence: The antiquated laws were vestiges of British colonial rule, strategically crafted to perpetuate British dominance over India's legal system.
- 2. Punitive Emphasis: The prior laws prioritized punitive
- measures over the objective of ensuring justice for citizens. 3. Obsolete Nature: Enacted during the 19th century, these laws had become obsolete, out of sync with modern societal norms, technological advancements, and the

evolving requirements of justice.

- 4. **Diminished Conviction Rates:** The outdated laws contributed to low rates of convictions and prolonged delays in the dispensation of justice, eroding public confidence in the legal system.
- 5. **Gender Insensitivity:** The antiquated laws inadequately addressed crimes against women and children, displaying a lack of sensitivity toward such cases.
- 6. Complex Procedural Framework: Cumbersome procedures and excessive paperwork led to protracted trials and inefficiencies within the criminal justice system.
- 7. Potential for Misuse: The laws could be exploited by authorities to target individuals and infringe upon civil liberties, as exemplified by the misuse of sedition charges.
- 8. **Neglected Victim Welfare:** The focus often veered towards legal technicalities rather than prioritizing victim support and the delivery of justice.
- 9. Inadequate Technological Integration: The previous laws lacked provisions for

Indian Penal Code Code of Criminal (IPC), 1860 Procedure (CrPC), 1973 TO BE REPLACED BY TO BE REPLACED BY Bharatiya Nyaya

Sanhita Bill, 2023 Suraksha Sanhita, 2023

- It will have 356 sections (instead of 511 sections in IPC)
- 175 sections have been amended
- 8 sections have been added, and 22 sections have been repealed
- **Bharatiya Nagarik**
- It will have 533 sections (instead of 478 sections in CrPC)
- 160 sections have been changed
- 9 sections have been added, and 9 sections have been repealed
- Indian Evidence Act, 1872 TO BE REPLACED BY

Bharatiya Sakshya Bill,

- It will have 170 sections (instead of 167 sections in IEA)
- 23 sections have been changed • 1 section has been added, and 5
- sections have been repealed



WHAT NEXT

The three bills will be standing committee on home affairs, which is chaired by BJP MP Brijlal (who is a retd IPS officer)

COMMITTEES FOR REFORM **OF CRIMINAL LAWS**

- The Malimath Committee was formed in 2003 to improve the criminal justice system. It recommended that victims of serious crimes be allowed to participate in the case and be given compensation.
- The Justice Verma Committee was formed in 2013 to ensure faster trials and harsher punishments for criminals convicted of sexual assault against women.
- The Ranbir Singh Committee was formed in 2020 to review three major criminal laws: the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860, the Code of **Criminal Procedure** (CrPC), 1973, and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.

- harnessing modern technology, obstructing efficient investigation and evidence presentation.
- 10. **Limited Applicability:** The laws failed to adequately address contemporary concerns such as cybercrimes, terrorism, and organized crime, rendering them inadequate in scope.

CONCERNS REGARDING NEW BILLS:

BHARATIYA NAGARIK SURAKSHA SANHITA BILL:

- 1. **Detention Duration Concerns:** The bill raises concerns about the duration of detention without formal charges. Previously, India allowed detention for up to 60 days, while the new bill proposes an extension to 90 days.
- 2. **Police Discretion:** The new Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) appears to grant the police significant discretionary powers, including the authority to handcuff individuals.
- 3. **Arrest Restrictions:** The bill includes provisions that allow the arrest of women after sunset under exceptional circumstances and authorize the use of any necessary force and means during apprehension, potentially legitimizing encounters and various forms of violence.
- 4. **Supreme Court Precedent:** The Supreme Court's ruling in the D.K. Basu vs. State of West Bengal (1996) case stipulates that people should not be subjected to handcuffing.

BHARATIYA NYAYA SANHITA BILL:

- 1. **Numerical Section Changes:** The bill entails substantial alterations in the numbering of crucial sections. For example, Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) is slated to become Section 101, and Section 420 will be reclassified as Section 316.
- Historical Significance: These sections have held a significant place in the public
 consciousness over the 164 years of the IPC's existence, and the modifications in their
 numerical designations could pose significant challenges in maintaining accurate records
 within the National Crime Records Bureau and the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and
 Systems.
- 3. **Limited Scope:** While a distinct chapter is dedicated to sexual offenses, it appears to exclusively focus on those committed against women. The government seems to have overlooked sexual offenses involving men against men or women against women.

WAY FORWARD:

- Parliamentary Debate: The Bills should undergo a thorough debate and discussion in Parliament to consider various perspectives and address potential concerns.
- Public Consultation: Soliciting public opinion and expert input can help in refining the proposed laws and ensuring they align with contemporary needs.
- Alignment with Fundamental Rights: Ensure that the new laws respect and uphold the fundamental rights of Indian citizens.
- Monitoring and Accountability: Establish mechanisms to monitor the implementation of these laws and hold authorities accountable for any misuse.

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE:

1. THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023

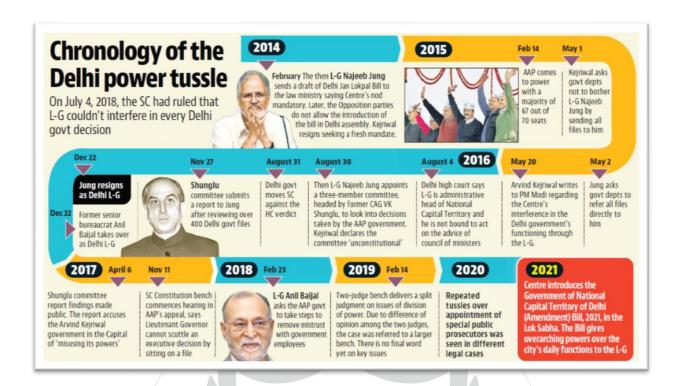
SOURCE: $\underline{\mathsf{TH}}$, $\underline{\mathsf{IE}}$, $\underline{\mathsf{LIVEMINT}}$, $\underline{\mathsf{PRS}}$

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BILL:

- The Bill establishes the National Capital Civil Services Authority, which consists of the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary of Delhi, Principal Home Secretary of Delhi. The Authority will make recommendations to the Lieutenant Governor (LG) regarding transfers and postings of officials and disciplinary matters.
- The **Bill empowers the LG to exercise his sole discretion on several matters** including those recommended by the National Capital Civil Services Authority, and the summoning, prorogation and dissolution of the Delhi Legislative Assembly.
- ➢ It authorises department secretaries to bring to the notice of the LG, the Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary any matter that may bring Delhi Government into controversy with the Central Government

KEY ISSUES AND ANALYSIS:

- 1. **Enhanced LG Power:** The amendment to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act 1991 aims to amplify the authority of the Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Delhi.
- 2. **Overturning Supreme Court:** The ordinance intends to reverse the impact of a Supreme Court judgment and reinforce the LG's role in Delhi's administration.
- 3. **Establishment of NCCSA:** The ordinance establishes the National Capital Civil Service Authority (NCCSA) to advise the LG on various matters such as transfers, postings, and vigilance.
- 4. **Federalism Concerns:** Critics argue that the ordinance infringes on the principle of federalism by granting the LG more power than the elected government.
- 5. **Undemocratic Shift:** Some view the ordinance as undemocratic since it empowers the LG more than the elected representatives of Delhi's people.
- 6. **Erosion of Elected Government's Power:** The ordinance is seen as potentially weakening the authority of the elected Delhi government.



TIMELINE ON KEY LEGISLATIONS AND JUDGEMENTS ON DELHI:

| YEAR | DEVELOPMENT | | |
|-----------|--|--|--|
| 1956 | States Reorganization Act is passed. Delhi classified as a Union Territory | | |
| 1991-1992 | The 69th Constitutional Amendment (Article 239AA) is passed to make Delhi a UT with legislature. The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) Act, 1991 is passed. The 70th Constitutional Amendment is passed which provides for certain laws of Parliament (amending Article 239AA) to not be deemed as an amendment to the Constitution. | | |
| 2015 | Ministry of Home Affairs issues a notification taking away the control over services from the Delhi legislature, and empowering the LG to discharge functions of the Central Government in relation to the same. | | |
| 2016 | Delhi High Court holds that services lie outside the purview of the Delhi legislative assembly and executive. | | |
| 2018 | The Supreme Court rules that the LG must act on the "aid and advice" of the council of ministers of Delhi. | | |
| 2019 | A two-judge bench of the Supreme Court delivers a split verdict while ruling over the issue of services | | |
| 2021 | Union government amends the GNCTD Act, 1991, expanding the list of matters where the LG's opinion was mandatory and the nature of Bills that LG could refer to the President. | | |
| 2023 | Supreme Court rules that Delhi government has control over services in Delhi. Central government promulgates an Ordinance to amend the GNCTD Act, 1991 to exclude "services" from the purview of Delhi legislature. The GNCTD (Amendment) Bill, 2023 was introduced in Lok Sabha on August 1, 2023 to replace the Ordinance. | | |

PROVISIONS OF NATIONAL CAPITAL CIVIL SERVICE AUTHORITY (NCCSA):

- ➤ NCCSA Composition: The National Capital Civil Service Authority (NCCSA) comprises the Chief Minister of Delhi, the Chief Secretary, and the Principal Secretary of the Home department.
- ➤ Majority-Based Decision: The NCCSA's decisions are determined by a majority vote, allowing the two senior bureaucrats to potentially override the Chief Minister's stance.
- ➤ **LG Disagreement:** If the Lieutenant Governor (LG) opposes NCCSA's recommendations, the NCCSA is empowered to send them back for further review.
- LG's Ultimate Authority: In case of a persistent difference of opinion, the final says rests with the LG, effectively overturning the Supreme Court's ruling.

IMPACT ON FEDERAL STRUCTURE:

- ➤ Constitutional Provision: The ordinance impacts Article 239AA which provides the elected government a clear say in the institutional governance of Delhi and gives bureaucrats a prominent role in the governance of Delhi.
- Accountability: Officers appointed would be accountable to Union Government and not to the Chief Minister of Delhi who represents the "will of the people".
- Cooperative Federalism: The ordinance would impact the principle of cooperative federalism and state government would become wary of the extensive power given to LG/Governors by the Union Government.
- ➤ Challenges authority of courts: The ordinance challenges the authority of the Supreme Court and impacts the federal structure of the Constitution where the Supreme Court has the final say in interpreting the Constitution.
- Asymmetric model of federalism: The ordinance challenges the asymmetric model where under Article 239AA, the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi represents the will of people at the regional level and the union government at the national level.
- Parliamentary democracy: The power to veto a decision of the Chief Minister in the National Capital Civil Service Authority (NCCSA) goes against the principle of parliamentary democracy.

WAY FORWARD:

Sarkaria Commission Recommendations on Governor:

- The Governor should be an individual of repute and from outside the state.
- The appointee should not have an active political engagement for a certain period before nomination.
- Upon completion of the term, the former Governor should not be eligible for other prominent governmental roles except for a possible second term, or election as Vice-President or President of India.
- Reasonable post-retirement benefits should be provided at the conclusion of the Governor's tenure.
- The Governor's role should be impartial, avoiding excessive involvement in regional politics of the state.
- Selection should occur in consultation with the Speaker of Lok Sabha, Vice-President of India, and the Chief Minister of the respective state.

The Punchhi Commission:

- o Giving the states more powers over natural resources.
- o Giving the states more powers over economic planning.

Establishing a mechanism for resolving Centre-State disputes.

The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC):

- o Giving the states more powers over education and healthcare.
- Giving the states more powers over agriculture and rural development.
- Establishing a federal public service commission

2. UNMUTE THE OPPOSITION

SOURCE: IE

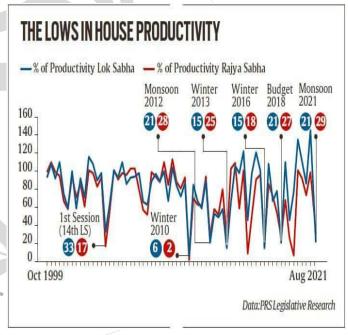
WHY IN NEWS?

The authority to erase speeches is excessively wide and frequently utilized to silence valid government criticism in parliament.

Rules 261 and 380 of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, respectively, outline the provision for the removal of content deemed "defamatory or indecent or unparliamentarily or undignified."

MECHANISM OF PARLIAMENTARY ACCOUNTABILITY:

- 1. QUESTION HOUR: In the Question Hour, Members of Parliament have the opportunity to ask ministers about the government's execution of laws and policies, and the ministers provide responses to these queries.
- 2. **ZERO HOUR**: Zero Hour is a parliamentary procedure in India that allows Members of Parliament (MPs) to raise matters of urgent public importance. It is a time when MPs can raise issues that are not on the agenda of the House.



- 3. **CENSURE MOTION**: In parliamentary procedure, it is a motion that expresses a strong opinion of disapproval that could be debated by the assembly and adopted by a majority vote.
- **4. NO CONFIDENCE MOTION**: A no-confidence motion is a parliamentary procedure whereby a vote is taken to express a lack of confidence in the government, typically resulting in the government's resignation. In India, the no-confidence motion is governed **by Rule 198 of the Lok Sabha Rules of Procedure.**
- 5. **Budgetary control** for appropriation of grants and post-budgetary control through committees like Public Accounts Committees.

IMPORTANCE OF PARLIAMENTARY ACCOUNTABILITY:

- ➤ **Democratic Oversight**: Parliamentary accountability ensures that elected representatives remain answerable to the public they represent, allowing citizens to have a say in the decision-making process.
- Transparency and Openness: It promotes transparency in governance, making sure that government actions and decisions are accessible to the public.
- Checks and Balances: Parliamentary accountability acts as a check on the government's power, preventing potential abuses and ensuring a balance of power among different branches of government.
- ➤ Effective Governance: Holding ministers and officials accountable fosters efficient and responsible governance, as they are incentivized to deliver on their promises and commitments
- Public Trust: A robust system of parliamentary accountability builds public trust in the government and democratic institutions.

HOW TO ENSURE PARLIAMENTARY ACCOUNTABILITY:

- Strengthening Question Hour: Committees have suggested enhancing the effectiveness of Question Hour by providing more time for questions, ensuring adequate ministerial presence, and improving the quality of answers.
- Parliamentary Oversight Committees: Creation of specialized committees to scrutinize specific government departments or policies, allowing for in-depth examination and accountability.
- Whistle-blower Protection: Implementing measures to protect whistle-blowers who expose corruption or malpractice within the government, encouraging transparency and accountability.
- Public Consultations: Recommending the inclusion of public consultations during the policy-making process, ensuring that citizens' views are considered and incorporated.
- Performance Audits: Committees propose regular performance audits of government agencies to assess their efficiency, effectiveness, and adherence to policies.

SC JUDGEMENTS

- **Raj Narain v. State of Uttar Pradesh:** The Court held that there can be no secrets in a government whose representatives are held accountable for their conduct.
- **♣ S.P. Gupta Case:** The Court explained the positive trend of liberal democracies towards open government and stated that India should not be an exception to this new democratic culture.
- ♣ Dinesh Trivedi v. Union of India: it was held that to ensure public participation in the democratic process, important decisions of the government and their basis should be communicated.

FACTSHEET:

While Lok Sabha met for an average of 130 days in a year during the 1950s, these sittings came down to 70 days in the 2000s.

In its 14th report, the Law Commission had highlighted the disturbing extent to which administrative action in India can go unchecked as authorities use their discretionary powers without public accountability.

| PRELIMS SPECIFIC: | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| FEATURES | CENSURE MOTION | NO CONFIDENCE MOTION |
| Purpose | To express disapproval of the government's actions or policies. | To express a lack of confidence in the government and to force it to resign. |
| Who can move it? | Any member of the legislature. | Only the opposition can move a no confidence motion |
| Number of supporters required | No minimum number of supporters is required. | At least 50 members of the legislature must support the motion. |
| Outcome | If passed, the government is not forced to resign. | If passed, the government must resign. |

3. A TENTATIVE RETHINK

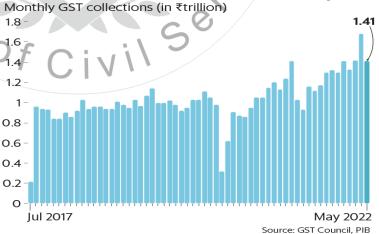
SOURCE: TH

WHY IN NEWS: The GST Council's reconsideration of gaming bets lacks sufficient clarity and certainty.

The Goods and Services Tax system was implemented following the approval of the Constitutional (122nd Amendment) Bill by both Houses of Parliament in 2016.

The GST Council, established by the President under **Article 279A** (1) of the amended Constitution, serves as a collaborative platform between the Central Government and the states.

GST collections have consistently hit the ₹1-trillion mark in the last one year



SPORTS BETTING AND LAWS RELATING TO IT:

- > Sports betting in India is mostly illegal except for betting on horse race. All other sports betting is based on the laws of the individual states.
- ➤ Gambling in India varies by state, Gambling is a state subject; states in India are entitled to formulate their own laws for gambling activities. Some states like Goa have legalised casinos.

Common gambling activities like organized betting are restricted except for selective categories including lottery and horse racing.

SIGNIFICANCE OF GST COUNCIL:

- 1. **Uniform Tax Structure**: The GST Council ensures a uniform tax structure across the country, replacing multiple indirect taxes levied by the Central and State Governments.
 - a. <u>For example, before GST, goods were subject to both Central Excise Duty and State VAT. Now, a single GST rate applies to most goods.</u>
- 2. **Fiscal Autonomy of States**: It ensures that states have the freedom to decide on their revenue-raising powers within the framework of the GST law.
 - a. <u>For example, some states have chosen to exempt certain goods from SGST (State Goods and Services Tax) to promote local industries.</u>
- 3. **Tax Rate Rationalization**: It aims to strike a balance between revenue generation and consumer affordability.
 - a. <u>For instance, over time, the council has reduced the GST rates on various items like daily necessities.</u>
- 4. **Decisions on Exemptions and Thresholds**: The Council decides on exemptions, thresholds, and special provisions for small businesses.
 - a. <u>For example, businesses with an annual turnover below a specified threshold are</u> exempt from GST registration.
- 5. **Addressing Industry Grievances:** The GST Council addresses industry grievances and concerns by making necessary amendments to the GST law.
 - a. <u>For example, it made changes to the GST law to provide relief to small businesses</u> during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 6. **Input Tax Credit Mechanism**: The Council ensures the smooth functioning of the Input Tax Credit (ITC) mechanism, which allows businesses to claim credits for taxes paid on inputs.

7. Dispute Resolution:

The Council resolves disputes between the Central and State Governments on various GST-related matters.

For example, there may be disagreements on sharing tax revenue or on the treatment of certain goods and services.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC:

ARTICLE 279 A: As per Article 279A (1) of the revised Constitution, the President is required to form the GST Council within 60 days from the commencement of Article 279A.

CHAIRPERSON: THE UNION FINANCE MINISTER

MEMBERS: The Union Minister of State in charge of Revenue or Finance The Minister in charge of Finance or Taxation or any other Minister nominated by each state government.

Article 279A(3) stipulates that the Members of the Goods and Services Tax Council shall elect one member from among themselves to serve as the Vice-Chairperson of the Council for a duration determined by their mutual agreement.

Tax Structure under GST:

- 1. **Central GST** to cover Excise duty, Service tax etc.,
- 2. **State GST** to cover VAT, luxury tax etc.
- 3. Integrated GST (IGST) to cover inter-state trade.
- 4. It has a **4-tier tax structure** for all goods and services under the slabs- 5%, 12%, 18% and 28%.

ISSUES FACED BY GST COUNCIL:

- > **Dual Control and Administrative Turf**: This dual control has led to disputes regarding tax administration, especially for businesses operating across state borders.
- Revenue Shortfall: There have been instances where the GST revenue collected was lower than expected, leading to fiscal challenges for both the Central and State Governments.
- Complex Tax Structure: The multiple tax rates and frequent changes in rates have resulted in complexity for businesses, causing confusion and compliance challenges.
- ➤ Inverted Duty Structure: Certain sectors faced an inverted duty structure, where the GST rate on inputs was higher than the rate on the final product. This resulted in accumulation of Input Tax Credit (ITC) and impacted working capital for businesses.
- ➤ **Compliance and IT Challenges**: The introduction of GST required businesses to adapt to new compliance procedures and adopt digital practices.
- ➤ Revenue Sharing and Compensation: The issue of timely and adequate compensation to states for revenue loss during the initial years of GST implementation has been a significant concern.

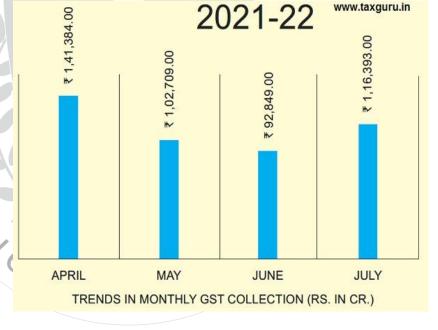
WAY AHEAD:

Transparency and Communication: Ensure effective communication with all stakeholders, including businesses, states, and the public.

Collaborative
Approach:
Encourage a
collaborative and
cooperative
approach among
Central and State

Governments and

Foster an



environment of open dialogue and consensus-building.

- **Review and Reforms**: Conduct periodic reviews to assess the GST implementation and identify areas for improvement.
- ➤ **GSTN and Technology**: Strengthen the GST Network (GSTN) to ensure smooth functioning and handle large volumes of data.
- ➤ **Dispute Resolution Mechanism**: Strengthen the dispute resolution mechanism to expedite the resolution of disputes between the Centre and states.

4. JAN VISHWAS ACT 2022

SOURCE: TH

WHY IN NEWS: The Jan Vishwas Act of 2022, which has been recently passed by the Parliament, is a topic of controversy. The government presents it as a significant legal milestone with the objective of enhancing the "ease of doing business" in India. The Act achieves this by either removing criminal charges or making certain offenses "compoundable" under 42 different legislations.

KEY FEATURES OF THE PROPOSED BILL:

1. Decriminalisation of Offences:

- ➤ The objective is to eliminate criminal charges associated with approximately 180 violations found in 42 laws that govern various sectors, including agriculture, media, industry, trade, environment, and more.
- The intention is to entirely replace imprisonment sentences with fines of a monetary nature.
- 2. **Periodic Revision:** The fines and penalties will undergo an increment of 10% of their initial amount every three years.

3. Grievance Redressal Mechanism:

- Adjudicating Officers may be designated by the central government to determine the appropriate penalties.
- These officers possess the authority to summon individuals for testimony and carry out investigations related to violations of the respective Acts.

4. Appellate Mechanism:

- Provisions have been made to appeal against orders issued by adjudicating officers.
- For instance, under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, appeals against decisions made by Adjudicating Officers can be filed with the National Green Tribunal within a 60-day window.

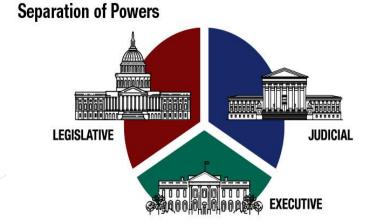
OBJECTIONS TO THE ACT:

- The rules have mostly changed jail punishment to fines, and this change moves the power to decide these money penalties from the courts to the government's administrative system.
 - EG: The Jan Vishwas Act changes the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986, and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981. Instead of sending people to jail for some offenses, it introduces fines of up to ₹15 lakh. These fines can be decided by specific government officials (Joint Secretaries) assigned for this purpose.
- As per changes made to the Indian Forest Act, 1927, forest officials now possess the authority not only to investigate and find out the extent of harm caused to the forest by anyone but also to instruct the wrongdoer to provide compensation for the previously unlimited "damage" they caused to the forest.
- Despite India Inc. frequently expressing concerns about "tax terrorism," there is a curious absence of resistance towards granting the administrative system the authority to simultaneously act as both the accuser and the decision-maker in imposing fines and directing the settlement of compensation.
- The fundamental query revolves around whether entrusting the bureaucracy, as opposed to the courts, with the authority not only to resolve factual disagreements but also to impose

penalties and mandate compensation, contradicts the constitutional principle of the Separation of powers.

HOW BUREAUCRACY IS ENCROACHING UPON JUDICIAL ACTIVITIES:

- Various Ministries initiated the establishment of judicial tribunals to assume control over diverse judicial responsibilities previously carried out by the courts.
- The majority of these tribunals were established in a way



THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH enacts the laws of the country and raises and distributes the money necessary to operate the government, known as "The Power of the Purse."

THE JUDICIAL BRANCH interprets the U.S.Constitution and bylaws and rules on disputes brought before it by citizens, states, or other branches of government.

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH implements and administers the laws and public policies enacted and funded by the Legislative Branch.

that allowed bureaucrats to potentially join the tribunals as "technical members."

- The federal government initiated the establishment of a fresh category of legal overseers like the Securities and Exchange Board of India, and the Competition Commission of India (CCI), empowered to levy substantial penalties on private enterprises. Nearly all of these regulatory bodies wound up being led by senior bureaucrats.
- The officials responsible for making judgments were consistently bureaucrats who were granted authority to either validate "attachment orders" concerning properties or impose fines on businesses.
- > The Jan Vishwas Act continues with this particular approach of establishing "adjudicatory officers" within the administrative system to enforce penalties.
- The legality of bodies like the National Tax Tribunal and certain regulators like the CCI has been contested in court due to apprehensions regarding the executive branch infringing upon judicial authority.

WAY FORWARD:

Enhance public awareness of the Act: The government should take steps to ensure that the public is aware of the provisions of the Act and how it can benefit them. This can be done through public awareness campaigns, workshops, and other initiatives.

- > Strengthen the enforcement mechanism: The government should also strengthen the enforcement mechanism for the Act to ensure that it is implemented effectively. This includes ensuring that there are adequate resources available to investigate and prosecute cases under the Act.
- Address concerns about the Act: The government should also address the concerns that have been raised about the Act, such as the potential for it to be used to dilute environmental and labour laws. This can be done through consultation with stakeholders and by making necessary amendments to the Act.
- Monitor the impact of the Act: The government should also monitor the impact of the Act to ensure that it is achieving its intended objectives. This includes collecting data on the number of cases filed under the Act and the outcomes of those cases.

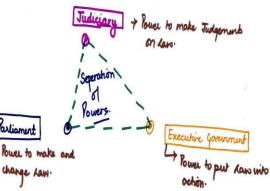
PRELIMS SPECIFIC

Constitutional provisions depicting separation of po-

Article 50 - State shall take steps to separate the judi **Articles 74 and 163** - : It restricts the courts from inquof Ministers to the President and the Governor.

Article 122 and 212:- Validity of proceedings in Parlia into question in any Court.

Article 361: - states that the President or the Governo Rouse to make regarding the exercise



5. J&K CONSTITUTION LIMITED EXECUTIVE POWERS OF UNION OF INDIA, SAYS SC

SOURCE: TH, HINDUSTAN TIMES

WHY IN NEWS?

The Supreme Court asked why the Union of India is reluctant to include Constitution of J&K within the fold of the Constitution of India.

BACKGROUND:

- The Jammu and Kashmir Constitution had over the years, limited the executive powers of the Union of India and restricted the legislative reach of Parliament.
- Post 1957, neither the government nor Legislative Assembly of J&K thought of amending to bring it expressly within the fold of the Indian Constitution.
- The Bench is still hearing a series of petitions challenging the dilution of Article 370.



• Presidential orders in 2019, had rendered infructuous the J&K Constitution and Article 35A, which was introduced into the Indian Constitution - through the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 1954.

ABOUT J&K's CONSTITUTION:

- ➤ Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) held a distinctive status as the sole State possessing an independent Constitution.
- The Indian Constitution witnessed the inclusion of Article 35A in 1954 through the Constitution Order, which vested the Jammu and Kashmir State Legislature with the authority to define 'permanent residents' and grant them specialized privileges encompassing employment, property ownership, and educational benefits.
- ➤ The constitution unique to J&K was formulated by its own Constituent Assembly and was officially adopted on the 17th of November, 1957. It came into effect on the 26th of January, 1957.
- ➤ However, this special status was revoked by the President on the 5th of August, 2019.

REMOVAL OF SPECIAL STATUS OF J&K:

- Article 370(3) allows for the removal of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir through a Presidential Order.
- For such an order to be enacted, the agreement of J&K's Constituent Assembly is required.
- Some believe that since the State's Constituent Assembly ceased to exist on January 26, 1957, the special status cannot be revoked.
- However, an alternate perspective suggests that it can be accomplished only with the consent of the State Assembly.
- In 2019, the President issued the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order 2019, eliminating J&K's special status and extending all Indian Constitution provisions to the region.
- Through the J&K (Reorganization) Act 2019, Jammu and Kashmir was divided into two Union Territories: Jammu and Kashmir with a Legislative Assembly, and Ladakh without one.
- The Supreme Court of India has recently commenced hearing petitions contesting the 2019 removal of Article 370.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS:

BEFORE ARTICLE 370 REPEAL:

- Special powers exercised by J&K
- Dual citizenship
- Separate flag for Jammu & Kashmir
- Article 360 (Financial Emergency) not applicable
- No reservation for minorities such as Hindus and Sikhs
- Indian citizens from other states cannot buy land or property in J&K
- > RTI not applicable
- Duration of Legislative Assembly for 6 years

AFTER ARTICLE 370 REPEAL:

- No special powers now
- Single citizenship
- > Tricolour will be the only flag
- Article 360 will be applicable
- Minorities will be eligible for 16% reservation
- People from other states will now be able to purchase land or property in J&K
- > RTI will be applicable
- Assembly duration in Union Territory of J&K will be for 5 years
- ➤ If a woman marries out of state or country, she will still retain all her rights and Indian citizenship

- If a woman from J&K marries out of state, she would lose the citizenship of the state
- Panchayats did not have any rights
- Right to Education (RTE) was not applicable
- Panchayats will have the same rights as in other states
- Children in the state will benefit from RTE

HOW HAS THE J&K CONSTITUTION CONSTRAINED THE UNION OF INDIA'S ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE YEARS?

- > Special Autonomy via Article 370: Jammu and Kashmir was granted special autonomy under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, leading to the exclusion of many Indian Constitution provisions in the state.
- Autonomy over Internal Affairs: The J&K Constitution bestowed significant authority on the state government to manage internal affairs, including matters related to policing, public order, and local issues. This limited the Union government's ability to intervene directly without state government approval.
- ➤ Property Ownership Restrictions: Article 35A, introduced in 1954 through a Presidential Order, empowered the J&K State Legislature to define 'permanent residents' and provide them exclusive rights to own property and access government employment.
- > Separate Flag and Constitution: Alongside the national flag of India, Jammu and Kashmir had its own flag, and its unique Constitution coexisted with the Indian Constitution. This reinforced the distinct identity and autonomy of the state.

WAY FORWARD:

- Establish Political Stability: Initiate stability by conducting elections and reinstating Jammu and Kashmir Assembly. Provides local representation and restores normalcy.
- > **Drive Economic Growth:** Foster economic progress by investing in infrastructure, job creation, and business attraction. Enhance living standards, reduce deprivation, and alienation.
- Encourage Sectarian Unity: Promote harmony by addressing root causes of sectarian tensions like poverty. Facilitate interfaith dialogue for a more peaceful society.
- Ensure Human Rights: Safeguard rights by preventing arbitrary arrests, torture, and extrajudicial actions. Uphold rule of law and provide access to justice.
- **Protect the Environment:** Address deforestation, water, and air pollution for environmental preservation. Promote sustainable development, responsible resource use, and job creation.
- Comprehensive Strategy: Prioritize security, human rights, economic growth, and local connection. Effective governance and meaningful dialogues are essential for lasting solutions. Uphold values of "Insaniyat, Jamhuriyat & Kashmiriyat."

6. NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY, 2020 & PM-USHA

SOURCE: TH, Ministry of Education, PIB

WHY IN NEWS?

Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal, along with other states, have not yet signed an MoU with the Union Education Ministry for implementing the National Education Policy, 2020, to receive funds totalling ₹13,000 crore over three years under the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA). The scheme aims to enhance access, equity, and quality in higher education institutions, replacing the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) initiative. The RUSA scheme, launched in 2013 and 2018, has now evolved into PM-USHA to align with the National Education Policy.

ABOUT NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020:

• NEP 2020 Introduction:

- The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is India's inaugural education policy of the 21st century.
- It replaces the previous National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986.
- The policy was developed under the guidance of a committee led by Dr. K
 Kasturirangan from the Ministry of Education.

Reforms and Scope:

- NEP 2020 introduces a series of reforms for both school and higher education.
- It includes adjustments in technical education to address contemporary requirements.

• Fundamental Pillars:

 NEP 2020 is founded on five essential pillars: Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability, and Accountability.

Alignment with Sustainable Development:

- The policy is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Its objective is to transform India into a thriving knowledge society and a global knowledge superpower.

Educational Vision:

- NEP 2020 aims to foster a more comprehensive, adaptable, and interdisciplinary educational system.
- This approach applies to both schools and colleges, fostering the development of each student's distinctive potential.

TARGETS UNDER NEP:

- a. Ensure comprehensive education coverage from Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to Secondary Education by 2030, in accordance with SDG 4.
- b. Achieve the acquisition of Fundamental
 Learning & Numeracy
 Skills through a National
 Mission by 2025.



- c. Attain a 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) from Pre-School to Secondary Level by 2030.
- d. Aim for a 50% GER in Higher Education by 2035.
- e. Reintegrate 2 Crore children into mainstream education using the open schooling system.
- f. Prepare teachers for assessment reforms by the year 2023.
- g. Establish an inclusive and equitable education system by 2030.

WHAT IS THE NEED FOR MOU AND CONCERNS RAISED BY STATES?

Key Points of Agreement:

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) encompasses clauses that cover the planning, execution, and monitoring aspects, aligning the proposals put forth by the States with the National Education Policy (NEP) to achieve better cohesion.
- The program introduces flexibility for States and Union Territories to customize activities in accordance with their specific requirements, streamlining various components to enhance the allocation of resources with improved efficiency.
- Furthermore, States have the authority to identify focus districts based on indicators such as enrolment ratios, gender parity, and the proportions of marginalized communities within the population.

Concerns Raised:

- Some State governments have expressed dissatisfaction with the MoU, as it fails to address the crucial necessity for additional funding to effectively implement the reforms mandated by the NEP.
- Despite being accountable for 40% of the expenses under the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA), the MoU does not offer clear insights into the funding mechanisms designed to support the changes aligned with the NEP.

| KEY FEATURES OF PM-USHA SCHEME: | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Feature | Description | |
| Objective | Enhance access, equity, and excellence in State higher education institutions | |
| | with increased efficiency, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. | |
| Phases | Phase 1 launched in 2013, Phase 2 launched in 2018. | |
| Renamed as | The scheme has been renamed from Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan | |
| | (RUSA) to Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA). | |
| Funding | Centrally Sponsored Scheme with funding shared between the central | |
| | government and the States/UTs. | |
| Components | Supports various components like infrastructure development, creation of | |
| | research centers, faculty recruitment, curriculum reforms, etc. | |
| Flexibility | States/UTs have flexibility to tailor activities according to their specific needs. | |
| Focus Districts | States can identify focus districts based on indicators like enrollment ratios, | |
| | gender parity, and marginalized community proportions. | |
| Higher | Aims to improve overall higher education system, enhance quality, and promote | |
| Education | holistic development. | |
| System | | |
| Alignment with | Aims to align State proposals with the National Education Policy for better | |
| NEP | integration and implementation. | |
| Accountability | Emphasizes transparency, efficiency, and accountability in utilizing allocated | |
| | funds. | |
| Monitoring | Includes provisions for planning, implementation, and monitoring of the | |
| | scheme's progress. | |

WAY FORWARD:

- **Engagement and Dialogue**: Initiate discussions with non-participating states to understand concerns and benefits.
- **Customization Assurance:** Highlight flexibility in PM-USHA for tailored implementation in each state.
- NEP Alignment: Emphasize the alignment of PM-USHA with NEP's goals and vision.
- Benefits Showcase: Present funding opportunities, infrastructure enhancement, and quality improvement benefits.
- Success Demonstrations: Share success stories from states already benefiting from PM-USHA.
- Collaborative Workshops: Organize workshops for officials to address concerns and share insights.

