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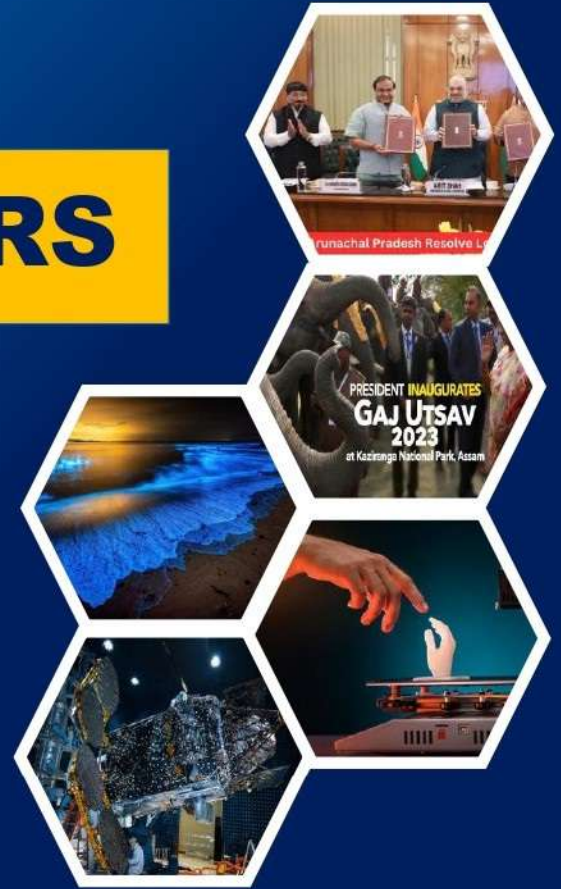
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APRIL 2023



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Let's talk numbers. According to the United Nations' State of World Population Report 2023, India would overtake China's 1.425 billion inhabitants by mid-2023. The news elicited diverse reactions within the country, but it was fascinating to witness China's reaction. 'Population is essential, but so are talents,' they argue. We'd want to believe that talent is significant, but the motivation behind the retort has baffled many. Does it also fall within their "Wolf Warrior" diplomacy? We'll let the readers decide how to respond. For the time being, we agree with Elon Musk: Demographics is destiny. His tweets are comprehensible at times.

With 3167 or more tigers, India is home to over 75% of the world's tiger population. The Prime Minister shared this great news with the world during the inaugural program of The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) held in Mysuru to honor Project Tiger's 50th anniversary. The National Tiger Conservation Authority's 5th Cycle of Tiger Census has been able to lift everyone's spirits. The celebrations were cut short when 10 security officers and 5 soldiers were killed in separate terrorist assaults in Chhattisgarh and Jammu and Kashmir respectively. The incident happened in the same month that the Global Terrorism Index was made public by the Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP). We still don't have a universally accepted definition of terrorism despite all of these reports and partnerships to fight it! This is not progress, but rather convenience wrapped in ambiguity!

Preventive detention is making headlines once again. The question of whether preventive detention is appropriate in a democratic nation has long been argued in India, yet the colonial provision is still in place. Indeed, the number of cases of preventative detention has increased dramatically in recent years. In a recent judgment, the Supreme Court stated that it had the potential to give the state arbitrary power. Speaking of arbitrary governmental power, the Kesavananda Bharati Case will be 50 years old in 2023. The evolution of the doctrine of Basic Structure, which reigns over the arbitrary authority of the state, is a watershed moment in India's judicial history. In this issue of eKuhiCA, we have a piece about the momentous judgment.

Paramananda Nath, AMI (Rank 05, CCE 2020), is the featured guest on this month's "*Interview with the Topper*." He speaks about his preparatory process and service career in an email exchange. We hope it will be useful to you all. Send any recommendations for enhancing the publication to ekuhipathofficial@gmail.com.



INTERVIEW WITH TOPPER



Current Posting: Assistant Manager, District Industry and Commerce Centre, Karimganj, Industry and Commerce Department, Government of Assam
Educational Background: BSc (Hon.), DELED
Permanent Address: Khaga, Lakhimpur, Assam
Optional Subject: Anthropology



PARAMANANDA NATH

RANK-5

AMI, CCE 2020

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What motivated you to pursue a civil service career, and what specific steps did you take to prepare for the examination? Is there a specific person or incident that you attribute your success in the Civil Services Examination to?

Answer: The scope of helping the society at large and respect for the service from the society itself motivated me to pursue this career. A civil servant can attribute in wider fields like health, education, agriculture, industry and other development projects which can be performed with dedication, integration and innovative thoughts.

After thinking about becoming a civil servant, I first decided to commit to studying for at least five to six hours every day on a regular basis for about six to seven months because a large syllabus needs to be covered in a specific length of time. At the very least, I used to write one or two answers every day. It was challenging for me to learn everything at once because I was a working professional with two young children. However, I could manage the everyday obligations I gave myself.



2. What were the biggest challenges you faced during your exam preparation, and how did you overcome them?

Answer: I decided to write in Assamese medium, which was a challenging task, because of limited study materials available and no definite guidelines were there on the commission's website. However I firmly studied and wrote in Assamese medium and my strategy had been rewarded finally.

3. How did you figure out which books to read, which sources to follow? How helpful was Google and YouTube in your preparation? How did you separate the wheat from the chaff?

Answer: For static part, aspirants can go through the NCERT and SCERT class books/ Textbooks. This will cover Indian History, Indian Polity, Geography- India & World, and Economy etc. For Assam geography part they can read Md. Taher's Book. For current events concept, they could go through any one the newspapers among the Assam Tribune, Indian Express or The Hindu.

Google and YouTube are also beneficial. But one needs to choose the right content with right mentor. Also, the aspirants can compare the study materials with reference books. This will increase their faith on the subject matters.

4. At what point did you begin preparing for the civil service exam - during your graduation, immediately after graduation, or at a later stage?

Answer: I began later in life. Evidently, the commission started to become transparent at that point and expedited the hiring procedure. I took the CCE in 2018 and participated in the interview, however I was unable to make the final list. The following attempt in 2020 was successful, thanks to the Almighty.

5. With the removal of the optional subject from the APSC CCE syllabus, what is your opinion on how this change will impact the strategies of aspirants this year?

Answer: Definitely, it will impact the scoring pattern. I believe, the Essay Paper, the paper on Assam as well as the Ethics paper will be the deciding factors in the mains. The other GS papers are almost same for every candidate.

6. Is it necessary to support/justify/endorse the policies and views of the government while writing the answers of civil services examination or replying in the interview? Can the government's opinion on any issue be opposed?

Answer: It is necessary to keep an overview of the government policies. Both in the main and the personality test, it will definitely help. Direct questions can also be expected.

Yes, one can criticise some part of the policies, but it should be supported by some remedial measures in an optimistic tone.



7. How important do you think it is to have an alternate career back-up while preparing for civil services? Which path had you chosen?

Answer: It differs from person to person. Looking at the extremely low rate of selection in the examination, I would recommend the aspirants to have some sort of backup while pursuing the civil service dream.

8. The preparation for Civil Services Examinations is so arduous that it could potentially impact one's social and personal relationships. Did you face such problems? If yes, then how did you balance them during the preparation period?

Answer: The journey of the civil services aspirants is full up highs and lows. While it demands isolation from the world to focus during the preparation, however, support of the near and dear ones help deal with the immense stress that comes in the process. Thus, it should be a balance between the two according to time and space.

9. Did you write the Examination in English? Do you think the language used in the examination have any impact on the overall score obtained by a candidate?

Answer: I took the main examination in Assamese, and it did impacted the scoring pattern. Especially, one needs to be careful while writing the essays. A number of keywords might have to be provided in English as well.

10. How satisfied are you after having joined the service? How similar or different is it from what you had imagined?

Answer: I am satisfied to see my name in the final selection list. Every job has its challenges as well as opportunities. Civil service is somewhat different from other services, because government policies and public opinion can meet in the working hands of civil servants. To be motivated to work for the public and to sustain that momentum throughout are the keys to make an impact while in services.

11. What is your opinion regarding the usefulness of online learning platforms of Assam such as eKuhipath in the preparation journey of the aspirants?

Answer: Online mode of learning is very much helpful and has become essential these days. eKuhipath is doing a great job for the welfare of the aspirants. I wish them a bright future ahead. Also, I am grateful to the team for providing an opportunity to express my thought on the pages of eKuhiCA.

Team eKuhipath is thankful to Mr. Paramananda Nath for the time out of his busy schedule. We wish him all success in the service and in achieving milestones in the journey he has embarked upon.



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SL	Date	Time	Paper	Answer Synopsis Upload on Website	Last date for Submission of Answer
1	25-04-2023	9:00 AM	GS I	26-04-2023	05-05-2023
2	28-04-2023	2:00 PM	GS II	29-04-2023	09-05-2023
3	03-05-2023	9:00 AM	GS III	06-05-2023	13-05-2023
4	08-05-2023	2:00 PM	GS IV	10-05-2023	17-05-2023
5	12-05-2023	9:00 AM	GS V	15-05-2023	21-05-2023
6	16-05-2023	9:00 AM	Essay	20-05-2023	25-05-2023
7	21-05-2023	9:00 AM	GS I	24-05-2023	29-06-2023
8	25-05-2023	2:00 PM	GS II	28-05-2023	03-06-2023
9	29-05-2023	9:00 AM	GS III	03-06-2023	07-06-2023
10	04-06-2023	2:00 PM	GS IV	08-06-2023	11-06-2023
11	09-06-2023	9:00 AM	GS V	12-06-2023	15-06-2023



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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1.MERA GAON MERI DHAROHAR PROGRAM

Source: The Hindu

News: In a bid to harness the unique cultural heritage of rural India, the government has identified and documented distinctive features of more than one lakh villages across the country.



- ❖ The entire exercise has been carried out under the ‘Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar’ (My Village My Heritage) programme of the National Mission for Cultural Mapping (NMCM).



National Mission for Cultural Mapping (NMCM)

- ❖ The **National Mission for Cultural Mapping (NMCM)** aims to develop a comprehensive database of art forms, artists and other resources across the country.
- ❖ It was launched by the **Ministry of Culture in 2017**, the programme got off to a slow start and was handed over to the **Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) in 2021**.
 - ❖ IGNCA was **established in 1987** as an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture, as a centre for research, academic pursuit and dissemination in the field of the arts.
- ❖ The **IGNCA** plans to cover all the 6.5 lakh villages in the country. As of today, short films have been made on 750 clusters villages. The films, which give a 360 degree view of the village, have been shot using drones.

Significance & Need

- ❖ The program seeks to document the **cultural identity at the village level** by involving citizens to share what makes their village, block, or district unique.
- ❖ In this cultural asset mapping, villages have been broadly **divided into seven-eight categories** based on whether they are important ecologically, developmentally and scholastically, if they produce a famous textile or product, and if they are connected to some historical or mythological events such as the Independence struggle or epics like the Mahabharata.
- ❖ The mapping aims to develop a comprehensive database of art forms, artists, and other resources across the country.

About the survey process

- ❖ The survey process involves a **CSC Village Level Entrepreneur (VLE)** conducting meetings with locals and then uploading interesting facts about their village, its places of interest, customs and traditions, famous personalities, festivals and beliefs, art and culture, etc., on a special application.

2.RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL OR STATE PARTY

Source : Indian express

News: Recently, the AAP was given the status of a 'national party' by the Election Commission (EC).

- ❖ The EC also **revoked** the 'national party' status of the All India Trinamool Congress, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Communist Party of India (CPI).
- ❖ The Commission also revoked the state party status granted to few other state parties.

How is a party's status decided



A party needs to fulfill any of the following conditions to get national or state tag

For national status

Votes in LS, state polls: A party should secure at least 6% of the votes polled in four or more states in Lok Sabha or assembly elections, and, in addition, have at least four members in the Lok Sabha

Seats in LS: It should have at least 2% of the total Lok Sabha seats, and have candidates from not less than three states

Must be a state party: It is recognised as a state party in at least four states

For state tag

Votes in assembly polls: The party must get at least 6% of the votes and win at least two seats in the assembly election

1 MP must in LS: It gets at least 6% of the votes polled and has at least one MP in the Lok Sabha

Assembly seats: It has at least 3% of the votes or three MLAs in the assembly, whichever is more

Strength in House: The party has at least one Lok Sabha member for every 25 assembly members, or any fraction thereof allotted to the state

Performance in past polls: It has at least 8% of the total valid votes polled in the state in the previous election to the Lok Sabha or assembly in the state

Perks of national party

Common party symbol across states

Free airtime during elections on public broadcasters

Space for a party office in New Delhi



What is a National Party?

- ❖ The name suggests that a national party would be **one that has a presence 'nationally'**, as opposed to a **regional party** whose **presence is restricted to only a particular state or region**.
- ❖ National parties are usually India's bigger parties, such as the Congress and BJP.
 - ❖ However, **some smaller parties are also recognised as national parties**.
- ❖ A **certain stature is sometimes associated** with being a national party, but this does **not necessarily translate** into having a lot of national political clout.
- ❖ Some parties, despite being dominant in a major state and having a major say in national affairs, remain regional parties.



A political party would be considered a national party if:

- ❖ It is 'recognised' in four or more states; or
- ❖ If its candidates polled at least 6% of total valid votes in any four or more states in the last Lok Sabha or Assembly elections and has at least four MPs in the last Lok Sabha polls; or
- ❖ If it has won at least 2% of the total seats in the Lok Sabha from not less than three states.

➤ **AAP's current position:** The AAP is in power with big majorities and very large vote shares in Delhi and Punjab. And in the Goa Assembly elections held in March, it received 6.77% of the vote.

To be recognised as a state party, a party needs:

- ❖ At least 6% vote-share in the last Assembly election and have at least 2 MLAs; or
- ❖ have 6% vote-share in the last Lok Sabha elections from that state and at least one MP from that state; or
- ❖ At least 3% of the total number of seats or three seats, whichever is more, in the last Assembly elections; or
- ❖ At least one MP for every 25 members or any fraction allotted to the state in the Lok Sabha; or
- ❖ Have at least 8% of the total valid votes in the last Assembly election or Lok Sabha election from the state.

State party:

- ❖ This meant that going into the **Gujarat-Himachal** elections, the party already fulfilled the criteria for recognition as a state party in three states.
 - ❖ It now required 6% of the vote in the Assembly elections in either Himachal or Gujarat to be recognised in a fourth state — which would qualify it for recognition as a national party.
- ❖ While the AAP got only 1% of the vote in Himachal, the almost 13% vote it got in Gujarat was more than double required to be recognised as a state party there.

How are Political Parties registered?

- ❖ Political Parties registrations are governed by the **provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1951**.
- ❖ According to the EC, any party seeking registration has to submit an application to the Commission **within a period of 30 days**.
- ❖ Powers conferred by EC **under Article 324** of the Constitution of India and **Section 29A** of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

❖ **Section 29A of RPA, 1951:**

- ❖ Indian Citizen, Purpose of contesting elections, & 100 registered electors as its members.
- ❖ There is no procedure available for the de-registration of dormant political parties.

3.PREVENTIVE DETENTION

Source : Economic times

News : The Supreme Court observed in a judgment that preventive detention laws in India are a colonial legacy and confer arbitrary power to the state.



Supreme Court's recent observation

- ❖ The judgment described preventive detention laws as “**extremely powerful**”.
- ❖ They have the ability to provide the state with **unfettered discretion**.

About:

- ❖ Preventive detention means **detention of a person without trial and conviction by a court**. Its purpose is not to punish a person for a past offence but to **prevent him from committing an offence in the near future**.
- ❖ The detention of a person **cannot exceed three months unless an advisory board reports sufficient** cause for extended detention.



Protection:

- ❖ **Article 22 grants protection** to persons who are arrested or detained.
 - ❖ Article 22 has two parts—the **first part deals with the cases of ordinary law** and the **second part deals with the cases of preventive detention law**.

Two Types of Detentions:

- ❖ **Preventive detention** is when a **person is held in police custody only on the basis of a suspicion** that they would conduct a criminal act or cause harm to society.
 - ❖ The police have the authority to hold anyone they suspect of committing a criminal offence and also to **make arrests without a warrant or a magistrate's authorization in certain cases**.
- ❖ **Punitive detention**, which means detention as a punishment for a criminal offence. It occurs after an **offence is actually committed, or an attempt has been made towards the commission of that crime**.