7. BILKIS BANO CASE: SC ASKS WHY REMISSION POLICY IS 'SELECTIVE'

SOURCE: TH, IE, DECCAN HERALD, TOI

WHY IN NEWS?

The Supreme Court questioned the Gujarat government's policy of premature release of prisoners, asking if it's applied selectively.

ISSUES RAISED BY THE S.C.

- The query emerged while considering petitions that contested the premature release of eleven individuals who were found guilty of gang-raping Bilkis Bano and causing the death of seven individuals during the 2002 Gujarat riots.
- Justice B.V. Nagarathna expressed apprehension about the potential selective use of the remission policy.
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- Petitioners, comprising Bilkis Bano and political figures, contested the release of the convicts based on the State's Early Release Policy of 1992.
- An affidavit unveiled conflicting perspectives between law enforcement and the Home Ministry regarding the release of the convicts.

ABOUT REMISSION POLICY:

Remission involves the early release of a convicted prisoner before their sentence concludes. The introduction of the concept of remission dates back to the Prisons Act of 1894.

Constitutional Aspect:

 According to Article 72 of the Indian Constitution, the President of India holds authority to grant remission of a sentence. This authority extends to convicts involved in crimes falling under the jurisdiction of the central government, including court-martial decisions. Under Article 161, the governor of a state possesses the power to provide remission. However, the governor is not empowered to commute a death penalty or a death sentence that has already been commuted to life imprisonment.

ARGUMENT FOR RELEASE:

- ➤ 1992 Remission Policy: The Supreme Court of India had previously determined that the application of the remission policy in this instance would adhere to the 1992 remission policy that was effective at the time of conviction. This policy did not exclude individuals convicted of rape from receiving executive remission.
- Criterion of Positive Behaviour: State governments have outlined specific behaviours or activities that can lead to prisoners earning a certain number of days as remission, subsequently subtracted from their sentence.
- ➤ Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC): According to the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), life convicts must undergo a minimum of 14 years of actual imprisonment before becoming eligible for remission or premature release.
- However, in this particular scenario, the imprisonment terms of all 11 individuals exceeded 15 years, rendering the calculation of 14 years irrelevant.

ARGUMENT AGAINST THE RELEASE OF CONVICTS:

- Not eligible for early release: Just like in many other states, Gujarat's existing policy on remission (which was updated in 2014) renders individuals who have been convicted of rape unable to receive early release.
- Contrary to justice for victims and minority communities: This practice raises concerns regarding the fairness of justice for both the victim and minority groups within the community.
- **Remission motives questioned by some experts:** The act of granting remission to the accused is perceived by certain experts as being influenced by political considerations.

| Article | Remission | Description |
|----------------|-------------|--|
| Aiticic | Type | — Description |
| Article 72 | Pardon | Full exemption from punishment; conviction remains but sentence is void. |
| | Commutation | Reduction of sentence to a less severe form, like from death to life. |
| | Respite | Temporary suspension of execution of sentence, often due to illness. |
| | Remission | Reduction of sentence without changing the nature of the punishment. |
| | Reprieve | Temporary delay to allow the offender to seek pardon or commutation. |
| Article 161 | Pardon | Similar to Article 72, the President's power in cases under state law. |
| | Commutation | State Governor can reduce sentence for offenses under state law. |
| | Respite | Temporary reprieve in cases falling under state jurisdiction. |
| | Remission | State Governor's authority to reduce state law sentences. |
| | Reprieve | Temporary suspension of sentence in state law matters. |

WAY FORWARD:

- > Transparency and Data: Establish clear criteria for prisoner release and ensure transparency in their application. Maintain accurate records and data to demonstrate the consistency of the policy.
- Non-Discrimination: Ensure that the policy is not applied selectively based on factors such as socio-political considerations or demographics.
- ➤ **Court Oversight:** Involve the judiciary in overseeing the implementation of the policy to prevent any potential biases or inconsistencies.

8. WITH HUGE ALLOCATION, TECH. WILL TRANSFORM JUDICIARY, SAYS CJI

SOURCE: TH, DECCAN HERALD, OBSERVER RESEARCH FOUNDATION

WHY IN NEWS?

Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud Thursday said huge budget has been allotted for the third phase of the **e-courts project**, which will **equip judiciary with technology, especially the lower courts.** He also pointed out that during Covid-19 pandemic, one of the high courts had no funds to purchase license necessary for video conferencing platform

MAJOR LOOPHOLES IN THE INDIAN JUDICIARY:

- 1. **Enormous Backlog of Cases:** Courts in India grapple with an extensive backlog of cases, leading to delayed justice.
 - This backlog arises from a shortage of judges and inefficient case management systems.
 - As of May 2022, over 4.7 crore cases are pending across various levels of the judiciary, showcasing systemic shortcomings.
- 2. **Insufficient Physical and Digital Infrastructure**: Numerous courts lack adequate courtrooms and basic facilities like restrooms, waiting areas, and parking spaces.
 - Inconveniences faced by litigants, lawyers, and court personnel contribute to overcrowding and procedural delays.
 - Only 9 out of 25 High Courts in India have implemented live streaming of court proceedings, with limited coverage even in the Supreme Court.
- 3. Limited Adoption of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR):
 - While mediation and arbitration can alleviate court burdens, their implementation remains restricted in India.
- 4. **Delayed Recruitment of Judicial Personnel:** Judicial vacancies are not promptly filled, resulting in a shortage of judges.
 - With only 21 judges per million population (as of February 2023), recruitment lags behind demand.
 - Approximately 400 vacancies exist in high courts, and around 35% of posts are vacant in the lower judiciary.
- 5. Gender Disparity in Judicial Representation:
 - The higher judiciary lacks proper representation of women, indicating a gender disparity concern.
 - Out of 1.7 million registered advocates, a mere 15% are women.

- In high courts, women judges constitute only 11.5%, and the Supreme Court has just three sitting women judges.
- 6. **Upcoming Chief Justice Appointment:** Justice B V Nagarathna is set to become the Chief Justice of India for a limited tenure in 2027.

THE POTENTIAL OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN JUDICIAL TRANSFORMATION:

- Digitalization of Court Proceedings: Digitized court records ensure easy accessibility, improved transparency, and expedited judicial processes. The e-Courts project exemplifies this by aiming to computerize the operations of courts in the country for enhanced efficiency.
- Utilization of AI and Machine Learning: Artificial intelligence and machine learning can analyse extensive data, identify patterns, and forecast outcomes. Notably, two tools, Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software (SUVAS) and Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court's Efficiency (SUPACE), have been implemented to leverage AI's potential. SUVAS facilitates translation of orders/judgments to vernacular languages, while SUPACE acts as an AI Research Assistant tool.
- ➤ E-filing of Cases: It minimizes filing time, improves data precision, and eliminates the need for physical court presence.
- ➤ Video Conferencing for Hearings: Video conferencing enables remote hearings, facilitating lawyer and litigant participation. It saves time, reduces travel burden, and ensures participant safety.
- ➤ Blockchain for Secure Record-Keeping: Blockchain technology ensures secure and transparent court records. It prevents tampering, upholds data integrity, and restricts access to authorized users. Telangana, an Indian state, employs blockchain to secure land records and deter fraud.

CHALLENGES IN INTEGRATING EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES INTO THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM:

Data Security:

- Safeguarding sensitive data collected within the judicial system is paramount to maintain its integrity and public trust.
- Potential data breaches could jeopardize the entire justice system and erode confidence.

> Bias and Discrimination:

- The application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies might inadvertently perpetuate bias and discrimination.
- Inadequate algorithm design could amplify existing inequalities and biases in the justice system.

> Limited Understanding:

- Many legal professionals may lack the necessary technical expertise to comprehend the full capabilities and limitations of emerging technologies.
- Misunderstandings may lead to inappropriate or ineffective utilization of these technologies.

Privacy Concerns:

- o The use of emerging technologies could potentially infringe upon privacy rights.
- For instance, facial recognition technology might identify individuals without consent and risk misuse by law enforcement or other entities.

Financial Implications:

- Implementing emerging technologies can be financially burdensome, potentially straining the resources of the judicial system.
- Budgetary constraints may hinder the realization of the benefits these technologies offer.

Ethical Considerations:

- Ethical concerns arise when integrating emerging technologies into the judicial system.
- Ensuring these technologies uphold individual rights and maintain the justice system's integrity is crucial.
- The absence of a human "conscience" in technological decision-making raises ethical questions about the act of judging.

WAY AHEAD:

1. Strengthening the E-Court System:

- Implement a robust e-court system to streamline processes, reduce paperwork, and enhance efficiency.
- Digitize case records, enable online case filing, e-summons, e-payment, and video conferencing for hearings.

2. Transforming the Appointment System:

- Fill vacancies promptly and establish a clear timeline for judge appointments with advance suggestions.
- Introduce the All-India Judicial Services (AIJS) to enhance the quality of appointments.
- Case Management Software: Develop and deploy case management software for tracking case progress, automating administrative tasks, and facilitating better coordination among stakeholders.

3. Data Analytics and Case Prediction:

- ➤ Utilize data analytics and AI to analyse past judgments and predict case outcomes.
- Assist judges in making informed decisions, reducing inconsistencies and enhancing judgment quality.

4. Public Legal Education:

- Promote public legal education and awareness programs.
- Empower citizens to understand rights and obligations, reduce unnecessary litigation, and encourage out-of-court settlements.
- Citizen Feedback Mechanism

| ARTICLES RELATED TO SUPREME COURT: | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Article | Title and Description | |
| Article 124 | Establishment and Constitution of Supreme Court | |
| Article 125 | Salaries and allowances of Judges | |
| Article 126 | Appointment of acting Chief Justice | |
| Article 127 | Appointment of ad hoc Judges | |
| Article 128 | Attendance of retired Judges at sittings of the Supreme Court | |
| Article 129 | Supreme Court to be a court of record | |

| Article 130 | Seat of the Supreme Court | | |
|-----------------|--|--|--|
| Article 131 | Original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court | | |
| Article 132 | Appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court in appeals from High Courts in certain cases | | |
| Article 133 | Appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court in appeals from High Courts in regard to civil matters | | |
| Article 134 | Appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court in regard to criminal matters | | |
| Article 134A | Certificate for appeal to the Supreme Court | | |
| Article 135 | Jurisdiction and powers of the Federal Court under existing law to be exercisable by the Supreme Court | | |
| Article 136 | Special leave to appeal by the Supreme Court | | |
| Article 137 | Review of judgments or orders by the Supreme Court | | |
| Article 138 | Enlargement of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court | | |
| Article 139 | Conferment on the Supreme Court of powers to issue certain writs | | |
| Article 139A | Transfer of certain cases | | |
| Article 140 | Ancillary powers of Supreme Court | | |
| Article 141 | Law declared by Supreme Court to be binding on all courts | | |
| Article 142 | Enforcement of decrees and orders of Supreme Court and orders as to discovery, etc. | | |
| | | | |

9. MEDIATION BILL: AN INCOMPLETE SETTLEMENT

SOURCE: IE

WHY IN NEWS?

The Mediation Bill 2021, which seeks to reduce the duration required for concluding mediation processes, has received the endorsement of Parliament following its approval by both houses. As a result, India now possesses specific legislation overseeing mediation (referred to as Samadhan). However, there is a need for certain improvements in certain aspects of the bill.

KEY FEATURES OF THE BILL:

1. Mediation Prior to Litigation:

- a. Before approaching a court or specific tribunals, parties are required to make an attempt to resolve civil or commercial disputes through mediation.
- b. In case pre-litigation mediation does not result in a settlement, parties can request the court or tribunal to refer them to mediation at any point.

2. Exclusions from Mediation:

- a. The Bill includes a list of disputes considered unsuitable for mediation.
- b. These encompass disputes involving minors or individuals with mental incapacity, matters tied to criminal prosecution, and disputes affecting third-party rights.
- c. This list can be modified by the central government.

3. Scope of Application:

a. The Bill applies to mediations conducted within India: Involving solely domestic parties, involving at least one foreign party and related to commercial disputes (international mediation), When the mediation agreement specifies adherence to this Bill, in cases where the central or state government is a party, the Bill's provisions extend to commercial and other designated disputes.

4. Mediation Procedure:

- a. The mediation process is confidential and should conclude within 180 days, extendable by 180 days at the parties' discretion.
- b. A party retains the option to withdraw from mediation following two sessions.
- c. Court-annexed mediation will adhere to rules established by the Supreme Court or High Courts.

5. Mediator Selection:

- a. Mediators can be chosen by parties through mutual agreement or a mediation service provider.
- Mediators are obligated to disclose any potential conflicts of interest that might impact their impartiality. Subsequently, parties can decide to replace the mediator if they wish.

CONCERNS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE:

1. Pre-Litigation Issues:

- a. The committee raised several important concerns about the mandatory and coercive nature of pre-litigation mediation.
- b. They emphasized that making pre-litigation mediation compulsory might lead to delays in cases and offer a tool for uncooperative litigants to extend the case resolution process.
- 2. **Concerns with Clause 26:** The committee expressed opposition to Clause 26 of the draft legislation, which grants the Supreme Court or High Court the authority to establish laws regarding pre-litigation mediation as per their interpretation.
- 3. **Exclusion from Non-Commercial Disputes:** Committee members questioned the decision to not apply the provisions of the Bill to disputes or matters of a non-commercial nature that involve the Government and its affiliated agencies.
- 4. **Appointments Discussion**: The committee engaged in deliberations regarding the qualifications and the process of appointing the Chairperson and Members of the proposed Mediation Council.

| OTHER DISPIUTE RI | OTHER DISPIUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISMS: | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Mechanism | Description | | |
| Arbitration | A private process where parties agree to resolve disputes through an arbitrator's decision. | | |
| Mediation | A neutral third party assists disputing parties in reaching a mutually acceptable settlement. | | |
| Conciliation | Similar to mediation but the conciliator may suggest solutions and propose settlement terms. | | |
| Negotiation | Parties directly communicate to settle a dispute without involving any third party. | | |
| Lok Adalat | Informal courts where retired judges, social activists, or legal professionals mediate disputes. | | |
| Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) | Uses technology platforms to resolve disputes online, including arbitration and mediation. | | |
| Judicial Settlement | Judges encourage parties to reach a settlement through negotiation and discussion. | | |
| Expert Determination | A neutral expert assesses technical issues and makes a binding decision on the dispute. | | |

WAY FORWARD:

Awareness and Training:

- Launch awareness campaigns to educate the public, legal professionals, and stakeholders about the benefits of mediation and the provisions of the new legislation.
- Organize training programs to enhance the skills of mediators and promote a better understanding of the mediation process.

> Refinement of Bill:

- Engage in a comprehensive review of the Mediation Bill to identify specific provisions that need refinement or clarification.
- Consider seeking input from legal experts, mediation practitioners, and stakeholders to ensure that the Bill is well-balanced and effective.
- ➤ **Guidelines and Rules**: Develop clear and comprehensive guidelines or rules for the implementation of the Mediation Bill, including procedures for pre-litigation mediation, the role of mediators, confidentiality measures, and the mediation timeline.
- ➤ Incorporate Feedback: Create a mechanism for gathering feedback from mediators, parties involved in mediations, and other stakeholders to continuously improve the implementation of the legislation.

10. AS MANY AS 189 TRIBAL COLONIES IN KERALA STILL LACK INTERNET ACCESS

SOURCE: TH, LIVEMINT, IE

WHY IN NEWS?

- Kerala has recognized the right to Internet as a fundamental right, yet there is a discrepancy.
- In 12 districts, 189 Adivasi ooru (tribal colonies) do not have access to the Internet or mobile connections.
- The district of **Idukki** holds the **highest count of digitally isolated tribal colonies** (75), affecting over 2,000 tribal students.
- Following Idukki, Kannur district has 1,140 students who face similar challenges.

INTERNET ACCESS A PART OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT:

- Anuradha Bhasin vs. Union of India and Ors: Apex Court observed that freedom to practice any profession or carry on any trade, business or occupation over the medium of internet enjoys Constitutional protection under Article 19(1)(a) and Article 19(1)(g), but the restriction of such fundamental rights should be according to Article 19(2) and (6) of the Constitution, inclusive of the test of proportionality.
- Faheema Shirin RK vs. State of Kerala and others: Hon'ble High Court stated that Right to access internet is a part of Right to education and Right to Privacy under Article 21A and Article 21 of the Constitution of Indian respectively. Internet Access not only enhances the opportunities of students to acquire knowledge but also enhances the quality of education.
- ➤ INTERNET SHUTDOWN: In <u>PUCL vs. Union of India</u>: Right to freedom of speech and expression is guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. Freedom here means the right to express one's opinions freely by word of mouth, writing, printing, picture, or in any other manner.

ABOUT K-FON:

- The K-Fon (KERALA -Fibre Optic Network) initiative by the Kerala government seeks to offer no-cost high-speed internet access to more than 2 million families falling under the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category within the state.
- 2. In a recent case, **Faheema Shirin v. State of Kerala**, the Kerala High Court ruled that access to the internet is a fundamental right, encompassed into the right to privacy and the right to education under Article 21 of the Constitution.
- 3. In today's digital age, where nearly all services are becoming digitalized, ensuring internet availability for all becomes crucial to facilitate growth and prosperity.

SIGNIFICANCE OF K-Fon PROJECT:

- The initiative aims to drive the **digitalization of government services** such as **e-health programs, IT parks, and transportation** hubs like airports and seaports.
- The program will ensure **affordable internet connectivity for households** outside the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category, effectively bridging the digital divide.
- It will establish connections between residences and more than 30,000 government offices
 and educational institutions, including improved mobile network coverage for faster mobile
 internet services, leading to enhanced governance.
- **Promoting digital literacy** will enable people to access information, collaborate, and navigate social and cultural networks.
- The initiative will set a **minimum standard and quality for internet** access while also focusing on capacity-building, allowing all citizens to gain digital literacy.
- Internet access and digital literacy will facilitate demanding accountability from the government, encouraging both the legislative and executive branches to take proactive steps in advancing this right.
- The initiative aligns with Constitutional Articles 38(2) and 39, working toward reducing inequalities and promoting the right of every individual.

CHALLENGES TO INTERNET ACCESSIBILITY:

- ➤ **Digital Divide:** Many rural areas lack access to reliable internet due to inadequate infrastructure. Example: In 2021, only around 29% of rural households in India had access to the internet.
- Affordability: High costs of data plans and devices make internet access unaffordable for a significant portion of the population.
- Lack of Digital Literacy: Many people, especially in rural areas, lack the skills to effectively use the internet for their benefit.
- Infrastructure Challenges: Inadequate broadband connectivity and poor network coverage limit access in remote and hilly areas.
- Language Barrier: Many online resources and services are available predominantly in English, creating a barrier for non-English speakers.
- **Privacy and Security Concerns:** High-profile data breaches and privacy concerns have led to hesitation among users to engage with online platforms.
- Regulatory and Policy Challenges: Complex regulations and restrictions on internet usage can limit accessibility and freedom.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE FOR INTERNET ACCESS:

How <u>KFON</u> aims to bridge the digital divide in Kerala

How is the Kerala Fibre Optic Network project going to be rolled out? Has any other State declared access to Internet as a basic right? Who are the beneficiaries of the project?

S.R. Praveen

The story so far:

n November 7, 2019, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in Kerala announced that access to the Internet would be a basic right in the State, becoming the first State in the country to do so. The declaration came three years after the UN had passed a resolution recognising Internet access as a basic human right. The announcement was accompanied by a detailed plan to ensure that it would become a ground reality, with the setting up of the Kerala Fibre Optic Network (KFON), through which Internet connections would be provided free of cost to 20 lakh below-poverty-line (BPL) families. The project is aimed at ensuring universal Internet access and narrowing the digital

divide, which has become especially acute after the COVID-19 outbreak.

How is the government running the network and providing services? The Kerala government's role involves setting up the vast infrastructure required for providing Internet, especially to remote corners of the State. The network has reached remote locations, including tribal hamlets in Wayanad and elsewhere, which had remained out of the information superhighway until now. The cabling works, stretching to 34,961 km, piggybacks on the Kerala State Electricity Board's (KSEB) existing infrastructure. KFON Limited is, in fact, a joint venture of the KSEB and the Kerala State Information Technology Infrastructure Ltd (KSTILL).

In July 2022, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) granted KFON an infrastructure provider (IP) licence and also approved it as an internet service provider (ISP).

How will the plan be rolled out?

The aim was to provide Internet connections to 14,000 BPL families, with 100 each from the State's 140 assembly constituencies in the first phase. The panchayats and the urban local bodies were given the responsibility of choosing the beneficiaries. However, the process of selection has been slow, with many local bodies delaying the submission of a list of beneficiaries from their area. As of now, Internet connection has been provided to 7,000 BPL families across the State. Each household will get 1.5 GB of data per day at 15 Mbps speed. In the second phase, Internet services will be made available to the public at affordable rates.

e public at affordable rates.
Free Internet connections for BPL

families and government institutions is just one part of the ₹1,548 crore KFON project. The rest of the network will be monetised. The State government in 2022 had constituted a committee headed by the Chief Secretary to study the possibilities of monetising the network. About 22 of a total of 48 fibres will be used for the network's own operations, with the KSEB also using some. The rest can be leased out, Santhosh Babu, Managing Director, KFON, had earlier told The Hindu.

What is the road ahead?

The commissioning of the first phase of KFON comes a week after the Chief Minister declared Kerala as India's first fully e-governed State. The e-office system has already been implemented in the Secretariat, district collectorates, commissionerates and directorates. As many as 900 government services, comprising all the services usually required by the public, are now available through a single-window portal.

The government has also begun a digital literacy campaign at the grassroot level through various local bodies to ensure that everyone is equipped to access basic services through the Internet. If the KFON project achieves what it has envisaged, it can bring about a change at the ground level as far as access and opportunities are concerned.

THE GIST

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On November 7, 2019, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in Kerala announced that access to the Internet would be a basic right in the State, becoming the first State in the country to do so.



The Kerala government's role involves setting up the vast infrastructure required for providing Internet, especially to remote corners of the State.

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The government has also begun a digital literacy campaign at the grassroot level through various local bodies to ensure that everyone is equipped to access basic services through the Internet.

| Initiative | Description |
|--|--|
| Digital India | Launched in 2015, aims to digitally empower citizens, |
| | provide government services online, and promote digital literacy. |
| A project to connect all Gram Panchayats (villages) with high-speed internet through optical Fiber networks. | |
| PM-WANI (Public Wi-Fi) | Launched to promote public Wi-Fi access by enabling small entrepreneurs to set up Wi-Fi hotspots. |
| Internet Saathi | Partnership with Google to train rural women as "Internet Saathis" who then train others in their communities. |
| SWAN (State Wide Area Network) | Aims to provide reliable and secure connectivity to government offices at various levels within the |
| NKN (National Knowledge | Connects academic institutions and research centres |
| Network) | through high-speed internet connectivity. |

WAY FORWARD:

- Infrastructure Development: Invest in robust broadband infrastructure, including Fiber-optic networks, to ensure widespread coverage and high-speed connectivity.
- Rural Connectivity Focus: Prioritize expanding internet access to rural and remote areas to bridge the digital divide.
- ➤ **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborate with private sector providers to extend internet services to underserved areas and improve overall connectivity.
- ➤ **Promote Digital Literacy:** Launch awareness campaigns and training programs to enhance digital literacy, enabling more people to utilize online services.

11. NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION (NCF-SE)

SOURCE: TH, PIB, IE

WHY IN NEWS?

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has unveiled the final version of the National Curriculum Framework.

- ➤ The framework, named the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE), aligns with the 5+3+3+4 educational structure suggested in the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020).
- ➤ The NCF aims to completely transform school syllabi nationwide.
- A steering committee led by former ISRO chairman K. Kasturirangan was responsible for the development of the NCF.



KEY POINTS OF NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK:

- Thorough Curriculum Coverage: The NCF-SE extensively addresses all four schooling stages.
 The complete curriculum framework spanning the Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary Stages has been unveiled.
- 2. **Knowledge, Skills, and Values Development:** The curriculum places emphasis on genuine comprehension of knowledge, essential skills like critical thinking and creativity, and foundational values, both constitutional and ethical.
- 3. **Integration of Vocational Education:** As per NEP 2020's recommendation, Vocational Education is integrated into school education, with the NCF-SE incorporating specific learning standards, content, teaching methods, and assessments for all schooling levels.
- 4. **Tailored Content Pedagogy:** For Grades 6 to 8, the NCF outlines content proportions from local, regional, national, and global sources in the Social Science curriculum.
- 5. **Emphasis on Multilingualism and Indian Languages:** The NCF-SE highlights the importance of multilingualism and learning indigenous Indian languages.
- 6. **Altered Language Learning Approach:** Students in Grades 9 and 10 will be required to study three languages, with at least two being native to India. In Grades 11 and 12, they will learn two languages, including one of Indian origin.
- 7. **Modified Language Curriculum:** The current norm involves two languages in Grades 9 and 10, and one language in Grades 11 and 12.
- 8. **Dual Board Exams Annually:** All students are permitted to take Board exams twice per academic year, with the best score being retained.
- 9. **Enhanced Mandatory Subjects:** Formerly, Grades 9 to 12 had five mandatory subjects with an optional additional subject. Now, Grades 9 and 10 encompass seven, and Grades 11 and 12 entail six mandatory subjects.
- 10. Optional Subjects Grouped: Optional subjects are categorized into three groups within the NCF. The first group emphasizes art education, including both visual and performing arts, focusing on creation, contemplation, and appreciation of artwork. The second group involves Social Science, Humanities, and interdisciplinary fields. The third group encompasses Science, Mathematics, and computational thinking.

- 11. **Transition to Semester-based Testing:** The NCF proposes a shift to semester or term-based testing across all boards. This allows testing as soon as a subject is completed, reducing the content burden in each examination.
- 12. **Emphasis on Environmental Education:** Addressing challenges like climate change, biodiversity decline, and pollution, the NCF places significant importance on Environmental Education across schooling stages.

| IMPORTANT COMMIT | IMPORTANT COMMITTEES RELATED TO EDUCATION DURING THE BRITISH ERA IN INDIA: | | |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|
| Committee Name | Year | Purpose/Significance | |
| Macaulay's Minutes | 1835 | Advocated English education and reduced emphasis on traditional Indian knowledge systems. | |
| Woods Dispatch | 1854 | Introduced a comprehensive plan for education in India, emphasizing grants for education and creation of educational departments. | |
| Hunter Commission | 1882 | Recommended government control over education and expansion of primary education. | |
| Indian Universities Act | 1904 | Brought reforms to Indian universities, including enhancing representation, finance, and academic freedom. | |
| Saddler University | 1917- | Focused on university education, suggesting improvements in | |
| Commission | 1919 | administration, curriculum, and faculty. | |
| Hartog Committee | 1929 | Addressed the issues of overcrowded classrooms and curriculum changes in primary education. | |
| Sargent Committee | 1944 | Proposed post-war educational reconstruction, emphasizing vocational training and adult education. | |

INDIAN MODERN EDUCATION: THE EVOLUTION OF THE SYSTEM THROUGH DIFFERENT POLICIES

1. Radhakrishnan Committee (1948-49):

- Formed the University Education Commission under Radhakrishnan.
- Aimed to align the education system with independent India's needs.
- Replaced colonial Macaulayism with Indian values.
- ➤ Highlighted values like wisdom, knowledge, social order, and leadership in education.
- Sought to establish an Indian value-based education system.

2. Kothari Commission:

- > Established the 10+2+3 educational system.
- Emphasized work experience and national service in education.
- Advocated linking colleges with nearby schools.
- Aimed for equal opportunities and integration.
- > Called for the establishment of the Indian Education Service.
- Proposed increased education spending to 6% of GDP by 1985.

3. National Educational Policy 1968:

- Focused on restructuring for national integration and development.
- Called for a 6% GDP allocation to education.
- Emphasized teacher training and the three-language formula.
- Laid the groundwork for India's education system development.

4. National Educational Policy 1985:

- Aimed to reduce disparities and provide equal opportunities.
- Introduced "Operation Blackboard" for primary school improvement.
- Established IGNOU, the Open University.
- Promoted the "rural university" model.

> Focused on grassroots economic and social development.

5. T.S.R. Subramaniam Committee Report:

- > Declared early childhood education (ECCE) as a fundamental right.
- Called for uniform ECCE facilities in government schools.
- Proposed exam reforms and teacher management improvements.
- Recommended integrated B.Ed. courses and enhanced ICT integration.
- Advocated scaling up vocational education and introducing certifications.
- Suggested the creation of an All India Education Service.

6. National Higher Education Promotion and Management Act (NHEPMA):

- Proposed replacing separate laws governing higher education regulators.
- > Recommended revisions to the roles of regulatory bodies like UGC and AICTE.
- Called for the establishment of a National Accreditation Board (NAB).

7. <u>Kasturirangan Report on School Education (Draft National Education Policy):</u>

- Focused on restructuring India's education system for the 4th Industrial Revolution.
- Emphasized demographic dividend utilization.
- Submitted by the Committee for Draft National Education Policy, chaired by Dr. K. Kasturirangan, on May 31, 2019.

SIGNIFICANCE OF NCF / WAY FORWARD:

- The creation of the NCF-SE was driven by the aim to synchronize education with the requirements of the 21st century and the principles of the Indian knowledge structure.
- The framework presents a **cross-disciplinary education approach**, cultivating principles, promoting innovative teaching methods, and equipping students for real-world issuesolving.
- > This initiative will assist India in crafting a comprehensive, modern, and culturally embedded educational environment.
- Renewed emphasis is placed on **multilingualism**, grasping fundamental concepts in Mathematics, and nurturing abilities for scientific investigation.

of Civils

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

COUP IN NIGER

SOURCE: TH

WHY IN NEWS?

The removal of President Mohamed Bazoum in Niger on July 26th poses a challenge to political stability in the emerging democracy and hampers efforts to combat the rapidly spreading Islamist insurgency in the Sahel region.

ALGERIA MALI NIGER CHAD BURKINA NIGERIA B B C N SHNN NIGERIA

MAJOR REASONS FOR NIGER COUP:

- Insecurity: Niger has been struggling with insecurity for years, as the country is home to several armed groups, including Boko Haram and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). The insecurity has led to a humanitarian crisis, as hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced from their homes.
- Economic hardship: Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world and the economic situation has been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Political dissatisfaction: The coup leaders have also cited political dissatisfaction as a reason for their actions. They have accused President Mohamed Bazoum of corruption and of failing to address the country's problems.
- Military dissatisfaction: coup was led by a group of high-ranking military officers.
- The rise of populism: Populism has been on the rise in Niger in recent years. This has led to a decline in trust in traditional institutions, such as the military and the government.
- The weakness of the government: The government of Niger has been weak and ineffective in recent years.

INDIA-NIGER RELATIONS:

1. **Diplomatic Relations:** India inaugurated its Embassy in Niamey in May 2009, while Niger established its Embassy in New Delhi in November 2011.

2. Trade:

- India's primary exports to Niger encompass a variety of items including Rice, Cotton, Pharmaceutical products, Engineering goods, electrical appliances, cotton fabrics, garments, processed cereals/food items, Sugar, Sugar confectionery, Construction material, and artificial jewelry.
- Conversely, Niger's key exports to India consist of Gum Arabic, Resins and other Vegetable saps and extracts, semi-precious stones, Oil seeds (Sesame), miscellaneous grains, and goat skins.
- ➤ The total bilateral trade volume in the fiscal year 2021-22 amounted to \$101 million.
- Indian Investments in Niger: Indian businesses have invested in Niger, including Airtel Cellular Services, Euroworld International, Jai Mata di Trading, Satguru Travels, and Qualis Beverages.
- 4. **Indian Community:** Approximately 200 Indian nationals are residing in Niamey, primarily involved in trading, hospitality, and service sectors.

IMPACT OF NIGER COUP ON INDIA:

- > Security implications: Niger is a major transit point for terrorists and other criminals, and the coup could make it easier for them to operate in India.
- Economic implications: Niger is a major supplier of uranium to India, and the coup could disrupt supplies.
- ➤ Humanitarian implications: Niger is a poor country, and the coup could lead to a humanitarian crisis. India has a long history of providing humanitarian assistance to Niger, and the coup could increase the need for such assistance.
- **Economic Ties:** Any disruptions in governance and political stability in Niger could affect trade and investment prospects between the two nations.

WHAT CAN INNDIA DO?

- Support the efforts of the African Union and the United Nations: India should support the efforts of the African Union and the United Nations to mediate the crisis in Niger.
- Provide humanitarian assistance: India should provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Niger, who are facing a humanitarian crisis as a result of the coup.
- Work with other countries to promote democracy and stability in Niger: India should work with other countries to promote democracy and stability in Niger. This could involve sharing best practices, providing training, and providing financial assistance.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC:

- Niger is a landlocked country located in West Africa.
- It is bordered by seven countries, including Nigeria, Chad, Algeria, Libya, Benin, Burkina Faso, and Mali.
- Niger gained independence from France on August 3, 1960, making it one of the earliest African nations to gain sovereignty from colonial rule.
- Niamey, the Capital of Niger, also serves as the nation's political, economic, and cultural hub.

MYANMAR COUP:

- India, known as the birthplace of Lord Buddha, holds significant religious importance for the people of Myanmar, attracting them as a country of pilgrimage.
- In 1951 INDIA and MYANMAR formalized their relationship by signing a Treaty of Friendship
- The visit of the Prime Minister in 1987 played a crucial role in laying the groundwork for a stronger bilateral relationship between India and Myanmar.
- Since 2014, Myanmar has been included in India's "Neighbourhood First" policy and its "Act East" policy, signifying the growing importance of the bilateral relationship.



IT'S TIME FOR AFRICA

SOURCE: IE

WHY IN NEWS?

During its leadership of the G20, India achieved a significant milestone as **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** passionately **advocated for the inclusion of the African Union within the group's membership**. In harmony with India's commitment to greater involvement and engagement with the Global South, an Action Council titled **'African Economic Integration: An Agenda for Global Business'** was established under the Business20 (B20) framework.

SIGNIFICANCE OF AFRICA:

- Africa holds around **30 percent of the global mineral reserves**, 12 percent of the world's oil, and **8 percent of its natural gas resources**.
- In the year 2050, Africa is projected to account for over half of the world's expected population growth of 1.7 billion individuals. This will consist of a youthful workforce, an expanding consumer market, and increasing disposable incomes.
- > For a significant duration, Africa has been referred to as the "final frontier" for business. As experts assess prevailing global trade practices, the viewpoint of Africa as an invaluable investment market needs to broaden even further.
- Encouraging investments in Africa transcends the expansion of businesses alone; it pertains to diversifying supply and value chains to establish a resilient and relatively shockresistant global economy.