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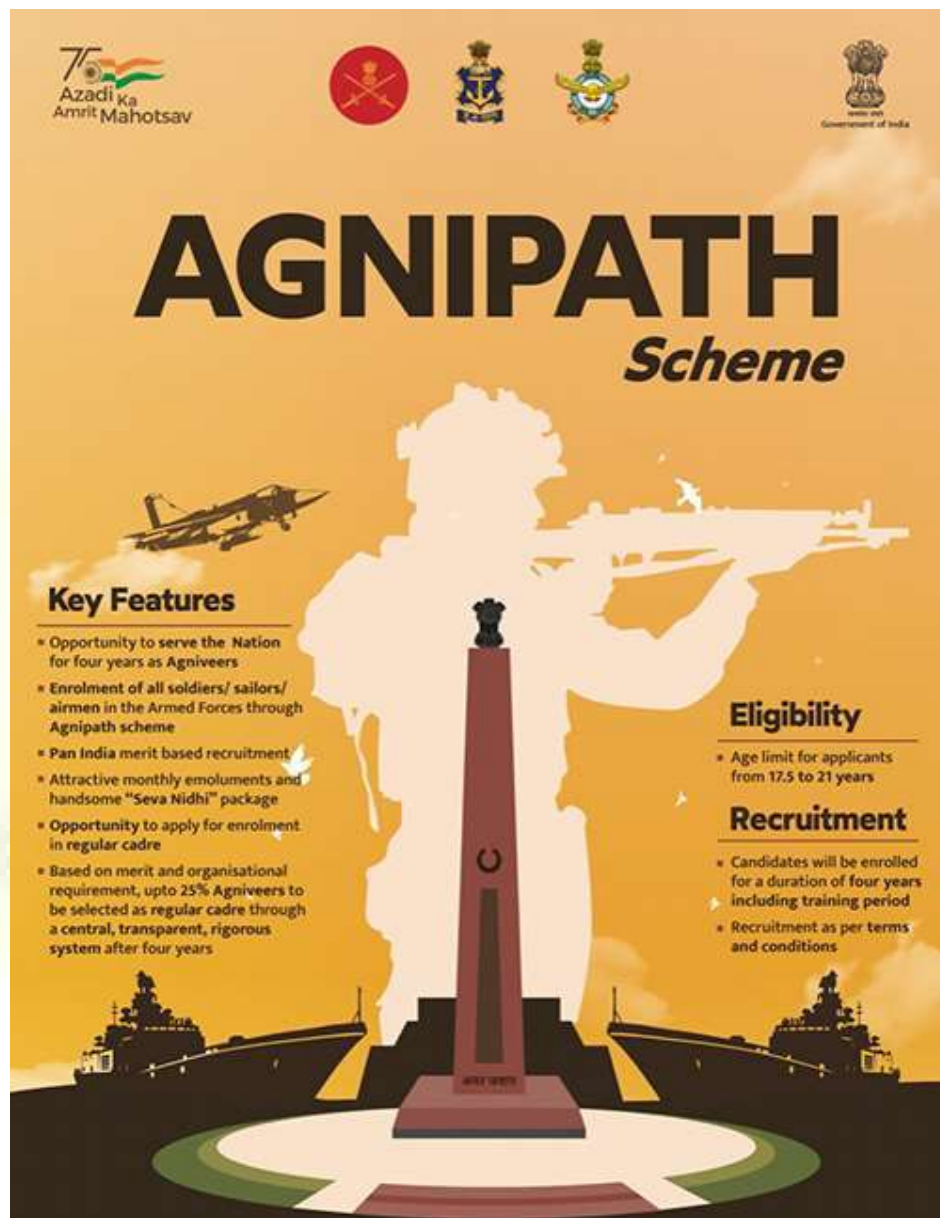
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4.SC RULING ON AGNIPATH SCHEME

Source: The Hindu

News : The Supreme Court recently dismissed petitions challenging the Delhi High Court judgment which upheld the **Agnipath scheme for recruitment to the armed forces.**



More about the news

➤ **The petition:**

- ❖ The Delhi High Court judgment recently upheld the Agnipath scheme for recruitment to the armed forces. The petitioners were challenging this judgment.



➤ **Issue:**

- ❖ Some of the petitioners included **candidates who were shortlisted** in the earlier **recruitment process to Army and Air Force**.
- ❖ Their **names appeared in a provisional list** for recruitment to Air Force but the **recruitment process was cancelled** when **Agnipath scheme** was notified.
- ❖ There was a written exam, physical test, medical exam conducted under the old recruitment process after which a **provisional selection list was published with the ranks**.
- ❖ These candidates had got jobs in BSF and other paramilitary organisations, but had refused as they were told that Air Force recruitment letters will be issued.
- ❖ So the petitioners argued that the **government must be directed to complete the old process** citing the **doctrine of promissory estoppel**.

Doctrine of promissory estoppel

➤ **What is the doctrine?**

- ❖ Promissory estoppel is a concept developed in **contractual laws**.
- ❖ A valid contract under law requires an **agreement to be made with sufficient consideration**.

SC's decision on the issue

- ❖ The judges have refused this argument pointing out that “promissory estoppel is **always subject to overarching public interest**”.
- ❖ They also added that “**this is not a contract matter** where promissory estoppel in public law was applied, it is a **public employment**”.

About the Agnipath Recruitment Scheme

➤ **About:**

- ❖ **Around 45,000 to 50,000 soldiers** will be recruited **annually**, and most will leave the service in just four years.
- ❖ Of the total annual recruits, only 25 percent will be allowed to continue for another 15 years under permanent commission.
- ❖ Recruits under the scheme will be known as “Agniveers”.

Features:

- ❖ **Enrolment in all three services:**



- ❖ Centralised online system to conduct rallies & campus interviews at recognised technical institutes such as the Industrial Training Institutes, and the National Skills Qualifications Framework.
- ❖ **Eligibility criteria:**
 - ❖ It is only for personnel **below officer ranks**. On an ‘**All India All Class**’ basis with the eligibility age ranging from 17.5 to 21 years, with medical and physical fitness standards.
 - ❖ Educational qualification: **Class X-XII**
 - ❖ Recruitment will be **done twice a year**.

Pay and Perks:

- ❖ **Annual package** of 4.76 lakh in the first year to 6.92 lakh in the fourth year along with hardship allowance.
- ❖ Under the “**Seva Nidhi**” package (which is exempt from Income Tax), they will receive about 11.71 lakh, including contribution and interest, on completion of service.
 - ❖ The recruits will have to contribute **30% of their monthly emoluments** to Seva Nidhi, with a matching contribution made by the government.
- ❖ There will be **no entitlement to gratuity and pensionary benefits** under the scheme.

Concerns:

- ❖ **No Pilot Project to Test the Scheme**; Lead to the militarization of the society.
- ❖ May **Dilute professionalism, military ethos and fighting spirit** (takes 7-8 yrs to become fully ready combat soldier)
- ❖ Will hit the **basic ethos of Naam, Namak & Nishan** (reputation of Battalion, fidelity & ensign)
- ❖ **Tourist soldiering** is not a good idea for India’s security challenges.

Rationale of the scheme:

- ❖ **Enhancing the youthful profile of the Armed Forces:**
 - ❖ The Centre has defended the Agnipath scheme, saying that its biggest aim was to enhance the youthful profile of the Armed Forces and reduce the average age of soldiers from 32 years to 26 years over a period of time.

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❖ 'Leader to led' ratio:

- ❖ With the introduction of the scheme, the 'leader to led' ratio will become 1:1 from the current ratio of 1:1.28, the Centre has said.

❖ Well thought & studied decision:

- ❖ The government also told the court that the impugned scheme is the result of various studies and deliberations such as the **Kargil Review Committee**, which proposed the retention of soldiers for a shorter duration of time as **opposed to the existing structure of 15 to 20 years**.
- ❖ The military intake and retention models of the **United States, United Kingdom, Canada and France** were considered by experts to analyse the efficiency and organisational benefits of short-term military service.

❖ Affordability of education:

- ❖ The government believes that this scheme **can help the youth in the country who are not able to afford an education**.

❖ Career choices post Agniveer:

- ❖ The central government has also rolled out a **list of career choices for the 75% of Agniveers** who will be **demobilized after four years of service**.
 - ❖ Those who wish to work will be given priority in **CAPFs, police, Assam rifles and police** and allied forces in several states.
- ❖ Furthermore, it will also **help the Agniveers to kickstart their second career with necessary bank loans** - which will be **given on a priority basis**.

5. PM JEEVAN JYOTI BIMA AND PM SURAKSHA BIMA YOJANA

Source: Economics time

News: Public sector banks (PSBs) have set a target for the sale of flagship government insurance schemes **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)** and **Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)** in FY24. They have also set goals for other financial inclusion schemes like **Mudra Yojana** and **StandUp India Scheme**



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Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana

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2 लाख का जीवन बीमा

- PMJJBY

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Annual Premium
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Achievements as on 28.04.2021

Total cumulative enrollments:
23,36,04,506

No. of claims disbursed:
45,674

Premium is debited from the bank account through 'auto-debit' facility.



Progress

- ❖ There are about 8.3 crore beneficiaries under PMJJBY and 23.9 crores under PMSBY, as of now.
- ❖ Since the launch of the schemes in 2015, 15.99 crore enrolment has taken place under PMJJBY, while 33.78 crores under PMSBY as of March 31, 2023.
- ❖ To achieve saturation under PMJJBY and PMSBY, the finance ministry launched a three-month campaign, starting April 1.
 - ❖ Under the campaign, camps are being organised at the **Gram Panchayat** level across all **districts in the country by the banks**, with the active participation of the state administration and other ministries of the central government to ensure that the benefits of the two Jan Suraksha schemes reach the masses

About

- ❖ **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY):** It is a one-year life insurance scheme renewable from year to year offering coverage for death due to any reason.
- ❖ **Eligibility:** Individuals in the age group of 18-50 years having a savings bank or a post office account are entitled to enroll under the scheme. People who join the scheme before completing 50 years of age can continue to have the risk of life cover up to the age of 55 years upon payment of the premium.
- ❖ **Benefits:** Life cover of Rs. 2 Lakh in case of death due to any reason against a premium of Rs. 330/- per annum.
 - ❖ The finance ministry revised rates from Rs 330 to Rs 436 under PMJJBY effective June 1, 2022.
- ❖ **Enrolment:** Enrolments under the scheme can be done by visiting the branch/ BC point or website of the bank of the account holder or at the post office in case of a post office savings bank account.
- ❖ The premium under the scheme is auto-debited every year from the subscriber's bank account based on a one-time mandate from the account holder.
- ❖ **Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY):** It is a one-year accidental insurance scheme renewable from year to year offering coverage for death or disability due to an accident.
 - ❖ **Eligibility:** Individuals in the age group of 18-70 years having a savings bank or a post office account are entitled to enroll under the scheme.
 - ❖ **Benefits:** Accidental death cum disability cover of Rs.2 lakh (Rs.1 lakh in case of partial disability) for death or disability due to an accident.

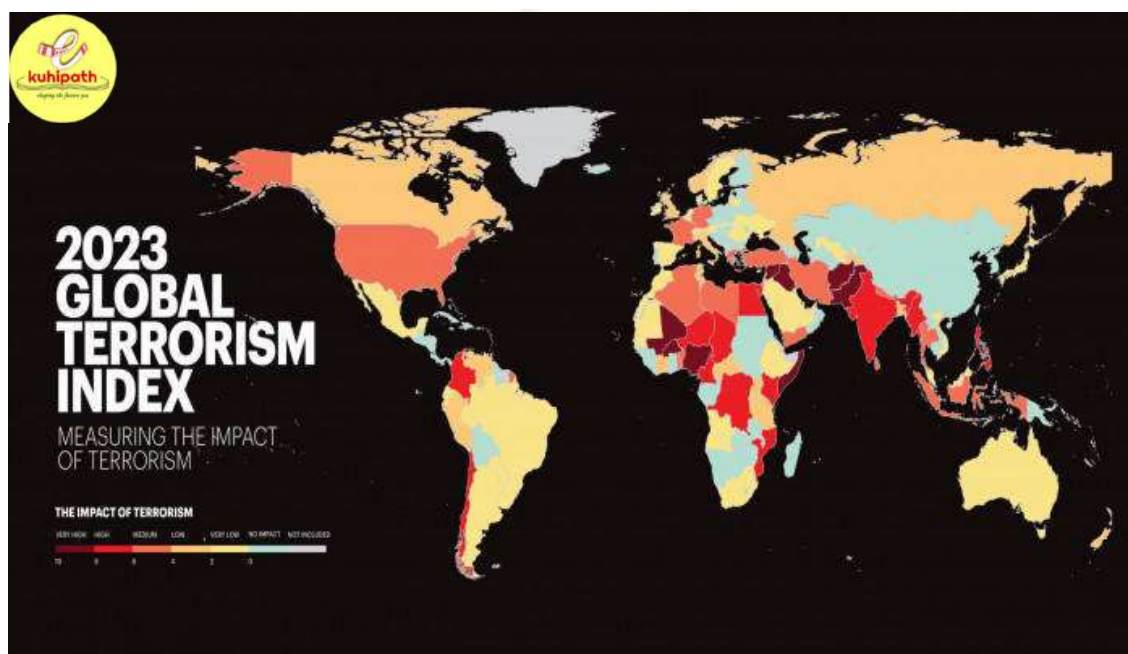


- ❖ The finance ministry revised rates from Rs 12 to Rs 20 for PMSBY, effective June 1, 2022.
- ❖ **Enrolment:** Enrolment under the scheme can be done by visiting the branch/ BC point or website of the bank of the account holder or at the post office in case of a post office savings bank account.
- ❖ The premium under the scheme is auto-debited every year from the subscriber's bank account based on a one-time mandate from the account holder.

6.GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX (GTI)

Source: IDSA

News: The **2023** edition of the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) was recently released.



About the Global Terrorism Index (GTI)

RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE
1	● Afghanistan	8.822	↔
2	● Burkina Faso	8.564	↑ 2
3	● Somalia	8.463	↔
4	● Mali	8.412	↑ 3
5	● Syria	8.161	↑ 1



About:

- ❖ The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) is a comprehensive study analysing the **impact of terrorism** for **163 countries** covering **99.7 percent of the world's population**.
- ❖ The GTI report is produced by **the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP)** using data from **Terrorism Tracker** and other sources.

GTI Score:

- ❖ The GTI produces a composite score so as to provide an ordinal **ranking of countries** on the impact of terrorism.
- ❖ The GTI scores each country on a **scale from 0 to 10**.
- ❖ Where **0 represents no impact** from terrorism and 10 represents the highest measurable impact of terrorism. The GTI considers deaths, incidents, hostages and injuries from terrorism.

Aim:

- ❖ Given the significant resources committed to counter terrorism by governments across the world, it is important **to analyse and aggregate the available data** to better understand its various properties.
 - ❖ One of the key aims of the GTI is **to examine these trends**.
- ❖ It also aims to help inform a **positive, practical debate** about the **future of terrorism** and the **required policy responses**.

Key findings from the Global Terrorism Index 2023 report

- ❖ **Deaths & attacks of terrorism:**
 - ❖ **Terrorist attacks and deaths caused by them** decreased by 28 per cent and 9 per cent respectively, but average deaths per attack increased from 1.3 to 1.7 from the previous year in 2022.
 - ❖ Outside Afghanistan, **terrorism deaths rose 4%** in the rest of the world.
- ❖ **Islamic State (IS) - the deadliest terrorist group:**
 - ❖ **Islamic State (IS) and its affiliates** remained the world's **deadliest terrorist group** in 2022 for the **eighth consecutive year**, with attacks in 21 countries.



❖ **Sahel and Af-Pak region:**

- ❖ Deaths from attacks by **unknown Jihadists** globally are **eight times higher than 2017**, representing 32% of all terrorism deaths and 18 times higher in the Sahel.
- ❖ The **Sahel is the most impacted region**, representing 43% of global terrorism deaths, 7% more than the year prior.
- ❖ Jihadi upheavals in the **Sahel and Af-Pak region** remain key drivers of the increase in lethality.

❖ **Global trends:**

- ❖ Declining terrorism in the West is met with intensified attacks in other regions.
- ❖ Far-right extremist groups are gaining ground in Europe and North America.
- ❖ Terrorism thrives in countries with poor ecologies and climate induced shocks.

❖ **Formalisation of terrorism:**

- ❖ Many states continue to use armed non-state actors for their own objectives, indicating a worrying trend in the formalisation of terrorism.

❖ **Technology use:**

- ❖ Drone technology and its use continues to rapidly evolve, especially with groups such as IS, Boko Haram and Houthis.

Implications for India

❖ **Kashmir:**

- ❖ The security situation in Kashmir did take a turn for the good after the abrogation of Article 370 with respect to organised terror, but new challenges emerged in the form rise in lone-wolf attacks and increased use of drones for cross-border terrorism.

❖ **Sikh separatism:**

- ❖ The dormant sentiments of Sikh separatism are increasingly showing signs of revival, with the socio-political situation in Punjab taking a radical turn.

❖ **Cross-border narco-terror networks:**

- ❖ In both Kashmir and Punjab, a growing trend of increased drug abuse is fuelled by cross-border narco-terror networks.

❖ **Terror drones:**

- ❖ India is still not adequately equipped to tackle the challenge of terror drones, whose sightings had multiplied significantly in 2022.

Way ahead

- ❖ All nations worldwide must keep up with their counter-terrorism efforts and address real or perceived grievances that make radicalisation possible.
- ❖ On the virtue of India's chairmanship of the **UNSC's Counter-Terrorism Committee** and its **joining of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** concentrating on extensive Counter-Terrorism cooperation through its **Regional**



Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), it can take the leading role in tackling terrorist challenges.

7.PM MARKS 7 YEARS OF STAND-UP INDIA

Source : The Hindu

News: As Stand-Up India completes 7 years, the PM acknowledged the role that the initiative has played in **job creation** & in **empowering** the SC/ST communities and women.

The Stand-up India scheme:

- ❖ It **aims at promoting entrepreneurship** among women and scheduled castes and tribes.
- ❖ **Launched in/by :** It was launched in **2016** and is anchored by the **Department of Financial Services (DFS)**, Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

Working

- ❖ It facilitates **bank loans between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 Crore** to at least one SC/ST borrower and at least one-woman borrower per bank branch **for setting up a greenfield enterprise** (the first- time venture) **only**.
- ❖ This enterprise may be in **manufacturing, services or the trading sector**.
- ❖ **In the case of non-individual enterprises, at least 51% of the shareholding and controlling stake should be held by either an SC/ST or a woman entrepreneur.**

The scheme can be accessed in 3 potential ways:

- ❖ Directly at the branch or,
- ❖ Through Stand-Up India Portal or,
- ❖ Through the Lead District Manager (LDM).

Achievements (as of 2022):

- ❖ **Rs. 30160 crores** have been sanctioned to over 1.33 lakh (over 1 lakh women) new **job-creators and entrepreneurs**.
- ❖ To extend collateral-free coverage, the Government of India has set up the **Credit Guarantee Fund for Stand Up India (CGFSI)**.
- ❖ Driving economic growth → making significant strides towards building an **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.



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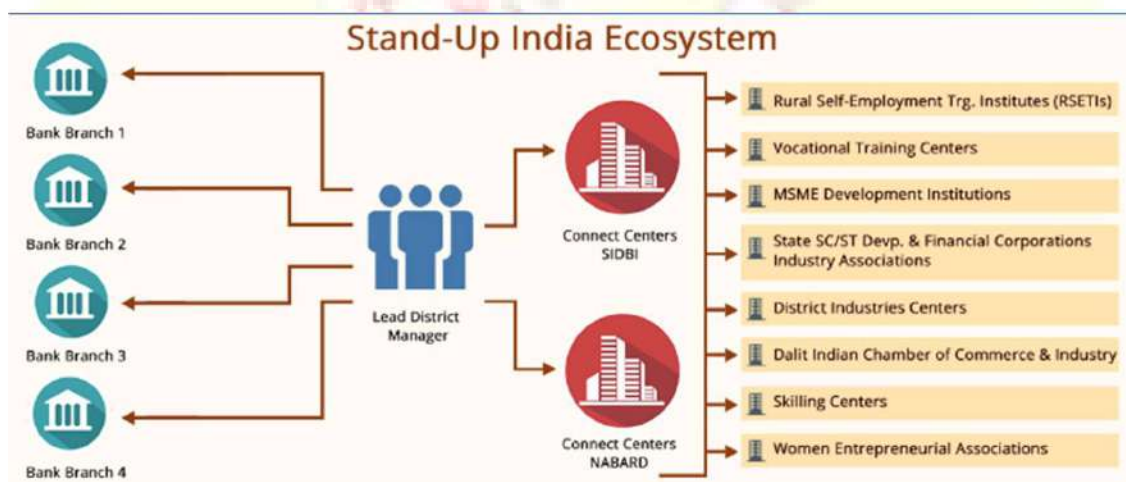
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Best practices for implementation of the scheme:

- ❖ **Awareness campaigns** were organized including **melas, financial literacy camps**, etc.
- ❖ **Hand-holding (pre and post-sanction of the loan):** Hand-holding of borrowers from the targeted community, CM helpline for query resolution (**Burhanpur, MP**), etc.
- ❖ **Effective coordination amongst implementing units:** It is essential that all agencies and persons involved, i.e. SIDBI, LDMs, and bank officials are on the same page.