AFRICA'S UNCAPPED POTENTIAL:

- Converting Africa's considerable potential into benefits requires a collaborative endeavour involving the international community, encompassing governments, businesses, and civil society.
- Currently, Africa's contribution to the overall global manufacturing and trade stands below 3 percent.
- Within the continent, **33 out of the world's 46 least developed countries are situated**, with many of them being landlocked.

WHAT ARE THE KEY PRIORITIES TO CATALYSE AFRICA'S ECONOMIC INTEGRATION?

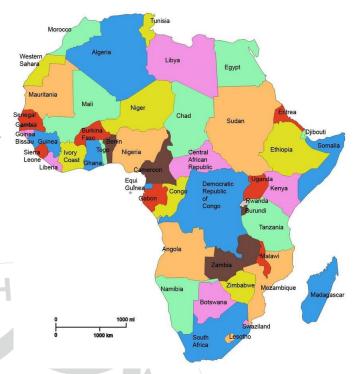
- First, human capital outcomes across health and education need to be strengthened: -
 - a. Youth Demographic Dividend:
 Much like India, Africa's
 population represents a
 valuable demographic dividend.
 This underscores the pivotal
 role that African youth will play
 in the economy's future.
 - b. Focus on Healthcare and Education: Effectively harnessing these potentials necessitates a dedicated emphasis on improving healthcare and education results.
 - c. Financial Requirement for Healthcare: The African

Development Bank has highlighted the need for substantial funds, amounting to \$26 billion annually, to sustain healthcare expenditure on the continent.

- d. **Impact of Education on Earnings:** According to the World Bank, each additional year of schooling is projected to lead to an 11 percent increase in earnings for boys and 14 percent for girls.
- e. **Benefits of Integrated Economic Structure:** An integrated economic framework would enable the consolidation of resources, sharing of knowledge, and cost-effective transfer of innovative education and healthcare methodologies.

2. Enhancing Agriculture and Food Systems:

- a. Approximately 70 percent of the African population being employed in the agricultural sector.
- **b. Characteristics of Farming:** Farming in the region is characterized by small-scale and subsistence landholdings.
- c. Challenges in Agricultural Productivity: The existing gap in the availability of finance and essential inputs like fertilizers and seeds results in low productivity. Additionally, value addition remains limited, and a majority of agricultural products are exported without undergoing processing.
- **d. Need for Training and Mechanization:** Addressing these issues necessitates the training and education of farmers. Incorporating mechanization is essential, along with introducing sustainable value-added enterprises within the sector.
- **e. Positive Outcomes through Interventions:** Coupled with improved access to inputs and credit lines, these interventions have the potential to yield impressive outcomes in Africa.
- Fostering manufacturing-based industrialization and empowering micro, small, and medium enterprises: Achieving this aim can be realized gradually by facilitating smoother intra-continental trade, aligning policies, and tapping into natural resources for renewable energy.



4. Accelerating trade facilitation under AfCFTA for increased competitiveness and investments: AfCFTA, when fully implemented, will increase the competitiveness of economies across the continent, boost integration with global value chains, and attract investments. Trade facilitation must be accelerated through technology and implementation support from G20nations.

IRRITANTS OF INDO-AFRICA:

- ➤ **Competition with China:** India competes with China in Africa for investments, trade, and influence, especially in sectors like infrastructure, mining, and energy.
- Limited Resources: India has limited resources for aiding Africa's financial needs and infrastructure development compared to China, making it challenging to compete for significant projects and trade opportunities.
- ➤ Investment Concerns: Indian companies may be reluctant to invest in Africa due to concerns about slow economic growth, high debt levels, and uncertainties in African business environments, limiting India's economic growth.
- Lack of Connectivity: Insufficient city-to-city connections between India and Africa hinder people-to-people interactions and mutual understanding, impeding cooperation.
- ➤ Perception and Image: India must address concerns in Africa about its investments being perceived as neo-colonialism or exploitative. Racial attacks on African nationals in India have worsened this image problem.

WAY FORWARD:

- ➤ **Diplomatic Engagement:** Strengthen diplomatic ties with African nations and engage in dialogues with key stakeholders to garner support for African Union's inclusion in the G20.
- ➤ **Promote Awareness:** Create awareness campaigns to emphasize the benefits of African representation in the G20, both within India and among other G20 member countries.
- ➤ **Diplomatic Advocacy:** Utilize international forums, such as G20 meetings, to advocate for African Union membership and highlight the significance of Global South inclusion.
- Collaborative Initiatives: Foster collaborative projects that align with the 'African Economic Integration' agenda, focusing on trade, investment, and economic development.
- ➤ Capacity Building: Offer technical assistance and training programs to African nations to enhance their capacity for active participation in global economic discussions.
- ➤ **Private Sector Engagement:** Encourage partnerships between Indian and African businesses to promote trade, investment, and economic cooperation.

| MAJOR GROUPINGS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN AFRICA: | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Grouping/Organization | Member Countries | Description and Purpose | |
| African Union (AU) | All 55 African countries | Continental organization for political and economic integration. | |
| Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) | Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo | Regional economic integration and cooperation in West Africa. | |
| Southern African Development Community (SADC) | Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, | Regional cooperation and integration in Southern Africa. | |

| | Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe | |
|--|--|--|
| East African Community (EAC) | Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda | Regional intergovernmental organization for economic and social integration. |
| Arab League | Various Arab countries | Organization of Arab countries to promote economic, cultural, and political cooperation. |
| African Development Bank (AfDB) | Regional and non-regional member countries | Multilateral development finance institution focusing on Africa's development. |
| African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) | Member countries of the African Union | Pan-African multilateral trade finance institution. |
| COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) | Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe | Regional economic community for promoting trade and development. |
| Maghreb Union | Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia | Economic and political integration among North African countries. |
| G5 Sahel | Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger | Joint military and political efforts to address security challenges in the Sahel region. |

INDIA-GREECE RELATIONS

SOURCE: HINDUSTAN TIMES, ECONOMIC TIMES, MoEA

WHY IN NEWS?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Greek PM Kyriakos Mitsotakis decided to upgrade bilateral ties to strategic partnership during the first prime ministerial visit to Greece in 40 years, made a commitment to quadruple bilateral trade by 2030, and decided to finalise a migration and mobility accord soon.



WHAT ALL ISSUES WERE DISCUSSED?

- 1. The nations decided to enhance collaboration in **defence**, **security**, **infrastructure**, **agriculture**, **education**, **and emerging technologies**.
- 2. They also planned to establish a **structured dialogue framework at the level of National Security Advisers**, and they committed to reinforcing cooperation in defence industry.
- 3. Both India and Greece aimed to **support peaceful solutions for the Ukraine crisis**, highlighting their strong alignment on global and regional matters, including the Indo-Pacific region.
- 4. Both nations emphasized their complete unity in **upholding maritime security** and the significance of adhering to the Convention on the Law of the Sea. This was deemed vital in light of concerns over the situations in the Eastern Mediterranean and Indo-Pacific areas.

- 5. The feasibility of **direct air connectivity between India and Greece** was discussed, acknowledging the potential benefits for the tourism sector.
- **6.** Discussions encompassed mutual **efforts in countering terrorism and enhancing cybersecurity.**
- 7. An accord on **agricultural cooperation** was also signed after the discussions.
- 8. Topics covered included digital payments, shipping, pharmaceuticals, tourism, culture, education, and people-to-people relationships.
- 9. The leaders engaged in talks regarding regional and international matters such as the European Union, Indo-Pacific, and Mediterranean. They emphasized the **importance of respecting international law, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.**
- 10. An agreement for migration and mobility partnership is on the horizon, aimed at facilitating skilled migration between the two countries.

GEOPOLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

- India and Greece are pivotal states with significant geopolitical importance in Eurasia.
- ➤ Bilateral relations have been steadily growing, with mutual support for each other's foreign policy objectives.
- ➤ Both nations share concerns about international terrorism and are strengthening ties through consistent initiatives.



BRIEF ACCOUNT OF INDO-GREEKS IN INDIA:

| Time Period | Indo-Greek Rulers | Key Events |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 3rd century BCE | Alexander the Great's Conquests | Alexander's invasion of India introduces Greek influence. |
| 3rd-2nd centuries BCE | Seleucid Empire Influence | Seleucid Empire rules over parts of northwestern India after Alexander's death. |
| 180-160 BCE | Demetrius I | Demetrius establishes the Indo-Greek Kingdom, starting a period of direct Greek rule. |
| 160-135 BCE | Menander I | Menander's rule is marked by interactions with Indian religions, as seen in Buddhist coinage. |
| 150-130 BCE | Eucratides I | Eucratides briefly captures north western Indian territories from the Indo-Greek Kingdom. |
| 130-125 BCE | Menander II | Menander II's rule is relatively short and characterized by conflicts with neighbouring regions. |
| 120-80 BCE | Strato I & Others | Various Indo-Greek kings rule different territories, often facing struggles against Indian rulers |
| 80 BCE | Indo-Scythians Emerge | Indo-Scythians overthrow Indo-Greek rule, marking the decline of direct Greek influence. |

WAY FORWARD:

- Diplomatic Collaboration: Establish regular high-level dialogues between the leaders of both countries to set strategic goals and maintain momentum.
- ➤ **Defining Common Goals:** Identify shared interests, such as maritime security, counterterrorism, and regional stability, to serve as the foundation for strategic cooperation.
- **Enhanced Defence Cooperation:** Strengthen defence ties through joint military exercises, technology sharing, and capacity building to address evolving security challenges.
- ➤ Trade and Investment Promotion: Facilitate trade and investment by forming business forums and eliminating trade barriers, promoting economic growth and collaboration.
- Cultural and Educational Exchange: Establish exchange programs for students, researchers, and artists to foster mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures.
- Tourism and People-to-People Ties: Promote direct air connectivity to boost tourism, allowing people from both countries to experience each other's heritage and landscapes.

INDIA AND THE NORTHEN SEA ROUTE

SOURCE: The Hindu

WHY IN THE NEWS?

- The Northern Sea Route (NSR)'s starting point in Murmansk, also known as the capital of the Arctic region, is seeing an increase in cargo traffic from India.
- ➤ India received a share of **35% of the eight million tons** of cargo handled by the **Murmansk port,** which is located around 2,000 kilometres northwest of Moscow, Russia, in the first seven months of 2023.

NORTHERN SEA ROUTE:

- The Northern Sea
 Route (NSR),
 commonly referred to
 as the Northeast
 Passage, is a maritime
 shipping route that
 follows the northern
 coast of Eurasia
 running for about
 5600km.
- Compared to the conventional routes that travel through the Suez Canal or around the southern edge of Africa, it is a noticeably shorter route between Europe and Asia.



Geographical location:

- It starts from the **North Atlantic** and travels into the **Arctic Ocean**, weaving through the **Barents**, **Kara**, **Laptev**, **East Siberian**, **and Chukchi Seas** as it moves eastward along Russia's northern coasts.
- The Bering Strait, which connects to the Pacific Ocean, marks the end of the route.

WHY IS THE NORTHERN SEA ROUTE IMPORTANT FOR INDIA?

- ➤ Historical relationship: The Svalbard Treaty in 1920 established a relationship between India and the Arctic Council, which is still active today.
- Reduced Shipping Distance and Time: This route helps in shorter transit times and shipping distances for India's exports and imports to and from Europe, Russia, and northern Asia.

- ➤ Access to Arctic Resources: The Arctic region is home to significant mineral, oil, and natural gas reserves. Accessing these resources becomes easier as a result of climate change as the ice cover melts.
- Strategic Alliances: India's alliances with Arctic nations like Russia could promote cooperation on trade and exploration in the region. Russia, a significant contributor to the development of the NSR, would present chances for India to participate in Arctic initiatives.
- ➤ **Global maritime Influence**: India can demonstrate its influence as a major participant by engaging in pertaining to **international shipping laws, security, and the environment**.
- **Environment and Climate Change: India's water security and economy** may be impacted by the Arctic's vulnerability to climate change.

INDIAN ENGAGEMENT IN THE NORTH SEA ROUTE:

| 1. Observer status | In 2013, the Arctic Council gave India observer status. India is now able to take part in debates about the Arctic, especially those concerning the NSR and its implications for geopolitics and the environment. |
|---|---|
| 2. Research and scientific expeditions. | The Indian Arctic Expedition (IndARC), a multidisciplinary research project that focused on atmospheric, oceanic, and geophysical studies, was carried out in 2014 by India. Himadri Station for understanding the impact of climate change in the Arctic. |
| 3. Trade in the region | With a growth rate of over 73% between 2018 and 2022, the NSR's growing cargo traffic is in line with India's rising imports of coal and Russian crude oil. |
| 4. Infrastructure development | India's interest in the NSR is increased by the Chennai- Vladivostok Maritime Corridor (CVMC) project, which provides a quicker and more effective trading route. |

WAY AHEAD:

Here are some of the future prospects of the Northern Sea Route for India:

- Achieving sustainable development goals: The region can address the energy needs of India. Also, the Government of India's Arctic Policy 2022 says that the economic development of the region is in line with the UN SDGs.
- Collaborations with Russia: The sole nuclear-powered icebreaker fleet in the world is found in Russia, ensuring year-round service. The NSR infrastructure manager, Rosatom, is committed to this. This can help India in enhancing trade and other development initiatives.
- ➤ **Geopolitical influence:** India also aims to **counteract** the potential **combined influence of China and Russia over the NSR.**

BRICS GETS SIX NEW MEMBERS

SOURCE: IE

WHY IN NEWS?

- The five-member BRICS invited six more countries to join the alliance.
- ➤ Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Egypt, and Ethiopia have been invited to the BRICS summit now taking place in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- They will officially join in January 2024.
- > They are planning to launch BRICS Currency.

ABOUT BRICS:

1. Formation and Purpose:

- a. BRICS is an acronym for the grouping of five major emerging economies:
 Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.
- b. It was established in 2006
 with the aim of fostering
 cooperation among these
 nations on economic,
 political, and social fronts.



2. Economic Powerhouses:

- a. BRICS countries collectively represent a significant portion of the global population, land area, and GDP.
- b. They play a crucial role in shaping the global economy and geopolitics.
- 3. <u>Cooperation Areas:</u> BRICS focuses on collaboration in various domains, including trade, investment, finance, technology, healthcare, and sustainable development.
- 4. <u>Annual Summits:</u> BRICS holds annual summits where leaders from member countries meet to discuss key issues and enhance cooperation. These summits rotate among the member nations.
- 5. <u>Geopolitical Influence:</u> BRICS countries often coordinate their positions on global issues, contributing to a multipolar world order.

6. New Development Bank (NDB): *

- a. One of the significant achievements of BRICS is the establishment of the **New Development Bank (NDB) in 2014.**
- b. NDB provides financial assistance for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in member countries and other emerging economies.
- Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges: BRICS promotes cultural exchanges, academic cooperation, and people-to-people ties to foster deeper understanding among member nations.
- 8. <u>Collaboration on Global Challenges:</u> BRICS discussions cover a wide range of topics, including climate change, terrorism, cybersecurity, and global health issues.
- 9. <u>Voice for Developing Nations:</u> BRICS serves as a platform for emerging economies to voice their concerns and aspirations on the global stage.
- 10. <u>Partnerships and Outreach:</u> BRICS engages with other nations and organizations through partnerships and dialogues, extending its influence beyond its member states.

WHY IS BRICS EXPANSION NECESSARY?

- **Economic strength:** The five participants in the coalition's economy are not as strong as they were when the platform was originally introduced in 2009.
 - Even though the BRICS countries account for over 30% of the global economy and about 43% of the world's population, they still have obvious economic disadvantages.
- **East west rivalry:** Their rivalries have been more consolidated as a result of the Russia-Ukraine War and the escalating China-USA war.
- New world order: The goal of the "new world order" is to firmly establish their position, particularly in respect to the European Union and the United States.
- > Investment: According to a UN report, the growth rate of exports within the BRICS and the amount of foreign direct investment into BRICS countries are both higher than the average



for the world.

- ➤ BRICS Plus: It is a vehicle for collaboration that was introduced at the 2017 Xiamen summit to expand BRICS beyond its current membership of five.
- ➤ BRICS NDB: The United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Bangladesh, and Egypt are already a part of the BRICS NDB, and many other countries are eager to join as well.
- ➤ **Decreased dependence on the US dollar:** The BRICS nations are making an effort to rely less on the US dollar.
 - They might have more control over their own economies as a result, which would make them less susceptible to US economic policy.

CHALLENGES WITH BRICS:

- ➤ **Differing priorities and interests** among member countries can lead to coordination challenges.
- ➤ Varying levels of economic development and political systems can hinder cohesive decision-making.
- ➤ **Geopolitical tensions** among member countries, like **India-China border issues**, can strain cooperation.
- ➤ Complex bureaucratic processes and negotiations can slow down initiatives and agreements.
- > Balancing individual national interests with collective goals can be a delicate task.

SIGNIFICANCE OF BRICS IN CHANGING GEOPOLITICAL SCENARIO FOR INDIA:

- 1. **Diverse Alliances:** BRICS provides India with a platform to engage with other major emerging economies, diversifying its diplomatic and economic ties beyond traditional partnerships.
- 2. **Multipolarity:** BRICS reinforces the concept of a multipolar world, where India's voice is heard alongside other influential nations, countering the dominance of established powers.
- 3. **Economic Opportunities:** The collaboration within BRICS enhances India's access to trade, investment, and technology from fellow member countries, boosting economic growth.
- 4. **Development Financing:** Institutions like the New Development Bank (NDB) offer India and other members alternative sources of development funding, reducing reliance on Westerndominated financial institutions.
- 5. **Counterbalance to Western Influence:** BRICS presents India with a collective voice against unilateral decisions by Western powers, increasing its diplomatic leverage in global affairs.

WAY FORWARD:

- > Strengthen Economic Ties: Enhance trade and investment cooperation. Explore new economic sectors for collaboration.
- Promote Innovation and Technology: Foster joint research and innovation projects. Share technological expertise and best practices.
- Address Global Challenges: Collaborate on climate change, health, and security. Provide collective solutions to common challenges.
- Enhance Cultural and Educational Exchanges: Foster mutual understanding and academic partnerships. Promote people-to-people ties.
- Maintain Diplomatic Coordination: Regular high-level dialogues and summits. Present a unified voice on global issues.

| OTHER GROUPINGS: | | |
|--|---|--|
| Regional | Member Countries | Description and Purpose |
| Grouping/Organization | | |
| SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional | Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri | Collaboration among South Asian countries for regional |
| Cooperation) | Lanka | development, economic integration, and cooperation. |
| BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi- Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) | Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand | Cooperation among nations around the Bay of Bengal to promote trade, investment, and development. |
| SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) | India, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan | Eurasian political, economic, and security organization comprising Central Asian and neighbouring states. |
| IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association) | India, Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, UAE | Collaboration among countries bordering the Indian Ocean for enhancing regional trade, growth, and security. |
| ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum) | ASEAN member states and their dialogue partners | Platform for political and security dialogue among |

| | | ASEAN member states and their dialogue partners. |
|--|---|--|
| G20 | Major global economies (comprises 19 countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, United Kingdom and United States) and the European Union. | Major economies coming together to discuss global financial stability, economic growth, and cooperation. |
| IONS (Indian Ocean Naval Symposium) | Participating Indian Ocean littoral states | Forum for maritime cooperation among Indian Ocean littoral states to ensure maritime security and stability. |
| MGC (Mekong-Ganga Cooperation) | India, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand | Collaboration between India and ASEAN countries along the Mekong and Ganga rivers to enhance cultural and economic ties. |
| BRICS | Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa | Grouping of major emerging economies to promote cooperation in economic, political, and social areas |

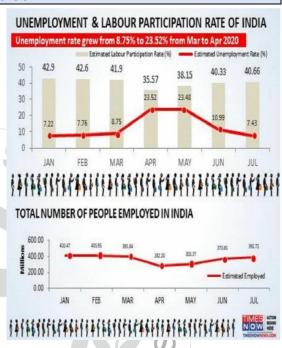


FORMAL JOB CRISIS

WHY IN NEWS: The contours of India's 'formal jobs' crisis

FACTSHEET:

- According to the latest report of periodic labour force survey, 7.5 per cent of the labour force was unemployed in 2020-21 (July to June), even when a person is defined as employed if he/she worked for at least one hour on at least one day during the seven days preceding the date of survey (current weekly status).
- About 42 million people who were available for work were not employed.
- Around 21 million of unemployed people were in the 15-29 years age group.
- The transition from agriculture to manufacturing in terms of GDP and employment generation, key to development, has not taken place.



REASONS FOR FORMAL JOB CRISIS IN INDIA

- Economic Slowdown: A prolonged economic slowdown can result in reduced business expansion and hiring, leading to fewer job opportunities.
 - For example, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 significantly impacted India's economy and caused job losses in various sectors.
- > The decline of the farm sector: Farm sector has been declining in recent years, due to a number of factors including the lack of investment, the low productivity, and the impact of climate change.
- > The rise of the gig economy: The gig economy is a growing trend in India, as more and more People are taking on temporary or contract work. However, the gig economy does not offer the same level of security or benefits as traditional formal jobs.
- ➤ Infrastructure Bottlenecks: Inadequate infrastructure can hinder industrial growth and job creation, affecting various sectors like manufacturing and construction.
- Demographic Challenges: India's growing population can put pressure on the job market, exacerbating the formal job crisis.
- The shift of the workforce away from agriculture that India has experienced over the last three decades or longer does not meet the criteria of what economists refer to as "structural transformation.

COMMITTES RECOMENDATIOS:

- National Employment Policy Committee (2018): This committee was set up by the Ministry
 of Labour and Employment to formulate a national employment policy:
 - Creating more jobs in the formal sector.

- Promoting entrepreneurship.
- > Reducing the gender gap in employment.
- > Addressing the problem of underemployment.
- Improving the employability of youth.
- Providing skills training and education.
- Providing financial assistance to the unemployed.
- 2. Standing Committee on Labour (2021): This committee was set up by the Parliament to examine the issue of unemployment in India.
 - Increasing the public investment in infrastructure.
 - Promoting labour-intensive industries.
 - Improving the quality of education and training.
 - Addressing the problem of skill mismatch.
 - Ensuring that the benefits of economic growth reach all sections of society.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE WAY AHEAD:

Skill Development Programs:

- o Implement comprehensive skill development programs to bridge the gap between demanded and available skills in the job market.
- Collaborate with industries to identify the most relevant skills needed and design training accordingly.

Promote Entrepreneurship and Startups:

- Create a conducive environment for entrepreneurs and start-ups to flourish by reducing bureaucratic hurdles and providing financial support.
- o Encourage innovation and technology-driven ventures that can generate new job opportunities.



Source: EPFO Payroll data, BL Analysis

Encourage Formalization of Informal Sector:

- Provide incentives and support to encourage informal businesses to formalize their operations.
- Offer benefits and assistance to registered businesses to improve their viability and create more formal jobs.

Enhance Education and Vocational Training:

- Revamp the education system to align with industry demands and promote practical skills.
- o Invest in vocational training to equip the workforce with relevant skills for various job sectors.

Support MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises):

- Provide financial support and easy access to credit for MSMEs to stimulate their
- Facilitate market linkages and technological upgrades for these enterprises.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES:

- Skill India Mission: This mission aims to skill 10
 million people in India annually in various sectors.
 This will help to make the workforce more
 employable and create more opportunities for
 formal jobs.
- Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY): This scheme provides incentives to employers for creating new jobs. This will help to encourage businesses to create more formal jobs.
- 3. Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana (ABRY): This scheme provides incentives to employers for creating new jobs and providing social security benefits to their employees.
- 4. National Career Service (NCS) Project: This project provides a platform for job seekers to connect with employers. This will help to match the skills of job seekers with the needs of employers and create more formal jobs.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC:

DISGUISED UNEMPLOYMENT: There is an excess of people in the workforce, and the overall production remains unaffected even if some of them are withdrawn.<u>EG</u>:

<u>AGRICULTURE AND INFORMAL SECTOR.</u>

Seasonal Unemployment: This type of unemployment happens at different times of the year. Production activities only happen during certain seasons in several sectors.

Structural Unemployment: This type of unemployment arises due to significant changes and adaptations made to a country's economic framework.

Cyclical Unemployment: Unemployment results from a reduction in economic activity, and cyclical unemployment is generally a temporary condition in the short term.



GOVT. IMPOSES CURBS ON IMPORT OF LAPTOPS AND TABLETS

SOURCE: TH

WHY IN NEWS: NEW REGULATIONS REQUIRES IMPORT LICENSES WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT

WHAT IS PLI SCHEME:

The PLI (Production Linked Incentive) scheme is a government program that aims to boost manufacturing in India. The scheme offers incentives to companies that invest in new manufacturing facilities or expand existing ones. The incentives are linked to the production of goods, so companies that produce more goods get more incentives.

FEATURES OF PLI SCHEME:

- Companies get incentives based on the amount of goods they produce.
- The scheme is open to both domestic and foreign companies.
- The incentives are available for a wide range of products, including electronics, textiles, and automobiles.
- The scheme is designed to boost investment in new manufacturing facilities and to expand existing ones.
- It is an outcome-based approach.
- It promotes private investment

SIGNIFICANCE OF PLI SCHEME:

- **Boosts investment in manufacturing**: The PLI scheme has been very successful in attracting investment in new manufacturing facilities.
- Creates jobs: The PLI scheme is expected to create millions of jobs in India. For example, the electronics PLI scheme is expected to create 2 million jobs in the next five years.
- ➤ Helps India become a global manufacturing hub: The PLI scheme is designed to help India become a global manufacturing hub. By attracting investment and creating jobs, the scheme is helping to make
 - o India a more attractive destination for manufacturing.
- ➤ Increases exports: The PLI scheme is also expected to increase India's exports.
 - For example, the electronics PLI scheme is expected to increase India's exports of electronics by \$50 billion in the next five years.
- ➤ **Development of high potential sectors: S**ectors who do not hold economic importance in current times but have significant opportunity in future can be developed through this scheme.
 - EG: Pharmaceutical sectors

ISSUES FACED BY PLI SCHEME

- Lack of transparency: There is no clear information about how the incentives are calculated or how they are distributed. This has led to some concerns about corruption and cronyism.
- Focus on large companies: The incentives are only available to companies that invest in new manufacturing facilities or expand existing ones. This means that small and medium-sized businesses are not eligible for the incentives.



- Not enough to make India a global manufacturing hub: Some experts have argued that the PLI scheme is not enough to make India a global manufacturing hub. They argue that the government needs to do more to improve the infrastructure and skills in India.
- ➤ Multiple Deliverables: The schemes promises multiple targets to achieve such as Increase in number of exports, Quality enhancement but unable to give result for all parameters.
- ➤ **Disadvantage to Excluded Sectors**: Some sectors are completely excluded from PLI scheme which causes lack of resources and human capital in these sectors.
- > **Skills gap:** Despite India having a sizable workforce, there is a noticeable deficiency of highly skilled labour, particularly in advanced technology sectors that the PLI scheme aims to address.

MEASURES TO BE TAKEN:

- 1. Make the scheme more accessible to small and medium-sized businesses: The government could do this by lowering the minimum investment requirements for the scheme. The government could also provide financial assistance to small and medium-sized businesses to help them meet the investment requirements.
- Coordinate the scheme with other government policies: The government could do this by creating a single window for businesses to access information about all the government policies that are relevant to them.
- 2. **Improve the monitoring of the scheme**: The government could do this by collecting more data on the scheme. The government could also create a system for tracking the progress of the scheme and identifying any problems that may be arising.
- 3. **Increased Investment:** There is a need to improve investment in the field of Innovation, Research and Skilling for better results.
- 4. **Technological Competence**: Incentives should be provided to industries so that they can enhance their technological competence of private players for transitioning into Global players.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC:

- The PLI schemes were initially declared in April 2020 as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, a comprehensive economic plan aimed at revitalizing the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- These schemes were initially focused on three sectors: mobile phones and specified electronic components, active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and medical devices, and critical key starting materials (KSMs), drug intermediates, and APIs.
- At present, the schemes provide incentives to companies for increasing sales of products manufactured in India across 14 significant sectors, including electronics, pharmaceuticals, automobiles, textiles, and food products.

SUGAR PRODUCTION IN INDIA

SOURCE: TH

WHY IN NEWS: How do sugarcane farmers suffer from the consequences of excessive sugar production? What steps can be implemented to safeguard India's agricultural sector from collapsing amid the surplus of sugar?

VI LH2

In the 2021-2022 season, India achieved a remarkable milestone by surpassing Brazil and claiming the title of the world's largest sugar producer, setting a new record with a production of 359 lakh tonnes.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC

Temperature: Between 21-27°C with hot and humid climate.

Rainfall: Around 75-100 cm. **Soil Type**: Deep rich loamy soil.

Top Sugarcane Producing States: Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Bihar.

It can be grown on all varieties of soils ranging from sandy loam to clay loam given these soils should be well drained.

REASONS FOR EXCESS SUGAR PRODUCTION IN INDIA:

- 1. <u>Fair and Remunerative prices</u>: The Central government provides the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) scheme, which enforces a minimum price that sugar mills must pay to sugarcane farmers, ensuring that farmers consistently receive equitable profits for their produce.
- 1. <u>Subsidies:</u> State governments also provide substantial subsidies to encourage and motivate sugarcane cultivation.
- 2. <u>Location:</u> The tropical climate in South India is conducive to higher sucrose content in sugarcane, resulting in increased yields per unit area compared to the northern regions of the country.
- 3. <u>Improved Farming Practices</u>: Adoption of modern agricultural techniques and technologies has resulted in higher productivity and output.
- 4. <u>Long Harvesting Season</u>: Sugarcane has a relatively long harvesting season, allowing for multiple crops and contributing to excess production.

CHALLENGES FACED BY SUGAR INDUSTRY IN INDIA:

- Cyclical nature and price fluctuations: The sugar industry in India operates in a cyclical nature, with periods of surplus and deficit production. This leads to price fluctuations, impacting the profitability of sugar mills.
- Sugarcane availability:
 The availability of
 sufficient and good
 quality sugarcane is a
 significant challenge for
 the Indian sugar
 industry. Factors such
 as fluctuations in



rainfall, inadequate irrigation facilities, and pest attacks can affect the yield and quality of sugarcane.

- Lack of modernization and low productivity: Many sugar mills in India are outdated and operate with old machinery and technology. This results in low productivity and efficiency.
- ➤ Energy and environmental concerns: Traditional sugar mills generate large amounts of bagasse (sugarcane waste) during the sugar production process. The industry faces challenges in effectively utilizing this biomass for energy generation and managing the waste.
- ➤ Increasing competition: The Indian sugar industry faces intense competition from other countries in the global market. Factors such as lower production costs, subsidies, and preferential trade agreements in other countries pose challenges for Indian sugar exporters.

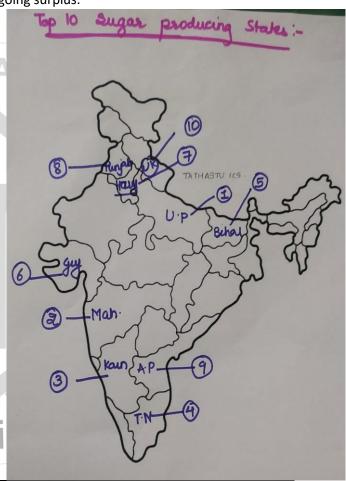
IMPACT OF EXCESSIVE SUGARCANE CULTIVATION ON ECOLOGY:

- ➤ **Depletion of Groundwater Levels**: Excessive irrigation for sugarcane leads to increased groundwater extraction, causing a decline in water levels.
- Aquifer Overexploitation: Intensive sugarcane farming can overexploit underground aquifers, reducing their recharge rate and long-term sustainability.
- ➤ Increased Energy Consumption: The need for pumping excessive groundwater requires higher energy consumption, leading to increased carbon emissions.

- ➤ **Deterioration of Water Quality**: Over-irrigation can result in waterlogging and salinization, degrading the quality of groundwater and making it unsuitable for other uses.
- > Impact on Ecosystems: Depleting groundwater levels can harm local ecosystems and wetlands that depend on a balanced water table.
- ➤ Competition for Water Resources: Excessive sugarcane cultivation competes with other crops and water-dependent activities, leading to conflicts over water resources.

WAY AHEAD:

- 1. A more viable and environmentally friendly approach involves **evaluating and rectifying incentives that disproportionately favour sugarcane cultivation over other crops**, which has been a significant contributor to the ongoing surplus.
- Implementing equitable and allencompassing subsidy programs for a diverse range of crops can encourage farmers to diversify their agricultural practices and promote more even distribution of cultivation.
- 3. To address the issue effectively in the long term, it is imperative to combine this approach with environmentally conscious sugarcane cultivation practices that give precedence to groundwater, such as adopting methods like drip irrigation.
- 4. India should prioritize investments in comprehensive water-saving and management systems.
- Collective endeavours to embrace ecofriendly practices like rainwater harvesting, wastewater treatment, and the establishment of canal irrigation networks can significantly reduce pressure on groundwater reserves by making alternative water sources accessible for irrigation.



VALUE ADDITION:

- Sugarcane necessitates 3,000 mm of rainfall, but in the leading sugarcane-producing states, the rainfall received is between 1,000-1,200 mm. As a result, these states heavily rely on groundwater sourced from confined aquifers, which is a finite and restricted resource.
- According to a 2022 CGWB report, the cultivation of 100 kg of sugar requires two lakh litters of groundwater for irrigation. This has become a cause of worry as the mentioned states are already susceptible to droughts and experience a scarcity of groundwater resources.

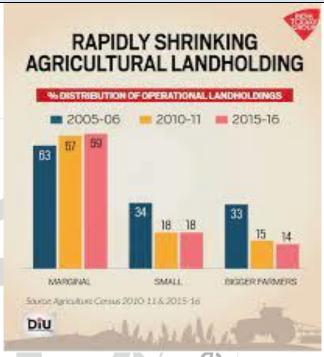
FARM REFORMS

SOURCE: IE

WHY IN NEWS: The government, which initially aimed to liberalize agricultural trade through the farm laws, has now returned to imposing restrictions and regulations.

ISSUES FACED BY FARM, FARMER, AGRICULTURE:

- LOW CROP YIELDS: India's crop yields have improved in recent years, with record food grain production of around 296.65 million tonnes in 2019-20. The country stands as the world's largest producer of pulses and the third-largest producer of cereals. Despite these achievements, the yield of food grains still falls behind that of other agrarian economies.
- DEPENDENCE ON MONSOON: Relying on the monsoon for agricultural water supply poses a challenge to productivity. Moreover, variations in climate and unpredictable weather events like cyclones and droughts can significantly affect crop yields.



- ➤ LOW SHARE IN GLOBAL MARKETS: While India has emerged as an agri-exporter nation with regards to crops such as rice, spices, tea, sugar etc., the share of India's agricultural exports in world trade remains low (2.15 percent in 2018), according to the ministry of agriculture's annual report 2019-20.
- ➤ INDEBTNESS AND FARMER SUICIDES: As per the Agricultural Statistics report of 2019, which relied on the Assessment Survey of Agricultural Households conducted between January to December 2013, farmer suicides and indebtedness remain critical issues.