Way ahead:

- ❖ Banks should be **incentivized** to motivate and reward officials and banks with large numbers of disbursements while offering due diligence.
- ❖ All the stakeholders of the program should be **educated** through IEC activities, **workshops, and training**.
- ❖ **Build success stories in all geographical regions for motivating the masses.**
- ❖ Efforts for **convergence** with other schemes like Startup India, MUDRA, etc.



8. WORLD MALARIA DAY

Source : Indian express

News: World Malaria Day is being observed on 25th April.

World Malaria Day

- ❖ It is an international observance commemorated every year to recognize global efforts to control malaria.
- ❖ **Theme** - "Time to deliver zero malaria: invest, innovate, implement".
- ❖ World Malaria Day was first **held in 2008**. It was developed from **Africa Malaria Day**.



- ❖ WHO officially endorses disease-specific global awareness days for only four diseases namely, **HIV-AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria and Hepatitis.**

Malaria

- ❖ Malaria is a potentially life-threatening disease caused by parasites (**Plasmodium vivax, Plasmodium falciparum, Plasmodium malariae and Plasmodium ovale**) that are transmitted through the bite of infected **female Anopheles mosquitoes.**
- ❖ In the human body, parasites initially multiply in liver cells and then attack the Red Blood Cells (RBCs).
- ❖ It is predominantly found in the tropical and subtropical areas of Africa, South America and Asia. It is preventable and curable.
- ❖ Symptoms include high fever, chills, headache and other flu-like symptoms.
- ❖ Infants, children under 5 years, pregnant women, travellers and people with HIV or AIDS are at higher risk of severe infection.

India's Malaria Burden

- ❖ In 2021, India accounted for 79% of all malaria cases in Southeast Asia, according to the World Malaria Report 2022, released by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- ❖ India also accounted for about 83% of all malaria deaths in the region.

Vaccine:

- ❖ Till now, no malaria vaccine has shown the benchmark efficacy of 75% set by WHO. Still, WHO gave a go-ahead for the **first malaria vaccine called RTS,S** to be rolled out in high transmission African countries understanding the urgency of malaria control and prevention.
- ❖ In India, **Bharat Biotech has been granted license to manufacture this vaccine.**
- ❖ Similar to RTS,S vaccine the Oxford University has developed a vaccine called R21 which is still waiting for the WHO's approval.
- ❖ Ghana and Nigeria have approved this vaccine for use in their countries. It is also being manufactured by Serum Institute of India.

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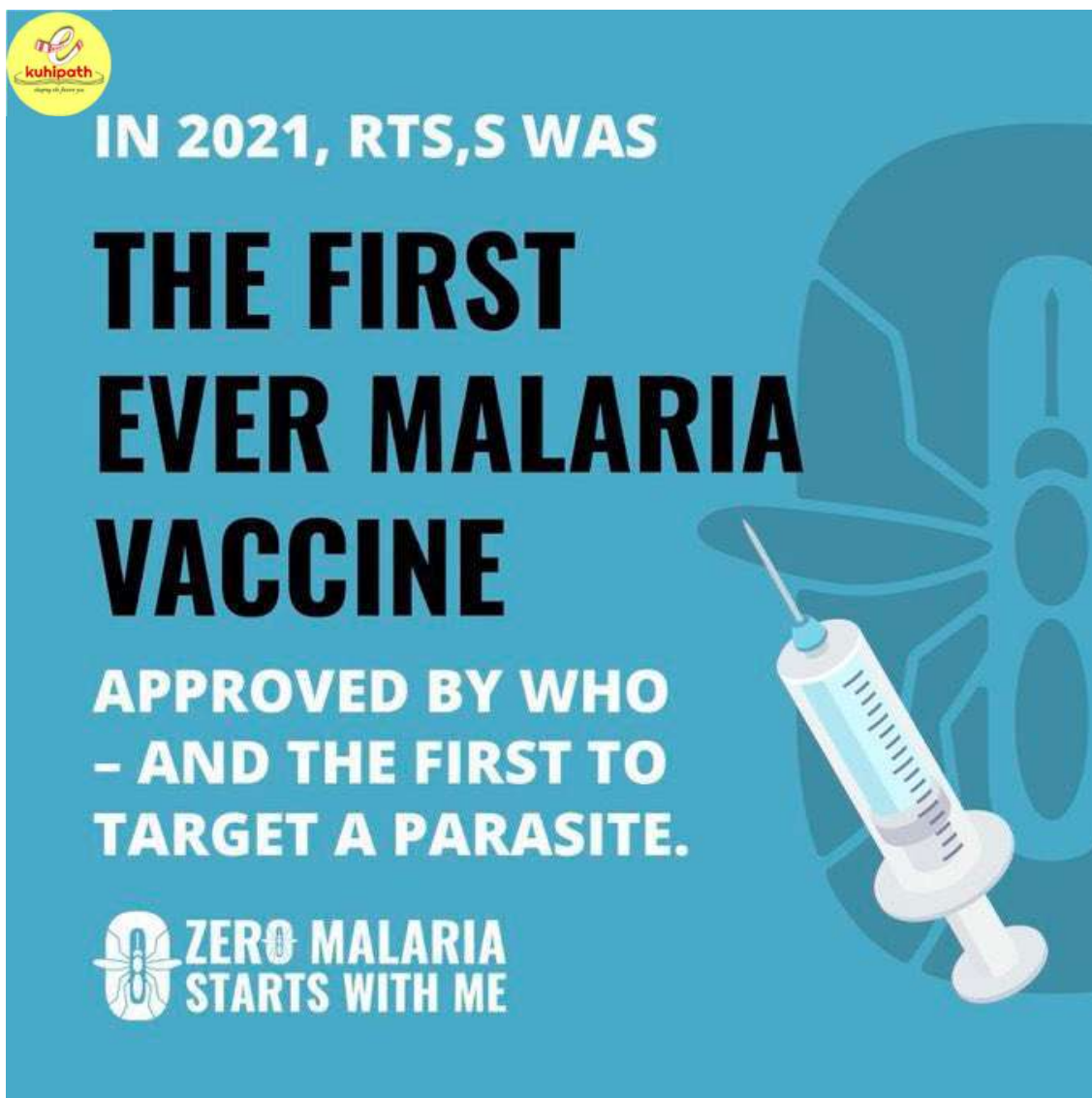
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9.CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITIES IN INDIA

Source : The Hindu

News : Two recent comments of the SC will have a direct bearing on the **concept of the independence of various constitutional authorities** in India.

More about the news :

- ❖ **Role of Governors in State politics:** In a hearing of the ‘Sena versus Sena’ case, the Court expressed that **Governors becoming part of political processes is disconcerting.**
- ❖ **Independence of the Election Commission of India:** The Court divested the executive of its sole discretion in appointing the CEC and ECs by forming a committee to suggest suitable names to man these constitutional posts.



Constitutional provision

- ❖ **Article 145 of the Constitution** says that all judgments (decisions) made by the Supreme Court must be given in an open court where anyone can watch or hear. This means that the decisions cannot be made secretly.
- ❖ **According to Article 145(4)**, the court cannot give a judgment or report the opinions of judges in secret, it must be done openly in front of people.
- ❖ **Section 123 of the Indian Evidence Act of 1872:** Under this act, official unpublished documents relating to state affairs are protected and a public officer cannot be compelled to disclose such documents.

Need for independent institutions:

- ❖ Democracy requires **a system of checks and balances** to prevent the arbitrary use of power by the elected government.
- ❖ **India's democracy provides for various constitutional authorities** such as the Public Service Commission, the CAG, the ECI, the Finance Commission, etc.
- ❖ **Such bodies need complete independence -**
 - ❖ To regulate sectors of national importance without any executive interference.
 - ❖ To enable them to function **without fear or favour** and in the larger interests of the nation.



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10.KESAVANANDA: CASE AND ITS LEGACY

Source: Indian express

News: Fifty years ago, on **April 24, 1973**, the SC delivered its landmark judgment in **Kesavananda Bharati vs the State of Kerala**.



KESAVANANDA BHARATI VS STATE OF KERALA

What was the case about?

- ❖ The extent of Parliament's power to amend the Constitution was the backdrop of the **tussle between the executive and the judiciary** in the first two decades of the republic.
- ❖ By the **1st Amendment of 1951**, the 9th Schedule was inserted – any law placed in this Schedule could not be questioned in any court of law.
- ❖ In **Shankari Prasad v. Union of India (1951)**, the SC upheld the 1st Amendment and held that



	<p>Parliament's power to amend any part of the Constitution was limitless.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ In Sajjan Singh v. State of Rajasthan (1965), the SC asked whether the Parliament could take away even the critical fundamental rights❖ In Golaknath v State of Punjab (1967), the SC ruled that Parliament cannot amend fundamental rights.❖ The 24th Amendment 1971 – amended Articles 13, 368 – provided Parliament with the powers to amend any provision of the Constitution and insulated such amendments from Judicial Review.
Verdict	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ A 13-judge Constitution Bench of the SC (with a 7-6 majority) redefined the relationship between Parliament and the Constitution by ruling that the “basic structure” of the Constitution is inviolable and cannot be amended by Parliament.❖ While the Parliament had vast powers to amend the Constitution, certain parts (“basic structure”) are so inherent and intrinsic to the Constitution that even Parliament cannot touch it.
What is the basic structure doctrine?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ The origins of the basic structure doctrine are found in the German Constitution.❖ In India, while parliamentary democracy, fundamental rights, judicial review, and secularism are all held by courts as basic structures, the list is



	<p>not exhaustive (decided by the court on a case-by-case basis).</p> <p>❖ The basic structure doctrine has formed the bedrock of judicial review of all laws passed by the Indian Parliament.</p>
--	--

Constitutional amendment entirely stuck down by the SC:

- ❖ **The Constitution (99th Amendment) Act 2014**, which established the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) was struck down in 2015 on the grounds that it threatened “**judicial independence**” – a basic feature of the Constitution.
- ❖ **NJAC** would have been responsible for the appointment and transfer of judges, replacing the current Collegium system.

Constitutional amendments partially stuck down by the SC:

- ❖ **In 6 instances**, including the Kesavananda ruling itself, the SC has “partially struck down” a constitutional amendment.
- ❖ In all these cases, the provision that was struck down related to the **denial of judicial review**.

Significance of the verdict:

- ❖ The ruling (by the narrowest possible margin of 7-6) has **rejected majoritarian impulses** and **underlined the foundations of a modern democracy** saving both the **constitution and constitutionalism**.
- ❖ However, it marked a **definite assertion of the judiciary** against the majoritarian Parliament leading to **Parliamentary sovereignty vs Judicial supremacy, Judicial activism vs overreach**
- ❖ A highly controversial **pluralist judicial creation** has been **accepted now** by legislatures, the executive, and the people of India.



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Mains (UPSC 2019)

“Parliament’s power to amend the constitution is limited power and it cannot be enlarged into absolute power”. In light of this statement, explain whether parliament under Article 368 of the constitution can destroy the basic structure of the constitution by expanding its amending power.

Prelims Links: (UPSC 2020)

Consider the following statements:

1. The Constitution of India defines its ‘basic structure’ in terms of federalism, secularism, fundamental rights and democracy.
2. The Constitution of India provides for ‘judicial review’ to safeguard the citizens’ liberties and to preserve the ideals on which the Constitution is based.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both 1 and 2
4. Neither 1 nor 2

11. POWERS OF THE GOVERNOR UNDER ARTICLE 200

Source: Scroll

News : The SC said that governors should clear bills passed by the legislative assemblies as soon as possible, as mandated under Article 200 of the Indian Constitution.

Article 200:

- ❖ **It gives governors the power to either grant assent** to a bill, withhold assent or reserve the bill for the president’s consideration in certain cases.
- ❖ **The governor may return the bill** (if it is not a Money Bill) requesting the House/Houses to reconsider the bill.
- ❖ If such a bill is passed again by the House/Houses with/without amendment and presented to the governor for assent, **the governor shall not withhold assent.**
- ❖ **The plea in the SC:** A plea was filed by the Telangana government **seeking directions to the governor** to clear ten bills passed by the state Assembly.

What are the SC’s observations?

- ❖ Article 200 states that the governor must “**as soon as possible**” after the presentation of the bill for assent return the bill for reconsideration to the House/Houses of the state legislature.



- ❖ The expression “as soon as possible” has **a significant constitutional intent and must be borne into mind.**

The issue:

- ❖ The issue that is agitating State governments (**Kerala, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal**) is the non-decision/indecision on the part of the governor on a bill passed by the Assembly.
- ❖ In a new constitutional development, **the TN Assembly passed a resolution** urging the President of India **to fix a timeline for assent** to be given to bills passed by the Assembly.

Why is this resolution a new constitutional development?

- ❖ **Article 355 of the Constitution** says that it shall be the duty of the Union to ensure that the government of every State is carried on in accordance with the Constitution.
 - ❖ This provision justifies the “**invasion of the provincial field**” by the Union government and the proclamation of the **President’s rule** (under Article 356) in a State.
- ❖ If the governor violates Article 200 and **sits on the bills indefinitely** (an option not given by the Constitution), s/he is creating a situation where **governance of the state cannot be carried on in accordance with the Constitution.**
- ❖ In such a situation, **the government of the State has a constitutional duty to invoke Article 355** and request the President to give suitable instructions to the Governor.

The practice followed in the United Kingdom:

- ❖ The veto could **only be exercised on ministerial advice.**
- ❖ Refusal of royal assent on the ground that the monarch strongly disapproves of a bill/ it was intensely controversial would be **unconstitutional.**


Case of India:

- ❖ **Under Article 154 of the Constitution**, the governor can exercise his/her executive powers **only on the advice of the Council of Ministers.**
- ❖ Whether the Governor (under Article 200) can withhold his/her assent to a bill in the exercise of his/her **discretionary powers?**
- ❖ Under the constitutional scheme, the governor is **only a constitutional head** and has no real powers.
- ❖ According to constitutional experts, **the governor can withhold assent to a bill only on ministerial advice.**
- ❖ Hence, there is a **confusion** on the issue in India.



Way ahead:

- ❖ A bill is a **policy imperative of the elected government which is responsible to the people.**
- ❖ Withholding assent means the **death of the bill.** Therefore, the government can challenge the inaction of the governor in a court of law.
- ❖ **The SC must fix a reasonable time frame** for governors to take a decision on a bill passed by the Assembly in the **larger interest of federalism** in the country.




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INTERNATIONAL RELATION

12.75 YEARS OF THE WHO: NOT A 'GLOBAL HEALTH POLICE'

Source : Indian Express

News :The World Health Organization (WHO) marks its 75th anniversary on 7 April 2023.



Background

- ❖ In April 1945, politicians from around the world gathered in **San Francisco** to **establish the United Nations**.
- ❖ The World Health Organization (WHO) was born three years later, when its constitution came into effect on April 7, 1948.
- ❖ It states that **health is a human right that every human being is entitled to**, “without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition” and that “the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security.”

World Health Organization (WHO)

- ❖ It is a **specialised agency of the United Nations** with a mandate to act as a coordinating authority on international health issues.
- ❖ It was **founded in 1948** and has **headquarters at Geneva, Switzerland**.
- ❖ It has **194 Member States**, 150 country offices, six regional offices.
- ❖ It works in collaboration with its member states usually through the Ministries of Health.



Achievements so far

- ❖ Eradication of smallpox in 1980.
- ❖ The organization is close to eradicating Polio, a disease that affects mainly infants and young children. Due to eradication programs by the WHO, polio cases have come down by 99% since 1988. As of 2019, only three nations are suffering from polio – Nigeria, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.
- ❖ About 216 million people are suffering from Malaria, mostly in tropical Africa, where 90% of Malaria cases and deaths are recorded. In the African region, the death rate due to malaria has been brought down by 60% as of 2018.
- ❖ In 2008, the WHO initiated the observance of the ‘World Malaria Day’. This day is observed annually on April 25.
- ❖ It focuses on infectious diseases like HIV, influenza, malaria, tuberculosis, and Ebola; and also other non-communicable diseases such as heart disease and cancer.
- ❖ It also takes efforts in the direction of maternity and infant healthcare, old-age care, and hygienic food and water for all.

Failed attempts of WHO

- ❖ **The 2014 Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone** offers an example of a WHO job less well done.
- ❖ The organization’s agreement to give up on trying to **eradicate malaria in the 1960s** represents another example of what some consider a botched job.
- ❖ The WHO launched the **Global Malaria Eradication Programme (GMEP) in 1955**. But there was little to no progress in sub-Saharan Africa under the program, and in many places, failure to sustain GMEP actually led to a resurgence of malaria. In 1969, the program was discontinued.
- ❖ In the **COVID-19 pandemic the WHO was criticized** for not doing enough to support member states in their fight against the disease.

Need for WHO Reforms

- ❖ **Lack of funding:** Any attempt to build a stronger WHO must first begin with increased mandatory funding by member states.
- ❖ **Providing more powers:** It is time to provide the agency with more powers to demand that member states comply with the norms and to alert WHO in case of disease outbreaks that could cause global harm.
- ❖ WHO does not have the authority to **enforce its recommendations**.
- ❖ **Lack of information sharing:** The long delay and the reluctance of China to readily and quickly share vital information regarding the novel coronavirus, including the viral outbreak in Wuhan.