HISTORY OF FARM REFORM LAWS IN INDIA:

- LAND REFORMS: Zamindari Abolition: After India gained independence in 1947, several states-initiated land reforms to abolish the zamindari system, which was a feudal land tenure system. The goal was to provide land rights to tenants and improve the socioeconomic conditions of farmers.
- ➤ **Green Revolution**: In the 1960s and 1970s, the Green Revolution was introduced to increase agricultural productivity through the adoption of high-yielding crop varieties, improved irrigation, and increased use of fertilizers and pesticides.
- Agricultural Price Support and Procurement: The government implemented Minimum Support Prices (MSP) to provide farmers with a guaranteed price for their crops, mainly wheat and rice. Additionally, the government established procurement agencies like Food Corporation of India (FCI) to purchase grains from farmers at MSP.

- Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC) Acts: The APMC Acts were introduced in various states to regulate the functioning of agricultural markets, known as mandis. These acts aimed to protect farmers from exploitation by traders and intermediaries.
- ➤ **Economic Liberalization**: In the 1990s, India embarked on economic liberalization policies, which gradually opened up the agricultural sector to private investment and reduced government intervention.
- ➤ Recent Farm Reforms: In September 2020, the Indian government introduced three controversial farm bills aiming to liberalize agricultural trade, allow farmers to sell outside APMC mandis, enter contracts with agribusiness firms, and reduce government control on essential commodities.

VARIOUS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. The National Commission on Farmers (NCF):
 - the need for increased investment in agriculture, the promotion of sustainable agriculture,
 - b. and the improvement of market access for farmers.

2. The Shanta Kumar Committee:

- a. the need to deregulate the food sector.
- the need to improve the efficiency of the public distribution system,
- and the need to promote exports of agricultural products.

3. The Ashok Dalwai Committee:

- a. the need to increase investment in agriculture,
- b. the need to promote agricultural exports, and the need to improve the efficiency of agricultural markets.

Overregulated Lifeline? Agriculture in India Facts about agriculture in India Government Share of ...in Haryana/ Share of GDP procurement employment (2019)of wheat and rice Punjab (2020)surplus (2018/19) 40-50% 16% 41% Average annual household food savings due to price moderation (2019/20)* * and other gov. schemes. Calculated for vegetarian household of five. Sources: World Bank, Ministry of Finance Economic Survey

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN THE SECTOR:

- 1. National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGPA): The program was initially introduced in 2010-11 in 7 pilot States as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with the objective of achieving rapid development in India by leveraging Information & Communication Technology (ICT) to provide farmers with timely access to agriculture-related information.
- 2. National Agriculture Market (eNAM): The eNAM is an all-encompassing electronic trading platform that connects the current APMC mandis across India, aiming to establish a cohesive national market for agricultural commodities.
- **3.** The National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA): IT has been designed to improve agricultural productivity, particularly in rainfed regions, by emphasizing integrated farming,

statista 🔽

efficient water usage, soil health management, and the harmonization of resource conservation efforts.

PM LAUNCHES REVAMP OF 508 AMRIT BHARAT STATIONS

SOURCE: TH

WHY IN NEWS: On Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the virtual ceremony to commence the redevelopment of 508 railway stations throughout the country. The ambitious project is estimated to cost over ₹24,470 crore.

ADVANTAGES OF REVAMPED AMRIT BHARAT STATIONS:

- Elegant Station Building: A new station building will redefine Station's architectural landscape, reflecting a modern and inviting design.
- Focus on Swachh Bharat: Keeping in step with the Swachh Bharat mission, the station will
- Aesthetic Platforms: Platforms will undergo a resurfacing and aesthetic uplift, with the introduction of captivating landscaping on platform walls.
- Passenger Amenities: Travelers will enjoy improved amenities, including better seating, drinking water facilities, and enhanced lighting and ventilation on platforms and within the station building.
- Enhanced Connectivity: A revamped foot over bridge, supplemented by additional lift and escalator facilities, will ease passenger movement and accessibility.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC:

BHARAT GAURAV SCHEME:

In 2021, the Ministry of Railways introduced the 'Bharat Gaurav Trains' policy, featuring themebased tourism circuit trains to promote India's cultural heritage and historical sites. These trains now have a dedicated tourism segment, in addition to the passenger and cargo segments. The plan's distinctive feature is its reliance on a revenue-generating mechanism, eliminating the need for allocated funds.

PRASAD SCHEME:

The Ministry of Tourism initiated the 'National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive' (PRASAD) in the year 2014-15, aiming to achieve comprehensive development of selected pilgrimage destinations.

- ➤ **Guidance and Information**: Modernized train indication boards and passenger-friendly signages will facilitate seamless navigation within the station premises.
- Functional Upgrades: The existing booking office and other administrative buildings will undergo a thorough renovation, aligning them with the scheme's overarching vision.
- Inclusivity: All improvements will be designed to be divyangjan (specially-abled) friendly, ensuring equal access and convenience for all.

WHAT IS AMRIT BHARAT SCHEME:

<u>Overview</u>: The scheme has a forward-looking perspective, focusing on the ongoing and sustainable development of railway stations.

- **Objective**: The scheme's primary objective is to create Master Plans for railway stations and execute them in phases, aiming to improve the station facilities significantly.
- Noteworthy Elements for Targeted Stations: The proposed stations under this scheme will incorporate various modern features such as roof top plazas, extended platforms, ballastless tracks, and cutting-edge 5G connectivity, facility for specially abled.

NEED OF RAILWAY REFORMS:

these issues.

- the needs of a growing \$5 trillion economy, crucial reforms in the Railways sector are necessary, encompassing administrative and engineering improvements to enhance service, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and environmental impact, facilitating the nation's comprehensive development.
- Essential administrative changes: include significantly simplifying the management organization. Implementing the Debroy committee's suggestion to segregate core functions, such as rail operations, from noncore activities like medical services, schools, and protection force, is a logical and practical step forward.
- Safety Concerns: Rail accidents in India have witnessed a significant increase. As per the data provided by the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), there was a 38 per cent rise in accidents in 2021. The Kakodkar committee recommended the allocation of Rs 1 lakh crore over five years and the establishment of a statutory railway safety authority to address



| IMPORTANT COMMITTEES RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD: | | |
|---|--|--|
| Sam Pitroda Committee | Suggested modernization of Indian Railways, including high-speed | |
| | trains and improved technology and services. | |
| Anil Kakodkar | Focused on railway safety and recommended steps to prevent | |
| Committee | accidents Emphasized track replacement and modern signaling. | |
| Bibek Debroy Committee | Proposed the restructuring of Indian Railways, including the creation | |
| | of holding and subsidiary companies. | |
| High-Level Safety Review | gh-Level Safety Review Recommended measures to enhance safety, including eliminating | |
| Committee (Kakodkar | unmanned level crossings and technology adoption. | |
| Committee II) | | |
| Mukul Mudgal | Examined catering services on Indian Railways and suggested | |
| Committee | improvements in quality and hygiene standards. | |
| Sreedharan Committee | Focused on revamping maintenance practices in Indian Railways to | |
| (2012) | improve reliability and safety. | |
| E. Sreedharan | Examined the feasibility of implementing high-speed rail projects in | |
| Committee (2014) | India, including routes and financing models. | |

HOUSE PANEL TELLS GOVT. TO ENSURE FERTILIZER AVAILABILITY, INCREASE LOCAL PRODUCTION

SOURCE: TH

WHY IN NEWS?

The Standing Committee of Parliament on Chemicals and Fertilizers, headed by senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, tabled two reports. It has posed questions on the availability of fertilizers and a subsidy policy

FINDINGS OF THE REPORT:

- The reports have also called for ending the import dependence on fertilizers such as; - urea, diammonium phosphate (DAP), muriate of potash (MOP), and nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium (NPK).
- The production of these fertilizers up to November 2022 was 281.83 lakh tonnes but the consumption was 401.46 lt.
- It asked the Department of Fertilizers to ascertain the reasons for a shortage of fertilizers being reported in some of the States.
- And asked to ensure availability of fertilizers in every State by taking corrective steps.



NUTRIENT BASED SUBSIDY (NBS) POLICY, 2010:

Policy Description:

- Under the Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) Policy introduced in 2010, the government determines the annual subsidy based on the weight of various macro/micronutrients (N, P, K, S, etc.) present in fertilisers.
- Manufacturers and marketers have the flexibility to set reasonable Maximum Retail Prices (MRPs) for fertilisers.
- Objective: The primary objectives of the NBS Policy are to ensure balanced fertiliser usage, enhance agricultural productivity, foster the growth of domestic fertiliser production, and reduce the subsidy burden.

Limitations:

- Urea is excluded from the scope of this policy.
- Delays in subsidy payments within the NBS framework often lead fertilizer companies to prioritize Urea production over other types of fertilisers.
- An upward trend in the prices of Phosphoric and Potassic fertilisers has been observed.
- Farmers tend to overuse Urea due to its distinct subsidy treatment, disrupting the ideal NPK nutrient ratio in fertiliser application.
- Access to More Information: To delve deeper into the Nutrient Based Subsidy Fertilizer Policy, interested individuals can explore further details via the provided link.
- Review on nutrient based subsidy:

- The panel sought the review of a nutrient-based subsidy (NBS) that covers fertilizers such as P&K fertilizers.
- Urea is left out of the scheme and hence it remains under price control whereas technically there is no price control in other fertilisers.
- The committee noted that GST for fertilizers is at 5% and GST on raw materials such as sulphuric acid and ammonia are at 18%.

CHALLENGES IN THE SECTOR:

Government Subsidies Impact:

- o Substantial government subsidies are allocated, especially for Urea and DAP.
- These subsidies account for around 5 percent of GDP, amounting to approximately
 0.73 lakh crore, which is the second highest after food subsidies.
- ➤ Price Regulation and Subsidy Reimbursement: Companies are mandated to sell fertilisers at the Maximum Retail Price (MRP), with the government compensating them for the higher production or import costs through subsidies.
- Limitations in Small Farmer Benefits: Despite the significant subsidies, only 35 percent (17,500 crores) of total fertiliser subsidies effectively reach small-scale farmers.

> Reliance on Imports:

- A considerable dependency on imports exists: Nearly 90 percent of the potash requirement, About 90 percent of the phosphatic requirement, Approximately 20 percent of the urea requirement.
- ➤ Unfavourable Nutrient Usage Patterns: Over time, the utilization ratios of nitrogen (N), phosphorous (P), and potassium (K) have significantly deviated from the recommended 4:2:1 NPK ratio, affecting soil quality.
- Imbalance in Application: High costs of Muriate of Potash (MOP), containing 60 percent K, discourage its application by farmers due to its elevated MRP.
- **Environmental Concerns:** The disproportionate use of certain fertilisers, like Urea, DAP, and others, raises environmental worries and poses a threat to soil health and crop yields.
- Fragmented Market Structure: The India Fertilizers Market is marked by fragmentation, with the top five companies controlling a total market share of 28.93 percent.

Black Market and Corruption:

- Due to stringent regulations and selective subsidies, a black market for Urea has emerged.
- This illicit market disproportionately affects small farmers and contributes to production inefficiency, excessive usage, and harm to both soil quality and human health.

ONE NATION ONE FERTILIZER (ONOF) PROGRAM:

Recent Action:

- The Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers at the Union level has introduced a new initiative known as the "One Nation One Fertilizer" scheme.
- This initiative mandates the utilization of a unified brand and logo for fertilizers by all manufacturers participating in the government's fertilizer subsidy program.
- The fertilizer subsidy scheme has also undergone a name change, now being referred to as the "Pradhanmantri Bhartiya Janurvarak Pariyojna" (PMBJP), emphasizing its connection to the Prime Minister.

Unified Brand and Logo:

- The scheme requires the adoption of a common brand name for various types of fertilizers, such as UREA, DAP, MOP, and NPK.
- The chosen brand names are BHARAT UREA, BHARAT DAP, BHARAT MOP, and BHARAT NPK, respectively, and must be employed by all entities involved in fertiliser production, distribution, and marketing.

Visual Representation:

 Alongside the unified brand names, a logo symbolizing the Fertilizer subsidy scheme, specifically the Pradhanmantri Bhartiya Janurvarak Pariyojna, will be featured on the packaging of the fertilizers.

Bag Design Guidelines:

- Companies are permitted to allocate only one-third of the bag space for displaying their name, brand, logo, and other pertinent product details.
- The remaining two-thirds of the bag must showcase the "Bharat" brand and the logo of the Pradhanmantri Bharatiya Jan Urvarak Pariyojana.

This initiative represents an effort towards standardization in the fertilizer sector, aiming to create a consistent visual identity for fertilizers distributed under the government's subsidy scheme.

WAY FORWARD:

1. Optimal Fertilizer Use:

- a. Facilitating the effective utilization of fertilizers based on the condition and fertility of the soil is crucial.
- b. Connecting soil health cards to provide soil profiles and fertilizer recommendations, even if not subsidized, can significantly enhance crop productivity.

2. Micronutrients and Organic Fertilizers:

- a. Indian soils commonly lack essential micronutrients (e.g., boron, zinc, copper, iron), which hampers crop output.
- b. Fertilizers enriched with micronutrients can yield an extra 0.3 to 0.6 tonne per hectare in cereals.
- c. Addressing this deficiency can be accomplished through increased usage of organic fertilizers.
- d. Organic composting and manure, being cost-effective, can both enhance and sustain soil fertility.

3. Effective Nutrient Management:

- a. Ensuring soil vitality and productivity requires prudent application of chemical fertilizers, bio-fertilizers, and locally available organic manures.
- b. This practice should be based on soil testing.
- c. Delivering soil-testing services to the extensive 12 crore farm holdings in India is a significant challenge.
- d. Utilizing technology and distributing soil fertility maps to farmers can aid in optimizing nutrient usage.

4. Regional Disparities in Fertilizer Consumption:

- a. Fertilizer consumption fluctuates significantly across different regions of India.
- b. Disparities often arise due to varying availability of irrigation facilities, necessary for effective fertilizer absorption.
- c. Addressing these imbalances necessitates the establishment of appropriate soiltesting facilities and implementation of relevant policy measures.

NEW SOIL HEALTH CARD SCHEME

SOURCE: PIB

WHY IN NEWS?

A massive programme of soil sampling, testing and generation of SHCs was launched to assist State Governments to issue soil health cards to all farmers in the country.

ABOUT NEW SOIL HEALTH CARD SCHEME:

- The New Soil Health Card Scheme (NSHCS) is a government initiative to improve soil health
- and crop productivity in India. The scheme was launched in 2023 and aims to cover all farmers in the country by 2025.
- Under the NSHCS, each farmer will be issued a soil health card that contains information about the nutrient status of their soil.
- The card will also provide recommendations on the type and amount of fertilizers and other amendments that the farmer

amendments that the farmer should apply to their soil to improve its health and productivity.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC:

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana: This Scheme aims to counteract soil erosion, facilitate the revival of natural vegetation, encourage rainwater harvesting, and facilitate the replenishment of groundwater levels.

National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture: This initiative comprises strategies that endorse time-honoured indigenous methodologies such as organic farming and natural agriculture. By doing so, it lessens reliance on chemicals and other agricultural inputs, subsequently alleviating the financial burden on small-scale farmers.

- The NSHCS covers a wider range of nutrients, includes more detailed recommendations on fertilizer application, and is being implemented using a more efficient and transparent system.
- By providing farmers with the information, they need to manage their soil more effectively, the scheme will help to improve yields, reduce input costs, and make Indian agriculture more sustainable.

KEY FEATURES OF NEW SOIL HEALTH CARD SCHEME

- It encompasses a broader array of nutrients compared to the earlier SHCS which include nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, sulphur, zinc, iron, copper, manganese, and boron.
- It furnishes more intricate suggestions for applying fertilizers, tailored to the particular nutrient scarcities in the soil.
- The execution employs a more effective and open system, utilizing geospatial technology for soil type and nutrient deficiency mapping.
- Collaboration with the private sector is in progress to guarantee farmers' access to the necessary fertilizers and additives, facilitating soil health enhancement.

BENEFITS OF NEW SOIL HEALTH CARD SCHEME:

• **Enhanced agricultural productivity**: By equipping farmers with the necessary insights for better soil management, the NSHCS can contribute to boosting crop yields.

| • | <u>Dimir</u> | ished | d exp | endi | ture | on | inputs: |
|---|--------------|--------|----------|-------|-------|--------|---------|
| | Throu | igh th | ne utili | zatic | n of | the a | dvised |
| | fertili | zers a | and en | hand | ceme | nts, f | armers |
| | have | the | poten | tial | to c | urtail | input |
| | exper | ises | and | acł | nieve | mo | netary |
| | saving | gs. | | | | | |

| • | Elevated soil well-being : The NSHCS |
|---|---|
| | has the potential to enhance soil health |
| | by tackling nutrient inadequacies and |
| | other issues. |

| MACRONUTRIENTS | MICRONUTRIENTS |
|--|---|
| Macronutrients are required in large quantities. | Micronutrients are required in small quantities |
| They are present in excessive concentration in plant. | They are present in low concentration in plant. |
| Also called as major elements | They are also called trace elements |
| They are usually not toxic to the cell if they are present in relatively higher concentration than the normal level. | They can be toxic for the plant if present excess in the cell than the required quantity. |
| Examples: C, H, O, N,P, K, Ca, S, and Mg. | Examples: Fe, Mn, Cu, Zn, Mo, B, Cl, and Ni. All micronutrients are minerals. |

• <u>Augmented sustainability</u>: Embracing the recommended fertilizers and enhancements can aid farmers in fostering greater sustainability within their agricultural methods.

CONCLUSION:

The NSHCS marks a significant stride in the government's endeavour to enhance soil health and bolster crop productivity in India. Anticipated to wield a noteworthy influence on the agricultural domain, the initiative is warmly embraced by farmers and environmental advocates alike.

VALUE ADDITION:

Soil preservation fosters a sustainable and economically viable progress in alignment with the Goals of Sustainable Development:

<u>SDG 6</u> — Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for All: By aiding in drainage and filtration, soil contributes to the provision of uncontaminated water for both consumption and agriculture.

<u>SDG 13</u> — Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and Its Impacts: Soil's capacity for carbon sequestration positions it as a crucial player in the fight against climate change, as it aids in the reduction of carbon in the atmosphere.

<u>SDG 15</u> — Sustainably Manage Forests, Combat Desertification, and Halt and Reverse Land Degradation and Biodiversity Loss: The vitality of soils is indispensable for the enduring care of forests, the battle against desertification, and the reversal of land deterioration.

TO CONTROL THE INCREASE IN PRICES, THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO RELEASE ADDITIONAL STOCKS OF GRAINS THROUGH OPEN MARKET SALES.

SOURCE: TH

WHY IN NEWS?

Worried about the surge in food grains prices, the government made the decision on Wednesday to sell an extra 5 million metric tonnes of wheat and 2.5 million metric tonnes of rice using the Open Market Sales Scheme (OMSS) from the reserves of the Food Corporation of India. The government anticipates that this action will guarantee sufficient domestic supply and control the costs of rice, wheat, and flour.

PRICE STABILISATION FUND:

- The establishment of the Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) took place during the fiscal year 2014-
- 15 under the supervision of the <u>Department</u> of Agriculture, <u>Cooperation & Farmers Welfare</u> (DAC&FW).
- Starting from April 1st, 2016, the administration of the PSF initiative was shifted from DAC&FW to the <u>Department of Consumer Affairs</u> (DOCA).
- The PSF serves as a source of interest-free working capital advance to Central Agencies, State/UT Governments, and other relevant bodies for executing market intervention operations.
- Alongside domestic procurement from farmers and wholesale markets, the PSF can also be employed to facilitate imports.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC

MARKET INTERVENTION SCHEME

- Government implements Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) for procurement of agricultural and horticultural commodities which are perishable in nature and are not covered under the Price Support Scheme (PSS).
- The objective of intervention is to protect the growers of these commodities in the event of a bumper crop during the peak arrival period.
- The scheme is implemented at the request of a State/UT government which is ready to bear 50 percent of the loss (25 percent in case of North-Eastern States), if any, incurred on its implementation.
- pre-determined quantity at the fixed Market Intervention Price (MIP) is procured by the agencies designated by the State Government for a fixed period or till the prices are stabilized above the MIP whichever is earlier.

BENEFITS OF PRICE STABILISATION FUND:

- <u>Price Volatility Mitigation</u>: The fund helps control abrupt price fluctuations in essential commodities, ensuring stability in the market.
- **Consumer Protection**: Stable prices lead to affordable goods for consumers, preventing sudden spikes that could impact household budgets.
- Farmers' Income: Maintaining steady prices ensures farmers receive fair compensation for their produce, fostering agricultural sustainability.
- ➤ <u>Discourages Hoarding:</u> The fund's calibrated releases discourage hoarding and speculative activities, promoting a fair market environment.

> <u>Strategic Buffer:</u> The fund creates a reserve that can be used during periods of scarcity, ensuring an uninterrupted supply of crucial commodities.

ISSUES OF PRICE STABILISATION FUND:

- Funding: Price stabilization funds can be expensive to set up and maintain. The government may need to raise taxes or borrow money to finance the fund.
- > Transparency: It is important for the government to be transparent about how the price stabilization fund is being used. This includes providing information on how much money is in the fund, how it is being invested, and how it is being used to stabilize prices.
- ➤ Efficiency: The government needs to make sure that the price stabilization fund is used efficiently. This means ensuring that the fund is not used to subsidize inefficient producers or to prop up prices that are already high.
- Political interference: There is a risk that the price stabilization fund could be used for political purposes. For example, the government could use the fund to support certain industries or to reward its political supporters.
- Moral hazard: If the government is always there to stabilize prices, then producers may have less incentive to control their costs. This could lead to higher prices in the long run

WAY FORWARD:

- ➤ Improve transparency and accountability: The PSF should be more transparent in its operations and decision-making process. This would help to build trust with farmers and consumers, and make it easier to identify and address any problems.
- > Target the fund more effectively: The PSF should be targeted more effectively to the commodities that are most vulnerable to price fluctuations. This would help to ensure that the fund is used to its full potential in stabilizing prices and protecting the interests of farmers and consumers.
- ➤ Make the fund more flexible: The PSF should be more flexible in its use. This would allow it to be used to respond to sudden price shocks, and to address the specific needs of different regions and commodities.
- Coordinate with other government programs: The PSF should be coordinated more effectively with other government programs that are aimed at stabilizing prices, such as the Minimum Support Price (MSP) scheme. This would help to ensure that the government is taking a comprehensive approach to price stabilization.
- > Strengthen the regulatory framework: The regulatory framework for the PSF should be strengthened. This would help to prevent fraud and misuse of the fund.

TEXTILE EXPORTS CONTINUE TO DECLINE

SOURCE: THE WIRE, TH

WHY IN NEWS?

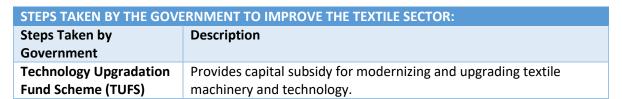
India's textile and apparel industry saw an 11.3% reduction in exports in June 2023 compared to the previous year while several mills continue to face acute cash loss, several mills in the South also suspended production citing lack of demand.

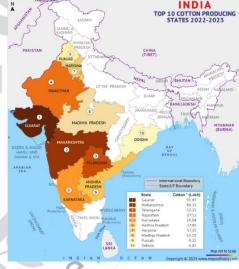
| OVERVIEW OF TEXTILE SECTOR IN INDIA: | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Aspect | Details | |
| Fiber Variety | Utilizes diverse Fibers, including natural (cotton, jute, silk, wool) and synthetic | |
| | (polyester, viscose, acrylic) options, often blended. | |

| Economic Contribution | Contributes about 14% to industrial production. Adds around 3% to the country's GDP Textiles and clothing sector generates approximately 27% of foreign exchange earnings. Contributes about 8% of total excise revenue collection. Employs 21% of total workforce, with around 35 million direct and 60 million indirect jobs. |
|--------------------------|---|
| Global Position | Largest cotton and jute producer globally. Second-largest producer of silk. Sixth-largest producer of Technical Textiles. Third-largest exporter of Textiles & Apparel. Dominates with 95% of world's hand-woven fabric production. |
| Locational Factors | Dependent on six geo-economic factors: Climate, Power availability, Raw Material access, Labor availability, Transport infrastructure, and Market opportunities . |

CHALLENGES FACED BY TEXTILE SECTOR IN INDIA:

- Global Competition: Intense competition from countries with lower production costs, such as Bangladesh and Vietnam, affects India's export competitiveness.
- Outdated Technology: Many textile units still use outdated machinery and technology, resulting in lower productivity and quality. For instance, traditional handloom weavers struggle to compete with modern manufacturing.
- Lack of Skilled Labor: A shortage of skilled labor in specialized areas like dyeing and finishing hampers production efficiency and quality. The sector's growth is impeded by this skill gap.
- Environmental Concerns: Textile production is resource-intensive and can have negative environmental impacts. Issues like water pollution from dyeing processes can harm local ecosystems and communities.
- Infrastructural Bottlenecks: Inadequate infrastructure, including unreliable power supply and inadequate transportation networks, increases production costs and delays deliveries.
- ➤ Complex Regulatory Framework: Stringent labor laws, multiple regulatory requirements, and complex compliance processes can hinder business operations and growth.
- ➤ **High Production Costs:** Factors like energy costs, expensive raw materials, and compliance with environmental regulations contribute to higher production costs.
- Low Value Addition: The sector largely focuses on low-value products, limiting its potential for higher earnings. Lack of investment in research and development restricts innovation.





| Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS) | Revised version of TUFS to include additional segments like technical textiles, jute, silk, etc. |
|--|--|
| Schemes for Skill Development | Various skill development initiatives to bridge the skill gap and improve labor productivity. |
| Make in India Initiative | Promotes domestic manufacturing, including textiles, by providing incentives and improving ease of doing business. |
| National Textiles Policy (NTP) | Aims to achieve sustainable growth, attract investments, and promote innovation in the textile sector. |
| Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) | Provides clean cooking fuel to rural households, indirectly benefiting the jute industry (gunny bags for LPG cylinders). |
| Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan | Focuses on self-reliance, encouraging local production and reducing dependence on imports. |
| Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme | Offers incentives to promote manufacturing of textiles and garments, enhancing their global competitiveness. |
| National Technical Textiles Mission | Aims to promote technical textiles and enhance the production of specialized textiles in India. |
| Support for Handloom and Handicrafts | Various schemes to promote handloom and handicraft sectors, preserving traditional arts and crafts. |
| Infrastructure Development | Focus on improving logistics, connectivity, and industrial infrastructure. |
| | |

| Textile Crop | Geographical Factors | Cultivation Factors |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Cotton | Grown in regions with warm climate and well-drained soil. | Requires a frost-free period, around 6-8 months of warm weather. Planted in Feb-March and harvested from Oct-Dec. |
| Jute | Thrives in areas with high humidity and alluvial soil. | Grows best in areas with high rainfall and temperature. Sown during monsoon (June-July) and harvested in autumn. |
| Silk | Sericulture practiced in states with suitable climate and resources. | Requires specific host plants (mulberry, castor) and controlled environment for silkworm rearing. |
| Wool | Sheep farming done in hilly areas with colder climates. | Requires grazing land, proper nutrition, and healthcare for sheep. Shearing of wool is a seasonal process. |
| Flax | Grows well in temperate regions with moderate rainfall. | Cultivated for its fibers (linen). Requires well-drained soil and sowing during spring or early summer. |

WAY AHEAD:

- **Export Diversification:** Explore new international markets and diversify product offerings to reduce dependency on specific regions and products.
- ➤ **Digital Transformation:** Embrace e-commerce and online platforms to reach global customers directly and efficiently.

- **Promote Local Consumption:** Launch campaigns to encourage domestic consumers to support local textiles and boost demand.
- > Supply Chain Efficiency: Streamline supply chains for faster production cycles, reducing costs and increasing responsiveness.

LIVESTOCK SECTOR IS CONSISTENTLY GROWING AT A HIGH COMPOUND ANNUAL GROWTH RATE (CAGR) OF 7.67% DURING 2014-15 TO 2021-22

SOURCE: PIB

WHY IN NEWS?

- Livestock sector has been consistently growing at a high Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 7.67% from 2014-15 to 2021-22 (at constant prices).
- The growth is attributed to various parameters within the Livestock Sector, including Dairy, Bovine (cattle), Poultry, Goatery, and Piggery.
- Notably, the livestock sector made a significant contribution of approximately 30.19% to the total Gross Value Added (GVA) of the agriculture and allied sectors during the year 2021-22, measured at constant prices.

IMPORTANCE OF LIVESTOCK SECTOR FOR INDIA:

Economic Contribution:

- Livestock sector contributed around 30.19% to the total agriculture and allied sector Gross Value Added (GVA) during 2021-22.
- o It has consistently grown at a high Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 7.67% from 2014-15 to 2021-22 (at constant prices).

Employment Generation:

- The sector provides livelihoods for a significant portion of the population, with millions of households engaged in animal husbandry and related activities.
- It supports rural employment and helps reduce unemployment and underemployment.

> Food Security and Nutrition:

- Livestock products like milk, meat, and eggs are important sources of protein and essential nutrients for the Indian population.
- They contribute to addressing malnutrition and improving overall nutrition outcomes.

Diversified Income:

- Livestock rearing offers farmers diversified income sources, reducing their dependence solely on crop farming.
- It acts as a risk mitigation strategy against fluctuations in crop yields and prices.

Rural Development:

- The livestock sector plays a vital role in the development of rural economies by generating income and improving infrastructure and services.
- o It can help bridge the urban-rural economic divide.

Export Potential:

 Livestock products like meat, dairy, and leather have significant export potential, contributing to foreign exchange earnings for the country.

CHALLENGES IN LIVESTOCK SECTOR IN INDIA:

| Challenge | Data and Examples |
|----------------------|---|
| Lack of Modern | Around 80% of livestock owners in India do not have access to veterinary |
| Infrastructure | services, affecting animal health. |
| Low Productivity | India's average milk yield per animal is around 1,084 kg/year, significantly lower than global standards. |
| Inadequate Animal | Nearly 70% of India's livestock is undernourished due to the scarcity of |
| Nutrition | balanced and quality feed. |
| Disease Outbreaks | Foot and Mouth Disease affects 60% of Indian cattle, leading to substantial economic losses. |
| Lack of Quality | The proportion of indigenous breeds with high genetic potential has |
| Breeding | declined to around 20% of the total cattle. |
| Inadequate Genetic | Less than 5% of the livestock population in India is under organized |
| Improvement | breeding programs for genetic enhancement. |
| Fragmented Land | Small and marginal farmers own around 64% of the operational holdings in |
| Holdings | the livestock sector. |
| Limited Access to | Only 14% of the total rural households in India have access to formal credit |
| Credit | sources for livestock activities. |
| Market Access and | Around 90% of Indian farmers are not integrated into formal value chains, |
| Value Chains | limiting their market access. |
| Lack of Training and | Only 10-15% of farmers in India receive any form of training in modern |
| Skill Development | livestock management practices. |
| Environmental | Overgrazing affects nearly 25% of the total land area in India, contributing |
| Degradation | to soil erosion and land degradation. |

| INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT: | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Initiative | Description | |
| National Livestock Mission | Aims to promote sustainable development of the livestock sector by | |
| (NLM) | enhancing productivity and quality. | |
| Rashtriya Gokul Mission | Focuses on conserving and developing indigenous cattle breeds and | |
| | improving their productivity. | |
| National Programme for | Aims to enhance milk production by promoting scientific breeding | |
| Bovine Breeding | and genetic improvement of cattle. | |
| National Dairy Plan-I | Aims to increase milk productivity and promote clean milk | |
| | production by enhancing infrastructure. | |
| Kamdhenu Gau Vigyan | Aims to promote sustainable cattle rearing and address the | |
| Prachar Prasar Yojana | nutritional needs of livestock. | |
| National Kamdhenu | Establishment of centers for the propagation of high genetic merit | |
| Breeding Centres | bulls to improve livestock quality. | |
| Livestock Health and | Schemes for controlling and eradicating livestock diseases through | |
| Disease Control | vaccination and health measures. | |
| Skill Development and | Initiatives to provide training to farmers, veterinarians, and livestock | |
| Training | entrepreneurs for skill enhancement. | |
| National Animal Disease | Aims to control and eradicate Foot and Mouth Disease and | |
| Control Programme | Brucellosis to enhance livestock productivity. | |
| Dairy Processing and | Focuses on establishing modern dairy infrastructure and enhancing | |
| Infrastructure | milk processing capacities. | |

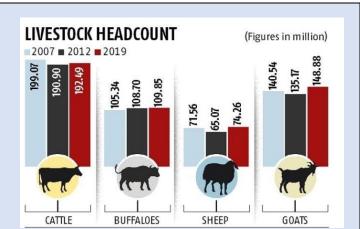
WAY FORWARD:

- > Sustainable Practices: Promote environmentally friendly and sustainable livestock management practices.
- Research and Innovation: Invest in research to enhance productivity, health, and value addition in the sector.
- > Skill Development: Provide training to farmers in modern techniques and technologies.
- **Disease Management:** Strengthen disease control measures to safeguard livestock health.
- ➤ Infrastructure Enhancement: Develop modern facilities for processing and distribution of livestock products.
- Market Linkages: Establish better market connections for farmers to ensure fair pricing.

ABOUT LIVESTOCK CENSUS:

- The Livestock Census, initiated in 1919-20, has since been a quinquennial practice, occurring every five years.
- This census encompasses a comprehensive count of all domesticated animals.
- The Ministry of Fisheries,
 Animal Husbandry, and
 Dairying, in collaboration with
 State Governments and UT
 Administrations, has

successfully conducted 19 such censuses.



- 4. Notably, the **20th Livestock Census** introduces the innovative use of household-level data obtained through online transmission from the field.
- 5. Beyond policymakers, this census holds significance for farmers, traders, entrepreneurs, the dairy industry, and the broader population.

20TH LIVESTOCK CENSUS (KEY POINTS):

- 1. The country's total livestock population has reached 535.78 million, marking a 4.6% increase compared to the Livestock Census-2012.
- 2. **West Bengal** recorded the **most substantial rise at 23%**, closely followed by Telangana with a 22% increase.
- 3. The total cattle population nationwide experienced a modest 0.8% growth.
- 4. Exotic and crossbred cattle populations surged by 27%, with these breeds contributing around 28% of India's total milk production in 2018-19.
- 5. The preference for exotic and crossbred cattle, such as Jersey or Holsteins, is due to their higher milk yields.
- 6. The indigenous cattle population has dwindled by 6%, even with the government's **Rashtriya Gokul Mission** aimed at conservation.
- 7. States with stringent cow slaughter laws, including Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra, experienced the most significant declines.
- 8. The **overall milch animal population grew by 6%,** driven by foreign breeds that account for over half of these animals.
- 9. Backyard poultry numbers surged by approximately 46%, suggesting a positive shift in rural livelihoods and poverty alleviation.
- 10. While the bovine population (cattle, buffalo, Mithun, and Yak) saw a 1% increase, sheep, goat, and Mithun populations grew significantly, whereas horse, pony, pig, camel, donkey, mule, and yak populations declined.

IRRIGATION IN FOCUS AS INDIA MOVES TOWARDS DRIEST-EVER AUGUST

SOURCE: THE ECONOMIC TIMES , TOI , DECCAN HERALD , WMO

WHY IN NEWS?