- ❖ **Member states do not face penalties for non-compliance:** This has to change for any meaningful protection from future disease outbreaks.

13.SAUDI ARABIA'S QUEST FOR STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

Source : The Hindu

News: Recently, Saudi and Iranian officials held bilateral talks, mediated by China in Beijing, that concluded with an agreement to **restore diplomatic ties which have been severed since 2016.**

Recent changes in Saudi's Foreign Policy

- ❖ Normalization of diplomatic ties with Iran.
- ❖ Saudi Arabia agrees to join SCO as a dialogue partner.
- ❖ Various reports suggest Russia mediating talks between Saudi and Syria.
- ❖ Saudi-Omani delegation to Yemen for permanent ceasefire with Houthis.



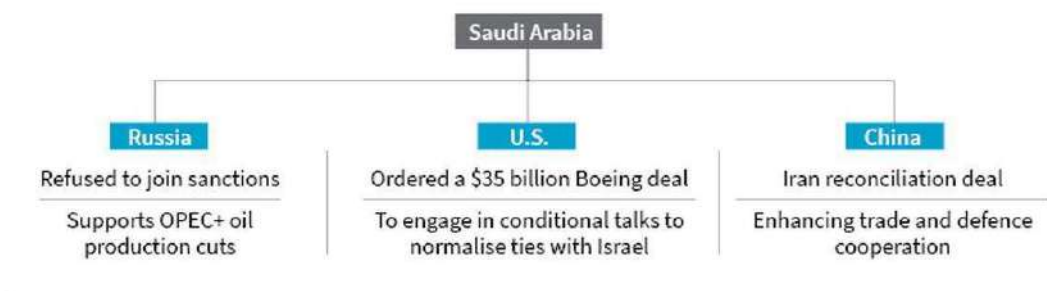
Why are these changes now?

- ❖ Saudi Arabia's response to the Iran problem has shifted from strategic rivalry and proxy conflicts to tactical de-escalation and mutual coexistence.
- ❖ Kingdom's recent regional bets were either unsuccessful or only partially successful in case of Syrian Civil war and Yemen conflict.
- ❖ In parallel, the U.S.'s priority is shifting away from West Asia.

Is Saudi moving away from the U.S.?

- ❖ De-Americanization of West Asia is not a Saudi goal. Rather it is trying to exploit America's weakness in the region to establish its own autonomy by building better ties with Russia and China and mending relations with regional powers without completely losing the U.S.
- ❖ The Kingdom is also trying to develop advanced missile and drone capabilities to counter Iran's edge in these areas with help from the U.S.
- ❖ Saudi Arabia joined hands with Russia to affect oil production cuts twice since the Ukraine war began
- ❖ It has also built stronger trade and defence ties with China, and the Iran reconciliation deal, under China's mediation, announced Beijing's arrival as a power broker in West Asia.
- ❖ Saudi Arabia has placed orders for Boeing aircraft worth \$35 billion and entered into conditional talks with the U.S. on normalizing ties with Israel.

How Saudi Arabia is balancing between global powers



What are the implications for the region?

- ❖ If Syria re-joins the Arab League, it would improve the overall relationship between Damascus and other Arab capitals.
- ❖ If the Saudis end the Yemen war through a settlement with Riyadh would get a calmer border.



Implications for the India and world

- ❖ It would help in ending ethnic conflict of Shia Sunni.
- ❖ It would assist India in balancing regional powers in West Asia.
- ❖ Peace in areas like Yemen, Syria would improve Oil supply in the market.
- ❖ It leads to a multi-polar world with the increasing role of China and Russia in west Asia.
- ❖ Safety of the Indian diaspora would be ensured by peace in the Persian Gulf area.

India-Saudi Arabia Bilateral Relations

Political Relations:

- ❖ The establishment of diplomatic relations in 1947 was followed by high-level visits from both sides.
- ❖ The historic visit of King Abdullah to India in 2006 was a watershed moment that resulted in the signing of the 'Delhi Declaration', imparting a fresh momentum to the bilateral relationship.

Commercial Relations:

- ❖ Saudi Arabia is India's fourth largest trade partner (after China, USA and Japan) and a major source of energy as India imports around 18% of its crude oil requirement from the Kingdom.
- ❖ Saudi Arabia is also a major source of LPG for India.
- ❖ During FY22, bilateral trade was valued at US\$29.28 billion.
- ❖ India's imports from Saudi Arabia were valued at US\$22.65 billion and exports to Saudi Arabia were worth US\$6.63 billion.

Cultural Relations:

- ❖ India successfully participated as 'Guest of Honour' in the 32nd edition of the prestigious Saudi National Festival of Heritage and Culture in 2018.
- ❖ Yoga was announced as a 'sports activity' in Saudi Arabia.
- ❖ Haj pilgrimage is another important component of bilateral relations.

Military exercise:

- ❖ **AL – Mohed-AL – Hindi** is the maiden bilateral naval exercise between India and Saudi Arabia.

Diaspora:

- ❖ The approximately 2.2 million strong Indian community is the largest expatriate community in the Kingdom.

What is a Dialogue Partner?

- **Dialogue Partners** refer to individual sovereign states and **not members**, but with a special interest and/or capacity to contribute, particularly in the areas of common interest.

SCO

- SCO is a **Eurasian political, economic, international security** and defence organization founded in Shanghai in 2001.
- It is the **world's largest regional organization** in terms of geographic scope and population, covering approximately 60% of the area of Eurasia, 40% of the world population, and more than 30% of global GDP.
- The SCO currently **comprises eight Member States** (China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), four Observer States interested in acceding to full membership (Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, and Mongolia) and 9 "Dialogue Partners".
- SCO has mainly **focused on regional security issues**, its fight against regional terrorism, ethnic separatism and religious extremism. SCO's priorities also include regional development.
- SCO has been an **observer in the UN General Assembly since 2005**.

14.SUDAN CONFLICT

News: Recently, fierce fighting broke out in **Khartoum, the capital of Sudan**, between the country's army and paramilitary forces.





Reason of recent crisis

- ❖ Clashes erupted after heightened tensions between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary group led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo — also known as **Hemedti** — and the military, headed by **Lt Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan**.
- ❖ The two generals disagree over the **proposed transition to civilian rule in Sudan**.

Origin of the Sudan conflict

- ❖ The roots of the ongoing conflict go back to April 2019, when Sudan's long-serving authoritarian President Omar al-Bashir was overthrown by military generals following a countrywide uprising against him.
- ❖ Despite Bashir's ouster, civilians continued their demonstrations seeking democratic elections. It led to an agreement between the military and the protesters under which it was decided to constitute the Sovereignty Council, a power-sharing body of military officers and civilians, and elections at the end of 2023.
- ❖ But the new arrangement was short-lived as the military overthrew the government in October 2021, and Burhan became de-facto leader of the country. Burhan announced that the military would hold power until elections are held in July 2023.
- ❖ Over the past few weeks, the RSF (Para-military which was formed in 2013) was redeployed around the country, which the army saw as a provocation and threat. With both sides on edge, a ferocious battle broke out.



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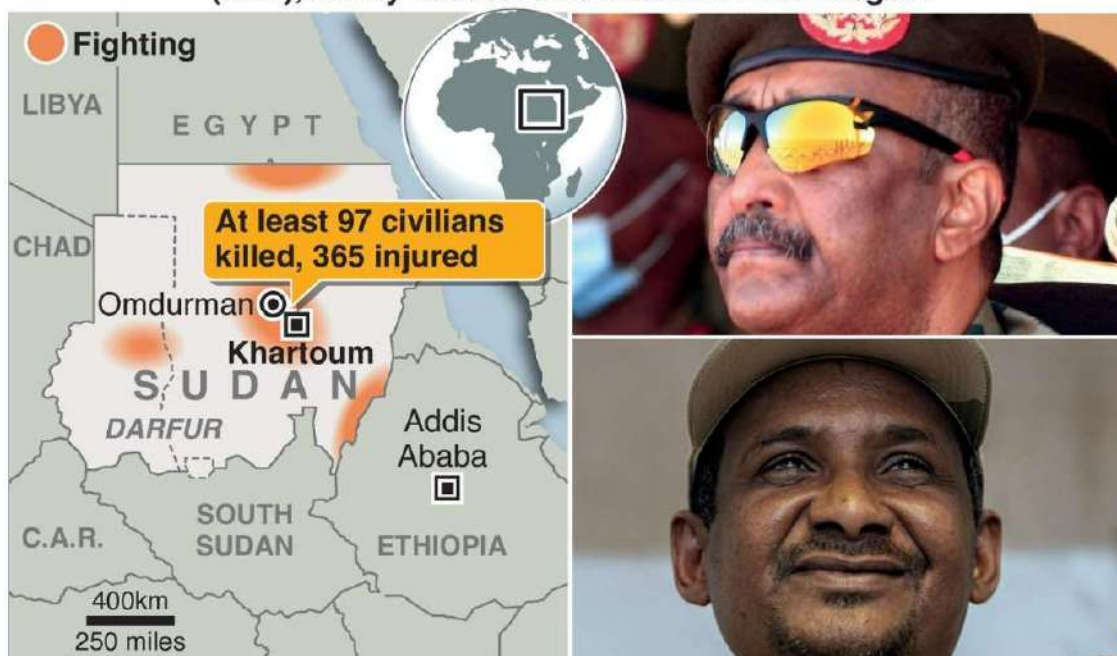
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Sudan's power struggle

The intense fighting in Sudan is between troops loyal to army chief General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo



■ **2000s:** Sudan's President **Omar al-Bashir** uses **Janjaweed** militias to help army put down rebellion in Darfur region. 2.5 million people displaced and 300,000 killed

■ **2013:** Janjaweed forces evolve into RSF, group overseen by Burhan (*top*) and led by Dagalo (*above*)

■ **Apr 2019:** Burhan and Dagalo join forces to oust Bashir

■ **Jun:** RSF opens fire on protesters in Khartoum, killing 118 people

■ **Jul:** Dagalo becomes deputy of **Transitional Military Council (TMC)**, led by Burhan. TMC to share power with civilians ahead of elections

■ **Oct 2021:** Coup led by Burhan and RSF overthrows transitional civilian government. TMC dissolved. Prime Minister **Abdalla Hamdok** detained

■ **Nov 2021:** Hamdok reinstated as premier, elections slated for 2023

■ **Jan 2022-Jan 23:** Hamdok resigns under mounting protests. Following international pressure, Burhan, Dagalo and pro-democracy groups back agreement to restore civilian rule.

Deal is vague on integrating RSF into regular army and who will have absolute control

■ **Apr 2023: Signing of agreement put off repeatedly amid rising tensions between Burhan and Dagalo over integration of RSF**

■ **Apr 15:** Fighting breaks out around Khartoum, quickly spreading to Darfur region and areas of northern and eastern Sudan

Sudan armed forces: 210-220,000 personnel, RSF – 70,000 personnel

Sources: Associated Press, CNN, Reuters

Pictures: Getty Images

© GRAPHIC NEWS

Repercussions for Sudan

- ❖ The third largest country in Africa by size has seen repeated pro-democracy protests since the 2021 coup.
- ❖ Some experts fear the tussle could transform into a wider conflict leading to the country's collapse.
- ❖ Sudan's economy is struggling, battered by hyperinflation and crippled by massive foreign debt.
- ❖ Billions of dollars given in international support and debt relief, were frozen after the ouster of the government.

Darfur Region

- ❖ Darfur is a region of western Sudan. Darfur covers an area of 493,180 square kilometers, approximately the size of mainland Spain.
- ❖ Most of the region consists of a semi-arid plain and thus appears unsuitable for developing a large and complex civilization.



- ❖ The White and Blue Niles merge at Khartoum, the capital of Sudan.
- ❖ Sudan's relationship with Ethiopia in particular has been strained over disputed farmland along their border, over conflict in the **Tigray region** that drove tens of thousands of refugees into Sudan, and the **Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam**.

Case at International Criminal Court (ICC)

- ❖ International Criminal Court (ICC) alleged that al-Bashir (Sudanese former military officer and politician who served as the seventh head of state of Sudan under various titles from 1989 until 2019, when he was deposed in a coup) bore individual criminal responsibility for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes committed since 2003 in Darfur.
- ❖ ICC accused al-Bashir of having "masterminded and implemented" a plan to destroy the three main ethnic groups—Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa.

Division of Sudan

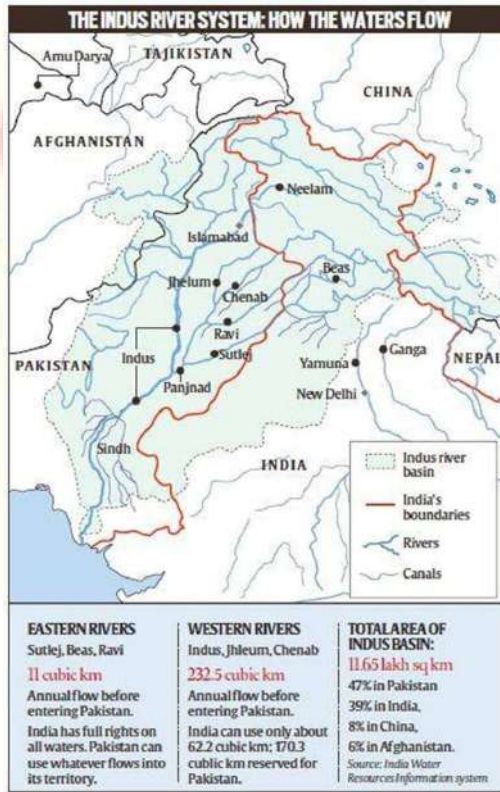
- ❖ The Sudanese conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile in the early 2010s between the Army of Sudan and the Sudan Revolutionary Front started as a dispute over the oil-rich region of Abyei in the months leading up to South Sudanese independence in 2011.
- ❖ South Sudan became an independent state on 9 July 2011, following 98.83% support for independence in a January 2011 referendum.

15.INDUS WATER TREATY

News : The Indus Water Treaty (IWT) seems to be struggling to gain support in the J&K region.

Background:

- ❖ One of the few instances of a significant international river basin conflict being resolved in South Asia is the IWT, **signed by India and Pakistan in 1960.**
- ❖ However, J&K region's residents claim that the **treaty prevents them from utilising their own water resources**, significantly impacting the UT's growth.
- ❖ This indicates the **widespread resentment among the residents** over the existence of IWT.



Reasons for resentment: It is due to the perception that the treaty has resulted in a loss of water resources, which has had a detrimental impact on the UT's potential for –	
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Jammu and Kashmir's economy is mainly dependent on agriculture. Nearly 70% of the people here depend on agriculture for their income, directly or indirectly. ❖ The UT's irrigation system has merely improved over the years. In Kashmir, the primary irrigation method (canal) has seen a dismal development.
Power generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The region's hydropower potential, which will give its economy a powerful boost, is not fully re- alised. ❖ Of the potential hydropower capacity (20,000 MW), only 3,263.46 MW/19.80% have been used so far. ❖ IWT only allows for run-of-the-river projects that do not affect the riparian rights of Pa- kistan.
What do the resi- dents want and what are the steps taken?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Abrogation of the treaty. ❖ Quantify the losses incurred to aid the UT in seeking compensation. ❖ Consequently, the government started the process of quantifying the losses.

- ❖ As the issue of IWT is again in the spotlight due to India's appeal to Pakistan to modify it, the people of J&K eagerly ex- pect policymakers to pay attention to their concerns.

16.CHINA- CENTRAL ASIA AND INDIA

News: China convened a meeting (online) of trade ministers of the grouping known as **C+C5**.

Source Indian express

- ❖ **C+C5:** It constitutes **China and the five Central Asian republics**, namely Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan.





China and Central Asia:

- ❖ China shares a **long history of trade, culture, and people-to-people links** with the Central Asian region, which lies on the **ancient Silk Route**.
- ❖ Modern China's involvement with the region began with the **break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991**.
- ❖ Diplomatic relations were established in **1992**, and China's relationship with the region was institutionalised as the **Shanghai Five**, the forerunner of the **Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO)**.



Mutual benefits	
For China	For C5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Central Asia is a readymade market for cheap exports and gave China overland access to markets in Europe and West Asia. ❖ The region is resource-rich, with massive gas and oil re- serves, and strategic minerals such as uranium, copper, and gold. ❖ China also had another priority in its relationship with these countries - to ensure peace in Xinjiang Autonomous Region, which forms its frontier with Central Asia. ❖ The BRI plays a critical role as a transit hub for China's trade with Europe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Chinese investments helped to upgrade Soviet-era infrastructure and carry out development works in these countries. ❖ President Xi launched his Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a modern version of the Silk Road, during his 2013 visit to the Kazakh capital Almaty. ❖ Beijing has also pumped billions of dollars in investments that cover projects from oil and gas exploration, rail, road and seaport connectivity to digital technologies and green energy. ❖ Access to the Pacific Ocean and East Asia to the land- locked region. ❖ China, unlike the West, asks no questions about their governance or human rights record.



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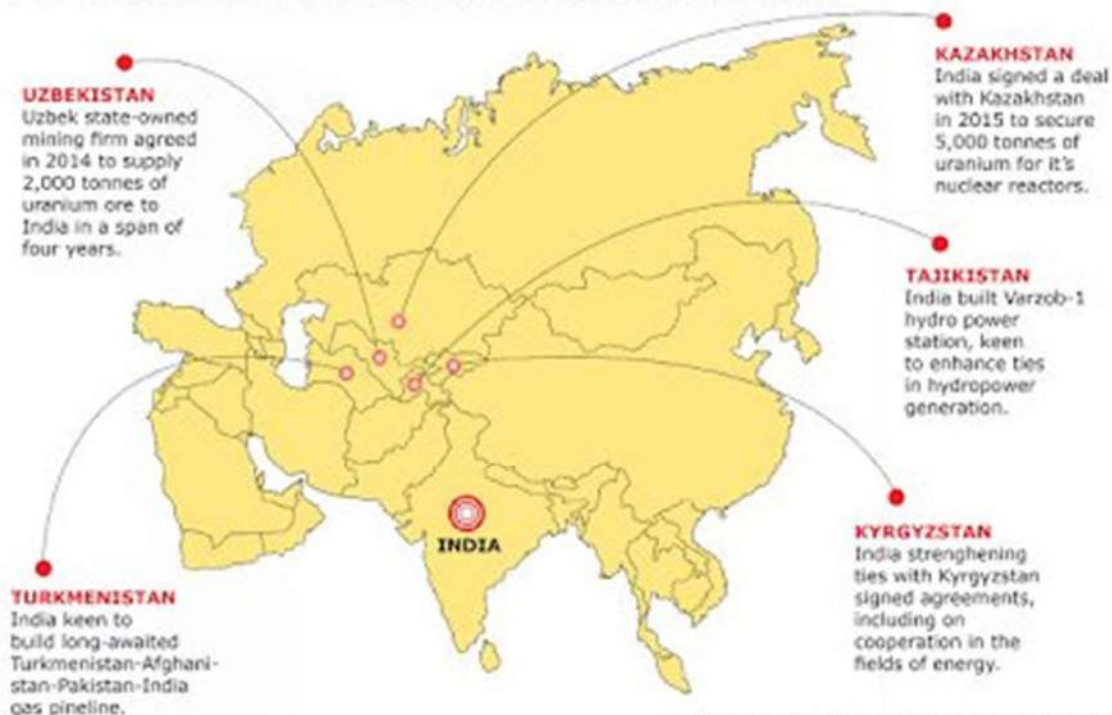
Friction points between China and Central Asia:

- ❖ Beijing's targeting of the Muslim population of Xinjiang has triggered resentment in these countries, where Islam is the principal religion.
- ❖ The increasing presence of Chinese workers and rapid land acquisitions by China in these countries has led to public protests.

India and Central Asia:

INDIA'S FOOTPRINT IN THE CENTRAL ASIA

India has a special focus on the importance of energy diplomacy, specifically with reference to building relationship with the energy-rich region of the Central Asia.



Source: The MEA, Government of India

- ❖ While India has trading ties with these countries, it is **hindered by the absence of a land route to Central Asia**, with Pakistan denying its passage and Afghanistan being uncertain territory after the Taliban takeover.
- ❖ **The Chabahar port in Iran offers an alternative route, but it is not fully developed yet.**
- ❖ Also, India's relationships in the region (including in the SCO) **remain security-driven.**
- ❖ There have been suggestions that India should provide connectivity for people and trade in Central Asia through "air corridors", as it had done for Afghanistan.
- ❖ As a first, **New Delhi made its biggest outreach to Central Asia**, when the PM of India hosted a virtual summit of the C5 last year.
- ❖ New Delhi's leadership of the SCO this year may provide it with an opportunity to diversify relations with this strategy

17.JAPAN'S NEW PLAN FOR A FREE AND OPEN INDO-PACIFIC (FOIP)

Context: During his visit to India, the Japanese PM unveiled Japan's New Plan for a FOIP and exchanged views about deepening the Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership.

Japan's New Plan for the FOIP: It lays stress on the need to **uphold the rules-based order** and respect each other's **territorial sovereignty**, at a time when the **international community** is at a **historical turning point**.



Four pillars of cooperation under the new FOIP:

1. **Principles for peace and rules for prosperity:** Japan wants to engage in economic development programmes such as the G-20 Principles for “Quality Infrastructure Investment”.
2. **Addressing challenges in an Indo-Pacific way:** Incorporating realistic and practical projects in a wide range of areas, such as **climate change, food security, global health and cybersecurity**.
3. **Multi-layered connectivity:** The 3 areas identified for introducing more such projects are Southeast Asia, South Asia and the South Pacific/Pacific Island countries. Japan has made a new commitment of –
 - ❖ \$100 million towards the **Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund**;
 - ❖ It will promote the **Bay of Bengal-Northeast India industrial value chain** concept in cooperation with



India and Bangladesh, etc.

4. **Extending efforts for security and safe use of the “sea” to the “air”:** Japan will help in strengthening the capabilities of maritime law enforcement agencies in other countries. Towards these objectives,
- ❖ Japan will implement the “strategic use of Official Development Assistance (ODAs)”.
 - ❖ Japan also announced **to mobilise a total of more than \$75 billion in public and private funds** by 2030 for infrastructure development.

What does Japan’s New Plan for the FOIP signify?

- ❖ **Japan needs to do much more in the region.**
- ❖ Japan is preparing itself for any unforeseen threat to its own as well as regional security.
- ❖ To reinforce the idea that Japan has been the
 - ♣ **The main champion of the FOIP concept**
 - ♣ **Central in the emerging geopolitics** of the Indo-Pacific
- ❖ With recent global developments (Russia-Ukraine war, Chinese assertiveness in the SCS, ECS, the Indian LAC, and the Taiwan Straits), **there is a need to give a fresh push and momentum to the FOIP concept.**
- ❖ It focuses on the numerous challenges facing the Indo-Pacific such as the **lack of a united stand** on “what the international order should be?”.

Pros of FOIP: Embrace diverse voices and **create an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration** (rather than division and confrontation) → **rule-making through dialogue.**

India and Japan relations:

- ❖ Notwithstanding some differences in the Ukraine conflict, **Japan remains one of India’s closest friends in Asia** given their **shared concerns over the aggressive Chinese activities.**
- ❖ Japan deeply invested in Indo-Pacific stability and prosperity is **good news indeed for India and the wider region. India and FOIP:**
- ❖ India is an **indispensable** partner.
- ❖ Japan’s concept of FOIP is like **India’s concept of the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)**, which has seven pillars:
 - Maritime Security
 - Maritime Ecology
 - Maritime Resources
 - Capacity Building and Resource Sharing
 - Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
 - Science, Technology and Academic Cooperation



- Trade Connectivity and Maritime Transport.

Conclusion:

Both India and Japan should cooperate to build consensus on the new FOIP during the G-7 and the G-20 (Japan and India hold their presidencies, respectively) summits.

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GEOGRAPHY

18.THE TROPOSPHERIC EMISSIONS: MONITORING OF POLLUTION (TEMPO) MISSION

News: NASA's high-resolution air pollution monitoring instrument TEMPO lifted atop a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida



About TEMPO

- ❖ It is the first funded project of **NASA's Earth Venture Instrument program**, which includes small, targeted science investigations designed to complement NASA's larger research missions.
 - ❖ It is part of the agency's Earth System Science Pathfinder program.
- ❖ It will measure **atmospheric pollution covering** most of North America, from Mexico City to the Canadian tar/oil sands, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific hourly and at high spatial resolution.
 - ❖ It covers not only the continental United States, but also Canada, Mexico, Cuba, the Bahamas, and part of the island of Hispaniola.
- ❖ It will take important scientific observations, including that of ozone, nitrogen oxide, sulphur dioxide and formaldehyde levels.

Benefits

- ❖ TEMPO's measurements from **geostationary orbit (GEO)** of tropospheric ozone, ozone precursors, aerosols, and clouds will create a revolutionary dataset that provides understanding and improves prediction of air quality (AQ) and climate forcing.
- ❖ TEMPO data will play an **important role in the scientific analysis of pollution**, including studies of rush hour pollution, the potential for improved air quality alerts, the effects of lightning on ozone, the movement of pollution from forest fires and volcanoes, and even the effects of fertilizer application.

Geostationary orbit (GEO)

- ❖ Satellites in geostationary orbit (GEO) circle Earth above the equator from west to east following Earth's rotation – taking 23 hours 56 minutes and 4 seconds – by travelling at exactly the same rate as Earth.
- ❖ This makes satellites in GEO appear to be 'stationary' over a fixed position.
- ❖ In order to perfectly match Earth's rotation, the speed of GEO satellites should be about 3 km per second at an altitude of 35 786 km.
- ❖ This is much farther from Earth's surface compared to many satellites.
- ❖ It is used by satellites that need to stay constantly above one particular place over Earth, such as telecommunication satellites.
- ❖ It can also be used by weather monitoring satellites, because they can continually observe specific areas to see how weather trends emerge there

19. POPULATION BOMB

Source: The Hindu

News: The Earth4All modelling team published their predictions about the **world's human population** in the form of a report.





About

- ❖ The word '**population bomb**' signifies a grim scenario that warns of perils of **overpopulation** like mass starvation and environmental deterioration.
- ❖ In the new Earth4All Initiative report, the researchers set aside population-modelling approaches adopted by the U.N., the Wittgenstein Centre, The Lancet, and integrated assessment models.
- ❖ In the Earth4All model, **birth rates** are explicitly and causally modelled as a **function of GDP per person**, depicting a negative correlation between income and fertility rate.
- ❖ Earth4All is a vibrant collective of leading economic thinkers, scientists, and advocates, convened by **The Club of Rome**, the **Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research**, the **Stockholm Resilience Centre** and the **Norwegian Business School**.

Findings of the Report

The researchers advance two scenarios:

- ❖ The first, called "**Too Little, Too Late**", predicts that if economic development continues as it has in the last five decades, the world's population would peak at **8.6 billion in 2050**, roughly 25 years from now, and decline to **7 billion by 2100**.
- ❖ In the second scenario, called "**The Giant Leap**", the researchers conclude that the population will peak at **8.5 billion by 2040** – a decade sooner than 2050 – but then rapidly decline to around **6 billion by 2100**. This will be due to our investments in poverty alleviation, gender equity, education and health, ameliorating inequality, and food and energy security.
- ❖ These **population predictions are more optimistic** than the kind of historic fear mongering and regressive development policies engendered by the 'population bomb' metaphor.
- ❖ Population alone was never the problem for sustainability, nor will it be for the climate crisis rather a declining population alone won't address the issues surrounding the climate crisis.

Comparison with other Reports

- ❖ The Earth4All report contradicted the U.N. '**World Populations Prospects 2022**' report, which predicted that the global population would steadily rise to **10.4 billion in 2080** and then stabilise around that number in **2100**.
- ❖ The contradictions between the U.N. report and the Earth4All 2023 report are helpful because they allow us to imagine and address the conditions proposed by different studies. They also inform scholarship, activism, and policies that safeguard women's health and well-being in all possible scenarios.



Population Growth and Related issues

- ❖ Large population will require the unflinching **focus of policymakers on areas fundamental to human well-being** — education, nutrition, healthcare, housing, and employment.
- ❖ Rapid population growth can make challenges of **hunger and poverty steeper**.
- ❖ Rapid population growth makes eradicating poverty, combating hunger and malnutrition, and increasing the coverage of health and education systems more difficult.
- ❖ Will need **policies to increase jobs** so that labour force participation rate increases for both men and women.

Indian Scenario

- ❖ As of 2022, more than half the world's population lives in Asia, **China and India being the two most populous countries** with more than 1.4 billion people each.
- ❖ According to the **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**, while India's population growth is stabilising, it is "still growing at 0.7% per year" and is set to surpass China in 2023 as the **world's most populous country**.
- ❖ UNFPA has noted that India has its **largest ever adolescent and youth population**.
- ❖ According to UNFPA projections, India will continue to have one of the youngest populations in the world till 2030 and is currently experiencing a demographic window of opportunity, a "youth bulge" that will last till 2025.

Steps taken by India for Stabilising Population

- ❖ **Mission Parivar Vikas:** For substantially increasing access to contraceptives and family planning services in 146 high fertility districts with Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 3 and above in seven high focus states.
- ❖ **Compensation scheme for sterilization acceptors:** Under the scheme MoHFW provides compensation for loss of wages to the beneficiary and also to the service provider (& team) for conducting sterilizations.
- ❖ **Clinical Outreach Teams (COT) Scheme:** The scheme has been launched in 146 Mission Parivar Vikas districts for providing Family planning services through mobile teams from accredited organizations in far-flung, underserved and geographically difficult areas.
- ❖ Scheme for **Home delivery of contraceptives by ASHAs** at doorstep of beneficiaries. Scheme for ASHAs to Ensure **spacing in births**.
- ❖ **Family Planning Logistic Management and Information System (FP-LMIS):** A dedicated software to ensure smooth forecasting, procurement and distribution of family planning commodities across all the levels of health facilities.
- ❖ **National Family Planning Indemnity Scheme (NFPIS)** under which clients are insured in the eventualities of death, complication and failure following sterilization.
- ❖ Ensuring quality of care in Family Planning services by establishing **Quality Assurance Committees** in all states and districts.

20.EFFECT OF RAINS ON WHEAT CROP

Source: The Hindu

News: The **unusual rise in heat** followed by an untimely **spell of widespread rain** left wheat-growing farmers worried.



Wheat and its cultivation in India

- ❖ It is **Rabi Crop** and is the **main cereal crop** in India.
- ❖ It has wide adaptability. It can be grown not only in the **tropical and subtropical zones** but also in the **temperate zone** and the **cold tracts** of the far north, beyond even the **60-degree north altitude**.
- ❖ It **can tolerate severe cold and snow** and resume growth with the setting in of warm weather in spring
- ❖ It is sown in **October-December** and harvested during April-June.
- ❖ **Soil:** It is grown in a variety of soils in India.
 - ❖ Soils with a clay loam or loam texture, good structure, and moderate water-holding capacity are ideal for wheat cultivation.
- ❖ **Wheat-growing states in India:** Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, and Gujarat

Impacts and Concerns Related to recent weather events

- ❖ According to the **IMD**, fairly widespread rains along with stormy winds lashed several parts of the major wheat-growing States in the country under the **influence of consecutive western disturbances**.

- ❖ Wheat is **sensitive to both heat stress and rain/ thunderstorms** during the terminal grain filling and ripening period.
- ❖ When accompanied by **high-velocity winds**, make the stems prone to “lodging” or bending and even falling flat on the ground.
- ❖ The crop damage scenario also comes against the **backdrop of persisting high inflation and food security woes globally amid geopolitical uncertainties**.

Governments View

- ❖ The Centre is optimistic that wheat production would be close to 112 MT on account of an increased acreage (area) of wheat and better yield this season, despite a slight production loss due to recent adverse weather conditions.

Way Ahead

- ❖ A sizable section of farmers asserts that the inclement weather has adversely damaged the standing wheat crop.
- ❖ Moreover, if the country's wheat production drops below the government estimate it could lead to a hike in prices of wheat and wheat-based products in the domestic market,
- ❖ Any decline in wheat production can also lead to a potential food grain security issue.
- ❖ If the production is less, then the possibility of market intervention by the government is also quite bleak as its priority would be to maintain the buffer stock.

21.FLASH DROUGHTS

Source: IE

News: As per a recent study, flash droughts occurred more often than conventional 'slow' droughts in tropical places like India, Southeast Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and the Amazon basin.





More about Study

- ❖ Flash droughts are fast becoming the 'new normal' making forecasting and preparing for their impact more difficult.
- ❖ Climate change has effectively speed up the onset of droughts.
- ❖ **Reason:** when the precipitation suddenly shuts off, hot, sunny and windy conditions can cause large amounts of water to evaporate quickly (i.e., high evapotranspiration)
- ❖ The trends varied from place to place, but, looked at globally, they show a shift toward more frequent and more rapid flash droughts.

Flash Droughts

- **About:**
 - ❖ A considerably long dry spell with significantly low precipitation anomalies during the monsoon results in an increase in air temperature. Increased air temperature and precipitation deficit together cause a rapid depletion of soil moisture leading to flash drought.
 - ❖ There is little known about flash droughts or 'hidden hazards' when compared to research available on long-term droughts.
- **Occurrence:**
 - ❖ Flash droughts can occur in the monsoon season as well, primarily caused by the monsoon breaks and these can also occur due to delayed onset of the summer.
- **Duration:**
 - ❖ Normally, developing drought conditions take months, but flash droughts could occur in weeks and stay on for months.
- **Factors:**
 - ❖ Atmospheric anomalies (variations), anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and ongoing climate change.
- **Detection:**
 - ❖ **Early-warning systems (EWS)**, that could identify trends in climate and sources of water, are used to detect the emergence or probability of the occurrence of flash droughts.
 - ❖ Drought monitoring through use of **remote sensing data** and various indices for drought monitoring as well as through on-line help facilities.
- **Drought**
 - ❖ A drought is a period of unusually persistent dry weather that persists long enough to cause serious problems such as crop damage and/or water supply shortages. The severity of the drought depends upon the degree of moisture deficiency, the duration, and the size of the affected area.



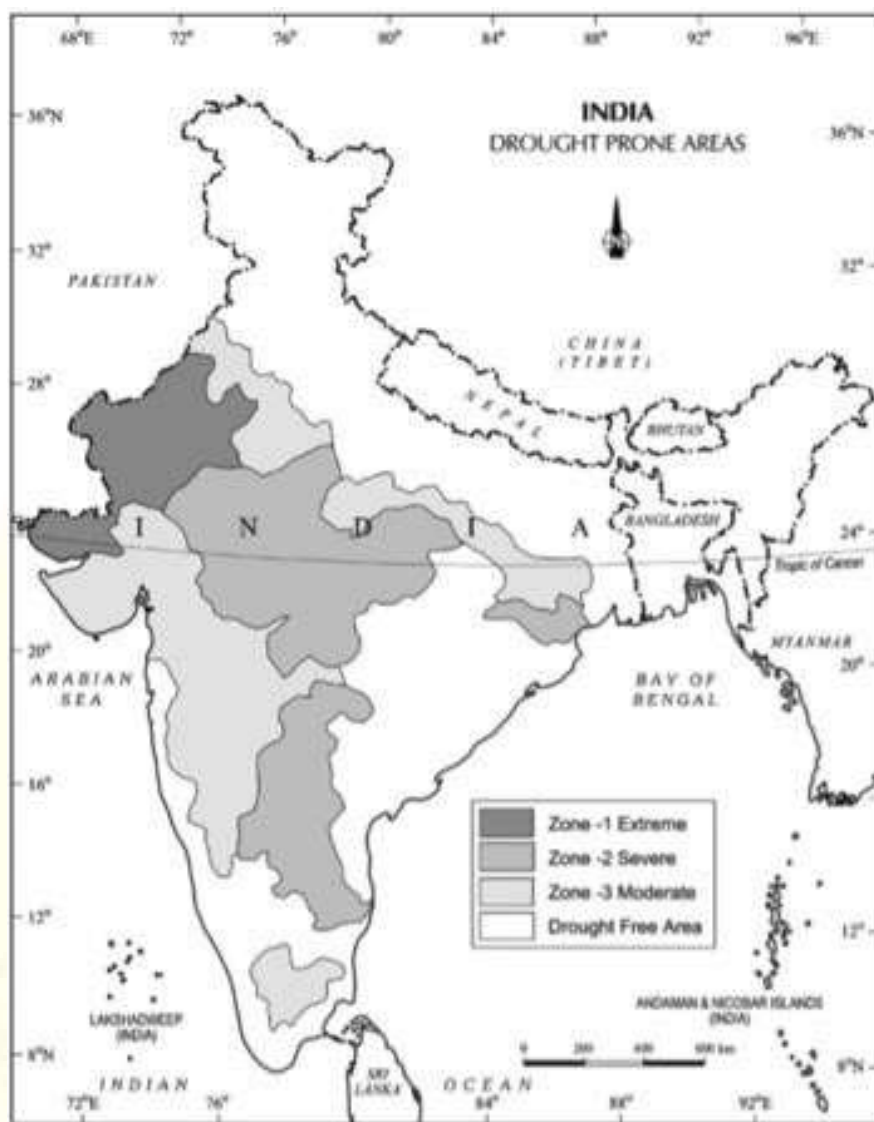
➤ Classification

- ❖ **Meteorological Drought:** It is classified based on rainfall deficiency with respect to long term average, where 25% or less is normal, 26-50% is moderate and more than 50% is severe.
- ❖ **Hydrological Drought:** It is defined as deficiencies in surface and subsurface water supplies leading to a lack of water for normal and specific needs. Such conditions arise even in times of average (or above average) precipitation when increased usage of water diminishes the reserves
- ❖ **Agricultural Drought:** It is identified with soil moisture deficiency in relation to meteorological droughts and climatic factors and their impacts on agricultural production and economic profitability.
- ❖ **Ecological drought:** When the productivity of the natural ecosystem diminishes due to water shortage which causes ecological distress and ecosystem damage.