- 1. India is currently experiencing its **driest August in a century**, with a 7% deficit in cumulative monsoon rainfall compared to the long period average (LPA).
- 2. Weather predictions indicate that India's rainfall for August might fall below 180 mm, marking the **lowest amount since 1901**.
- 3. The sowing of Kharif crops has been negatively impacted, with **pulses sowing showing a** decrease of 10% in comparison to the previous year.
- 4. The retail inflation for pulses has surged to 13% in July, and the inflation rate for toor dal stands at 34%.
- 5. Agricultural outcomes are closely intertwined with the southwest monsoon, and a recent research paper by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) explores the changing dependence and the evolving role of enhanced irrigation in this context.

| CHARACTERISTIC | VALUE |
|---|--|
| Gross irrigated area (2021-22) Net irrigated area (2021-22) | 106.7 million hectares (mha) 65.0 mha |
| Irrigated area as percentage of net area sown (2021-22) Major sources of irrigation (2021-22) | 45.0% Canals (62%), wells (26%), tanks |
| States with the highest irrigated area (2021-22) | (10%), and others (2%) Punjab (22%), Uttar Pradesh (18%), and Andhra Pradesh |
| States with the lowest irrigated area (2021-22) | (13%) Arunachal Pradesh (0.1%), Meghalaya (0.2%), and Mizoram (0.3%) |
| Budget allocation for irrigation (2022-23) | Rs. 44,000 crores |
| Progress under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY) (2022-23) | 24.77 mha |

(SOURCE: MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE)

TYPES OF IRRIGATION:

- 1. Surface Irrigation:
 - a. **Flood Irrigation:** This involves the flooding of fields with water diverted from rivers, canals, or reservoirs. It is commonly used in areas with flat terrain.
 - b. **Furrow Irrigation:** In this method, water is allowed to flow in small channels (furrows) between rows of crops. It's suitable for row crops like vegetables.
 - c. **Basin Irrigation:** Fields are divided into basins, and water is directly applied to each basin. It's useful for crops that need a relatively level field.
- 2. Subsurface Irrigation:

- a. **Subsurface Drip Irrigation:** Water is delivered directly to the root zone of plants through buried pipes or tubes. This conserves water and reduces weed growth.
- b. **Subsurface Bubble Irrigation:** Similar to drip irrigation, but water is applied in the form of air bubbles, which helps maintain soil structure.
- 3. **Drip Irrigation:** In this method, water is delivered directly to the root zone of plants through a network of pipes, tubes, and emitters, minimizing water wastage.

4. Sprinkler Irrigation:

- a. **Traditional Sprinkler Irrigation:** Water is distributed through overhead sprinklers, resembling rainfall. It's suitable for a wide range of crops.
- b. **Center Pivot Sprinkler Irrigation:** Circular fields are irrigated by rotating sprinklers mounted on wheeled towers, usually in large-scale agriculture.

5. Lift Irrigation:

- a. **Manual Lift Irrigation:** Water is manually lifted from sources like wells or rivers using devices like buckets or containers.
- b. **Mechanical Lift Irrigation:** Pumps, such as electric or diesel pumps, are used to lift water from sources to higher areas for irrigation.

6. Rainwater Harvesting:

- a. **Traditional Rainwater Harvesting:** Rainwater is collected and stored for irrigation purposes in tanks, ponds, or other storage systems.
- b. **Rooftop Rainwater Harvesting:** Rainwater falling on rooftops is collected and stored for irrigation or domestic use.

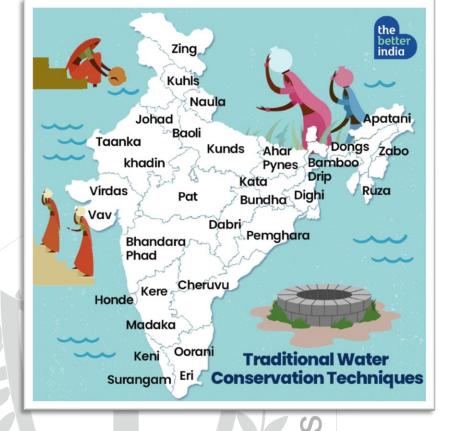
7. Springs and Seepage Irrigation:

- a. **Spring Irrigation:** Utilizing water emerging naturally from springs for irrigation.
- b. **Seepage Irrigation**: Using water seeping from higher ground to lower areas for irrigation.
- 8. **Check Dam Irrigation:** Small dams constructed across seasonal streams or rivers to store water for irrigation.
- 9. **Canal Irrigation:** Water is diverted from rivers into main canals, which are then distributed into smaller channels (distributaries) to irrigate fields.
- 10. **Tank Irrigation:** Rainwater is stored in tanks or reservoirs, and this stored water is used for irrigation.
- 11. **Percolation Tanks:** These are structures designed to enhance groundwater recharge, which can indirectly support irrigation.
- 12. **Localized Irrigation:** Water is applied directly to the root zone of individual plants, often using handheld tools or small pipes.

DIFFERENT PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH IRRIGATION:

- 1. **Water Scarcity:** In regions like Marathwada in Maharashtra, farmers often face water scarcity during dry seasons, leading to reduced crop yields and economic challenges.
- 2. **Waterlogging and Soil Salinity:** In parts of Punjab and Haryana, excessive irrigation and poor drainage have caused waterlogging and increased soil salinity, affecting crop growth and soil quality.
- 3. **Groundwater Depletion:** The over-extraction of groundwater for irrigation in regions like Rajasthan has caused falling water tables, leading to long-term sustainability concerns and reduced water availability.
- 4. **Inefficient Water Use:** Traditional flood irrigation methods in areas like Uttar Pradesh result in significant water wastage due to runoff and evaporation, reducing the overall efficiency of water use.

- 5. **Erosion and Sedimentation:** Uncontrolled runoff from irrigated fields in hilly regions like Uttarakhand can lead to soil erosion and sedimentation in downstream water bodies.
- 6. Environmental
 Impact: In the Indira
 Gandhi Canal
 command area of
 Rajasthan, excessive
 irrigation has led to
 the loss of wetlands
 and negatively
 affected local
 biodiversity.
- 7. Conflicts over Water Allocation: The disputes between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu over the sharing of Cauvery River water for irrigation have resulted in legal battles and social tensions.



8. Lack of

Modernization:

Many small-scale farmers in remote regions continue to use traditional irrigation methods, limiting their ability to increase productivity.

9. **Infrastructure Decay:** In areas with outdated canal systems, such as parts of Uttar Pradesh, the lack of maintenance can result in water losses and reduced system efficiency.

SCHEMES/INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE IRRIGATION:

- Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY):
 - Launched in 2015, it aims to enhance water use efficiency through a mix of effective water management and distribution techniques, sustainable on-farm water use, and decentralized water source development.
 - Components: Har Khet Ko Pani (Water to Every Farm), Per Drop More Crop, Micro Irrigation Fund, Watershed Development, etc.
- Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Program (AIBP): This program provides financial assistance for major and medium irrigation projects to expedite their completion and improve water availability for agriculture.
- Command Area Development & Water Use Efficiency (CAD & WUE) Program: The program focuses on optimizing irrigation systems in command areas to reduce water wastage and enhance water use efficiency.
- ➤ Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY): Launched in 2016, this crop insurance scheme provides financial support to farmers in case of crop losses due to natural calamities, including inadequate irrigation.

- National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA): The mission promotes sustainable agricultural practices, including efficient irrigation, soil health management, and integrated farming systems.
- Neeranchal National Watershed Project: This project aims to enhance sustainable water management in rainfed areas through community participation, soil conservation, and efficient water use.
- Micro-Irrigation Fund: Launched under PMKSY, this fund provides financial assistance to promote the adoption of micro-irrigation technologies like drip and sprinkler systems.

WAY FORWARD:

- Modernization of Irrigation Infrastructure: Upgrade and modernize existing irrigation systems, including canals, dams, and reservoirs, to minimize water wastage and improve efficiency.
- **Promote Micro-Irrigation:** Encourage the adoption of micro-irrigation techniques such as drip and sprinkler irrigation to maximize water efficiency in agriculture.
- ➤ Rainwater Harvesting: Promote rainwater harvesting at the individual and community levels to recharge groundwater and supplement irrigation needs.
- ➤ Efficient Water Management: Implement advanced water management practices like water budgeting, crop planning, and demand-based water allocation to optimize water use.
- Crop Diversification: Encourage farmers to diversify crops based on water availability to reduce the pressure on water-intensive crops

SMARTPHONE MANUFACTURING IN INDIA

SOURCE: TH, THE WIRE, TOI

WHY IN NEWS?

- ➤ Former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan and Minister of State for Electronics Rajeev Chandrasekhar in disagreement over Central government's electronics manufacturing scheme.
- Rajan, along with economists, argues scheme isn't boosting self-sufficiency but creating low-level assembly jobs dependent on imports.
- Chandrasekhar criticizes Rajan's paper, calls it based on "half-truths" and "shoddy comparisons".

ELECTRONIC MANUFACTURING IN INDIA:

- ➤ India is the world's second-largest electronics market after China.
- The Indian electronics manufacturing industry is expected to **grow at a CAGR of 10%** to reach \$400 billion by 2025.
- The major drivers of growth in the Indian electronics manufacturing industry are:
 - o Growing demand for electronics products in India.
 - o Government initiatives to boost electronics manufacturing in India.
 - o Low labour costs in India

POTENTIAL FOR ELECTRONIC MANUFACTURING IN INDIA:

1. Market Size and Growth:

a. India's electronics market is projected to reach \$400 billion by 2025, driven by rising consumer demand and increased digitalization.

b. Example: Smartphone shipments in India reached approximately 150 million units in 2021, showcasing the substantial market size.

2. Government Initiatives:

- a. The "Make in India" campaign aims to increase the share of domestic manufacturing in GDP and attract foreign investment.
- b. Example: The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme offers financial incentives to electronics manufacturers, contributing to growth.

3. Mobile Manufacturing Hub:

- a. India has become the <u>second-largest mobile phone manufacturer globally</u>, with over 300 million devices produced annually.
- b. <u>Example: Samsung and Apple have established manufacturing units in India to cater</u> to both domestic and export markets.

4. Skilled Workforce:

- a. India produces over 2.6 million engineering graduates annually, contributing to a technically skilled labour force.
- b. <u>Example: The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) are renowned for producing top-notch engineers, fostering innovation.</u>

5. Semiconductor Manufacturing:

- a. India is investing in semiconductor fabs, aiming to reduce import dependency for chips.
- b. <u>Example: The Uttar Pradesh government allocated land for a semiconductor</u> fabrication unit by STMicroelectronics, promoting indigenous chip production.

6. Rising Exports:

- a. Electronics exports from India grew by 42% in 2020-2021, highlighting increased manufacturing capabilities.
- b. <u>Example: Companies like Foxconn and Flex export electronics products</u> manufactured in India to various global markets.

CHALLENGES OF ELECTRONIC MANUFACTURING IN INDIA:

- Dependency on Imports: High reliance on imported electronic components and raw materials.
 - Example: In 2020-21, India imported electronic goods worth \$57 billion, including components.
- Supply Chain Disruptions: Disruptions in global supply chains, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Example: Semiconductor shortages in 2021 affecting production lines worldwide, including India.
- Lack of Skilled Workforce: Shortage of skilled labour and engineers in electronics manufacturing.
 - Example: Industry reports indicate a shortage of over 1 million skilled workers in India's electronics sector.
- ➤ Inadequate R&D Investment: Insufficient investment in research and development (R&D).
 - Example: India's R&D spending in electronics is significantly lower than that of other countries, hampering innovation.
- Complex Regulatory Environment: Complex regulatory procedures and compliance requirements.

| GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR PROMOTING ELECTRONIC MANUFACTURING: | | |
|--|--|--|
| INITIATIVE | DESCRIPTION | |
| Make in India | Launched to boost manufacturing across sectors, including electronics. Encourages domestic production and investment. | |
| National Policy on Electronics | Aims to make India a global hub for electronics manufacturing. Focuses on creating a conducive environment for growth. | |
| Production Linked Incentive (PLI) | Offers financial incentives to manufacturers for increasing production in specific sectors, including electronics. | |
| Electronics Manufacturing Clusters | Develops dedicated zones with infrastructure for electronics manufacturing, aimed at attracting investments. | |
| Modified Special Incentive | Provides capital subsidy for setting up electronic manufacturing units, encouraging domestic production. | |
| Package Scheme of Incentives | Offers fiscal incentives to promote investment in electronics manufacturing, research, and development. | |
| Skill Development Initiatives | Focuses on training and skill development in electronics manufacturing to address the skill shortage in the sector. | |
| Start-Up India | Supports startups in the electronics sector with funding, mentorship, and other resources to promote innovation. | |
| National Digital Communications Policy | Aims to provide universal and affordable access to digital communications, fostering growth in electronics. | |

WAY FORWARD:

- Invest in Research and Development (R&D): Allocate funds and resources for R&D to drive innovation and product development.
- ➤ Enhance Skill Development: Establish training programs to bridge the skill gap in electronics manufacturing.
- > Simplify Regulatory Procedures: Streamline approval processes and reduce bureaucratic hurdles for setting up manufacturing units.
- ➤ **Promote Clusters and Infrastructure:** Develop specialized electronics manufacturing clusters with essential infrastructure.
- **Provide Incentives and Subsidies:** Offer financial incentives like tax breaks and subsidies to attract investments.

CENTRE FOR MONITORING INDIAN ECONOMY (CMIE) DATA: A DISSONANT NOTE

SOURCE: IE

WHY IN NEWS?

The employment data sourced from the **Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)** has shown that **India's work force has rapidly aged over the past seven years**.

Statistics:

> Data shows that the **share of India's youth**— defined as those between **ages 15 and 29** has fallen **from 25 percent in 2016-17 to just 17 percent at the end of 2022-23.**

- Further, even the share of those falling in the next 15-year age bracket (**30 to 44 years**) has fallen from **38 percent to 33 percent** over the same period.
- ➤ While the share of these two categories has shrunk, that of the oldest cohort 45 years and above has grown from 37 percent to 49 per cent.

REASONS FOR UNDERUTILISATION OF DEMOGRAPHIC DEVIDEND:

1. Skills Gap and Education Quality:

- a. Insufficient access to quality education and skill development programs.
- b. <u>Data: As of 2021, around 25% of Indian youth lack basic reading and math skills</u> (ASER Report).

2. Job Mismatch and Informal Economy:

- a. Mismatch between skills possessed and skills demanded by the job market.
- b. <u>Data: Around 47% of Indian graduates are unemployable due to lack of skills</u> (National Employability Report, 2020).
- c. Example: Engineering graduates working in jobs unrelated to their field.

3. Limited Job Opportunities:

- a. Slow job creation in sectors that can absorb the growing workforce.
- b. <u>Data: In 2020, India's unemployment rate reached 23.5% due to the COVID-19</u> pandemic (CMIE).
- c. Example: Many graduates competing for a limited number of government jobs.

4. Gender Disparities:

- a. Gender-based discrimination limiting women's workforce participation.
- b. <u>Data: India's female labour force participation rate is around 20%, one of the lowest in the world (World Bank).</u>
- c. Example: Traditional norms discouraging women from working outside the home.

5. Agricultural Dependency:

- a. Majority of the population dependent on agriculture with limited capacity to absorb the workforce.
- b. <u>Data: Over 50% of rural households depend on agriculture for livelihood (NSSO, 2019)</u>
- c. Example: Seasonal unemployment among agricultural workers.

6. Inadequate Entrepreneurial Ecosystem:

- a. Lack of support for entrepreneurship and startups.
- b. <u>Data: India ranks 3rd in the world for startups but faces challenges in scaling</u> (NASSCOM).
- c. Example: Limited access to funding for aspiring entrepreneurs.

7. Slow Industrial Growth:

- a. Slow growth in manufacturing and industry leading to job scarcity.
- b. <u>Data: India's manufacturing sector contribution to GDP is around 15% (World Bank, 2019).</u>
- c. Example: Decline in manufacturing jobs due to automation.

8. Population Growth Pressure:

- a. Rapid population growth leading to higher competition for available jobs.
- b. Data: India's population is projected to be 1.64 billion by 2050 (UN).
- c. Example: Large number of job seekers entering the workforce every year.

9. Social Inequalities:

a. Caste-based discrimination and social inequalities limiting opportunities.

- b. <u>Data: Caste-based disparities in education and employment opportunities persist</u> (NSSO).
- c. Example: Limited access to education and jobs for marginalized communities.

| GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES: | | |
|--|---|--|
| INITIATIVE | DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE | |
| Skill India | Aims to provide skill training to youth across various sectors, enhancing employability. | |
| Make in India | Promotes manufacturing and job creation, attracting investments and boosting industrial growth. | |
| Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) | Offers skill development training to improve the employability of youth. | |
| Startup India | Supports and nurtures startups to encourage entrepreneurship and job creation. | |
| Digital India | Promotes digital literacy and access, creating opportunities in technology and IT sectors. | |
| Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana | Provides financial support to small businesses and entrepreneurs, fostering self-employment. | |
| National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme | Encourages industries to provide apprenticeship training, bridging the skill gap. | |
| Atal Innovation Mission | Fosters innovation and research in schools and universities, nurturing a culture of creativity. | |
| Skill Development for Minorities | Focuses on skill training and entrepreneurship development for minority communities. | |
| Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) | Focuses on rural youth, providing skill training and placements. | |
| National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) | Promotes self-employment and micro-enterprises in rural areas, targeting youth and women. | |
| Pradhan Mantri Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) | Supports self-employment ventures through financial assistance. | |

WAY FORWARD:

- Quality Education and Skill Training: Enhance education quality from early stages to higher education. Focus on relevant skill development aligned with industry needs.
- ➤ **Job Creation and Industry Growth:** Promote industries with potential for high employment. Attract investments and ease of doing business to spur economic growth.
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation: Nurture a supportive ecosystem for startups and innovation. Encourage entrepreneurship through funding and mentorship.
- Gender Equality and Women's Participation: Empower women through education and economic opportunities. Ensure safe and inclusive workplaces to enhance workforce diversity.

IMPORTANT COMMITTEES AND THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. National Commission on Population (2000):
 - Invest in education and health care.
 - Promote female literacy and empowerment.
 - Reduce child marriage and fertility rates.

• Create employment opportunities for youth.

2. Committee for Economic Growth (2007):

- Invest in infrastructure.
- Promote labour-intensive industries.
- Attract foreign investment.
- Improve the quality of education and training.

3. High Level Expert Group on Population Stabilization (2011):

- Invest in family planning.
- Promote delayed marriage and child spacing.
- Reduce the gender gap in education and employment.
- Create an enabling environment for women.

4. National Population Commission (2016)S:

- Promote inter-state migration.
- Address the issue of rural-urban divide.
- Invest in social protection for the elderly.

9 YEARS F JAN DHAN YOJANA

SOURCE: PIB

WHY IN NEWS?

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi thanked Jan Dhan Yojana recipients on the program's nine-year anniversary.
- Over 50 crore bank accounts and deposits totalling more than 2 lakh crore have been created as a result of the PM Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), marking its extraordinary nine-year journey.
- The success of the program is due to its dedication to financial inclusion, which opens doors for impoverished groups to use government programs and access banking services.

PRADHAN MANTRI JAN DHAN YOJANA:

- It is also known as **National Mission for Financial Inclusion** launched by the government in 2014.
- It ensures that **financial services** such as **banking**, **savings**, and **deposit accounts**, **remittance**, credit, insurance, and pension are accessible and affordable.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME:

- Ensure affordable access to financial products and services.
- Use of technology to increase reach and reduce costs.

BASIC TENETS OF THE SCHEME:

| Banking the unbanked | Opening a basic savings bank deposit (BSBD) account with little to no paperwork, simple KYC, e-KYC, no balance or fees. |
|------------------------|--|
| Securing the unsecured | Issuing indigenous debit cards with free accident insurance coverage of Rs. 2 lakh that can be used for cash withdrawals and payments at merchant locations. |

| Funding the unfunded | Other financial products include micro-credit, micro-pension, overdraft, and micro-insurance. |
|----------------------|---|
| | |

IMPORTANT PILLARS OF THE SCHEME:

- Universal access to Banking services.
- ➤ Basic savings bank accounts with a 10,000-rupee overdraft limit are available to all qualified adults.
- Financial literacy program: Promoting savings, using ATMs, preparing for credit, obtaining insurance and pensions, and using simple mobile phones for banking are all part of the financial literacy program.
- The establishment of a **credit guarantee fund** will give banks some **protection against defaults.**
- Insurance: For accounts opened between August 15, 2014, and January 31, 2015, accident coverage of up to Rs. 1,00,000 and life coverage of Rs. 30,000 are available.
- > Pension plan for unorganized business.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SCHEME:

- Digital banking: The PMJDY switched to online accounts integrated into banks' core banking systems from the previous approach of opening accounts offline with technology. It made simpler for people to access their accounts and carry out transactions
- Reduction in informal lending: Jan Dhan gives the poor a way to transfer their savings into the formal banking system, a way to send money to their families in villages, and it frees them from predatory lenders who charge exorbitant interest rates.
- Direct Benefit transfer: Direct Benefit Transfers (DBTs) have empowered and given financial security to the most vulnerable segments of society in the COVID-19 period with exceptional speed and seamlessness.
 - The fact that DBTs through PM Jan Dhan accounts have made sure **every rupee** reaches its designated beneficiary and stopped systemic leakage is a crucial factor.
 - PMJDY served as the cornerstone for people-centric economic programs like Direct benefit transfers, financial support for COVID-19, PM-KISAN, higher pay under MGNREGA, life and health insurance coverage,
- > JAM: The JAM pipeline, one of the key pillars of the FI ecosystem, was established through the consent-based connection of account holders' bank accounts with their Aadhar and mobile phones.
 - This has made it possible for eligible recipients of various government assistance programs to receive prompt DBT.

CHALLENGES:

- ➤ Low financial literacy: Many of the target beneficiaries have low levels of financial knowledge and awareness.
- Inadequate Infrastructure: There is usually a lack of suitable banking infrastructure in rural areas, where a sizable section of the target population dwells.
- ➤ Challenges with identification: The program requires legitimate identification documents in order to open bank accounts and access other services.

Account Misuse: In certain cases, people open many accounts to take advantage of the incentives provided by the plan, some money is also diverted.

WAY FORWARD:

- Customized financial products: Financial products that are specifically tailored to the demands of certain beneficiary segments. For instance, providing small company owners with flexible credit alternatives or providing micro-insurance products that address the health and livelihood risks faced by rural farmers.
- ➤ **Encourage saving** by providing rewards for keeping a certain amount in Jan Dhan accounts. Encourage recipients to save money for unforeseen expenses or future requirements by paying interest on saves.
- ➤ Encourage digital payments: Encourage the adoption of digital payment systems and teach beneficiaries about digital transactions to promote them. Provide incentives or discounts for transacting via digital channels.

UNDERSTANDING CURBS ON RICE EXPORTS

SOURCE: The Hindu, PIB

WHY IN THE NEWS?

- The Indian government has banned the export of white rice, imposed a 20% export levy on par-boiled rice until October 15, and allowed the export of Basmati rice for contracts worth at least \$1,200 per ton in an effort to control domestic rice prices and guarantee domestic food security.
- However, it is permitted based on the government's approval given to other nations to meet their needs for food security and based on their request.

WHY DID THE GOVERNMENT IMPOSE THIS BAN?

- Food security: We can make sure that the rice supply is used to satisfy domestic demand.

 This helps avert any shortages and guarantees that citizens have access to basic food items.
 - Low rice stocks could endanger the public distribution system (PDS) and the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana under the National Food Security Act 2013.
- Price stabilization: Export restrictions can stop domestic rice prices from rising. This aids in keeping rice prices reasonable for the local populace, which is crucial for low-income households in particular.
 - According to the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare's third Advanced Estimate, rice production decreased 13.8% during Rabi 2022–2023, from 184.71 lakh tons to 158.95 lakh tons.
- > Disaster response: An export ban can ensure that the available rice cases where there is a natural disaster, crop failure, or other interruptions to the agricultural supply chain.
 - The International Food Policy Research Institute, warns of rising rice prices of about 16% as a result of production deficits brought on by the severe impacts of this year's El Nino.

- ➤ **Bioethanol Production:** Sugarcane is used to make bioethanol, but **cereals, primarily rice,** are also used. About 80% of the ethanol produced in India is made from sugarcane juice while rice makes up the remaining **about 18%.**
 - According to information provided by the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, about 81,044 tons of FCI rice were allotted in the ethanol supply year (December-November) 2020-21.

RICE IN INDIA:

| Climatic conditions required for cultivation | A hot, humid atmosphere.Areas with continuous sunshine, and a |
|--|---|
| 10. cultivation | reliable supply of water. |
| | Soil: Clay or clay loam soils. |
| 1 | Average temperature between 21 and 37 C. |
| 2. Types of rice varieties | Basmati rice, black rice, red rice, Mogra rice, sticky |
| produced in India | rice, wild rice |
| 3. Nutritional value of rice | It is an important source of carbohydrates (starch). |
| | Husked rice has a protein content of about 7-12% |
| 4. Area under crop production. | About 23% of the gross cropped area. |
| 5. Crop production practices | Dry or Semi-dry upland cultivation |
| | Wet or low land cultivation (Transplantation) |
| | System of Rice Intensification |
| 6. Leading producers of rice | West Bengal, UP, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil |
| | Nadu, Orissa, Bihar, and Chhattisgarh contribute |
| (n) | 72% of the rice production in India. |
| 7. GI-tagged rice varieties | Marcha Rice (Bihar) |
| | Chak Hao (Manipur) |
| | Gobindbhog rice (West Bengal) |
| 8. Exports | India is the leading exporter of rice in the world followed by Thailand, Vietnam, and Pakistan. |
| C | Major export destinations: Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, UAE, USA |
| | • India is the leading exporter of Basmati rice in the |
| 9. Government Policies | world. (2/3 global supply) |
| 9. Government Policies | Minimum support price (Ministry of Agriculture) Minimum Synort Policy by AREDA |
| | Minimum Export Policy by APEDA Fortification of Rice under PDS |
| | |
| | National food security mission |

WAY AHEAD:

➤ **Policy priorities:** Governmental **economic and social priorities** can have an effect on the agricultural industry. Governments may decide to impose export limits in accordance with

- their priorities, which may include rural development, farmer welfare, and economic security.
- ➤ Market dynamics and consumer demand: This can have an impact on export choices as well as production levels. Based on shifting spending trends, nations with a developing middle class may balance their local supply and exports.
- > Sustainability and Environmental Concerns: This may have an impact on agricultural practices and output levels. Environmental protection and sustainable agriculture are receiving more attention influencing future export decisions.
- ➤ Global trade relations: A nation's policies on export restrictions may be influenced by the harmony between domestic food security and commitments to worldwide commerce.

 Trade agreements, discussions, and connections with trading partners will all be important.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC: MINIMUM SUPPORT PRICE

 The Indian government uses the Minimum Support Price (MSP) as a kind of market intervention to protect farmers from a sudden drop in farm prices.

Who decides MSP?

• On the basis of the **recommendations** of the **Commission for Agricultural Costs** and **Prices (CACP)**, the **Ministry of Agriculture**, Government of India set the prices for a few crops at the **start of the sowing season**.

Major objectives:

- Help the farmers through distress sales.
- Procure food grains for public distribution.

Crops covered:

- The government announces fair and remunerative pricing (FRP) for sugarcane as well as minimum support prices (MSPs) for 22 mandatory crops.
- The **14 kharif season** crops, **6 rabi season crops**, and **two extra commercial crops** are covered.
- The list of crops is:
- Cereals (7) paddy, wheat, barley, jowar, bajra, maize and ragi.
- Pulses (5) gram, arhar/tur, moong, urad and lentil
- Oilseeds (8) groundnut, rapeseed/mustard, toria, soyabean, sunflower seed, sesamum, safflower seed and Niger seed
- Raw cotton
- Raw jute
- Copra
- De-husked coconut
- Sugarcane (Fair and remunerative price)
- Virginia flu cured (VFC) tobacco

ENVIRONMENT & GEOGRAPHY

ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA-75 ENDEMIC BIRDS OF INDIA

STATUS OF BIRDS IN INDIA:

- The Zoological Survey of India released a publication titled '75 Endemic Birds of India', pointing out that about 5% of birds found in the country are endemic and are not reported in other parts of the world.
- According to the report, India is home to 1,353 bird species, which represents approximately 12.40% of global bird diversity. Of these 1,353 bird species, 78 (5%) are endemic to the country.



MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE REPORT:

- Out of 78 species, three species have not been recorded in the last few decades. They are the Manipur Bush Quail, listed as 'Endangered'; the Himalayan Quail, listed as 'Critically Endangered'; and the Jerdon's Courser, listed as 'Critically Endangered'.
- The highest number of endemic species have been recorded in the Western Ghats, with 28 bird species. Such as Malabar Grey Hornbill; Malabar Parakeet; Ashambu Laughing Thrush; and the White-bellied Sholakili
- Four species of birds are endemic to the Eastern Himalayas, and one each to the Southern Deccan plateau and central Indian forest.
- "25 bird species are endemic to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Like Nicobar Megapode; Nicobar Serpent Eagle; Andaman Crake; and Andaman Barn Owl.

| Species | Description | Threats |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Manipur Bush | Small, elusive quail with a | Habitat loss due to deforestation and agriculture |
| Quail | bush-dwelling habitat | (Critically Endangered) |
| Himalayan | Medium-sized bird with | Habitat destruction and hunting (Critically |
| Quail | striking plumage | Endangered) |
| Jerdon's | Nocturnal bird with long | Habitat loss and disturbance due to human |
| Courser | legs and distinctive collar | activities (Critically Endangered) |
| Malabar | Found in the Western Ghats | 'Near Threatened' due to habitat loss and pet |
| Parakeet | | trade |
| Andaman | Found only in the Andaman | 'Near Threatened' due to habitat loss and |
| Crake | Islands | disturbance |

WAY FORWARD FOR ENHANCING CONSERVATION EFFORTS:

- Establishing Protected Areas and Habitats:
 - Establishing and effectively managing national parks and wildlife sanctuaries are crucial for safeguarding vital bird habitats.

 Restoration efforts are vital for rehabilitating deteriorated habitats, and ecological corridors need to be created to link fragmented regions.

Sustainable Development Practices:

- Advocating for sustainable land usage and resource management that harmonizes developmental and conservation demands.
- Collaborating with local communities to implement eco-friendly practices in tandem with conservation initiatives.

> Involving Local Communities:

- Cooperating with local stakeholders in decision-making procedures and conservation projects.
- Offering economic incentives to communities for active participation in conservation activities.

Responsible Ecotourism:

- Encouraging ethical birdwatching and nature tourism that minimizes disruptions to bird habitats.
- Generating economic benefits for local communities and supporting conservation initiatives.

Strengthening Research and Monitoring:

 Regular surveys are essential for tracking population trends, distribution, and the threats faced by endemic bird species.

Utilizing scientific data to inform conservation strategies and adaptive management approaches.

ABOUT ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

- The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) is a leading scientific institution operating within the purview of the Indian government's Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- Founded in the year 1916, its primary mission revolves around the survey, exploration, and comprehensive documentation of the wildlife inhabiting the Indian subcontinent.
- ZSI assumes a vital role in advancing various aspects of biodiversity, encompassing research, preservation, and effective governance, with a specific focus on the domain of zoological sciences.

RECALIBRATING INDIA CLEAN COOKING STRATEGY

SOURCE: TH

WHY IN NEWS: For the first time LPG consumption in Indian households saw an absolute reduction in FY23.

According to the India Residential Energy Consumption Survey (IRES) conducted by the Council on

Energy, Environment, and Water (CEEW), the proportion of Indian households using LPG as their main cooking fuel increased from 33% in 2011 to 71% in 2020.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF LPG PROGRAMME:

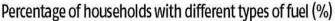
- > IN FY21 3 free cylinders were provided to all PMUY Consumers as part of Pradhan mantra garib kalyan yojana.
- Annual refill rates for LPG rose to highest level of 4.55 cylinders per active connection.
- Nominal subsidy of rs.200 per Cylinder was reinstated for PMUY Consumers in September 2022.

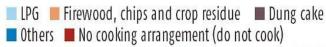
ADVANTAGES OF LPG PROGRAMME:

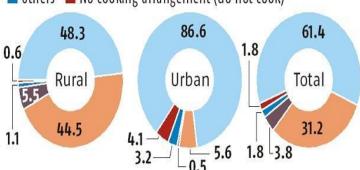
- Clean and Efficient Fuel: LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) is a clean-burning fuel that produces fewer emissions compared to traditional fuels like coal and wood. For example, using LPG for cooking reduces indoor air pollution and respiratory problems caused by
- Convenience: It eliminates the need for collecting firewood or charcoal, saving time and effort.

traditional solid fuels.









Note: The survey was conducted between July and December 2018 Source: National Statistical Office's 76th round survey on drinking water, sanitation, hygiene and housing condition in India

- Versatility: LPG can be used for various applications such as cooking, heating, water heating, and in commercial and industrial processes. Its versatility makes it a widely used energy source across different sectors.
- Energy Security: LPG provides a reliable energy supply in areas where electricity or other fuel sources may be intermittent or unavailable.
- Backup Power: LPG can be used for backup power generation during electricity outages. This is particularly valuable in regions with unreliable power supply.

CHALLENGES IN LPG STRATEGY:

- 1. Imports of LPG: India dependence on imported LPG has steadily increased to over 64% in FY 23.
- 2. Subsidy management: Identifying and targeting the right beneficiaries for LPG subsidies can be challenging, and it might lead to ineligible recipients receiving subsidies or eligible ones being left out.
- 3. Pricing and Affordability: Given the volatile international prices, particularly after the Russian war against Ukraine, and India's dependence on petroleum taxation in its domestic budget, it is improbable for the country to revert to a low price.
- 4. LPG vs. Alternative Fuels: Example: The promotion of LPG cylinders may impact the adoption of cleaner and sustainable energy sources, such as biogas, solar, or electric cooking options.
- 5. Accessibility in Remote Areas: In remote and hilly regions, transportation infrastructure may be inadequate, making it difficult to deliver LPG cylinders promptly.

WAY FORWARD:

India's clean cooking policy should proactively shift its focus from relying solely on LPG to embracing a range of clean-cooking technologies.

- o E.g.: <u>Electric cooking</u>, <u>Induction cook-tops</u>
- Need to move towards electric cooking as observed in other parts of the world and it is comparatively cheaper.
 - EG: According to a study by CEEW, even with a high tariff of ₹8 per unit of electricity,
 e-cooking would remain more cost-effective than using LPG at current prices.
- **Research and Development**: Invest in research to identify and develop diverse clean cooking technologies and fuels.
 - EG: <u>Support research on biogas, improved biomass stoves, electric induction</u> <u>cooktops, and solar-powered cookers</u>.
- Tailored Solutions for Different Regions: Customize clean cooking programs to suit regional cooking habits and fuel availability.
 - EG: <u>Promote the use of improved biomass stoves in areas with abundant agricultural</u> residues.
- Financial Access: Facilitate access to affordable financing options for clean cooking technologies.
 - EG: <u>Establish microfinance schemes for households to purchase biogas plants or</u> <u>electric cookers without financial burden.</u>

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AMENDMENT BILL 2021

SOURCE: TH

The Act aims to conserve biodiversity, promote its sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits that arise therein. **The Bill amends the Biological Diversity Act, 2002** to simplify compliance requirements for domestic companies.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BILL:

- ➤ The Bill amends the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 to simplify compliance requirements for domestic companies.
- Users of codified traditional knowledge and AYUSH practitioners will be exempted from sharing benefits with local communities.
- ➤ The Bill removes research and bio-survey activities from the purview of benefit sharing requirements.
- ➤ Benefit sharing will be based on terms agreed between the user and the local management committee represented by the National Authority.
- > The Bill decriminalises all offences under the Act.

KEY ISSUES AND ANALYSIS:

- Traditional knowledge: The Bill does not provide a specific definition for the term 'codified traditional knowledge.' Similarly, the Convention on Biological Diversity, along with its Nagoya and Cartagena protocols, also lacks a clear definition for this term.
- Local bodies: The Bill eliminates the direct involvement of local bodies and benefit claimants in deciding mutually agreed terms. Now the responsibility of establishing terms for benefit sharing during the approval process will be vested in the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA).

- Prior informed consent: There is no provision for a mechanism for obtaining prior informed
- consent of the local and indigenous communities. This may be in contrast with the framework under Nagoya Protocol.
- Penalty adjudication: The Bill alters the authority responsible for adjudication, replacing a Judge with a government official. Under new provisions, penalties will be determined through an inquiry process rather than through a judgment following arguments presented in an open court.
- ➤ Bio utilisation: The Bill seeks to remove the reference to "Bio-utilisation" from the definition, and elsewhere in the Act. However, Section 3 of the Act as amended by the Bill still contains the term "Bio-utilisation".
- Biopiracy: The exemptions granted to AYUSH

Practitioners, relieving them from the requirement of prior intimation to State biodiversity boards, could potentially facilitate "bio-piracy."

The Biodiversity Act, 2002:

- The Biodiversity Act, 2002 brought three-tier decentralised system, involving the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), State Biodiversity Boards (SBB) and the Biodiversity Management Committees (BMC) at the local level
- National Biodiversity Authority (NBA): NBA is a statutory autonomous body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, GOI established in 2003 to implement the provisions under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, after India signed Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1992.
 - **O HQ: CHENNAI, TAMIL NADU**
- ➤ State Biodiversity boards: They are statutory bodies established under Section 22 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. There is one SBB for each state in India. SBBs are composed of a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and other members, who are appointed by the state government
- Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC): Local-level body constituted under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002The BMC is composed of a chairperson and not more than six members, who are nominated by the local body. The chairperson is elected from among the members of the BMC.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY BILL 2002 AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AMENDMENT BILL 2021

| FEATURES | BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY BILL 2002 | BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AMENDMENT BILL 2021 |
|----------|---|---|
| Purpose | To provide for conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the use of biological resources. | To simplify compliance requirements for domestic companies, patent application, and transfer of research results, decriminalise offences, and encourage foreign investment in the sector. |

| Regulation of access to biological resources | Requires prior intimation to the State Biodiversity Board for accessing biological resources. | Exempts users of codified traditional knowledge and AYUSH practitioners from the requirement of giving prior intimation to State Biodiversity Boards for accessing biological resources for certain purposes. |
|---|--|---|
| Benefit sharing | Requires users of biological resources to share benefits with local communities. | Allows benefit sharing to be based on terms agreed between the user and the local management committee represented by the National Authority |
| Offences | Penalizes offences under the Act with imprisonment of up to 5 years and/or a fine of up to INR 1 lakh. | Decriminalizes all offences under the Act. |

WAY FORWARD

JPC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Biodiversity management committees and indigenous communities should be empowered under the proposed law by explicitly defining benefit claimers as conservers of biological resources.
- Promotion of indigenous resources should be promoted.
- Reassess and redraft the contentious provisions in the bill, particularly those related to decriminalizing violations, exempting domestic companies from seeking permission, and codified traditional knowledge.
- Adequately compensate indigenous communities and traditional knowledge holders for their role in conserving and preserving biodiversity

CLIMATE EVENTS AND AN UMBRELLA FOR URBAN HEALTH

SOURCE: TH

WHY IN NEWS?

The concern has been notable among policymakers regarding various events including the cyclonic storm Biparjoy that originated in the Arabian Sea in June, struck western India after landfall, the flooding in Assam, a northeastern state, and the recent instances of substantial rainfall and resultant damage in northern India.

Health LADAKH 100 centre count AMMU & KASHMIR | 38 The map shows the shortfall (%) of primary health centres (PHCs) in urban areas as of July 2020. The shortfall was more than 50% in 14 States/UTs 22 ODISHA 47 ANDHRA PRADESH L TAMIL NADU | 42 KERALA 70

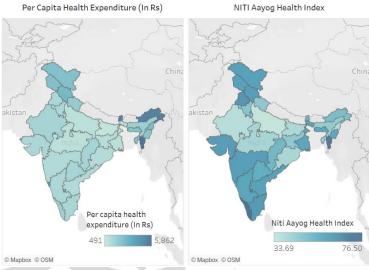
A STUDY ON DISEASE VULNERABILITY

The Indian Journal of Public Health emphasizes two key findings: Firstly, households with lower socio-economic indicators are more susceptible to malaria.

- Secondly, urban households face significantly higher odds of malaria compared to rural ones.
- Additionally, households located in states with high and moderately high vulnerability to climatic conditions are more likely to experience malaria.
- Following the monsoon season, officials responsible for managing water and vector-borne diseases are closely vigilant to observe and control the proliferation of these illnesses.



- 1. Heat-Related Illnesses:
 Increased temperatures can
 result in heat-related illnesses
 like heatstroke and heat
 exhaustion, especially in vulnerable
 populations.
- Vector-Borne Diseases: Climate change can expand the geographical range of disease-carrying vectors like mosquitoes, leading to the spread of diseases such as malaria, dengue, and Zika.
- 3. Food and Waterborne Diseases:
 Altered weather patterns can affect food and water safety, increasing the risk of foodborne and waterborne illnesses.
- Respiratory Issues: Poor air quality due to factors like wildfires and air pollution worsens respiratory conditions like asthma and bronchitis.
- 5. Extreme Weather Events: More frequent and severe weather events like hurricanes and floods can result in injuries and mental health issues among affected populations.
- 6. **Malnutrition:** Climate change can disrupt food production, leading to food shortages and malnutrition, particularly in vulnerable regions.



PRELIMS SPECIFIC:

Health insurance policies in India:

Ayushman Bharat: IT is the largest healthcare program globally, with the objective of providing coverage to a population equivalent to that of approximately 27-28 European countries.

The Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY): It offers fully subsidised comprehensive secondary and tertiary healthcare packages providing annual coverage of Rs. 5 lakhs per family on a shared basis.

Private voluntary health insurance (PVHI) schemes: PVHI is a contributory and voluntary scheme. It is a retail insurance product with coverage for nearly 11.5 crore persons.

NITI aayog has released a report " Health insurance for India's missing Middle.

NATIONAL URBAN HEALTH MISSION

National Urban Health Mission (NUHM) was approved by the Union Cabinet as a sub-mission under an **overarching National Health Mission (NHM)** for providing equitable and quality primary health care services to the urban population with special focus on **slum and vulnerable sections of the Society.**

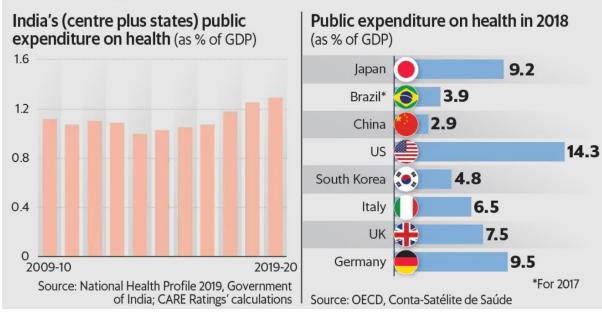
NUHM seeks to improve the health status by facilitating their access to quality primary healthcare.

CHALLENGES FACED BY PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM IN INDIA:

- ➤ Shortage of Healthcare Personnel: There is a significant shortage of doctors, nurses, and other o healthcare professionals in India. (Doctor population ratio 0.74:1000).
- ➤ Communicable Diseases: India continues to face a high burden of communicable Diseases including tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV/AIDS.
- E.g.: 34% of the world's TB burden, 21% of world's child deaths.
- ➤ Inadequate Focus on Preventive Care: The public health system often places more emphasis on curative care rather than preventive measures. (Only 6% is spent on preventive care).
- ➤ Inequality in Access: There is a stark disparity in access to healthcare services between urban and rural areas with rural populations facing greater challenges in accessing quality healthcare. (Rural areas have only 70% population, 31% hospital and 16% hospital).
- Insufficient Infrastructure: Inadequate healthcare infrastructure, including a shortage of hospitals, clinics, and primary health centres affects the accessibility and quality of health care services.

Health a low priority

India's public health expenditure was just 1.29% of GDP in 2019-20. In 2018 too, the country lagged behind BRICs peers as well as developed nations.



WAY AHEAD:

- Enhanced coordination and collaboration are essential in addressing public health emergencies.
- > There is a need for better information and data exchange among different stakeholders, preventive and therapeutic roles, medical procedures, and most importantly, overseeing rates and benchmarks.
- The domain of surveillance and information systems like the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme should be extended universally, broadened in scope, and reinforced.
- ➤ Given the intricate character of health and climate crises, the existing framework of specialized disease control initiatives must transition to a holistic healthcare system approach for effectively managing public health programs.

➤ It is essential to integrate front-line workers from different disease management programs in order to establish a versatile group of public health professionals in urban regions. These individuals would serve as multi-purpose, front-line personnel accountable to both communities and the healthcare system.

CAN SMRS (SMALL MODULAR REACTORS) HELP INDIA ACHIEVE NET ZERO?

SOURCE: TH

BACKGROUND:

With fossil fuels still dominating 82% of energy supply, decarbonizing the power sector is crucial, especially as electricity's share in final energy consumption is expected to rise significantly by 2050. This highlights the importance of small modular reactors (SMRs) – a type of nuclear reactor – in aiding India's pursuit of deep decarbonization, grid stability, and energy security.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF DECARBONISATION?

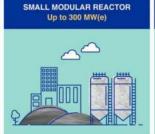
- > Policymakers agree solar and wind alone can't provide affordable energy.
- Incorporating firm power-generating technology in renewable-heavy grids enhances reliability and reduces costs.
- International Energy Agency predicts up to 3.5x rise in demand for critical minerals (like lithium, cobalt) by 2030 for clean energy.
- Challenges include major investments in new mines, processing facilities for required minerals.
- Top mineral-producing nations controlling 50-100% of extraction capacities pose geopolitical risks.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES WITH NUCLEAR POWER?

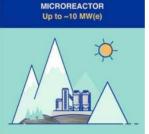
- Nuclear disaster risks from radiation leaks can cause genetic defects and mutations.
- Costs of cleanup for disasters like Fukushima exceed US\$ 600 billion.
- Nuclear power plant construction











- often faces cost overruns, as seen in the V.C. Summer project.
- Some proposed foreign reactors, like VVER and AP1000 designs, have operational issues.
- Fukushima accident led to local protests against new reactors like the Mithivirdi project.
- Solar and wind energy emerge as cheaper alternatives, while nuclear costs remain higher.

- Incompatibility between India's liability law and international conventions hampers foreign research.
- India's absence from Nuclear Supplier group and Non-Proliferation treaty limits technology access.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF SMRS?

- > SMRs offer **lower core damage** frequency and radioactive contamination risks.
- Enhanced seismic isolation and passive safety features increase safety.
- > SMRs have **simpler designs**, reducing potential radioactive material releases.
- > SMRs require less storage space for spent nuclear fuel compared to conventional plants.
- > SMRs can be safely operated at brownfield sites with less stringent zoning requirements.
- > Transitioning to SMRs improves energy security and takes India closer to net-zero.
- > SMRs typically use low-enriched uranium from countries with uranium mines and facilities.
- Factory manufacturing and on-site assembly reduce time and cost overruns.
- > SMRs have a levelized cost of electricity around \$60-90 per MWh, expected to drop further.
- International cooperation and reputable companies manufacturing SMRs contribute to cost reduction.

THE ROLE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY IN THE GLOBAL TRANSITION TO CLEAN ENERGY

- Energy transition involves rapidly introducing low-emission energy technologies and incorporating non-fossil energy sources into the primary energy mix on a global scale.
- ➤ The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reports that there are currently 413 operational nuclear power reactors worldwide with a combined net installed capacity of 368 GW(e) as of April 2023. This capacity is expected to double to 871 GW by 2050.
- Nuclear power contributes nearly 10% of the global electricity mix.
- According to the IAEA, nuclear power has prevented the release of 70 Gt of CO2 emissions over the last five decades and continues to prevent about 1 Gt of CO2 emissions annually.
- > The International Energy Agency (IEA) recognizes the significance of nuclear energy in the energy transition.
- The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) acknowledges nuclear power as an essential tool in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

WAY FORWARD:

Advancement of Technology:

Ongoing research and development efforts are imperative to enhance and perfect SMR designs.

Cost Efficiency and Standardization: Ensuring cost competitiveness is crucial for the widespread adoption of SMRs.

- Regulatory Alignment and Safety Evaluation: Safety assessment methodologies should be updated to consider multi-module designs and emergency planning zones.
- Skilled Workforce Formation: Developing a skilled workforce across the SMR value chain, from development to operation, is critical.



➤ Building Consensus and Engaging Stakeholders: Transparent communication and participatory processes with communities, environmental groups, and industry representatives are essential to garner acceptance and support for SMR projects.

MISSION AMRIT SAROVAR

SOURCE: PIB

WHY IN NEWS?

States are progressing towards creating 75 Amrit Sarovars per district, although some districts in specific states are yet to meet the target. Out of 112,277 identified Amrit Sarovars, work has begun on 81,425, with 66,278 constructed or rejuvenated. The Mission Amrit Sarovar, launched in April 2022, aims to establish sustainable water sources, involving multiple ministries and partnerships, and utilizing various schemes.

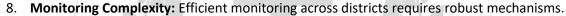
ABOUT MISSION AMRIT SAROVAR:

- 1. Launched on April 24, 2022, during India's 75th independence anniversary celebrations, Mission Amrit Sarovar was initiated.
- 2. The mission's primary goal is to **establish or renew 75 Amrit Sarovars in each district** to address water scarcity in rural regions.
- **3.** This target is crucial in achieving **localized water sustainability.**
- 4. **Eight Central Ministries/Departments**, including Rural Development, land resources, Drinking Water and Sanitation, Water resources, Panchayati Raj, Forest, Environment and Climate changes, Railway, and Road, Transport & Highways, actively participate.

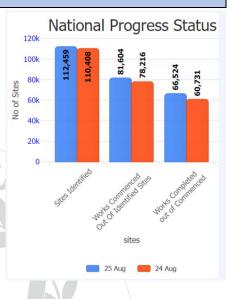
- 5. The mission collaborates with Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Application and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N) as its technical partner.
- 6. **BISAG-N** operates as an autonomous scientific society under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, utilizing geospatial data and technology to identify and execute Amrit Sarovar construction and rejuvenation.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE MISSION:

- Resource Allocation: Adequate funding, manpower, and equipment are required for construction and rejuvenation efforts.
- 2. **Geographical Variation:** Diverse landscapes demand adaptable strategies for different regions.
- 3. **Community Participation:** Engaging communities and ensuring their involvement poses a challenge.
- 4. **Technical Expertise:** Skilled professionals are needed for effective planning and execution.
- 5. **Land Issues:** Land acquisition and legal hurdles can impede progress.
- 6. **Climate Uncertainty:** Changing climate patterns can affect water availability.
- 7. **Sustainability:** Maintaining and managing water bodies for the long term is crucial.



9. **Inter-Ministerial Coordination:** Collaborating with multiple ministries necessitates coordination.



| OTHER GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR WATER SUSTAINABILITY: | | |
|--|---|--|
| Initiative | Description | |
| Jal Jeevan Mission | Aims to provide tap water to every rural household by 2024, with a focus on water conservation. It emphasizes the importance of local community involvement in water management. | |
| Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) | While primarily focused on sanitation and hygiene, this mission indirectly contributes to water quality improvement through the promotion of clean surroundings and safe disposal of waste. | |
| National Rural Drinking Water Programme | Aims to provide safe drinking water to rural areas through source strengthening, groundwater management, and the adoption of water quality monitoring practices. | |
| Namami Gange | Launched for the cleaning and rejuvenation of the Ganga river and its tributaries, this initiative addresses pollution control, water quality improvement, and holistic river management. | |
| Per Drop More Crop | This initiative promotes water-use efficiency in agriculture through micro-irrigation techniques, helping farmers optimize water resources and reduce wastage. | |
| Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) | Focuses on efficient water use in agriculture by improving irrigation practices, enhancing water use efficiency, and increasing agricultural productivity. | |
| Atal Bhujal Yojana | Aims to address groundwater depletion and contamination by promoting sustainable groundwater management practices, focusing on community-led initiatives and technology interventions. | |

| National Water Mission | Part of the National Action Plan on Climate Change, this initiative focuses on water conservation, minimizing wastage, and promoting equitable distribution across sectors. |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Watershed Development Projects | These projects work towards enhancing water availability in rain-fed areas by implementing soil and water conservation techniques, ultimately contributing to water sustainability. |
| Rainwater Harvesting Initiatives | Encourages capturing and storing rainwater for domestic, agricultural, and industrial use, helping in groundwater recharge and reducing reliance on external water sources. |
| National Mission for Clean Ganga | With a focus on controlling pollution, restoring the ecological health of the Ganga river, and ensuring its continuous flow, this mission contributes to water quality and sustainability. |

- ➤ **Community Engagement:** Foster active community involvement through awareness campaigns and participatory planning to ensure a sense of ownership.
- > **Technical Training:** Provide training and skill development to local workforce and authorities for efficient execution and management.
- Advanced Technology: Incorporate modern tools like geospatial mapping and remote sensing for accurate site selection and progress tracking.
- ➤ Integrated Planning: Align efforts with existing water management schemes and programs for synergy and resource optimization.



SOCIAL ISSUES

COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN INDIA

SOURCE: TH

WHY IN NEWS: VIOLENT INCIDENTS HAPPENED IN NUH DISTRICT OF HARYANA

Communalism is a form of political ideology that emphasizes the importance of religious and ethnic identities. It is often used to divide people into separate groups and to incite conflict between them.

EG: The Gujarat riots of 2002: These riots were sparked by the burning of a train carrying Hindu pilgrims. The riots resulted in the deaths of over 1,000 people, most of whom were Muslims.



THE IDEOLOGY OF COMMUNALISM HAS THREE ELEMENTS:

Belief- People who follow the same religion have same political, economic, social interests. So here socio-political communalities arise.

Notion- A multi-religious society like India, the interest of one religion differs from another religion.

Interest- Differs in different communities and are seen to be completely incompatible, antagonist and hostile.

CAUSES OF COMMUNALISM IN INDIA:

Historical Factors:

- **Legacy of Partition**: The traumatic events of the Partition of India in 1947, leading to mass migration and communal violence, left deep scars and contributed to communal tensions.
- **Historical grievances and communal clashes** in the past have left lasting imprints on community relations, affecting trust and understanding.

Economic Disparities:

 Unequal distribution of resources and opportunities among different religious communities can create a sense of competition and animosity.

Social Fragmentation:

• Social isolation and lack of intermingling between different religious communities can lead to misunderstandings and stereotypes.

Example: Residential segregation, where communities live in separate localities, can limit interactions and perpetuate prejudices.

Religious Fundamentalism:

 The rise of religious fundamentalism can promote intolerance and radicalization, leading to communal conflicts.

Caste System:

- The caste system in India, which is intertwined with religion, can reinforce social divisions and contribute to communalism.
 - Example: <u>Caste-based discrimination and conflicts may lead to communal tensions in some</u> areas.

CONSEQUENCES OF COMMUNALISM IN INDIA:

- Violence and instability: Communalism can lead to violence, riots, and even wars. This can destabilize the country and make it difficult to achieve economic and social development.
- Loss of life and property: Communal violence can result in the loss of life and property. This can have a devastating impact on individuals, families, and communities.
- ➤ Damage to social fabric: Communalism can damage the social fabric of a country. It can divide people into separate groups and make it difficult for them to work together for the common good.
- > Threat to national unity: Communalism can be a threat to national unity. It can divide people into separate groups and make it difficult for them to feel like they belong to the same country.
- ➤ Intolerance and discrimination: Communalism can lead to intolerance and discrimination against people of different religions or ethnicities. This can make it difficult for people to live together in peace and harmony.
- Loss of economic opportunities: Communal violence can damage the economy. This can lead to job losses, businesses closing down, and a decline in investment.

MAJOR SC JUDGEMENTS ON COMMUNALISM

- 1. **R.K. Dalmia v State of Bihar**: This judgment, delivered in 1958, held that the state has a duty to protect its citizens from communal violence. The judgment also held that the state can take preventive measures to prevent communal violence.
- 2. **M.C. Mehta v Union of India**: This judgment, delivered in 1997, held that the state has a duty to provide relief to victims of communal violence. The judgment also held that the state can take steps to rehabilitate victims of communal violence.
- **3.** Ramesh Yeshwant Prabhoo v. Prabhakar K. Kunte (1996): In this judgment, the court reiterated that politicians seeking votes should not appeal to religion, caste, or language, as it is against the secular ethos of the Constitution.
- **4. Sri Adi Visheshwara of Kashi Vishwanath Temple v. State of U.P. (1997):** The court held that no religious denomination or section of a religious group can claim exclusive ownership or control over a religious place based on past usage, and such places must be open to all, irrespective of religious affiliations.

- ➤ **Prohibiting communal speeches and publications**: The state should prohibit communal speeches and publications that incite violence.
- **Deploying security forces**: The state should deploy security forces to areas where there is a risk of communal violence.
- Providing relief to victims: The state should provide relief to victims of communal violence, including compensation for property damage and medical assistance.

> Rehabilitating victims: The state should rehabilitate victims of communal violence, including by providing them with housing and employment.

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN SECURITY FORCES

SOURCE: TOI

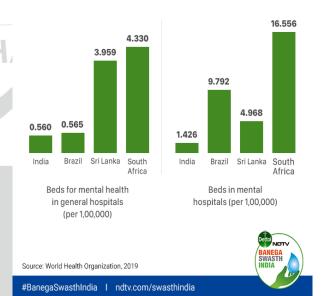
WHY IN NEWS: A personnel from the Railway Protection Force (RPF), who was on duty aboard the Jaipur-Mumbai Superfast Express, committed a shooting that resulted in the deaths of passengers

The WHO defines Mental Health as, "Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well and contribute to their community.

The WHO calls mental health a basic human right. And it is also included in Sustainable development goals.

- It is estimated that 6-7 % of the population suffers from mental disorders in India. (WHO Report)
- The suicide rate in the Indian Army is about 8.5 suicides per 100000 people

MENTAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE



ISSUES IN DEALING WITH MENTAL HEALTH:

- 1. **Stigma and Discrimination**: Mental health issues are often stigmatised in Indian society, leading to discrimination and social exclusion. (**Report by live love laugh foundation**)
- 2. **Shortage of Mental Health Professionals**: There is a significant shortage of mental health professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, and counsellors, particularly in rural areas.
- 3. **Media role**: Often the media links mental disorders with violence which are associated with crimes and evil activities which portrays a completely different image.
- 4. **Socioeconomic Factors**: Limited financial resources and social disparities can hinder access to mental healthcare services and exacerbate mental health challenges.
- 5. **Demographic Determinants**: Gender inequality, racial inequality, regional and ethnic discrimination etc. exacerbate Mental health problems.
- 6. **Environmental Determinants**: Natural calamities, industrial mishaps, armed conflicts, forced migration, and ecological disasters resulting from climate change increases mental health problems.
- 7. **Extensive use of smartphones**: It affects the sleep pattern of a person which indirectly leads to mental stress.

REASONS FOR MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN SECURITY FORCES:

- ➤ **High-Stress Environments:** Constant exposure to high-stress situations, including combat and emergencies, can lead to acute and chronic stress disorders.
- Traumatic Experiences: Security personnel often witness traumatic events, which can result in conditions like PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder).
- ➤ **Isolation**: Lengthy deployments and duty in remote or conflict zones can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness.
- Uncertain Working Conditions: Frequent transfers, unpredictability of deployments, and extended work hours can disrupt work-life balance and contribute to mental strain.
- Risk to Life: The constant risk to life and the need to make life-or-death decisions can cause anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues.
- Lack of Emotional Support: Limited access to mental health professionals and reluctance to seek help due to stigma can hinder timely intervention.

MEASURES TO BE TAKEN:

- > Destigmatize mental health: Promote mental health awareness and education campaigns to
- reduce stigma, increase understanding, and encourage help-seeking behaviour.
- Mental Health Services: Improve access to mental health services by reducing waiting times, increasing the number of mental health professionals, and implementing telemedicine.
- Suicide Prevention Programs: Implement suicide prevention programs that focus on early identification of suicidal behaviour, crisis helplines, counselling services, and community support networks.
- Research and Data Collection: Conduct research studies to generate data on mental health prevalence, risk factors, and treatment outcomes.
- Scientific Temperament -

PRELIMS SPECIFIC

MANODARPAN SCHEME:

The Manodarpan Scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare through the National Institute of



Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS). The scheme provides financial assistance to state governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to implement mental health awareness programs.

MENTAL HEALTHCARE ACT 2017:

The Mental Healthcare Act 2017 (MHCA) is a landmark legislation in India that aims to provide mental healthcare services for persons with mental illness and to protect, promote and fulfil their rights during the delivery of mental healthcare and services.

Indians have a tendency to believe in concepts such as Belief in supernatural powers which reduces the tendency to take patients to medical hospitals.

➤ Infrastructure - Medical hospitals lack proper infrastructure for treatment of patients.

Moreover, the ill treatment of patients reduces the tendency to take patients to medical hospitals

VARIOUS GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS:

National suicide prevention strategy.

- > Kiran helpline
- World mental health day
- National tele mental health program

COMBATING STEREOTYPES

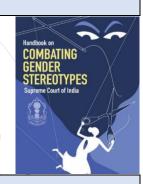
SOURCE: TH, SC

WHY IN NEWS?

- > The Supreme Court of India has taken a significant step to challenge outdated ideas, especially those affecting women, by releasing a special guide.
- > This guide introduces new words for lawyers and judges to use in court, aiming to fight harmful beliefs.

HANDBOOK ON COMBATING GENDER STEREOTYPES:

- > The handbook provides a list of biased words and suggests better alternatives for legal documents.
- Its main aim is to provide legal experts with the means to "identify, understand, and challenge stereotypes about women."
- > It includes a list of terms that promote gender bias and offers alternative, fairer terms to be used in legal documents.



OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE HANDBOOK:

- Challenging Old Beliefs: The Supreme Court's initiative aims to discard old-fashioned and harmful stereotypes, particularly those related to women, through the 'Handbook on Combating Gender Stereotypes.'
- > CJI's Vision: The handbook is introduced by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, who explains its purpose: to help legal professionals recognize and counter genderbased stereotypes.
- > Language Transformation: The handbook includes a glossary of terms that contribute to gender bias and suggests better alternatives to be used in legal writings

Combating stereotypes



| Career woman Woman Eve teasing Street sexual harassment Fallen woman Housewife Ladylike Use a gender neutral description of behaviour or characteristics (eg: amusing or assertive) Marriageable age A woman who has attained the legal age required to marry Mistress Woman with whom a man has had romantic or sexual relations outside of marriage Prostitute Sex worker Provider/Breadwinner Provocative clothing Address Sex change Sex change Sex reassignment or gender transition Unmarried woman Transgender Unmarriage physically weaker. A person's strength does n depend solely on gender but also or depend solely on gender but also or detends oslely on genders talso detends of the home do not car about their children. Men who sexually assault or rape a re typically strangers and not known to the woman. The woman may be a colleague, employer, neighbour, or family membe, rete which taints the honour of the survivor/victim. If the rapist marries home or the rapist to the survivor/victim does not restore home. Transgender individuals can be raped. Infact, transgender individuals are one of the groups which are most vul | Gender-unjust terms | What should be used instead | Stereotype | Why the handbook says they should be avoided |
|--|------------------------|--|--|--|
| woman Fallen woman Housewife Ladylike Use a gender neutral description of behaviour or characteristics (eg: amusing or assertive) Marriageable age Marriageable age Moman with whom a man has had romantic or sexual relations outside of marriage Woman with whom a man has had romantic or sexual relations outside of marriage Prostitute Sex worker Frovider/Breadwinner Provocative clothing Clothing/dress Sex change Sex reassignment or gender transition Spinster Unmarried woman Transpender Unwed mother Woman Women who work outside of the honour of the description of behaviour or characteristics (eg: amusing or about their children. Wen who sexually assault or rape are typically strangers and not known to them The woman may be a colleague, employer, neighbour, or family member, etc marriage of the rapis to the survivor/victim. If the survivor/victim of her family. The survivor/victim does not restore the rapis tharries her, her honour is restored. Spinster Unmarried woman Transpender Unwed mother Woman Women who work outside of the honour of the shout their children. Wen who sexually assault or rape are typically strangers and not known to them The woman may be a colleague, employer, neighbour, or family member, etc marriage of the rapis to the survivor/victim of her family. The survivor/victi | Affair | | physically weaker | physiologically different, it is not |
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| had romantic or sexual relations outside of marriage Prostitute Provider/Breadwinner Provocative clothing /dress Sex change Sex change Sex reassignment or gender transition Spinster Unmarried woman Unwed mother Material Rape is a crime which taints the honour of the survivor/victim or her family. In marriage of the rapist to the survivor/victim does not restore the survivor/victim does not restore the survivor/victim of the survivo | Marriageable age | the legal age required to | assault or rape are typically strangers | rape a woman known to them The woman may be a colleague, |
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| Provocative clothing / Clothing/dress | Prostitute | Sex worker | | |
| Provocative clothing Idress Sex change Sex change Sex change Sex change Sex reassignment or gender transition Spinster Unmarried woman Transgender Unmarried woman Transgender Unmarried woman Transgender Wother Mother Individuals are one of the groups which are most vulnerable to sexu violence because they are stigmatised and face structural | Provider/Breadwinner | Employed or earning | | |
| Spinster Unmarried woman Transgender Unmarried woman Transgender Unmarried woman Unmarried wom | | Clothing/dress | her, her honour is | Rape is a criminal offence, which |
| Spinster Unmarried woman Transsexual Transgender Transgender Unwed mother Unwed mother Mother Unmarried woman Transgender Transgender Transgender which are most vulnerable to sexu violence because they are stigmatised and face structural | Sex change | | | |
| Unwed mother Mother violence because they are stigmatised and face structural | Spinster | Unmarried woman | cannot be | individuals are one of the groups |
| Unwed mother stigmatised and face structural | Transsexual | Transgender | raped. | |
| | Unwed mother | Mother | | stigmatised and face structural |
| | ASI TILL | Page 1 and 1 | Manual Control of the | |

WHY SUCH A MOVE?

[A] Language inflicting Stereotypes

| | The handbook points out terms in legal language that promote gender bias and provides suggestions for change. |
|----------------|--|
| | Examples of Change: Instead of using "adulteress," the handbook recommends using "Woman who has engaged in sexual relations outside of marriage" to avoid disrespectful language. |
| | Removing Biases: The handbook encourages using simple terms like "woman" and "wife" instead of prefixes like "chaste" or "obedient." |
| | Using Neutral Language: Instead of negatively using "effeminate," the handbook suggests using neutral terms like "confident" or "responsible." |
| [B] <u>Avo</u> | oiding labelling |
| | Empowering Language: The handbook suggests using "survivor" or "victim" to describe individuals affected by sexual violence. |
| | Respecting Preferences: The choice between "survivor" and "victim" should be based on the individual's preference. |
| [C] <u>Con</u> | scious Reporting of Cases |
| | Separating Attire and Consent: The handbook emphasizes that a person's clothing should never excuse unwanted touching; consent remains essential. |
| | Breaking Stereotypes: The handbook rejects the idea that delayed reporting of sexual assault means it didn't happen. |
| | Encouraging Reporting: The handbook acknowledges the bravery required to report sexual offenses due to societal pressures. |

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF GENDER STEREOTYPES:

- Widespread Impact: Gender stereotypes lead to exclusion and prejudice in workplaces, schools, and public places.
- **Education Example:** The handbook illustrates how stereotypes affect students from marginalized communities, adding stress during exams.
- ➤ **Government Data:** Minister Subhas Sarkar's data on dropout rates among marginalized students is shared as an example.

- **Education:** Integrate gender equality into school curricula and raise awareness about its importance.
- Media Literacy: Promote critical thinking about media portrayals of gender roles.
- Positive Role Models: Celebrate diverse individuals who challenge stereotypes in various fields.
- ➤ Workplace Equality: Implement policies for equal opportunities and fair treatment in workplaces.
- > Youth Engagement: Empower young people to challenge stereotypes and promote equality.

NATIONAL MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX: A PROGRESS OF REVIEW 2023

SOURCE: NITI Aayog, UNDP, PIB

WHY IN NEWS?

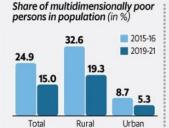
- The NITI Aayog has published the second edition of the Multidimensional Poverty Index titled 'National Multidimensional Poverty Index: A progress of Review 2023'.
- The report highlighted a record 13.5 crore people have moved out of multidimensional poverty in India between 2015-16 and 2019-21.

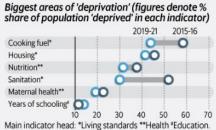
WHAT IS MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY?

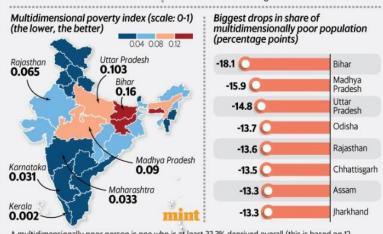
- A person who is poor can suffer multiple disadvantages at the same time for example they may have poor health or malnutrition, a lack of clean water or electricity, poor quality of work or little schooling.
- Focusing on one factor alone, such as income, is not enough to capture the true reality of poverty.
- Multidimensional
 Poverty is a measure of
 poverty that captures
 deprivations in
 education and access to
 basic infrastructure in
 addition to income or
 consumption at the USD
 1.90 international



Around 24.9% of Indians were assessed as multidimensionally poor in 2015-16, but that share came down to 15% in 2019-21.







A multidimensionally poor person is one who is at least 33.3% deprived overall (this is based on 12 indicators, all of which has a different weightage). Headcount ratio is the share of multidimensionally poor persons in population. Intensity refers to the average extent of deprivation among such persons (hence always >33.3%). The MPI value is headcount multiplied by intensity.

Source: Niti Aayog

poverty line (as per World Bank).

The MPI has been used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its flagship Human Development Report since 2010.

WHAT IS NATIONAL MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX (NMPI)?

- NITI Aayog serves as the nodal ministry for the MPI.
- It engages with publishing agencies such as Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- > It uses the Alkire-Foster (AF) methodology.
- ➤ The Baseline Report of MPI is based on the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 4 conducted during 2015-16.

INDICATORS USED:

- > The MPI considers three dimensions: health, education, and standard of living.
- ➤ It includes indicators such as nutrition, child and adolescent mortality, maternal care, years of schooling, school attendance, cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing, bank accounts, and assets.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE REPORT:

- ➤ **Decline in Poverty:** India has witnessed a substantial decline in multidimensional poverty, with a decrease of 9.89 percentage points from 24.85% in 2015-16 to 14.96% in 2019-21.
- **Progressiveness in rural areas:** Rural areas experienced the fastest decline, from 32.59% to 19.28%, while urban areas saw a reduction from 8.65% to 5.27%.
- ➤ Regional Progress: UP recorded the largest decline in the number of poor, with 3.43 crore people escaping multidimensional poverty. The states of UP, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan showed the fastest reduction in the proportion of multidimensional poor.
- Path towards SDG Targets: The report indicates that India is on track to achieve SDG Target 1.2, which aims to reduce multidimensional poverty by at least half by 2030.