➤ Drought Prone Areas

- ❖ In India, around 68% of the country is prone to drought to varying degrees.
- ❖ The 35% area which receives rainfall between 750 mm and 1125 mm is considered drought prone while 33% receiving less than 750 mm is chronically drought prone.

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Map of drought prone districts of India

➤ Major Causes

- ❖ Variability in rainfall
- ❖ Deviation in the route of monsoon winds
- ❖ Early withdrawal of the monsoon
- ❖ Forest fires
- ❖ Frequently occurring El NINO events
- ❖ Land degradation in addition to Climate change

➤ Drought Management in India

- ❖ Drought Mitigation Programs

- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)
- ❖ National Rainfed Area Programme- objective of the programme is to increase agricultural productivity in rainfed areas in a sustainable manner by adopting an appropriate farming system
- ❖ **Water Harvesting and Conservation**-Farm Ponds, Percolation Tanks (PT) / Spreading Basin, Some traditional water harvesting methods like Tankas / Kunds / Kundis In the desert and arid areas of Rajasthan.
- ❖ **Rainwater Harvesting in Urban Areas**
- ❖ Afforestation -National Green Mission is an important program to improve afforestation along with the creation of green corridors.
- ❖ **Monitoring and Early warning systems** at Central and State level to declare 'Drought'
- ❖ Drought relief and response measures are initiated following the declaration of drought.

22.RISING ANTARCTIC ICE MELT WILL DRAMATICALLY SLOW GLOBAL OCEAN FLOWS

Source : The Hindu

News : According to a study published recently in the journal Nature, deep ocean water flows from the Antarctic could decline by 40% by 2050.



- ❖ Rapidly melting Antarctic ice is dramatically slowing down the flow of water through the world's oceans, and **could have a disastrous impact on the global climate, the marine food chain and even the stability of ice shelves**

Key Highlights:

- ❖ Led by **scientists from the University of New South Wales** and published in the journal Nature, the peer-reviewed study **modeled the impact of melting Antarctic ice**



on deep ocean currents that work to flush nutrients from the seafloor to fish near the surface.

- ❖ Scientists relied on around 35 million computing hours over two years to crank through a variety of models and simulations up to the middle of this century, finding **deepwater circulation in the Antarctic could weaken at twice the rate of decline in the North Atlantic.**
- ❖ The effect of meltwater on global ocean circulation has **not yet been included in the complex models used by the IPCC** to describe future climate change scenarios, but it is going to be considerable.

Key Findings:

- ❖ **The Antarctic overturning circulation – also known as abyssal ocean overturning – is on track to slow 40% by 2050** if the world continues to burn fossil fuels and produce high levels of planet-heating pollution.
- ❖ A slowdown is **expected to speed up ice melt and potentially end an ocean system** that has helped sustain life for thousands of years. In the past, these overturning circulations **changed over the course of 1,000 years** or so, but now these changes are occurring within a few decades. So it is **pretty dramatic and challenging.**
- ❖ The circulation of deep ocean water is **considered vital for the health of the sea – and plays an important role in sequestering carbon** absorbed from the atmosphere. The study's findings also suggest the **ocean would not be able to absorb as much carbon dioxide as its upper layers become more stratified**, leaving more CO₂ in the atmosphere.
- ❖ According to the report, while a **slowdown of the AMOC would mean the deep Atlantic Ocean would get colder**, the slower circulation of dense water in the Antarctic means the deepest waters of the Southern Ocean will warm up.
- ❖ In certain areas, mostly south of Australia in the Southern Ocean and in the tropics, **this nutrient-rich cold water moves toward the surface in a process called upwelling**, distributing the nutrients to higher layers of the ocean.
- ❖ However, the study found that as **global temperatures warm, melting sea ice “freshens” the water around Antarctica, diluting its saltiness and raising its temperature**, meaning it's less dense and doesn't sink to the bottom as efficiently as it once did.
- ❖ Nutrients exported from the Southern Ocean in other current systems **support about three quarters of global phytoplankton production – the base of the food chain.**



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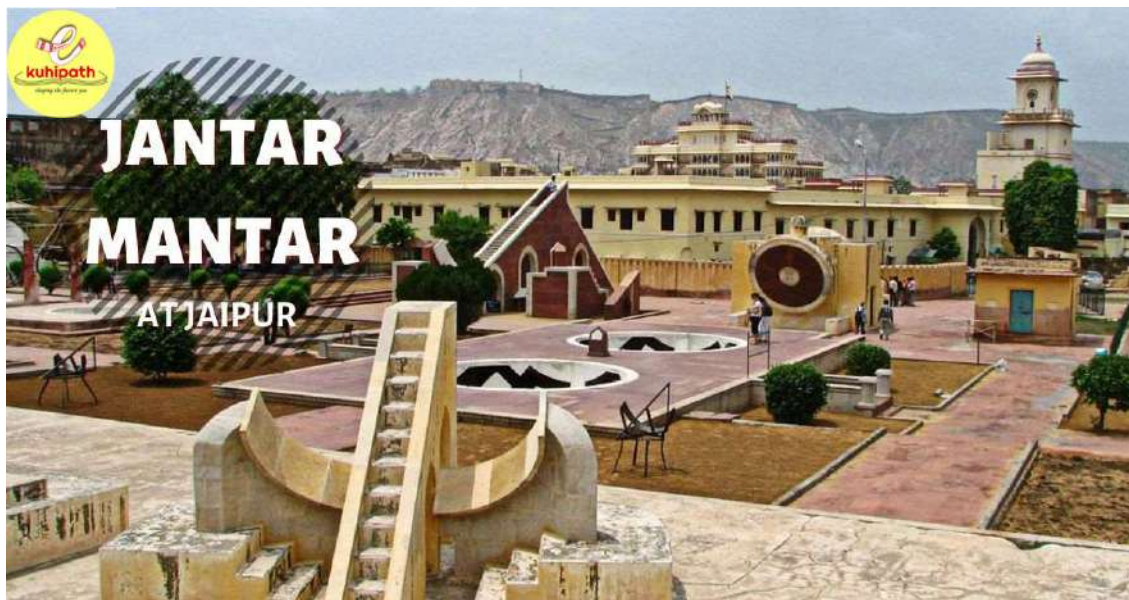
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ART & CULTURE

23.JANTAR MANTAR OBSERVATORY



LIMESTONE TERRAINS

- ❖ **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** has informed Delhi High Court that an expert committee has been formed for conservation and preservation of the Jantar Mantar observatory.
- ❖ **Jantar Mantar** was built by **Maharaja Jai Singh of Jaipur** in 1724. He also built Jantar Mantar at **Jaipur, Ujjain, Mathura and Varanasi**.
- ❖ It consists of **multiple buildings** of unique form, each with a **specialized function for astronomical measurement**.
- ❖ It was built to compile **astronomical tables**, and to predict the times and **movements of sun, moon and planets**

24.MANAMADURAI POTTERY

Source : The Hindu

News : Recently Manamadurai pottery of Sivagangai district, Tamil Nadu got the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

- ❖ A **unique type of clay** is sourced from **water bodies** like Nedunkulam, Nathapurakki, Sundaranadappu, Seikalathur **to make these pots**.
- ❖ **Main raw materials** for making these pots are **soil and water**.
- ❖ **Vaigai River** which runs through the Manamadurai village **enriches the clay** used for the pottery.



Manamadurai Pottery



Why in news?

Manamadurai pottery recently earned a Geographical Indication (GI) tag.



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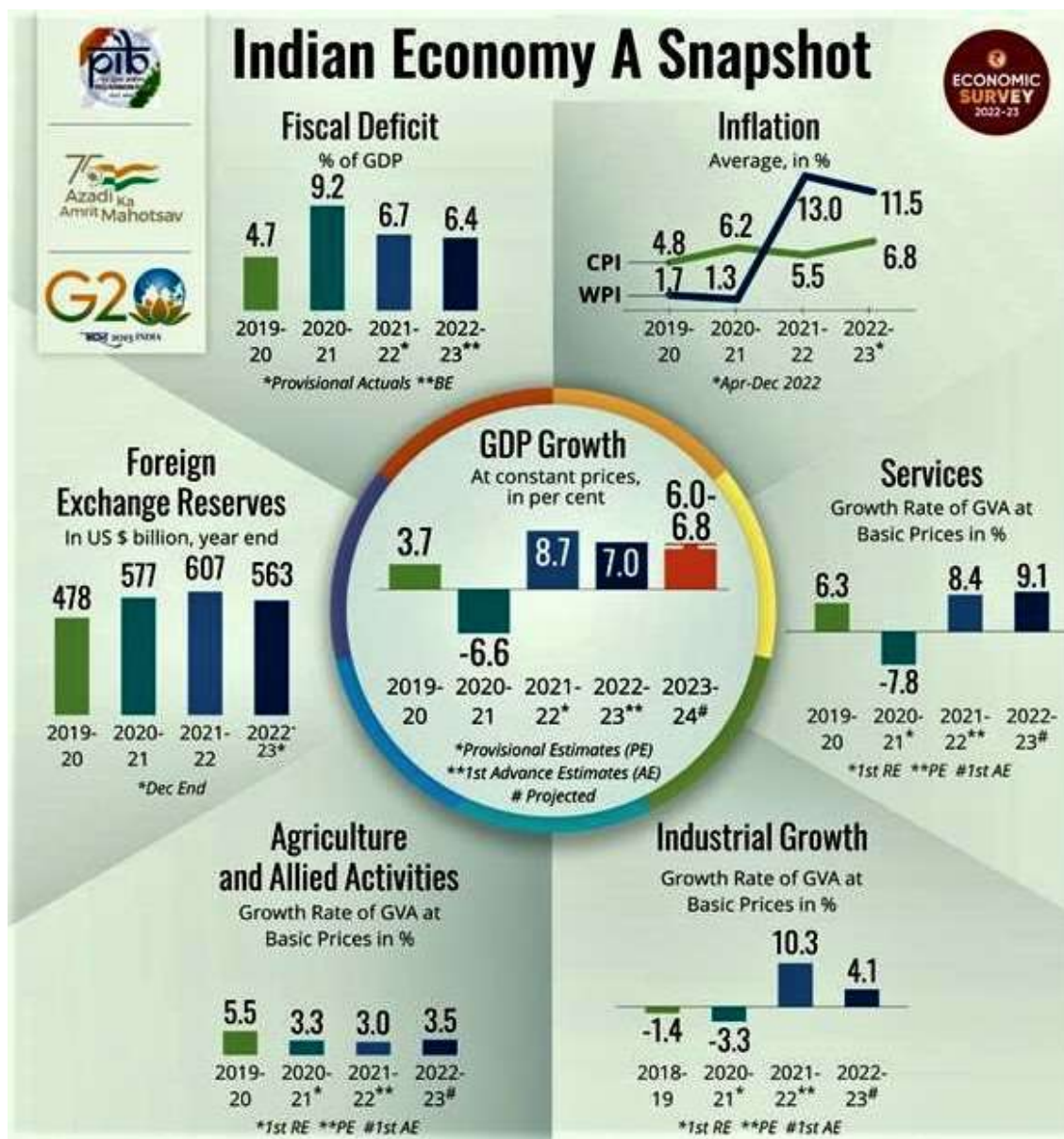
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ECONOMICS

25.HIGHLIGHTS OF ECONOMIC SURVEY

The Economic Survey 2022-23 prepared by a team of economists led by chief economic adviser Anantha Nageswaran analyses developments in the economy in the past year and makes projections for the following year.





State of the Economy 2022-23: Recovery Complete

At least three shocks have hit the global economy since 2020: COVID-19, Russia-Ukraine conflict, and policy rate hikes.

Key Points

- ❖ It all started with the pandemic-induced contraction of the global output, followed by the Russian-Ukraine conflict leading to a worldwide surge in inflation. Then, the central banks across economies led by the Federal Reserve responded with synchronised policy rate hikes to curb inflation.
- ❖ After the three major shocks to the global economy since 2020, India appears to have moved on. Indian economy is projected to be the fastest-growing major economy in FY23 at a 6.5-7.0% growth rate, as per various agencies worldwide.
- ❖ India staged a full-recovery in FY22 while ahead of many nations and positioning itself to ascend to the pre-pandemic growth path in FY23. India's economic growth in FY23 has been principally led by two main reasons: private consumption and capital formation.

Growth

- ❖ India is the 3rd largest economy in the world in PPP terms and the 5th largest in market exchange rates.
- ❖ **GDP** - The Indian economy is expected to expand 7% in real terms in 2022-23.
- ❖ It has been projected to be around 6.0 to 6.8% in 2023-24 depending on the trajectory of economic and political developments globally.
- ❖ Global growth is forecasted to slow to 2.7% in 2023 as per IMF's World Economic Outlook, October 2022.
- ❖ **Private consumption** - As a percentage of GDP, private consumption recovered to 58.4% in the second quarter of 2022-23, due to rebound in contact-intensive services such as trade and transport.

Fiscal developments

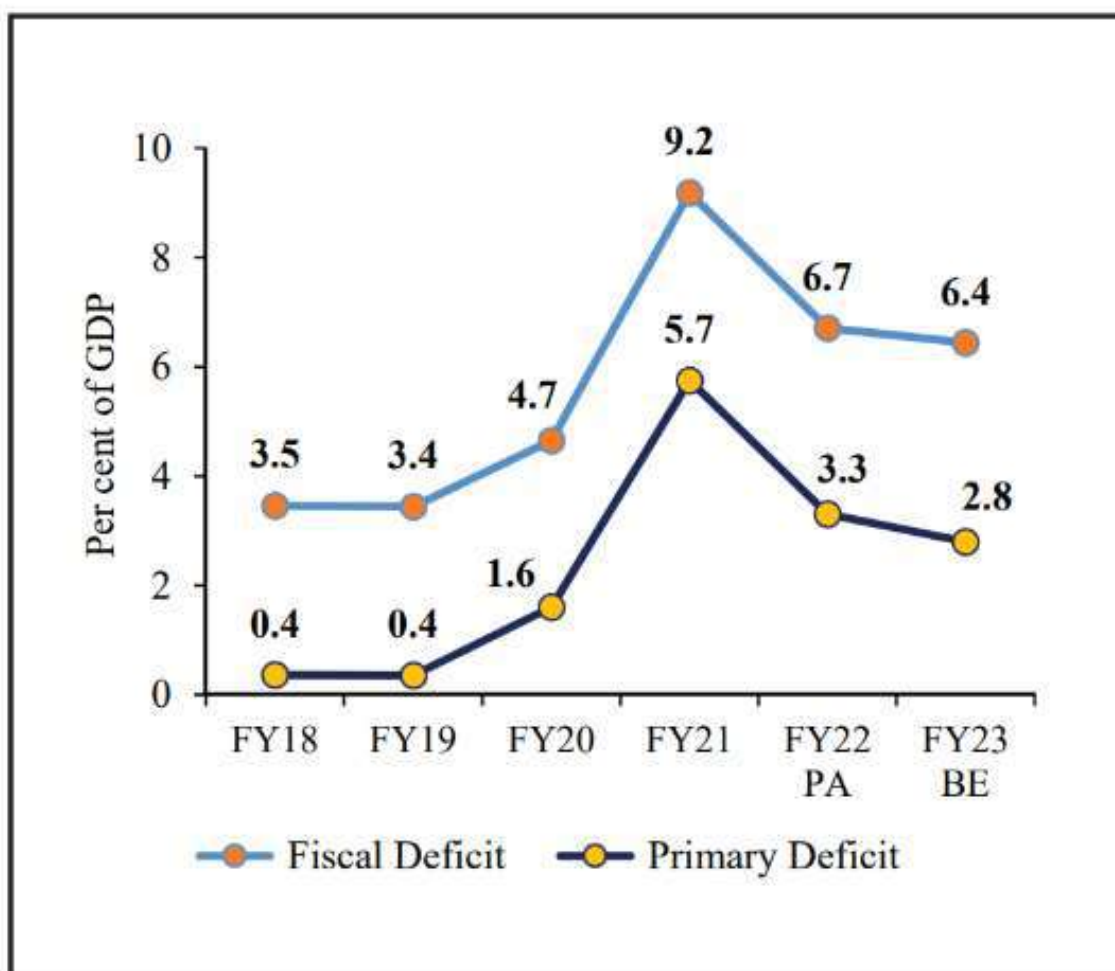
- ❖ **Inflation** - India's retail inflation rate peaked at 7.8% in April 2022, above the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) upper tolerance limit of 6%.
- ❖ **Tax collection** - The gross tax revenue registered a year-on-year growth of 15.5% from April to November 2022 driven by robust growth in the direct taxes and GST.
- ❖ **Capital expenditure** - The Centre's capital expenditure rose to 2.5% of GDP in 2021-22.

Developments in Union Government Finances

- ❖ The fiscal deficit of the Union Government, which reached 9.2% of GDP during the pandemic year FY21, has moderated to 6.7% of GDP in FY22 and is further budgeted to reach 6.4% of GDP in FY23.