WHAT IS KEEPING INDIANS MULTIDIMENSIONALLY POOR?

- Lack of uniformity- Poverty reduction is not equally represented in the three main indicators of standard of living, health, and education.
- Marginal health performance- Three sub-indicators of health which are nutrition, child and adolescent mortality, and maternal health showed only moderate improvement.
- Nutrition deprivation- It contributes close to 30% the highest in calculation of MPI which results in nearly 1/3rd of multidimensional poverty in India.
- Lack of education-It is due to lack of years of schooling (16.65%), and less-than-desired school attendance (9.10%).
- ➤ Cooking fuel- Though it marked a significant improvement, around 44% of Indian population is still deprived of it.
- > Sanitation- Despite its improvement, sanitation services are still deprived to around 30% of the population.
- > Access to housing- In India, 41% of the population is still deprived of housing.

| GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION: | | |
|---|---|--|
| INITIATIVE | DESCRIPTION | |
| Mahatma Gandhi National | Provides wage employment and livelihood opportunities in rural | |
| Rural Employment | areas. Aims to enhance rural income and reduce poverty. | |
| Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) | | |
| Pradhan Mantri Awaas | Aims to provide affordable housing to economically weaker | |
| Yojana (PMAY) | sections and lower-income groups. | |
| National Rural Livelihoods | Aims to promote self-employment and wage employment | |
| Mission | opportunities for rural poor. | |
| Deen Dayal Antyodaya | Focuses on poverty alleviation through social mobilization, financial | |
| Yojana | inclusion, and skill development. | |
| National Urban Livelihoods | Works towards poverty reduction and employment generation in | |
| Mission | urban areas. | |
| Pradhan Mantri Kaushal | Aims to provide skill development training to enhance | |
| Vikas Yojana | employability and income. | |

| Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana | Promotes financial inclusion by providing access to banking services for the unbanked and underprivileged. |
|---|---|
| Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Campaign) | Aims to improve sanitation and living conditions, indirectly contributing to poverty alleviation. |
| National Food Security Act | Ensures food security by providing subsidized food grains to eligible households. |
| Beti Bachao Beti Padhao | Focuses on promoting the education and welfare of the girl child, contributing to poverty reduction in the long term. |

WAY FORWARD:

- 1. Targeted Social Welfare Programs: Refine and expand social welfare programs to ensure effective targeting of the most vulnerable populations.
- 2. Skill Development and Employment Generation: Invest in skill development and vocational training to enhance employability, leading to sustainable livelihoods.
- 3. Rural Development: Focus on rural infrastructure development, including road connectivity, water supply, and sanitation, to uplift rural communities.
- 4. Access to Quality Education: Ensure access to quality education for all, bridging the education gap and opening opportunities for upward mobility.
- 5. Financial Inclusion: Promote financial literacy and provide access to formal banking services to empower the poor economically.

WAGE CODE

LABOUR

CODES

INDUSTRIAL

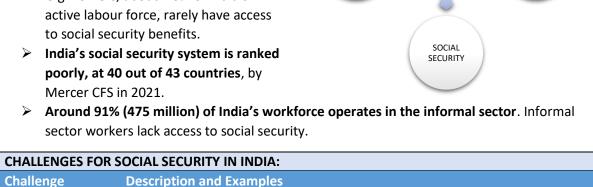
NEEDED, A WELL-CRAFTED SOCIAL SECURITY NET FOR ALL

SOURCE: TH

Coverage Gap

WHY IN NEWS & CURRENT STATE OF SOCIAL SECURITY IN INDIA:

- Around 53% of the salaried workforce lacks social security benefits in India. This means they lack access to provident funds, pension, health care, and disability insurance.
- Only 1.9% of the poorest 20% of India's workforce has access to any social security benefits.
- ➤ Gig workers, about 1.3% of India's to social security benefits.



INDUSTRIAL

WELFARE

Despite efforts, a significant portion of the population remains excluded from

social security programs. According to the Economic Survey 2020-21, only

| | shout 130/ of the worldown is covered by formal social convity ashomes |
|-----------------|---|
| | about 13% of the workforce is covered by formal social security schemes. |
| Pur sur surta d | Informal and unorganized sector workers often lack access to benefits. |
| Fragmented | Various social security programs are often fragmented, leading to |
| Systems | inefficiencies and duplication. For example, different ministries and |
| | departments implement schemes for similar target groups, resulting in |
| | overlaps and confusion. |
| Inadequate | Many eligible beneficiaries are unaware of the social security schemes |
| Awareness | available to them. This lack of awareness prevents them from accessing the |
| | benefits they are entitled to. |
| Administrative | The implementation of social security schemes faces administrative hurdles, |
| Challenges | leading to delays in disbursing benefits. Instances of incorrect identification, |
| | delays in processing, and leakage of funds have been reported. |
| Funding | Adequate funding is crucial for the sustainability of social security programs. |
| Constraints | Limited resources can lead to underfunding, affecting the quality and |
| | coverage of benefits. |
| Gender | Women often face barriers in accessing social security due to various factors, |
| Disparities | including limited mobility and decision-making power. For instance, the |
| • | female labour force participation rate in India remains relatively low, affecting |
| | their access to benefits. |
| Informal | A significant portion of India's workforce is engaged in the informal sector, |
| Workforce | making it challenging to extend social security benefits to them. This includes |
| Tronkioi Go | street vendors, domestic workers, and agricultural laborers. |
| Data Gaps | Accurate and comprehensive data is essential for effective implementation |
| Data Gaps | and monitoring of social security programs. Data collection, management, and |
| | sharing across agencies remain areas of concern. |
| Lack of | |
| | Portability of social security benefits across different regions and sectors is |
| Portability | often lacking. This can be particularly problematic for migrant workers who |
| | move across states for employment. |

- 1. **Expansion of EPFO System for Formal Workers:** Expand employer and employee contributions under the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) for formal workers.
- Partial Contributions for Informal Workers: Elicit partial contributions from informal
 workers with meaningful income. Encourage informal enterprises to formalize and
 contribute.
- 3. **Government Support for Unemployed and Low-Income:** Government intervention for unemployed, low-income, and vulnerable workers.
- 4. **Estimated Cost and Reforms:** Estimated cost for providing social protection to the poorest 20% is ₹1.37 trillion. Reforms needed for expanded coverage, benefit portability, and simplification.
- 5. **Recent Progress and Challenges:** The Code on Social Security (2020) aimed at urban and rural poor, gig workers, etc. **e-Shram platform** enabled enrolment but placed burden on informal workers. Employer involvement could have formalized relationships and registration.
- 6. **Support for Financing Social Security:** Push for **pan-India labour force card** and expand existing schemes. Loosen restrictions on benefit portability and registration.
- 7. **Focus on Domestic and Migrant Workers:** Special attention to domestic workers and their unpredictable job status. Expand coverage for migrant workers and address discrimination.

- 8. **Strengthening Existing Schemes:** Strengthen existing schemes like EPF, ESI, and NSAP with budgetary support. Address administrative complexities and overlapping areas of authority.
- 9. **Raising Awareness:** Promote awareness about social security benefits among workers. Leverage organizations like Self-Employed Women's Association for campaigns.

| SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES IN INDIA: | | |
|---|--|--|
| Social Security Initiative | Description and Purpose | |
| National Social Assistance Program (NSAP) | Provides financial assistance to elderly, widows, and disabled individuals living below the poverty line. Includes Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS), Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS), and Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS). | |
| Mahatma Gandhi National | Guarantees 100 days of wage employment per household in rural | |
| Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) | areas, contributing to livelihood security and reducing rural unemployment. | |
| Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) | Introduced during crises to provide food security and financial assistance to vulnerable sections, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic. | |
| Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) | Aims to provide access to financial services like banking and insurance to all citizens, especially the unbanked and underbanked sections. | |
| Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) | Offers affordable accidental insurance coverage to provide financial support in case of accidental death or disability. | |
| Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) | Provides low-cost life insurance, offering financial assistance to families in case of the policyholder's demise. | |
| Atal Pension Yojana (APY) | Focuses on providing pension benefits to individuals in the unorganized sector, encouraging them to save for retirement. | |
| Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) | Provides financial aid to pregnant women for maternity care and nutrition, promoting maternal and child health. | |
| Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) | Offers health insurance coverage to below-poverty-line families, reducing out-of-pocket expenses for medical treatment. | |
| National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) | Provides financial assistance to families in the event of the primary breadwinner's death or incapacitation. | |
| Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS) | Provides pensions to individuals with disabilities, ensuring financial support and inclusion. | |

SMART CITIES AWARDS: MP ADJUDGED BEST STATE, INDORE BEST CITY FOR 6TH YEAR IN ROW

SOURCE: ECONOMIC TIMES , IE , DNA INDIA , HINDUSTAN TIMES

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has designated Indore as the top city and Madhya Pradesh as the leading state in the India Smart Cities Awards 2022, part of the Smart Cities Mission.
- Securing the second and third positions among cities were Surat and Agra, respectively, while Tamil Nadu earned the second spot among states. The third position was jointly attained by Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

- ➤ A total of 66 awardees across various categories were declared. The awards ceremony, scheduled for September 27 in Indore, will feature the presentation of awards by President Draupadi Murmu.
- Earlier in the year, the deadline for the mission was extended to the following year from June 30 to enable the 100 cities to finalize their projects.

DETAILS:

- Indore has secured the top position in cleanliness rankings within the Swachh Bharat Mission, holding the title of the cleanest city for an unbroken span of six years.
- Madhya Pradesh has also achieved recognition as the cleanest state in the Swachh Survekshan 2022 evaluation.
- In the preceding Smart Cities awards, Indore had jointly secured the first rank with Surat.
- In the India Smart Cities Awards 2022, Coimbatore's project focusing on model roads and the restoration of lakes was acclaimed as the finest in the built environment category.
- Jabalpur was honoured with an award for its economic incubation center.
- Chandigarh was recognized for its public bike sharing initiative and e-governance services, winning accolades in the mobility and governance segments, respectively. Additionally, Chandigarh emerged as the overall winner in the Union Territory category.

| ABOUT SMART CITIES N | AISSION: |
|--|---|
| Aspect | Details |
| Smart Cities Mission | An initiative by the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry. Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 25, 2015. Involved cities submitting proposals to enhance municipal services and liveability. 100 cities selected over five rounds from January 2016 to June 2018. Projects initially slated for completion within five years of city selection, but the Ministry extended the deadline to June 2023 in 2021. |
| Objective | Core objective is promoting cities with essential infrastructure, clean environment, and a good quality of life through 'smart solutions'. Aims to drive economic growth and enhance quality of life by focusing on social, economic, physical, and institutional aspects of cities. |
| Funding | Operates as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. Central Government provides financial support of Rs. 48,000 crores over 5 years (approximately Rs. 100 crore per city per year). Equal contribution required from the State/ULB on a matching basis. Additional funds sourced through convergence, ULBs' resources, Finance Commission grants, innovative mechanisms like Municipal Bonds, government programs, and borrowings. |
| Fundamental Principles of Smart Cities | Although no fixed definition exists for a smart city, in India, it rests on six core principles: 1. Core Infrastructure: Fundamental services like water, sanitation, and mobility. |

- 2. Sustainable Environment: Focus on environmental sustainability.
- 3. Quality of Life: Enhancement of citizens' well-being.
- 4. Smart Solutions: Integration of technology-driven innovations for efficiency.
- 5. Economic Development: Encouraging economic activities.
- 6. Inclusive Governance: Ensuring inclusivity and participation.

CHALLENGES:

- > Funding Constraints: Limited resources hinder comprehensive project execution.
- Infrastructure Upgradation: Overhauling existing infrastructure disrupts urban life.
- > Technology Integration: Merging technology into diverse services requires careful planning.
- Citizen Participation: Engaging public input in decision-making is challenging.
- Lack of Skilled Workforce: Scarcity of experts in urban planning and tech slows progress.

- Public Awareness and Engagement: Foster awareness campaigns to educate citizens about smart city goals and involve them in decision-making.
 - Example: Singapore's "Smart Nation" initiative uses public feedback to shape urban solutions.
- ➤ Capacity Building and Training: Invest in training programs to develop a skilled workforce in urban planning, technology, and data management.
 - Example: Barcelona's "Digital City" program offers courses to empower citizens with digital skills.
- ➤ Data Governance and Privacy: Establish robust data governance policies to protect citizen data and ensure privacy.
 - Example: Amsterdam's "City Data Exchange" platform sets strict data-sharing guidelines.
- Cross-Sector Collaboration: Encourage partnerships between public and private sectors for holistic smart solutions.
 - Example: Helsinki's "Smart Kalasatama" district involves companies and citizens in co-creating urban services.
- ➤ Inclusive Design and Accessibility: Design smart solutions that cater to diverse citizens, including those with disabilities and limited resources.
 - Example: Toronto's "Quayside" project prioritizes inclusivity through accessible infrastructure.
- Sustainability Integration: Integrate sustainability goals into smart city projects to align with environmental targets.
 - <u>Example: Copenhagen's "Carbon-Neutral by 2025" plan combines technology and sustainability.</u>

| OTHER DEVELOPMENT RELATED INITIATIVES BY THE GOVERNMENT: | | |
|--|--|--|
| Initiative | Description | |
| AMRUT (Atal Mission for | Aims to provide basic urban services like water supply, | |
| Rejuvenation and Urban | sewerage, and urban transport to improve quality of life. | |
| Transformation) | Focuses on 500 cities with population over 100,000. | |
| HRIDAY (Heritage City | Aims to preserve and develop heritage cities in an inclusive | |
| Development and Augmentation | manner. Focuses on revitalizing urban areas while preserving | |
| Yojana) | their heritage. | |

| UDAY (Urban Development & | Promotes good governance and citizen participation through |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Authorities for Democracy) | capacity building of urban local bodies and communities. |
| Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean | Launched to achieve open defecation-free urban areas, |
| India Campaign) | effective solid waste management, and improved sanitation. |
| | Aligned with the Smart Cities Mission's cleanliness objectives. |
| PMAY-U (Pradhan Mantri Awas | Aims to provide affordable housing to urban poor by 2022. |
| Yojana - Urban) | Focuses on in-situ slum redevelopment and affordable |
| | housing construction. |
| National Urban Innovation Hub | Encourages innovation in urban planning, management, and |
| (NUIH) | service delivery. Supports Smart City projects through |
| | research, capacity building, and technology adoption. |
| SWM (Solid Waste | Sets guidelines for effective waste management, promoting |
| Management) Rules, 2016 | waste segregation, recycling, and proper disposal. Aligns with |
| | Smart Cities' clean environment goals. |
| Smart Roads Project | Aims to enhance road quality using technology and |
| | innovation. Involves improving road infrastructure, traffic |
| | management, and monitoring through sensors and data |
| | analytics. |
| City Surveillance Projects | Involves installing CCTV cameras for improved urban security |
| | and traffic management. Integrates data analytics for real- |
| | time monitoring and response. |
| Integrated Command and | Centralizes city operations through a unified platform, |
| Control Centers (ICCC) | integrating various services like traffic management, |
| | emergency response, and public information dissemination. |













MIGRANT WORKERS FORCED TO FLEE BACK HOME, GURUGRAM HIGH-RISES FEEL THE PINCH

SOURCE: THE HINDU

WHY IN NEWS?

In the next two days of Nuh Violence nearly 700 families, predominantly from West Bengal, grabbed whatever little they could and went back to their native places. The mass departure has hit the city's rich and middle-class households where it hurts the most – managing daily chores.

FORMS OF MIGRATION IN INDIA:

> Internal migration refers to migration from one place to another within a country, while external migration or international migration refers to migration from one country to another.

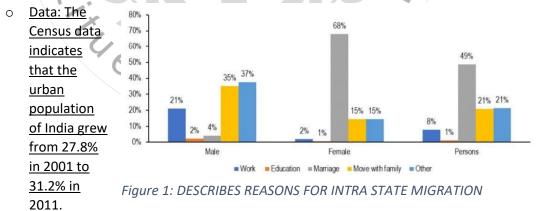
- Forced migration is when people are made to move, and they don't choose it. This can happen because of things like war, being treated badly, or natural disasters. Voluntary migration is when people decide to move on their own.
- Temporary migration means moving for a short time, like for a season or temporary job.
 Permanent migration means moving for a long time with the intention of making the new place your permanent home.
- Reverse migration refers to the migration of individuals or families who have previously migrated, back to their country of origin or their original place of residence

FACTSHEET ON MIGRANTS IN INDIA

- According to the Census of India 2011, the total number of internal migrants in India was 36 crore or 37% of the country's population.
- The Economic Survey of 2017 pegs the size of the migrant workforce at roughly 20 per cent or over 10 crore in 2016.
- The states with the highest number of migrant workers are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal.
- The most common reasons for migration are to find work, to escape poverty, and to reunite with family members.
- Between 2001 and 2011, while the population grew by 18%, the number of migrants increased by 45%.

FACTORS OF MIGRATION IN INDIA:

- **Economic Opportunities:** Economic disparity between regions drives people to migrate in search of better job prospects and livelihoods.
 - <u>Data: According to the 2011 Census of India, Maharashtra had the highest number</u>
 of migrants from other states, followed by Delhi and Gujarat.
- ➤ **Urbanization:** Rapid urbanization leads to increased migration from rural to urban areas in search of better living standards and access to services



Education and Skill Enhancement: Individuals often migrate for education and skill development opportunities. Students move to cities with reputed educational institutions,

> Social and Cultural Factors: Marriage, family reunification, and social ties influence migration decisions. People often move to be closer to their families or join their spouse.

leading to temporary or permanent migration.

Data: According to Census 2011, migration due to marriage accounted for around
 5.4% of the total migration in India.

- Conflict and Political Instability: Internal conflicts, political instability, and issues related to security can also force people to migrate to safer regions within the country.
 - Example: The ethnic conflict in the north-eastern states has led to migration of people to other parts of India.

CHALLENGES FACED BY MIGRANT POPULATION IN INDIA:

- Lack of Social Services and Infrastructure: Many migrants live in slums or informal settlements with limited access to clean water, sanitation, and healthcare services.
- Unregulated Working Conditions: Migrant laborers, especially in sectors like construction and agriculture, often work in hazardous environments without proper safety measures or legal protection
 - Data: The Economic Survey 2017-18 estimated that about 90% of India's workforce is in the informal sector.
- Lack of Legal Identity and Social Exclusion: Migrants without proper identification often face difficulties in accessing services like healthcare, education, and social welfare programs.
- **Education Disruptions for Children:** As per the "Educational Statistics at a Glance 2019" report, migrant children often drop out of school due to their families' frequent movements.
- Lack of Social Security Nets: The "Social Security in India" report highlights that a significant portion of the informal labour force, including migrants, lacks access to social security

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION:

Code on Social Security: The code entails specific advantages for migrant workers moving between states, including provisions for insurance and provident fund coverage. The "One Nation-One Ration Card" initiative has granted households benefiting from the Public Distribution System (PDS) the ability to choose the Fair Price Shop (FPS) from which they receive their rations, thereby offering increased flexibility.

Remote Voting Proposal: The Election Commission aims to test a Multi-Constituency Remote Electronic Voting Machine (RVM) to enable domestic migrants to participate in the electoral process from their distant locations, allowing them to vote for their home constituencies

| GOVERNMENT SCHEMES: | | |
|---|--|--|
| Scheme Name | Description | |
| One Nation, One Ration Card | Allows portability of food security benefits across states, ensuring access to subsidized food grains for migrant workers. | |
| Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana | Provides unemployment benefits to eligible insured persons, including migrant workers, under the Employees' State Insurance Act. | |
| National Career Service (NCS) | Offers a platform for job seekers, including migrants, to register, search for jobs, and access career-related services. | |
| Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PMSYM) | A pension scheme for unorganized sector workers, including migrants, providing them with a monthly pension after the age of 60. | |
| Swayam Sahayata Bhatta (Swavalamban) | Provides financial assistance to voluntarily return migrant workers to their home states and start self-employment ventures. | |
| Mukhyamantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana (Delhi) | Ensures doorstep delivery of ration to beneficiaries, including migrant workers, in Delhi. | |

| Chief Minister's Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (Rajasthan) | Promotes employment generation by providing incentives to employers for hiring unskilled and semi-skilled migrant workers. |
|--|---|
| Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979 | Regulates the employment conditions of inter-state migrant workers to safeguard their rights. |
| Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) | Offers skill training to rural youth, including migrant workers, to enhance their employability. |
| Atal Pension Yojana (APY) | Aims to provide pension benefits to workers in the unorganized sector, including migrants, after retirement. |
| Swadesh Darshan Scheme | Promotes the development of tourism infrastructure, potentially creating job opportunities for migrant workers in tourist destinations. |

WAY FORWARD

Healthcare Access: In search of work Ensure affordable Despite a large number of 31.7 37.2 and accessible Chandigarh people moving places for 39 work inside the country, healthcare facilities 32.7 Tawang there are only a few New Delhi for migrants. districts where the ratio **Education:** Establish of such migration is more than 20%. Here are the **52.1** Daman mobile schools and top ten districts. support education 36.1 Those migrating for 32.4 Dadra & initiatives for Kohima work/business as % Nagar Haveli of total migrants 31.3 migrant children. 33.2 Mokokchung Below 5% Mumbai Legal Protection: 5-10% 31.1 **Enforce labour laws** 10-20% Mumbai Above 20% Suburban and create

- ➤ Housing Solutions: Provide affordable housing options near workplaces for migrants.
- **Financial Inclusion:** Offer banking and financial services tailored to migrants' needs.

mechanisms to safeguard migrants' rights.

Information Dissemination: Set up information centers to guide migrants about their rights and available services.

INTERNAL SECURITY

MONEY LAUNDERING

SOURCE: TH, TH, TH

ABOUT MONEY LAUNDERING:

- Money laundering pertains to the transformation of unlawful gains or earnings of an organization, entity, or individuals into lawful ones.
- Criminals utilize money laundering as a strategy to obscure the illicit origins of their income.
- Through intricate transfers, transactions, or a sequence of commercial activities, the money
 is laundered, effectively removing its illicit source and presenting it as lawful business
 earnings.

PREVENTION OF MONEY LAUNDERING ACT, 2002 (PMLA):

OBJECTIVES-

- Counteract money-laundering.
- Thwart the funneling of funds into unlawful endeavors and financial offenses.
- Enact provisions for the seizure of assets originating from, or implicated/employed in, money-laundering activities.
- Address issues associated with and related to the actions of money laundering.

<u>OFFENCES-</u> According to the PMLA, engaging in any wrongdoing outlined in Part A and Part C of the PMLA Schedule will trigger the application of PMLA provisions. Several legislations and offenses that might fall under the purview of PMLA include:

- Part A enumerates breaches under various laws including: the Indian Penal Code, Narcotics
 Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, Prevention of Corruption Act, Antiquities and Art
 Treasures Act, Copyright Act, Trademark Act, Wildlife Protection Act, and Information
 Technology Act.
- Part B designates offenses that align with Part A offenses, but the monetary value linked to such wrongdoings is Rs 1 crore or more.
- Part C addresses cross-border criminal activities, highlighting the commitment to combat money laundering on an international scale.

AUTHORITIES ENTRUSTED FOR INVESTIGATION-

Enforcement Directorate: -

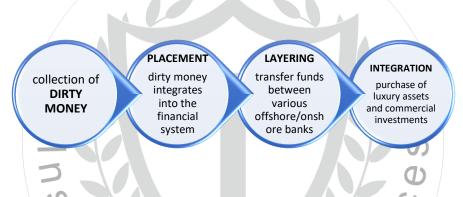
- The Enforcement Directorate conducts investigations into money laundering offenses as stipulated by the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA).
- It undertakes measures for the attachment and confiscation of assets if these are determined to be the gains from a criminal activity originating from a Scheduled Offense under the PMLA.

On ED's power under PMLA An upshot of the judgment by the Supreme Court on the validity of certain provisions under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act The offence of money It is not mandatory to give an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) in laundering is as heinous an offence as terrorism every case as it was not an FIR Section 3 (definition of money laundering), Section 24 (reverse The statements made to ED are considered admissible burden of proof), and Section 5 (attach- Provision of attachment of property of accused as ment of property) proceeds of crime 'balances' the interests of the Stringency accused and the State in granting The guestion of bail under the Act enactment of PML nendments through the Money Bill route is legal is to be decided by a larger Bench arbitrary

• Furthermore, it pursues legal actions against individuals implicated in the act of money laundering.

Financial Intelligence Unit - India (FIU-IND): -

- India (FIU-IND), operating within the Department of Revenue under the Ministry of Finance, functions independently and reports directly to the Economic Intelligence Council (EIC), which is overseen by the finance minister. FIU-IND serves as the central national entity tasked with receiving, processing, analyzing, and disseminating information concerning suspicious financial transactions. It holds responsibilities including:
- Coordinating and enhancing collaborations between national and international intelligence agencies.
- Engaging in investigations to contribute to the global endeavors against money laundering and associated criminal activities.
- Offenses listed in the schedule are investigated separately by relevant agencies mentioned in respective legislation, such as the local police, CBI, customs departments, SEBI, or other investigative bodies.



| CONSEQUENCES OF MONEY LAUNDERING: | |
|---|---|
| Impacts of Money Laundering in Indian Context | Examples |
| Socio-cultural Effects | Money laundering fuels radicalisation, terrorism activities |
| Encouragement of Criminal Activities | The success of money laundering schemes may embolden criminals to engage in more fraud, drug trafficking, and related crimes. |
| Erosion of Trust in Institutions | Money laundering undermines public trust in financial institutions and the rule of law, impacting societal integrity. |
| Economic Effects | It leads to huge economic losses to state in form of tax evaion |
| Distortion of Economic Activity | Inflated investment in sectors like real estate due to money laundering can lead to artificial demand, affecting market dynamics. |
| Impact on Tax Revenue | Money laundering reduces taxable income, thereby depriving the government of legitimate tax revenue. |
| Security and Terrorism | It fuels various types of terrorism like digital terrorism, biological, etc |

| Financing Terrorism | Illicit funds can be funneled through money laundering for financing terrorism, posing a threat to national security. |
|------------------------------|---|
| Organized Crime Infiltration | Money laundering provides organized crime groups with financial power to infiltrate businesses and institutions. |
| Weakening Institutions | It leads to lack of faith of common people in government institutions |
| Corruption and Bribery | Money laundering can lead to corruption and bribery of officials, eroding the functioning of public institutions. |
| Diminished Governance | Money laundering undermines effective governance and weakens the rule of law, hampering societal progress. |

CHALLENGES IN TACKLING MONEY LAUNDERING:

- **Predicate Offence-Centric Law:** This law hinges on outcomes pursued by primary agencies like the CBI, Income Tax, or police, where the Act's cases depend on their investigations. (Predicate offence: a component of a more serious crime)
- **Technological Advancement Gap**: Enforcement agencies struggle to match the pace of rapidly evolving technologies.
- Incomplete KYC Norms: KYC norms fail to address Hawala transactions due to RBI's limited regulatory control, and market competition leads banks to relax security, aiding money launderers.
- Rampant Smuggling Activities: Black-market channels in India facilitate the sale of imported goods like electronics and food items.
- **Fragmented Enforcement Agencies:** Divisions dealing with money laundering, cybercrimes, terrorism, and economic offences lack coordination.
- **Tax Haven Nations:** Countries known for financial secrecy laws enabling anonymous accounts have a historical link to money laundering.

| WAY FORWAR | WAY FORWARD: | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Aspect | Proposed Solutions | |
| Legal Framework | Develop a comprehensive and independent legal framework specifically focused on money laundering with clear definitions and provisions. | |
| Technology | Establish specialized cybercrime units within enforcement agencies, invest in technology training, and adopt advanced tools for monitoring and investigating digital financial transactions. | |
| KYC Norms | Strengthen KYC norms by introducing robust customer identification methods, enhancing oversight of banks' compliance, and establishing stringent penalties for non-compliance. | |
| Smuggling and Informal Trade | Enhance border security, strengthen customs enforcement, and promote awareness campaigns to curb illicit trade activities. | |

| Enforcement Agencies | Foster collaboration among enforcement agencies through dedicated task forces, joint training programs, and information-sharing mechanisms. |
|------------------------------------|---|
| International Cooperation | Strengthen international partnerships by signing mutual legal assistance treaties (MLATs), participating in global anti-money laundering initiatives, and sharing intelligence with other countries. |
| Financial Intelligence Units | Strengthen the capabilities of Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) to efficiently collect, process, and share information related to suspicious financial activities. |
| Regulation of Tax Havens | Collaborate with international organizations and other countries to pressure tax havens into implementing more transparent financial regulations and information sharing. |
| Awareness and Education | Launch public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about the consequences of money laundering, how to recognize suspicious activities, and the importance of reporting such activities to authorities. |

INDIA'S ROHINGYA REFUGEE CHILDREN ARE NOT CRIMINALS

SOURCE: THE HINDU

WHY IN NEWS?

A five-month-old infant born to a Rohingya refugee died in a detention or holding centre in Jammu in July. A viral video shows the police tear gassing a small congested area in the holding centre. Refugee women and children are also seen in the same space. As the explosion occurs, one can hear the shrieks of women and see children running in panic.

HOW INDIA DEALS WITH REFUGEE CRISIS:

- Non-refoulement Principle in Practice: Although India hasn't ratified the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, it has consistently adhered to the non-refoulement principle whenever vulnerable asylum seekers have sought refuge within its borders.
- Ad hoc refugee policy: India's refugee policy can be termed as ad hoc refugee policy that allows New Delhi to differentiate between different groups in its treatment toward refugees and put other interests over humanitarian concerns.
- Inclusive Border Approach: India has a track record of embracing refugees, using this as a way to demonstrate its comparative stability
 - and safety as a dominant economic force in South Asia. Historically, the nation has upheld relatively open borders.
- ➤ There are some laws that govern refugees, including the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939; Foreigners Act, 1946, and the Passport Act, 1967.

1951 UN CONVENTION ON REFUGEES

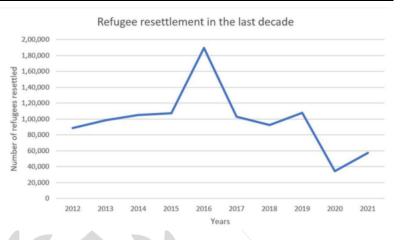
The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention) is a multilateral treaty that defines who a refugee is and sets out the rights of individuals who are granted asylum and the responsibilities of nations that grant asylum. The Convention was adopted on 28 July 1951 by the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons in Geneva, Switzerland. It entered into force on 22 April 1954.

While these rights are available to citizens, the Supreme Court ruled in National Human Rights Commission v. State of Arunachal Pradesh (1996) that "persons, including foreign nationals, are entitled to the right to equality and the right to life, among others."

ISSUES FACED BY REFUGEES IN INDIA:

Legal Uncertainty: Refugees often lack legal recognition,

legal recognition, leading to difficulties in accessing rights and services. Example: Rohingya refugees from Myanmar residing in India face legal hurdles that hinder their access to basic services like education and

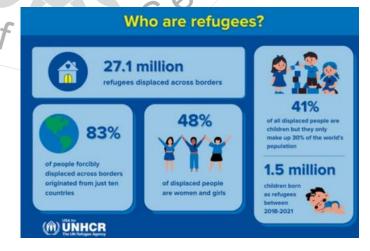


- ➤ Livelihood Constraints: Limited work opportunities due to legal restrictions and language barriers make it challenging for refugees to sustain themselves. Example: Afghan refugees in India.
- ➤ Housing and Shelter: Many refugees live in overcrowded and inadequate conditions. Example: Tibetan refugees in certain settlements face challenges related to substandard housing and infrastructure.
- ➤ **Healthcare Access:** Limited access to affordable healthcare services can result in health vulnerabilities.
- ➤ **Detention and Deportation:** Refugees sometimes face detention and deportation. The case of some Sri Lankan Tamil refugees facing deportation highlights this issue.
- ➤ Human Trafficking and Exploitation: Vulnerable conditions can expose refugees, particularly women and children, to risks such as human trafficking and exploitation.

WHAT INDIA SHOULD DO:

healthcare.

- Resettlement: Efforts should be made to resettle Rohingya refugees with cooperation from Myanmar, their home country. India provided 7,000 tonnes of aid to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, and later initiated a \$25-million project to help Myanmar build the necessary infrastructure for Rohingya rehabilitation in Rakhine State.
- Balancing Human Rights: The Supreme Court has emphasized



finding a balance between human rights and national security interests while not halting deportation plans. India should uphold human rights, offering healthcare, food, and temporary shelter to Rohingya without violating their rights.

➤ **Identity Cards:** Given the cultural ties between Myanmar and India, introducing identity cards for refugees could provide temporary relief and enhance security, as a proactive measure to address the situation.

- The next step involves a group of experts working on rewriting guidelines for how people seeking asylum and refuge should be treated.
- > A domestic refugee law should allow for temporary shelter and work permit for refugees.
- Make a distinction between temporary migrant workers, illegal immigrants and refugees and deal with each of them differently through proper legal and institutional mechanisms.
- ➤ Enhance access to education, healthcare, and basic services.
- > Align with international refugee protection standards.
- > Strengthen cooperation with UNHCR and international partners.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

THE HYBRID EV IMPERATIVE

SOURCE: TH

WHY IN NEWS: HOW HYBRID EVS OFFER A WAY TO BEGIN THE TRANSITION FOR ECONOMICALLY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

An electric vehicle (EV) is an automobile powered by one or more electric motors using electricity stored in rechargeable batteries. Unlike traditional internal combustion engine vehicles, electric vehicles do not require gasoline or diesel fuel and produce zero tailpipe emissions, making them an environmentally friendly transportation option.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC:

FOUR MAIN TYPES OF EVs:

Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) are powered solely by an electric battery, with no gas engine parts.

Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs) have both an electric motor and a gasoline engine. The electric motor can power the vehicle on its own for a limited distance, and the gasoline engine kicks in when the battery is depleted.

Hybrid Electric Vehicles (HEVs) also have both an electric motor and a gasoline engine, but the electric motor is used only to assist the gasoline engine. HEVs do not have a plug-in port, and the battery is not designed to be recharged from an external source.

Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles (FCEVs) use hydrogen fuel cells to generate electricity, which powers the vehicle's electric motor. FCEVs are still in the early stages of development, but they have the potential to offer longer ranges and faster refuelling times than BEVs.

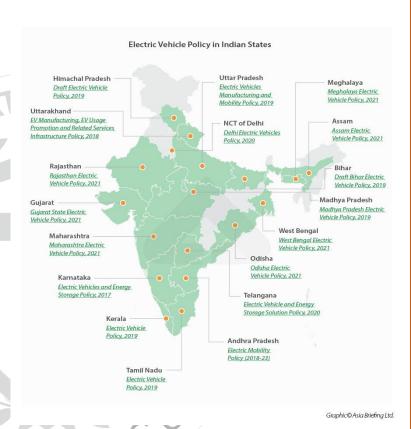
ADVANTAGES OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES:

- **Zero Emissions**: Electric vehicles produce no tailpipe emissions, reducing air pollution and contributing to improved air quality.
 - EG: According to the International Energy Agency (IEA) Global EV Outlook 2021, the global electric car stock surpassed 10 million units in 2020, preventing the release of approximately 40 million tonnes of CO2 emissions annually.
- Cost Savings: Electric vehicles generally have lower maintenance and operational costs compared to traditional vehicles, as they have fewer moving parts and do not require regular oil changes.
 - EG: A study by Consumer Reports in 2021 found that EVs cost significantly less to maintain over time than gasoline-powered cars, saving owners an average of 50% on maintenance expenses.
- Renewable Energy Integration: EVs can be charged using electricity from renewable sources, such as solar or wind power, further reducing their carbon footprint.
 EG: In 2021, the U.S. state of Texas set a record for wind power generation, highlighting the potential to charge EVs with clean energy in regions with a strong renewable energy infrastructure.

- Reduced Dependence on Fossil Fuels: Widespread adoption of EVs can decrease reliance on imported oil and enhance energy security.
 - EG: <u>China</u>, the world's largest electric vehicle market, has implemented policies to promote EV adoption and reduce its dependence on foreign oil imports.
- ➤ Energy Efficiency: EVs are more energy-efficient compared to internal combustion engine vehicles, resulting in lower energy consumption and reduced operating costs.

CHALLENGES IN TRANSITIONING TO ELECTRIC MOBILITY:

- Limited Charging Infrastructure: Achieving a successful shift to full electric vehicles necessitates the presence of rapid-charging networks along highways. EG: 50 – 350 kW for cars and upto 1000 kW for heavy duty vehicles.
- Grid Capacity and Demand Management: Limited access to a reliable grid, especially in economically developing nations, combined with significant power requirements for slow and fast charging, poses challenges to the transition to electric vehicles.
- High Initial Cost of EVs: Electric vehicles can have higher upfront costs compared to traditional vehicles, discouraging some consumers from making the switch.



- Policy and Regulatory Hurdles: Inconsistent policies or lack of incentives and subsidies may discourage manufacturers and consumers from embracing electric mobility.
- Limited Driving Range: Some EV models have limited driving ranges, making them less suitable for long-distance travel without frequent charging.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE ELECTRIC VEHICLE IN INDIA:

- 1. Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India (FAME India): This scheme provides subsidies for the purchase of EVs, as well as for the development of charging infrastructure.
- Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Automobile and Auto Component Industry: This scheme provides incentives for the manufacturing of EVs and their components in India.
- 3. **Go Electric Campaign**: This campaign aims to raise awareness about EVs and to encourage people to switch to EVs.

4. **National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP):** This plan outlines the government's vision for the development of EVs in India.

WAY FORWARD:

- ➤ Incentives and Subsidies: Provide financial incentives, tax breaks, and subsidies to promote the purchase of HEVs.
- Charging Infrastructure: Develop a robust charging infrastructure network, including fast chargers, to alleviate range anxiety.
- Research and Development: Invest in R&D for HEV technology to improve efficiency, battery life, and reduce costs.
- **Domestic Manufacturing:** Encourage domestic manufacturing of HEV components to reduce reliance on imports.
- Public Transportation: Promote HEVs in public transportation to reduce emissions and increase adoption.

SUPERCONDUCTING HYPE: ON SOUTH KOREA'S LK-99

SOURCE: TH

WHY IN NEWS: A team of scientists from South Korea has recently announced that they have found a substance called LK-99. As per their findings, LK-99 demonstrates superconducting properties under normal room temperature and pressure conditions.

WHAT ARE SUPERCONDUCTORS? Superconductors are materials that exhibit zero electrical resistance and expel magnetic fields when cooled below a critical temperature. This phenomenon allows for the efficient transmission of electric current without any energy loss.

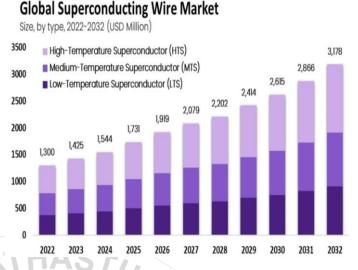
EG: Mercury-based superconductors, like HgBa2Ca2Cu3O8, function at extremely low temperatures, near -140°C (-220°F).

APPLICATIONS OF SUPERCONDUCTORS:

- ➤ **Electric Power Transmission:** Superconductors can carry electric current with minimal loss, enabling
- more efficient long-distance power transmission.
- Magnetic Levitation (Maglev) Trains: Superconducting magnets create strong magnetic fields, allowing trains to levitate above tracks and achieve high speeds with reduced friction.
- ➤ **Medical Imaging**: Superconducting magnets are used in MRI machines to produce high-resolution images of the human body.
- Particle Accelerators: Superconducting magnets are crucial components in particle accelerators like the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) to steer and control particle beams.
- **Power Storage**: Superconducting materials can store energy in their magnetic fields, offering potential for high-capacity, rapid-response energy storage.
- ➤ Wireless Power Transfer: Superconducting coils can efficiently transfer power wirelessly, enabling applications like wireless charging.
- > Sensors: Superconducting sensors are used in various fields including astronomy, geophysics, and materials testing due to their high sensitivity.

ABOUT LK 99:

- The two new papers uploaded on the internet, by researchers from South Korea, state the creation of a material known as LK-99.
- As per them, this material can conduct superconductivity at room temperatures.
- According to South Korean researchers, LK-99, the new superconductor, can be synthesised through a baking process that involves combining the



- > The resulting material exhibits two essential characteristics of superconductivity even at normal air pressure and temperatures as high as **127 degrees Celsius**.
- The researchers have put forward a plausible theory explaining how LK-99 could achieve room-temperature superconductivity.
- > They have not yet provided definitive experimental evidence to support their claims.

CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH SUPERCONDUCTIVITY

minerals lanarkite (Pb2SOâ,...) and copper phosphide.

- 1. **Expensive Production**: The manufacturing of superconducting materials is costly, involving specialized processes that contribute to their high expenses.
- 2. **Low Threshold Temperatures**: Superconducting materials typically demand extremely cold temperatures to showcase their characteristics. This requirement poses challenges in achieving and maintaining such low temperatures.
- 3. **Vulnerability to Magnetic Fields**: Superconducting materials are responsive to magnetic fields, which can interfere with their attributes.
- 4. **Susceptibility to Mechanical Damage**: Certain superconducting materials are susceptible to mechanical fragility, making their manipulation intricate and limiting their utilization in scenarios necessitating mechanical resilience.

- Research and Development: Invest in R&D to develop and discover new high-temperature superconducting materials.
- ➤ **Collaboration:** Foster collaboration between academic institutions, research organizations, and industry to accelerate innovation.
- Funding Support: Allocate government funding and grants for superconductivity research projects and start-ups.
- Infrastructure Development: Establish specialized labs and facilities for superconductor research and testing.
- Skilled Workforce: Train and educate a skilled workforce in superconductivity-related fields.

NATIONAL SUPERCONDUCTIVITY MISSION

- In 2017, the Indian government introduced the National Superconductivity Mission (NSM)
 with the intention of fostering research and advancement in the realm of
 superconductivity.
- This initiative endeavours to cultivate domestic technology for superconductors and their applications across diverse sectors such as healthcare, energy, and transportation.
- The execution of the NSM is a joint effort involving the Department of Science and Technology (DST), the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).
- This mission is allotted a financial allocation of INR 750 crores, equivalent to roughly USD 105 million, spanning a five-year period.

STARLINK: THE NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW DOMINANT FORCE IN LOW-EARTH ORBIT

Source: th

WHY IN NEWS: In a recent development, SpaceX, the foremost private space technology company globally, has introduced the Starlink Network into the Lower Earth Orbit (LEO). This initiative is geared towards offering affordable and dependable internet services via space to people around the world.

ABOUT STARLINK PROJECT:

- Satellite Constellation: Starlink involves deploying a massive constellation of small satellites in low-earth orbit to create a global broadband network.
- Internet Coverage: The goal of Starlink is to provide high-speed, low-latency internet coverage to even remote and rural areas around the world, helping bridge the digital divide.
- Global Reach: The constellation aims to ensure global coverage, making internet access available in regions where traditional infrastructure is difficult to establish.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC

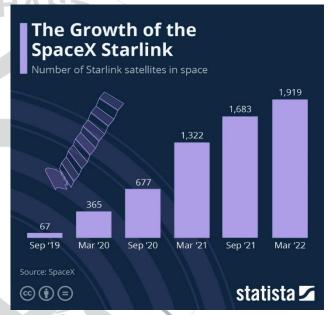
WHAT IS SATELLITE BROADBAND

- The technology transmits internet signals from a satellite positioned in Earth's orbit.
- This communication mainly occurs with satellites either stationed in geostationary orbit or orbiting closer to the Earth's surface, known as Lower Earth Orbit (LEO).
- The objective is to offer affordable internet services to remote areas that are otherwise difficult to access.
- Geostationary orbit and Lower Earth Orbit are viewed as the opposite ends of satellite communication options.

- ➤ Low Earth Orbit (LEO): Satellites are positioned in low-earth orbit, typically around 550 km to 1,200 km above the Earth's surface, which helps reduce signal latency and allows for faster data transmission.
- **Low Latency**: The LEO placement contributes to low latency, which is essential for real-time applications like online gaming, video conferencing, and remote work.
- > Satellite Design: Starlink satellites are relatively small and lightweight, equipped with multiple high-throughput antennas and advanced propulsion systems for precise orbital adjustments.
- ➤ **Commercial Potential**: Starlink aims to generate revenue by offering internet services to consumers, businesses, and potentially even aircraft and ships in remote locations.

ADVERSE IMPACTS OF STARLINK PROJECTS:

- Light Pollution: The large number of satellites in the Starlink constellation can contribute to increased light pollution in the night sky, affecting astronomical observations and the beauty of celestial views.
- Space Debris: The deployment of thousands of satellites raises concerns about adding to the growing problem of space debris, increasing the risk of collisions and potential damage to other satellites.
- Radio Frequency Interference: The high number of satellites transmitting signals in the same frequency bands could lead to interference with other satellite systems and radio astronomy observations.
- Limited Rural Access: While Starlink aims to provide internet to remote areas, the cost of user terminals and subscriptions might still be prohibitive for some underserved communities.



- 5. **Environmental Concerns:** The process of manufacturing, launching, and operating satellites has environmental implications, including carbon emissions and resource usage.
- 6. **Reliance on Space-Based Infrastructure:** The project's success relies on an intricate network of satellites, which could lead to interruptions in service if a significant number of satellites malfunction or fail.

- Monitoring and Tracking: Continue monitoring and tracking space debris to predict potential collisions.
- ➤ International Collaboration: Foster international cooperation for space debris mitigation efforts.
- Active Debris Removal: Develop and implement technologies for actively removing large and dangerous debris from orbit.
- > Space Traffic Management: Establish comprehensive space traffic management systems to prevent collisions.

- ➤ **Debris Minimization:** Encourage satellite operators to design spacecraft with end-of-life disposal plans.
- **Educational Initiatives:** Raise awareness about space debris and its consequences among space agencies, industries, and the public.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC:

KESSLER SYNDROME: This is an idea proposed by NASA scientist Donald Kessler in 1978. He said that if there was too much space junk in orbit, it could result in a chain reaction where more and more objects collide and create new space junk in the process, to the point where Earth's orbit became unusable.

IS ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE BEING MADE WORSE BY AIR POLLUTION?

SOURCE: THE WASHINGTON POST, NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE, UNEP

WHY IN NEWS?

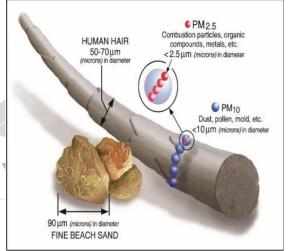
A new global analysis suggests a correlation between environmental pollution and rising antibiotic resistance, which is the 'next global threat' according to experts.

CORRELATION BETWEEN AIR POLLUTION AND AMR

- PM2.5, tiny particles causing health issues globally, could lead to the emergence of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). - Each 1% rise in PM2.5 leads to 0.5-1.9% AMR increase.
- A 10% rise in air pollution linked to a 1.1% increase in AMR across countries.

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE:

- Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) arises when microorganisms develop strategies to defend against the impacts of antimicrobial agents (medications employed for treating infections).
- Fungi, bacteria, viruses, and protozoa can develop resistance to antibiotics, and if they exhibit resistance to multiple antimicrobials, they are categorized as multidrug resistant.
- AMR is accountable for a higher mortality rate than the combined toll of malaria and HIV/AIDS.
- Linked to 1.27 million direct fatalities and approximately 4.95 million related fatalities worldwide.



CAUSES OF AMR:

- Overuse and Misuse of Antibiotics: A study published in the journal BMC Public Health found that nearly 73% of antibiotic sales in India occur without a prescription.
- 2. Inadequate Infection Control: Lack of proper sanitation and hygiene practices in healthcare facilities. The Indian Journal of Medical Microbiology reported that hospital-acquired infections are a significant concern due to poor infection control practices.

WHAT'S AMR?

Resistance of a micro-organism to an antibiotic that was originally effective in treating infections caused by it

Why India needs to curb antibiotic overuse

- ➤ India's bacterial disease burden is highest in the world
- ➤ Large population suffers from diseases like diabetes, heart ailments and cancer, making them prone to infections
- ➤ 40% children are malnourished and at risk of infections
- ➤ More and more drug-resistant bacteria are being identified



- 3. **Lack of Awareness and Education:** Limited public knowledge about the appropriate use of antibiotics. According to a study in the Indian Journal of Community Medicine, only around 38% of respondents knew that antibiotics are ineffective against viral infections.
- 4. **High Burden of Infectious Diseases:** Widespread infections like tuberculosis and diarrheal diseases leading to high antibiotic use. <u>India has the highest global burden of tuberculosis, according to the WHO, necessitating extensive antibiotic use.</u>
- 5. **Inadequate Regulatory Oversight:** Lack of stringent regulations on antibiotic sales and prescriptions.
- 6. **Agricultural Antibiotic Use:** A study published in Environmental Health Perspectives indicated that India consumes a significant amount of antibiotics for food animal production.

IMPACTS OF ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE:

- Increased Mortality: AMR is responsible for more than 700,000 deaths globally each year. By 2050, this number could surge to 10 million deaths annually if AMR is not adequately addressed.
- Limited Treatment Options: As resistance grows, existing antibiotics become ineffective, limiting the options available for treating infections.
 - a. Example: Antibioticresistant gonorrhoea strains have emerged, making it challenging to
- Animals get antibiotics and develop resistant bacteria in their guts.

 Person gets antibiotics and develops resistant bacteria in heir guts.

 Person stays at home and in the general community and spreads resistant bacteria is used on food crops

 Person stays at home and in the general community and spreads resistant bacteria is used on food crops

 Resistant bacteria are remain on crops and be caten. These bacteria can remain in the human gut

 Resistant bacteria spreads further in the community
- treat this common sexually transmitted infection.
- 3. **Economic Burden:** AMR places a substantial financial burden on healthcare systems and economies. The global economic impact of AMR is estimated to be around \$100 trillion by 2050 if not addressed effectively.
- 4. Agricultural Impact: AMR affects livestock health, impacting food production and safety.
- 5. **Global Health Security Threat:** AMR jeopardizes the control of infectious diseases, undermining healthcare systems and increasing the risk of outbreaks.

- a. Example: Multi-drug resistant strains of tuberculosis are a global health security concern, hindering efforts to eradicate the disease.
- 6. **Increased Healthcare Costs:** The need for specialized treatments and longer hospital stays drives up healthcare expenses. <u>Treating antibiotic-resistant infections can be up to 60% more expensive than treating non-resistant infections.</u>

| EFFORTS DONE BY INDIA TO TACKLE AMR: | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Efforts to Tackle AMR | Description | Impact/Outcome |
| in India | | |
| National Action Plan | Launched in 2017, the plan outlines strategies | Increased awareness |
| on Antimicrobial | for AMR containment in healthcare, animal | and coordinated |
| Resistance (2017-21) | husbandry, and agriculture sectors. It | actions across sectors |
| | emphasizes prudent use of antibiotics, infection | to tackle AMR. |
| | prevention, and surveillance. | |
| Promotion of | Guidelines issued for rational use of antibiotics | Improved antibiotic |
| Responsible | in healthcare, agriculture, and veterinary | stewardship and |
| Antibiotic Use | sectors. Regulatory mechanisms set up to | reduced inappropriate |
| | restrict over-the-counter sales of antibiotics. | antibiotic usage. |
| Strengthening | Establishment of the Indian Council of Medical | Enhanced monitoring |
| Surveillance | Research (ICMR) Antimicrobial Resistance | of drug resistance |
| | Surveillance Network (AMRSN) to monitor | patterns for informed |
| Night and the date | trends of drug resistance in hospitals. | decision-making. |
| National Health | The policy provides specific guidelines to curb | Improved regulation of |
| Policy 2017 | over-the-counter antibiotic sales and | antibiotic use and reduced misuse. |
| Infection Prevention | encourages stringent prescription practices. | Reduced infection |
| and Control | Implementation of infection control practices in healthcare settings to prevent hospital-acquired | rates and dependence |
| and Control | infections and reduce the need for antibiotics. | on antibiotics for |
| | infections and reduce the fleed for antibiotics. | treatment. |
| Education and | Campaigns to raise awareness among | Increased knowledge |
| Awareness | healthcare professionals, veterinarians, farmers, | about AMR and |
| | and the public about AMR, its consequences, | improved public health |
| | and prevention measures. | practices. |
| Research and | Government initiatives to support research on | Development of new |
| Development | new antibiotics, diagnostics, and alternative | treatment options and |
| | therapies. Encouragement of innovation | technologies to |
| | through collaborations with academia and | combat drug-resistant |
| | industry. | infections. |
| Regulation of | Implementation of the National Action Plan for | Control over |
| Veterinary | Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance in | inappropriate |
| Antibiotics | Veterinary Sector to regulate the use of | antibiotic use in |
| | antibiotics in animal husbandry. | animals and reduction |
| | | of AMR transmission |
| | | to humans. |

| INTERNATIONAL EFI | ORTS: | | |
|---|-------|---|--|
| Initiative | Year | Organization | Key actions |
| Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (GAP- AMR) | 2015 | World Health Organization (WHO) | Five strategic objectives: (1) improve awareness and understanding of antimicrobial resistance; (2) strengthen knowledge through surveillance and research; (3) reduce the incidence of infection; (4) optimize the use of antimicrobial agents; and (5) ensure sustainable investment in countering antimicrobial resistance. |
| One Health | 2004 | World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) | A collaborative approach to addressing health, animal health, and environmental issues. |
| AMR Industry Alliance | 2017 | AMR Industry Alliance | A coalition of pharmaceutical companies, diagnostic companies, and other stakeholders working to accelerate the development of new antimicrobials. |
| Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) | 2017 | CEPI | A global non-profit organization that funds research and development of vaccines and other medical products to prevent, prepare for, and respond to epidemics. |
| Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership (GARDP) | 2016 | GARDP Of Ci | A public-private partnership that develops and makes available new antibiotics for drug-resistant infections. |

INDIA SETS UP IT'S FIRST 3D-PRINTED POST OFFICE

SOURCE: <u>IE</u>, <u>TH</u>

WHY IN NEWS?

- India's first 3D-printed post office was virtually inaugurated by Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw in Bengaluru's Cambridge Layout on Friday. It's construction was completed in just 43days— two days ahead of the deadline.
- ➤ Invented more than four decades ago, 3D printing burst into the mainstream around



the 2010s, when many thought it would become part of everyday life. The technology, however, was expensive, slow and prone to making errors. In recent years, many of these flaws have been corrected, making 3D printing more prevalent than ever before.

WHAT IS 3D PRINTING?

The method of 3D printing, commonly referred to as additive manufacturing, involves building three-dimensional objects layer by layer using computer-generated designs. It is an additive process in which layers of a material, such as plastic, composites, or biomaterials, are built up to create objects of different shapes, sizes, rigidities, and colours.

HOW IS 3D PRINTING DONE?

- 1. In order to engage in 3D printing, an individual requires a computer linked to a 3D printer. The process involves designing a 3D model of the desired object using computer-aided design (CAD) software and initiating the 'print' command. The remainder of the task is then managed by the 3D printer.
- 2. The construction of the desired item using 3D printers involves a layering technique, which contrasts with subtractive manufacturing methods.
- 3. A classic instance of subtractive manufacturing can be found in the renowned work of the Italian sculptor Michelangelo, who famously sculpted his masterpiece David by meticulously carving it from a single block of marble.
- 4. In contrast, 3D printers create objects from the foundation upward by systematically layering materials until the final product accurately resembles the envisioned design.
- 5. The process of a 3D printer resembles that of a conventional inkjet printer in the direct 3D printing method. In this approach, a nozzle moves back and forth while depositing layers of wax or a plastic-like polymer. Each layer is allowed to dry before the next layer is added. This accumulation of hundreds or thousands of 2D prints atop each other results in the formation of a three-dimensional object.

| ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF 3-D PRINTING: | | |
|---|--|--|
| Advantages of 3D Printing | Disadvantages of 3D Printing | |
| Rapid Prototyping | Limited Material Options | |
| Customization and Personalization | Size Constraints for Larger Objects | |
| Reduced Material Wastage | Precision and Quality Variations | |
| Complex Geometries Achievable | Initial Investment in Equipment and Software | |
| Cost-Effective for Small Quantities | Post-Processing Requirements | |
| On-Demand Production | Layered Texture on Finished Products | |
| Accelerated Innovation | Limited Durability for Some Applications | |
| Accessibility for Small-Scale Production | Intellectual Property Infringement Risk | |
| Reduced Tooling Costs | Learning Curve for Design and Operation | |

APPLICATIONS OF 3-D PRINTING:

- ➤ **Healthcare:** Prosthetics, implants, surgical models, dental crowns.
- Automotive: Rapid prototyping, customized parts, concept cars.
- Aerospace: Lightweight components, complex geometries for aircraft and spacecraft.
- **Fashion:** Customized accessories, avant-garde designs.
- ➤ **Architecture:** Scale models, intricate building components.
- **Education:** Visual aids, learning tools.
- > **Jewellery:** Design prototypes, intricate patterns.

- **Consumer Goods:** Unique product designs, limited-edition items.
- > Art and Sculpture: Creative projects, unique art pieces.
- **Food:** Edible creations, intricate designs.

| OTHER INITIATIVES: | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Initiative | Description |
| Atal Innovation Mission | AIM promotes the establishment of Atal Tinkering Labs in schools, |
| (AIM) | encouraging students to explore 3D printing and innovation. |
| National Institute for | NITI Aayog has established a task force to create a roadmap for the |
| Transformation and | effective implementation of 3D printing in India. |
| Upgradation through | |
| Additive Manufacturing | |
| (NITI Aayog) | |
| Make in India Campaign | The campaign aims to boost manufacturing, including 3D printing, |
| | by promoting local production and innovation. |
| Start-up Incubators and | Various incubators and accelerators support 3D printing start-ups |
| Accelerators | by providing funding, mentorship, and resources. |
| Collaborations with | Partnerships between industry and academic institutions |
| Educational Institutions | encourage research and innovation in 3D printing. |
| Skill Development | Training programs and workshops are organized to develop skills in |
| Initiatives | 3D printing technologies and applications. |

TUBERCULOSIS (TB)

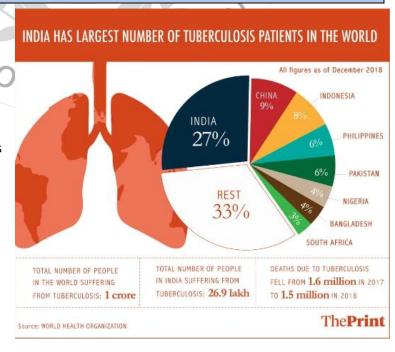
SOURCE: TH, IE, BUSINESS NEWS

WHY IN NEWS?

- India is facing a severe shortage of tuberculosis (TB) drugs, including those used for drugresistant TB such as Linezolid, Clofazimine, and Cycloserine.
- The shortage of TB medicines, for both drug-sensitive and drug-resistant TB, began last year and has persisted for about a year.

ABOUT TB:

- Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by a bacterium known as Mycobacterium tuberculosis.
- In humans, TB predominantly affects the lungs (pulmonary TB), but it can also impact other organs (extra-pulmonary TB).
- The transmission of TB occurs through airborne means, spreading from one person to another.
- Typical symptoms include a cough with sputum, sometimes containing blood, chest discomfort, weakness, weight loss, fever, and night sweats.



- The majority of TB cases emerge in adults. As of 2021, 56.5% of the TB cases were among men, 32.5% among adult women, and 11% among children.
- Several key risk factors contribute to new TB cases: malnutrition, HIV infection, alcohol misuse, smoking, and diabetes.
- ➤ **TB is both preventable and treatable**. Approximately 85% of those affected can be successfully treated with a 4 to 6-month drug regimen.
- First-line antitubercular medications, such as **rifampin**, **isoniazid**, **pyrazinamide**, **and ethambutol**, are FDA-approved and prescribed to combat Mycobacterium tuberculosis infections.

TB BURDEN:

- 1. As per the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2021, there were 1.6 million TB-related deaths, including 187,000 individuals with HIV co-infection.
- 2. According to the India TB Report 2023, the year 2022 witnessed the notification of 2.42 million cases, marking a 13% rise compared to 2021.
- 3. India is responsible for over a quarter of the global TB cases.

| GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES: | |
|--|--|
| Measures | Description |
| Revised National TB Control | The government's flagship program for TB control, focusing |
| Program (RNTCP) | on detection, treatment, and prevention. |
| Nikshay Poshan Yojana | A nutritional support scheme for TB patients, providing financial aid to patients during treatment. |
| Swasthya Sathi Yojana | Offers health insurance coverage to citizens, including TB patients, for better access to treatment. |
| TB Free India Campaign | An awareness campaign to promote understanding, prevention, and early detection of TB. |
| Directly Observed Treatment Short-course (DOTS) | A strategy where a healthcare worker directly observes a patient taking their medication. |
| Free Diagnosis and Treatment | Free diagnostic tests and medications provided to TB patients through various health facilities. |
| Jan Aushadhi Kendras | Government-operated outlets offering generic medicines, including TB drugs, at affordable prices. |
| Mobile TB Testing Units | Mobile vans equipped for on-the-spot testing, particularly in remote and underserved areas. |
| National Strategic Plan for TB Elimination | A comprehensive strategy focusing on diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of TB. |

CHALLENGES IN ERADICATING TB:

- Substantial Burden of TB
 Cases: According to the
 Global TB Report 2022,
 India is responsible for 28%
 of the total global TB cases,
 posing challenges in
 promptly identifying and
 treating all cases.
- Prevalence: India grapples with a notable burden of drug-resistant TB, which is more complex and expensive to manage compared to regular TB. Incomplete antibiotic use and inconsistent treatment adherence have led to the emergence of drug-resistant strains.



Source: MyGovIndia

➤ Limited Healthcare

Accessibility: A significant portion of India's population, especially in rural regions, lacks access to quality healthcare or cannot afford medical assistance. Consequently, diagnosis and treatment may experience delays, fostering TB spread.

- Stigma and Social Isolation: TB continues to carry a stigma in India, dissuading individuals from openly discussing their condition or seeking care due to the fear of discrimination or social exclusion.
- ➤ Challenging Living Conditions: Congested living environments, inadequate sanitation, and absence of clean water access heighten the risk of TB transmission.
- Awareness Deficit: Many individuals in India lack awareness regarding TB symptoms and the significance of completing the full treatment course. This knowledge gap contributes to diagnosis and treatment delays, promoting TB dissemination.
- Funding Shortfalls: Despite being a major health concern in India, TB often faces insufficient funding and neglect from policymakers and healthcare providers.

- **Establish Comprehensive TB Control:** Develop a holistic TB control plan with early detection, efficient treatment, and ongoing follow-up care.
- ➤ Improve Healthcare Access: Focus on expanding healthcare availability, especially in rural areas with limited access.
- ➤ Increase Financial Support: Prioritize TB prevention and treatment, allocating more funds for research, prevention efforts, and treatment initiatives.
- Target High-Risk Groups: Introduce programs to prevent TB among vulnerable populations like healthcare workers, those with HIV, and homeless individuals.
- ➤ Raise Public Awareness: Launch awareness campaigns through media, communities, and social platforms to educate about TB symptoms, transmission, and prevention.

- **Reduce Stigma and Bias**: Collaborate with community leaders, healthcare providers, and affected individuals to combat social stigma and encourage acceptance.
- **Enhance Living Conditions:** Improve living standards in crowded and disadvantaged areas to reduce TB transmission risk.
- > Invest in Research: Allocate resources to research and innovation, including new diagnostic tools and treatments like Al-based lung hotspot detection.
- Foster Collaborations: Partner with other nations and global organizations to share expertise, best practices, and resources for effective TB control.



GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

VISHWAKARMA YOJANA

SOURCE: PIB, TH, THE ECONOMIC TIMES

WHY IN NEWS?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced during his Independence Day address the launch of Vishwakarma Yojana which is the Rs 13,000- crore scheme, aimed at benefiting individuals skilled in traditional craftsmanship for a period of five years up to 2027-28 financial year.

FEATURES OF THE SCHEME:

➤ The program aims to encompass 18 traditional vocations and is estimated to encompass around 3 million families of artisans.

The included trades comprise carpentry, boat crafting, metalworking professions like blacksmithing and armour making, tool crafting, locksmithing, goldsmithing, pottery, sculpture, cobbling,

| ATHAST. | | |
|----------------|----------------------------|--|
| GI T | AGS FOR HANDICRFTS IN 2023 | |
| Hmaram | Mizoram | |
| Pawndum | Mizoram | |
| Ngotekherh | Mizoram | |
| Tawlhlohpuan | Mizoram | |
| Idu Mishmi | Arunachal Pradesh | |
| Textiles | | |
| Mizo Puanchei | Mizoram | |
| Kandangi Saree | Tamil Nadu | |

masonry, coir weaving, toy making, hairdressing, garland making, laundry, tailoring, and fishing net weaving.

- Artisans and craftspeople will be acknowledged through the PM Vishwakarma certificate and identity card.
- Furthermore, they will have access to interest-free credit up to Rs 100,000 (initially) and Rs 200,000 (subsequently) at a concessional 5% interest rate.
- The initiative will also aid artisans in enhancing their skills and offer incentives for digital transactions and marketing assistance.
- > Skill training will be subsidized with a Rs 500 stipend, while an additional Rs 1,500 will be allocated for the procurement of contemporary tools.
- ➤ Enrolment for the program can be completed through common services centers located in rural areas.
- In its inaugural year, the scheme intends to cover **500,000 families**, with a **long-term goal of reaching 3 million families within five years.**

CHALLENGES FACED BY ARTISANS AND CRAFTSMEN:

- Lack of Recognition: Artisans often lack recognition for their skills and contributions to traditional crafts, leading to undervaluation of their work.
- Financial Constraints: Limited access to credit and financial resources hinder artisans' ability to invest in their businesses, purchase raw materials, and modernize their tools.
- > **Skill Gap:** Traditional skills often remain unupgraded, making artisans vulnerable to competition from modern products and technologies.

- Lack of Infrastructure: Inadequate infrastructure for workspace, storage, and transportation limits artisans' productivity and quality of output.
- **Economic Marginalization**: Artisans are at risk of exploitation, receiving inadequate payments for their products, and remaining trapped in a cycle of poverty.

| OTHER IMPORTANT INITIATIVES O SUPPORT AND UPLIFT TRADITIONAL ARTISANS AND CRAFTSMEN: | |
|--|---|
| Key Initiatives | Description |
| PM Vishwakarma Samman Yojana | This scheme covers 18 traditional trades, benefiting around 30 lakh artisan families. It offers recognition through certificates and identity cards, credit support, skill training, modern tools, digital transaction incentives, and marketing support. |
| Credit Support Schemes | Various credit support schemes, including Mudra Yojana and Stand-Up India, offer financial assistance to artisans for starting or expanding their businesses without the need for collateral. |
| Hunar Haat | Organized by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Hunar Haat provides a platform for artisans to showcase and sell their products, promoting traditional art and culture while enhancing their market access. |
| National Handicraft | This program focuses on capacity-building, skill development, design |
| Development | improvement, and market promotion for artisans. It aims to elevate the |
| Program | livelihoods of artisans and preserve traditional crafts. |
| Artisan Credit Card | This scheme provides credit facilities to artisans for working capital |
| Scheme | requirements, purchasing tools, raw materials, and other necessary |
| | resources. It enables them to run their businesses smoothly. |
| Cluster Development Programs | The government supports the establishment of artisan clusters, providing common facilities, infrastructure, design development, and marketing assistance to enhance the competitiveness of artisan groups. |
| Crafts Museum and | The government promotes crafts museums and exhibitions, showcasing |
| Exhibitions | the work of artisans and helping them gain recognition and market exposure. |
| Digital Platforms | Initiatives like e-commerce platforms for handicrafts and digital marketing campaigns enable artisans to reach a broader audience and increase sales. |
| Promotion of | The government emphasizes obtaining GI tags for traditional crafts to |
| Geographical | protect their authenticity and heritage, enhancing the marketability of |
| Indications (GI) | artisan products. |
| Artisan Training and | Skill development programs and training workshops are conducted to |
| Skill Development | enhance artisans' skills, enabling them to create high-quality products and |
| | stay relevant in the market. |

WAY AHEAD:

- Awareness Campaigns: Launch awareness campaigns to inform traditional craftsmen about the Vishwakarma Yojana and its benefits.
- **Registration Simplification:** Streamline the registration process to make it easily accessible and understandable for craftsmen.
- > **Skill Enhancement:** Offer skill development programs to upgrade traditional craftsmen's skills and ensure their products meet modern demands.
- Access to Funds: Ensure easy access to the allocated funds to enable craftsmen to invest in their businesses.





- Q1. Mention the global occurrence of Marine heat waves in recent times. Discuss the impact of marine heatwaves on the environment and human activities.
- Q2. What are the major challenges faced by the textile industry in India? Examine the role of the Government in the development of the textile industry in India.
- Q3. Mesolithic rock-cut architecture of India not only reflects the cultural life of the times but also a fine aesthetic sense comparable to modern painting. Critically evaluate this comment. (PYQ)
- Q4. The Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi Ordinance 2023 has been in the news for several reasons. Discuss the role of this ordinance on the federal structure of our country.
- Q5. To what extent in your opinion can the enactment of a Uniform civil code have an impact on gender inequality in India?
- Q6. The time has come for India and Greece to build a strong contemporary relationship, one involving global and strategic partnership that will have a great significance for the world.' Comment
- Q7. Increasing livestock productivity is the need of the hour to ensure doubling the farmer's income. Discuss.
- Q8. What are the challenges associated with financial inclusion in India? Discuss the role of financial inclusion in achieving inclusive growth.
- Q9. How do the Rohingya refugees pose a threat to India's security? Discuss the strategies to curb illegal migration along the borders of India.
- Q10. What is medical ethics? Discuss its significance in the context of the private health sector in India.

Dear Learners of TATHASTU ICS,

In your pursuit of excellence, we encourage you to take the extra step towards mastery. Write your answers with diligence, knowledge, and precision, and then, bring your handwritten copies to our main centre [53/1, Upper Ground Floor, Bada Bazar Rd, Old Rajinder Nagar, Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi, Delhi, 110060] for live evaluation and valuable feedback from our experts. Remember, each stroke of the pen takes you one step closer to success. Embrace the journey of learning, and together, we shall conquer new horizons.