- ❖ The fiscal deficit of the Union Government at the end of November 2022 stood at 58.9% of the BE, lower than the five-year moving average of 104.6% of BE during the same period.
- ❖ This resilience in the fiscal performance of the Centre has resulted due to a recovery in economic activity, buoyancy in revenues observed during the year, and conservative assumptions of macroeconomic variables in the Budget.

Trends in Union government deficits over the years- On the way to fiscal consolidation



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Monetary management

- ❖ **Non-performing assets** - The gross non-performing assets ratio of scheduled commercial banks fell to a seven-year low of 5%.
- ❖ **CRAR** - The Capital-to-Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) remains healthy at 16.0.
- ❖ **Fiscal deficit** - The survey expressed confidence that the Union government should be able to meet the fiscal deficit target of 6.4% of GDP for this financial year.
- ❖ The government aims to lower the fiscal deficit to 4.5% of GDP by FY26 from a target of 6.4% of GDP in this fiscal year.

Social infrastructure and employment

- ❖ **Education** - As a share of total GDP, the budgetary allocation for education was at 2.9%.
- ❖ **Health** - The out-of-pocket expenditure as a percentage of total health expenditure declined to 48.2 % in 2018-19.
- ❖ **Food security** - Schemes like PM-Kisan and PM Garib Kalyan Yojana have helped in ensuring food security and their impact was also endorsed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- ❖ **Inclusion** - The JAM (Jan-Dhan, Aadhaar and mobile) trinity and direct benefit transfers has brought the marginalised sections into the formal financial system.
- ❖ **Employment** - Labour markets recovered beyond pre-Covid levels, in both urban and rural areas, with **unemployment rates** falling to 4.2% in 2020-21.
- ❖ Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is indirectly creating opportunities for rural households to diversify their sources of income generation.

Agriculture and food management

- ❖ **Private investment** - Private investment in agriculture rose to 9.3% in 2020-21.
- ❖ **Institutional credit** - Institutional credit to the agricultural sector continued to grow to Rs 18.6 lakh crore in 2021-22.
- ❖ **MSP** - The minimum support price for all mandated crops was fixed at 1.5 times of the all-India weighted average cost of production from 2018.
- ❖ **Foodgrain production** - Foodgrain production in India saw sustained increase and stood at 315.7 million tonnes in 2021-22.
- ❖ India stands at the forefront to promote millets through the International Year of Millets initiative.

Industry

- ❖ India became the second-largest mobile phone manufacturer globally.
- ❖ The production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes were introduced across 14 categories, with an estimated capex of Rs 4 lakh crore over the next five years, to plug India into global supply chains.



Services

- ❖ The services sector is expected to grow at 9.1% in 2022-23.
- ❖ India was among the top ten services exporting countries in 2021.
- ❖ India's e-commerce market is projected to grow at 18% annually through 2025.

External sector

- ❖ **Exports** - Merchandise exports were 332.8 billion dollars for April-December 2022 as India diversified its markets to Brazil, South Africa and Saudi Arabia.
- ❖ India entered into a comprehensive economic partnership agreement with the United Arab Emirates and an economic cooperation and trade agreement with Australia in 2022.
- ❖ **Remittances** - India continued to be the largest recipient of remittances in the world, netting 100 billion dollar in 2022.
- ❖ Remittances are the 2nd largest major source of external financing after service exports.
- ❖ **Forex reserves** - As of end-November 2022, India was the 6th largest foreign exchange reserves holder in the world.

Foreign Portfolio Investments

- ❖ Global economic factors, such as inflationary pressures, monetary tightening by central banks and recessionary fears in Advanced Economies, exerted pressure on FPIs to sell in Indian markets.
- ❖ However, on account of the strong macroeconomic fundamentals of the Indian economy, the market witnessed an increase despite the outflows driven by global factors. The total assets under custody with FPIs increased by 3.4 per cent at the end of November 2022 compared to November 2021.
- ❖ The overall net investments by Foreign Portfolio Investors during FY23 registered an outflow of Rs. 16,153 crore at the end of December 2022 from an outflow of Rs. 5,578 crore during FY22 at the end of December 2021, with both the equity segment and the debt segment witnessing net FPI outflows.
- ❖ Investments by Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) acted as a countervailing force against FPI outflows during recent years, rendering the Indian equity market relatively less susceptible to large scale corrections.
- ❖ Net DII inflows and net investment by mutual funds in equities were observed during FY23 (until November 2022).



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IFSC – GIFT City

- ❖ The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) has been established on April 27, 2020 under the International Financial Services Centres Authority Act, 2019. It is headquartered at GIFT City, Gandhinagar in Gujarat.
- ❖ IFSCA seeks to develop a strong global connect and focus on the needs of the Indian economy as well as to serve as an international financial platform for the entire region and the global economy as a whole.
- ❖ IFSC can facilitate India's emergence as a preferred jurisdiction for international financial services and encouraging easier access and greater participation from foreign investors to bring in capital to further promote India's growth.

Climate Change and Environment

- ❖ India declared the Net Zero Pledge to achieve net zero emissions goal by 2070.
- ❖ India achieved its target of 40% installed electric capacity from non-fossil fuels ahead of 2030.
- ❖ A mass movement LIFE– Life style for Environment was launched.
- ❖ Sovereign Green Bond Framework (SGrBs) were issued in 2022.
- ❖ National Green Hydrogen Mission enables India to be energy independent by 2047.

Infrastructure

- **Physical Infrastructure-** Projects that are currently active include
 - ❖ National Infrastructure Pipeline
 - ❖ National Monetisation Pipeline
 - ❖ Gati Shakti
 - ❖ National Logistics Policy
- **Digital Public Infrastructure**
 - ❖ Unified Payment Interface (UPI)-based transactions grew in value (121%) and volume (115%) terms between 2019-22.
 - ❖ Rural internet subscriptions witnessed a 200% increase, between 2015 and 2021.



Challenges for the Global Economy

- ❖ The Survey narrates about six challenges faced by the global economy.
 1. **COVID-19** related disruptions in economies
 2. **Russian-Ukraine conflict** and its adverse impact along with disruption in supply chain
 3. Central Banks led by Federal Reserve responding with **policy rate hikes** to curb inflation, leading to appreciation of US Dollar and widening of Current Account Deficits (CAD) in net importing economies
 4. The prospects of **global stagflation** compelling the nations to protect their respective economic space, thus slowing cross-border trade
 5. **China's slowdown** induced by its policies
 6. **Loss of education and income-earning opportunities** brought in by the pandemic



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SCIENCE AND TECH

26.3D PRINTING TECHNOLOGY

Source: Indian express

News: The PM appreciated the use of 3D printing technology in the construction of the post office.



About 3D printing technology

- ❖ Three-dimensional (3D) printing is an additive manufacturing process in which a physical object is created from a digital design by printing thin layers of material and then fusing them together.
- ❖ 3D printing technology is a fast-emerging technology.

Applications

- ❖ 3D Printing is widely used in the world. It is increasingly used for the mass customization, and production of any type of open-source designs in the field of agriculture, in healthcare, the automotive industry, the locomotive industry, and aviation industries.
- ❖ It can print an object layer-by-layer deposition of material directly from a computer-aided design (CAD) model.



- ❖ It is available for various segments, such as affordable housing up to G+3 floor, military barracks, single-floor schools, warehousing, accommodation, and villas.

Advantages derived from using 3D printing technology

- ❖ Ease of Access
- ❖ Advanced Healthcare
- ❖ Environmentally Friendly
- ❖ Cost Effective
- ❖ Rapid Prototyping
- ❖ Fast Design and Production
- ❖ Strong and Lightweight Parts
- ❖ Create complex objects and shapes that otherwise might be impossible to create through any conventional method.

Disadvantages

- ❖ **Design Inaccuracies:** A potential problem with 3D printing is directly related to the type of machine or process used, with some printers having lower tolerances, meaning that final parts may differ from the original design.
- ❖ **Copyright Issues:** As 3D printing is becoming more popular and accessible there is a greater possibility for people to create fake and counterfeit products and it will almost be impossible to tell the difference.
 - ❖ This has evident issues around copyright as well as for quality control.
- ❖ **Reduction in Manufacturing Jobs:** Another of the disadvantages of 3D technology is the potential reduction in human labour, since most of the production is automated and done by printers.
 - ❖ However, many third world countries rely on low skill jobs to keep their economies running, and this technology could put these manufacturing jobs at risk by cutting out the need for production abroad.
- ❖ **Restricted Build Size:** 3D printers currently have small print chambers which restrict the size of parts that can be printed. Anything bigger will need to be printed in separate parts and joined together after production. This can increase costs and time for larger parts due to the printer needing to print more parts before manual labour is used to join the parts together.
- ❖ **Limited Materials:** 3D Printing can create items in a selection of plastics and metals the available selection of raw materials is not exhaustive



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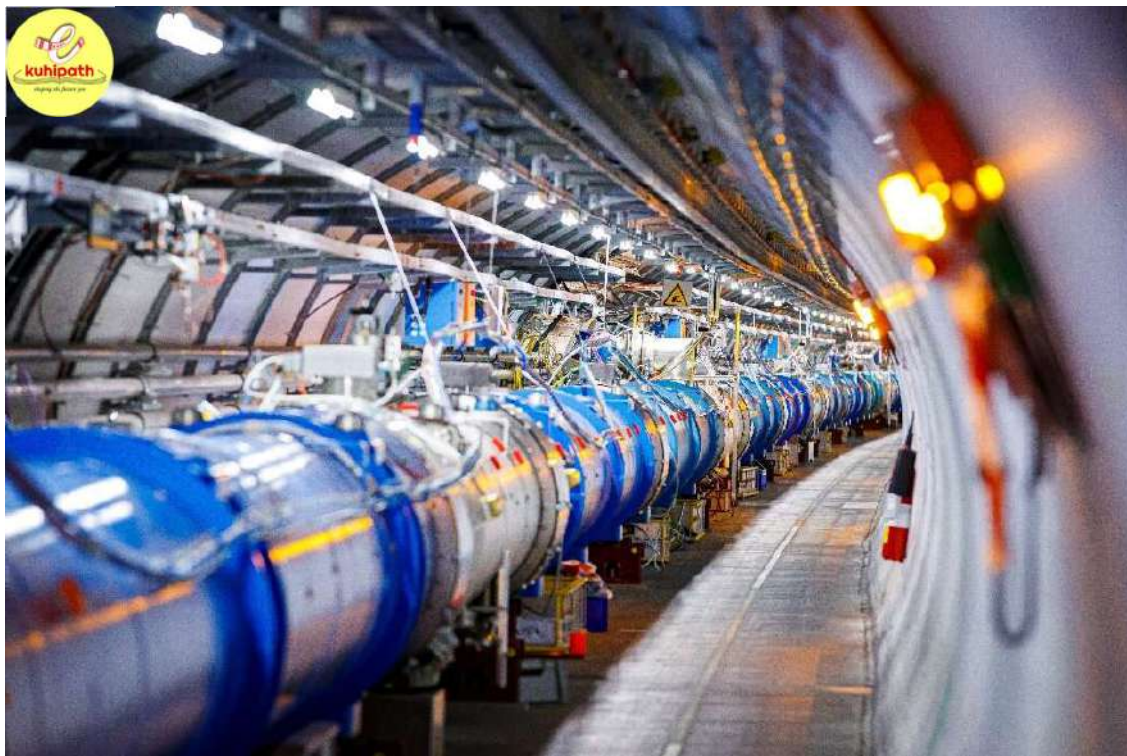


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27.LARGE HADRON COLLIDER (LHC)

Source: The Hindu

News: Currently, engineers are warming up the **Large Hadron Collider (LHC)** for its **third season of operations**.



Large Hadron Collider (LHC)

- ❖ The LHC is the **world's largest science experiment** that smashes tiny particles called hadrons together at really high speeds. It uses protons as the particles and has a long circular pipe where they're accelerated.
- ❖ It is built by the **European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN)**.
- ❖ LHC's goal is to test the **Standard Model**, the mathematical framework physicists use to describe all of the known fundamental particles in the universe and the forces through which they interact.
- ❖ LHC studies the **smallest known building blocks of matter**. It fires two beams of protons almost at the speed of light in opposite directions, guided by the magnetic field of superconducting electromagnets.
- ❖ **ATLAS** is the largest general purpose particle detector experiment at the LHC; the **Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS) experiment** is one of the largest international scientific collaborations in history, with the same goals as ATLAS, but which uses a different magnet-system design.

'God Particle' & Previous discoveries

- ❖ Ten years ago, on July 4, 2012, scientists at CERN had announced to the world the discovery of the Higgs boson or the **'God Particle'** during the LHC's first run.
 - ❖ Higgs boson is the fundamental force-carrying particle of the Higgs field, which is responsible for granting other particles their mass.
 - ❖ **Peter Higgs and his collaborator François Englert** were awarded the Nobel Prize for physics in 2013 for the discovery of the **Higgs Boson**.
- ❖ Observed **exotic particles like pentaquarks and tetraquarks** and checked if their properties are in line with theoretical expectations
 - ❖ **Quarks** are elementary particles that usually combine in groups of twos and threes to form hadrons such as the protons and neutrons that make up atomic nuclei.

About CERN

- ❖ European Organisation for **Nuclear Research (CERN)** is the world's largest **nuclear** and particle physics laboratory.
- ❖ CERN is based in Geneva on the French-Swiss border. It has 23 member states.
- ❖ **India in 2016 became an associate member of the CERN**. Indian scientists have played a significant role in the ALICE experiment, which is a dedicated experiment for search and study of Quark Gluon Plasma (QGP).

28.BIOLUMINESCENCE

Source: The Hindu

News: The bioluminescence phenomenon was seen in the Visakhapatnam beaches.





What is Bioluminescence?

- ❖ It is the production and emission of light by a **living organism**.
- ❖ The chemical reaction that results in **bioluminescence** requires **two unique chemicals: luciferin and either luciferase or photoprotein**. Luciferin is the compound that actually produces light.
- ❖ In a chemical reaction, **luciferin is called the substrate**. The bioluminescent color (**yellow in fireflies, greenish in lanternfish**) is a result of the arrangement of luciferin molecules.

Reason for Bioluminescence of Beaches.

- ❖ The glow of the waves is caused by tiny marine organisms called **phytoplankton**, which emit light on the ocean surface at night. It is best experienced during a moonless night.
- ❖ Bioluminescence is widespread among deep sea animals in general. Many marine creatures like sponges, jellyfish, worms, species of fish, arthropods, echinoderms and unicellular alga exhibit bioluminescence to either evade predators, attract prey or during mating.
- ❖ In Visakhapanam, this phenomenon is most likely the result of an algal bloom (significant accumulation) of the dinoflagellate species of noctiluca and ceratium.



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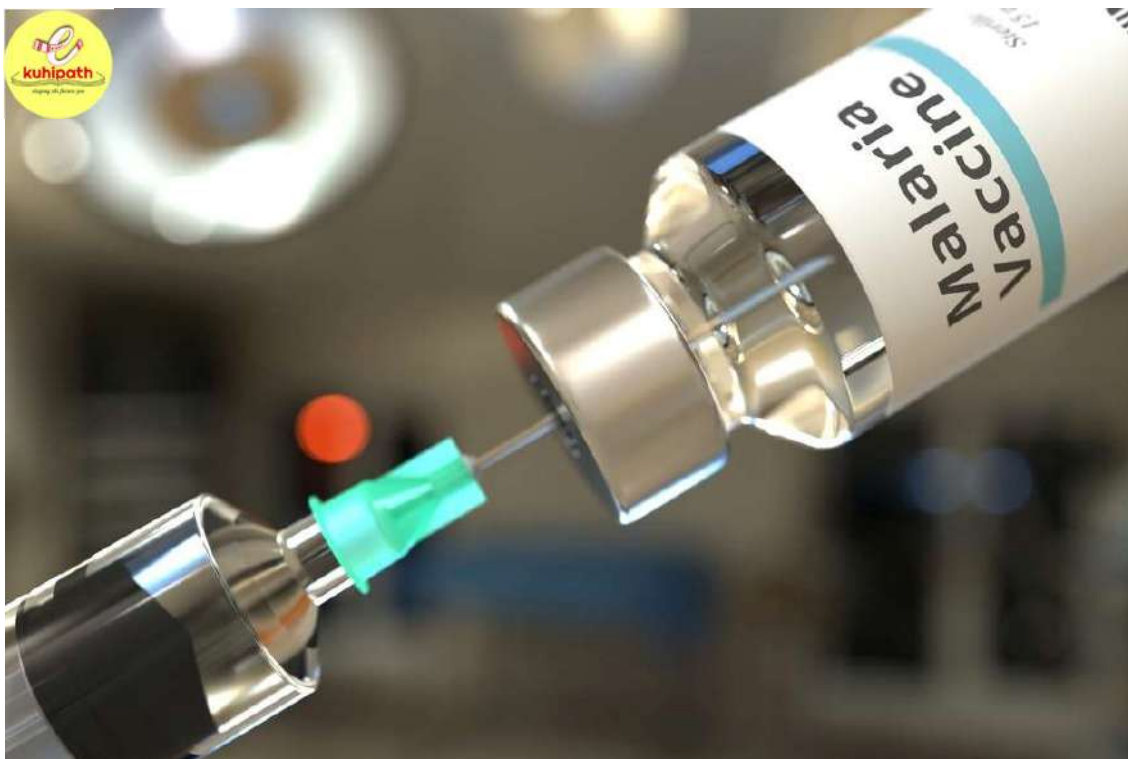
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29.R21 MALARIA VACCINE

Source: Economic times

News: Nigeria made history with the approval granted a new malaria vaccine- R21/Matrix-M, which has been developed by the University of Oxford and manufactured by the Serum Institute of India. It is the second country to do so after Ghana.



About

- ❖ The R21, otherwise referred to as Matrix-M malaria vaccine, is the second vaccine ever developed for a disease.
- ❖ The first-ever malaria vaccine, RTS, S or mosquirix was approved by the WHO in 2021.
- ❖ Since 2015, 9 countries have been certified by the WHO Director-General as malaria-free, including Maldives, Sri Lanka, Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, Uzbekistan, Argentina, Algeria, China (2021) and El Salvador (2021).

Malaria

- **About**
 - ❖ It is a mosquito-borne blood disease caused by plasmodium protozoa.
 - ❖ The parasites spread through the bites of infected female **Anopheles mosquitoes**.
- **Cause:**
 - ❖ It is a life threatening disease caused by plasmodium parasites.
- **Transmission:**



- ❖ The parasites spread through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes.
- ❖ In the human body, parasites initially multiply in liver cells and **then attack the Red Blood Cells (RBCs).**
- ❖ There are 5 parasite species that cause Malaria in humans and 2 of these species (**Plasmodium falciparum and Plasmodium vivax**) **pose the greatest threat.**
- **Distribution:**
 - ❖ It is predominantly found in the tropical and subtropical areas of Africa, South America and Asia.
- **Symptoms:**
 - ❖ Fever and flu-like illness, including chills, headache, muscle ache and fatigue.

Disease burden

- ❖ According to the latest World malaria report, there were 247 million cases of malaria in 2021 compared to 245 million cases in 2020.
- ❖ In 2022 there were over 45 thousand cases of malaria reported in India.
- ❖ Children under five years of age accounted for about 80 per cent of all malaria deaths in the WHO African Region.

Initiatives to Curb Malaria

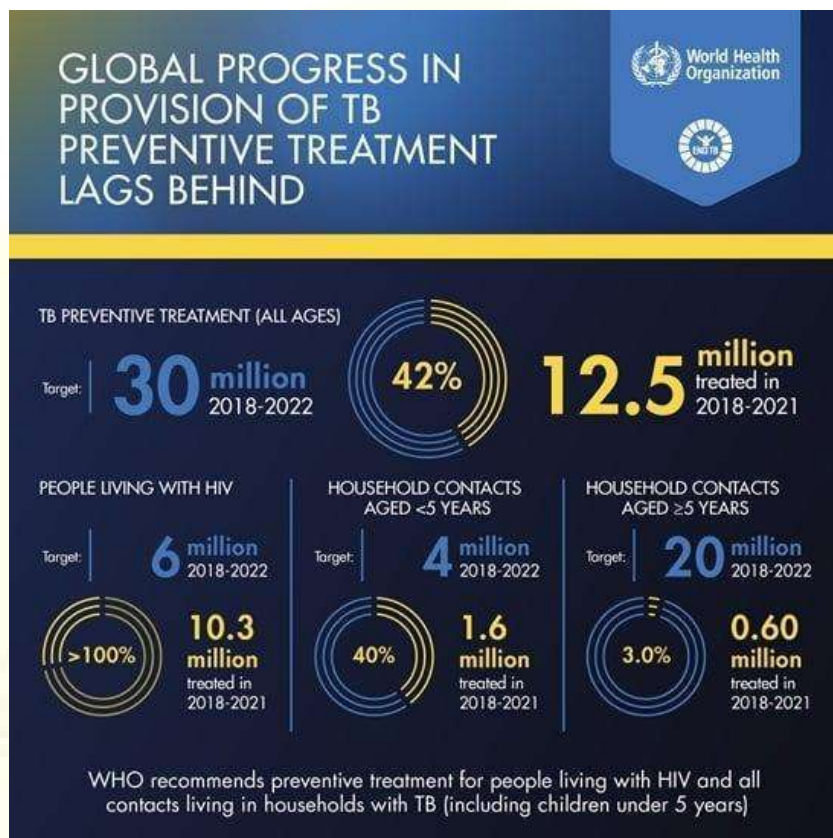
- **Global Initiatives:**
 - ❖ The WHO has also identified 25 countries with the potential to eradicate malaria by 2025 under its 'E-2025 Initiative'.
 - ❖ The WHO's Global technical strategy for malaria 2016–2030 aims to reduce malaria case incidence and mortality rates by at least 40% by 2020, at least 75% by 2025 and at least 90% by 2030 against a 2015 baseline.
 - ❖ WHO has initiated the **High Burden to High Impact (HBHI) initiative** in 11 high malaria burden countries, including India.
 - ❖ Implementation of "**High Burden to High Impact (HBHI)**" initiative has been started in four states i.e. West Bengal and Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.
- **Indian Initiatives:**
 - ❖ The Government of India set a target to eliminate malaria in India by 2027.
 - ❖ It developed a **National Framework for Malaria Elimination (2016-2030)**
 - ❖ National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination for 5 years.
 - ❖ Launched in 2017
 - ❖ It shifted focus from Malaria control to elimination.
 - ❖ It provided a roadmap to end malaria in 571 districts out of India's 678 districts by 2022.
 - ❖ Malaria Elimination Research Alliance-India (MERA-India)



- ❖ Established by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)
- ❖ It is a conglomeration of partners working on malaria control

30.WHO'S GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR NEW TB VACCINES

News: World Health Organisation (WHO) has released a draft document outlining a **global framework** to prepare countries for the **introduction of new tuberculosis (TB)** vaccines for adults and adolescents.



What is tuberculosis (TB)?

- ❖ Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. It primarily affects the **lungs** but can also affect other parts of the body.

Status of TB in India and the world:

- ❖ **As per the WHO Global TB Report 2022:** India's TB incidence for the year 2021 is **210 per 100,000 population** (a decline of over 18% from 2020)
- ❖ **India has a large burden of the world's TB**, with an estimated economic cost of US\$100 million lost annually due to this disease.

Need for new TB vaccines:

- ❖ The only available TB vaccine :Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG)



- ❖ Has **reduced in efficacy over the years** due to the development of multi-resistant TB
- ❖ It has **limited efficacy** in preventing pulmonary TB disease in adolescents and adults
- ❖ It does not prevent the **reactivation of latent pulmonary infection**.
- ❖ Currently, two vaccines **VPM (Vaccine Projekt Management) 1002** and **MIP (Mycobacterium Indicus Pranii)** have been developed and identified for TB.

WHO's Draft Framework:

- ❖ It is in line with **WHO's End TB Strategy** (to reduce TB incidence by 80%, TB deaths by 90%, and to eliminate costs for TB-affected households by 2030)

Other initiatives for eliminating TB:

Initiative Name	Description
PM TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyan	Target: Elimination of TB by 2025.
	Ni-kshay Mitra Initiative: Ni-kshay Mitra (Donor) are those who can support by adopting health facilities (for the individual donor) for accelerating the response against TB to complement government efforts.
	Ni-kshay Digital Portal: A platform for community support for persons with TB.
	Nikshay Poshan Yojana (NPY): Provides Rs 500 support through direct benefit transfer to TB patients.
National Strategic Plan (NSP) for Tuberculosis Elimination (2017-2025)	The Nikshay Ecosystem (National TB information system): To monitor TB patients and their treatment progress
TB Harega Desh Jeetega Campaign	A comprehensive plan of the Indian government to eliminate TB from the country by 2025, five years ahead of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for 2030.
WHO's Find. Treat. All. #EndTB	A campaign to create awareness about TB and encourage people to get tested and treated.
	A joint initiative by the WHO, the Global Fund, and the Stop TB Partnership to increase the number of people with



TB who are diagnosed, treated, and cured, and to accelerate progress towards the goal of ending the TB epidemic by 2030.

Previous year question

Mains UPSC 2018

Q. Appropriate local community-level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieve “health for all” in India. Explain.

Prelims

Q. Which of the following is/are bacterial infections?

1. Dengue
2. Tuberculosis
3. Leprosy
4. Hepatitis A
5. Yellow fever

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- a. 1, 2 and 3 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1, 2, 4 and 5 only
- d. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Ans: (b)

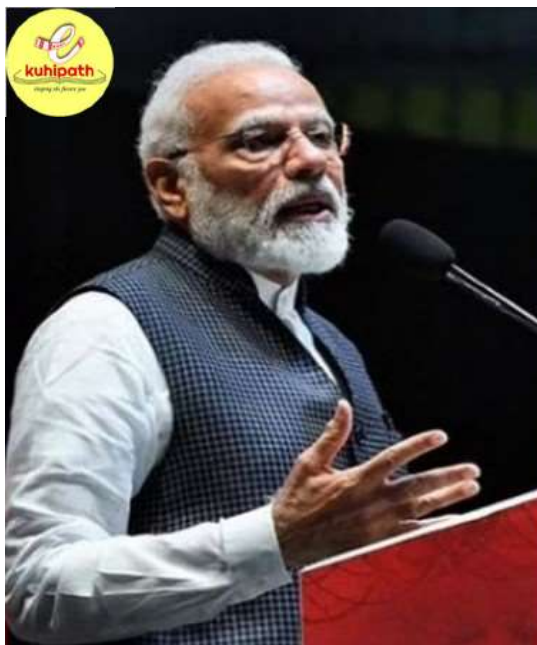
The advertisement banner for eKuhipath features a dark blue background with a yellow and red border. At the top left is the eKuhipath logo. To its right, the text reads 'eKuhipath ই-কুহিপাঠ e-learning platform Shaping the future you'. On the top right, there are two WhatsApp contact numbers: +91-9365668988 and +91-9613620696. Below this, a list of features is presented with checkmarks: 'All paid courses available on official website www.ekuhipath.com', 'Current Affairs series, regular Assam Tribune Analysis and Answer key Videos on official YouTube channel 'eKuhipath'', and 'Subscribe immediately.'. A central image shows a smiling woman with glasses holding a white folder and giving a thumbs up. To her left, a yellow box contains the text 'eKuhipath- Best e-learning platform of the state and one step solution for all state competitive exams.'. Below the features list, it says 'FOLLOW US ON' followed by icons for Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Telegram. At the bottom left is another eKuhipath logo. At the bottom right, a red button with white text says 'REGISTER NOW'. Small text at the very bottom mentions '@ekuhipath2020' and '49.7K subscribers'.

ENVIRONMENT

31.FIFTY YEARS OF 'PROJECT TIGER'

Source: The Hindu

News: Tiger Census figures were released by the Prime Minister at an event marking the “**International Big Cat Alliance conference**” as well as the “**50th anniversary of Project Tiger**”. The PM also released the government’s vision for tiger conservation during ‘Amrit Kaal’ and **launched the International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA)**.



About

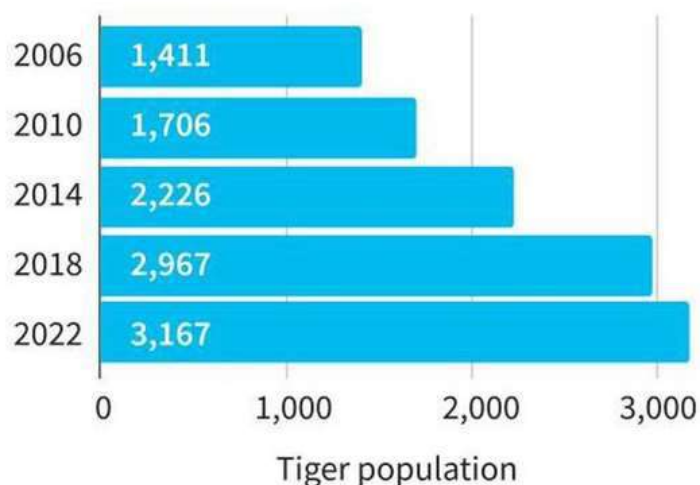
➤ **Tiger census highlights:**

- ❖ The number of tigers in India has increased by 6.74 percent from 2,967 in 2018 to 3,167 in 2022, according to the **figures of the 5th cycle of India’s Tiger Census**.
- ❖ Estimation was done in **five landscapes** across the country.
- ❖ **Region wise:**
- ❖ The tiger population has **grown the most in the Shivalik hills and Gangetic flood plains**, followed by **central India, the north eastern hills, the Brahmaputra flood plains, and the Sundarbans**.
- ❖ There was a **decline in the Western Ghats numbers**, though “major populations” were said to be stable



Big cat count

According to the data released by the PM, the number of tigers in India increased by 200 in the past four years. A look at the tiger population



Steady rise: A tiger at Van Vihar National Park in Bhopal on Sunday. PTI

➤ **International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA):**

- ❖ IBCA will focus on the **protection and conservation** of seven major big cats of the world, including **tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, puma, jaguar and cheetah**, with membership of the range countries harbouring these species.



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HOW TIGERS ARE COUNTED

AP Photo

Phase I

Frontline staff of state forest trained to **collect data in a digital format on the M-STRIPES mobile application**. They had to look out for carnivore sign encounters, ungulate abundance, vegetation, canopy cover, human disturbance and dung counts. For Sundarbans, protocol modified to allow sampling using a boat.



Phase II

Covariates of distribution and abundance of wildlife were obtained from **remotely sensed data and used to model**

tiger occupancy and abundance, in combination with Phase I data.



Phase III

Camera trap based capture-mark-recapture. This method has led to a greater clarity and precision in density estimation by integrating the spatial location information of animal photo-captures. **Camera traps were placed at 32,588 locations spread across 174 sites** for mark recapture analysis. Cameras were usually operated between 25 to 35 days at each site



About Project Tiger

❖ Tiger population after independence:

- ❖ According to reports, while there were 40,000 tigers in the country at the time of the Independence, they were soon reduced to below 2,000 by 1970 due to their widespread hunting and poaching.

- ❖ **Declining tiger population:**
 - ❖ Concerns around the issue further intensified when the same year, the **International Union for Conservation of Nature** declared the **tiger as an endangered species**.
 - ❖ Two years later, the Indian government conducted its own tiger census and found that there were only 1,800 of them left in the country.
- ❖ **Origin of 'Project Tiger':**
 - ❖ To **tackle the problem of hunting and poaching** of not just tigers but also other animals and birds, then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi promulgated the **Wildlife Protection Act in 1972**.
 - ❖ **Project Tiger** was launched by the Central government on April 1, 1973, in a bid to **promote conservation of the tiger**.
- ❖ **Project Tiger key aspects:**
 - ❖ Notably, Project Tiger didn't just focus on the conservation of the big cats.
 - ❖ It also ensured the preservation of their natural habitat as tigers are at the top of the food chain.
- ❖ **Rise in tiger population:**
 - ❖ Soon after, the number of tigers in India began to rise and by the 1990s, their population was estimated to be around 3,000.
 - ❖ Today, there are 54 tiger reserves across India, spanning 75,000 sq km. The current population of tigers in the country stands at 3,167 as opposed to 1,411 in 2006, 1,706 in 2010 and 2,226 in 2014.

32.NETWORK OF GROUNDWATER SENSORS

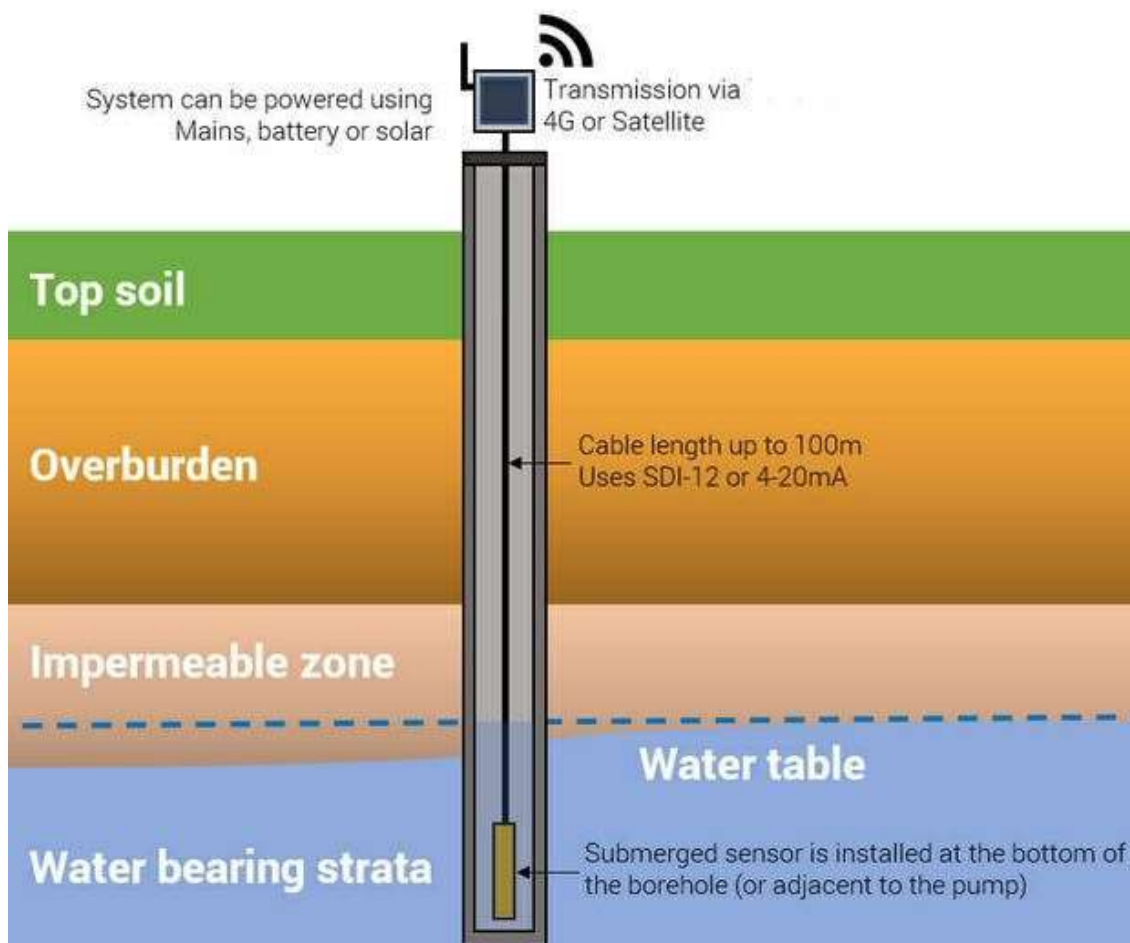
Source: The Hindu

News: The Jal Shakti Ministry is working on an ambitious plan to deploy a vast network of groundwater sensors.



More about News

- ❖ It will continuously relay information on groundwater levels as well as the degree of contamination down to the **taluk level**.
- ❖ Currently, such data is only measured a few times each year and communicated through Central Groundwater Board publications.



67,000 recordable units in the future

- ❖ Under the new initiative, around 16,000-17,000 digital water level recorders will be connected to piezometers in the wells (Piezometers measure groundwater levels, the recorders will transmit the information digitally)
- ❖ In the next three years India will have about 67,000 digitally recordable units to monitor groundwater dynamics.

Benefits of Network

- ❖ It will provide farmers with groundwater forecasts that would be useful for sowing



- ❖ Updated advisories that could influence groundwater extraction policies by states.
- ❖ Except for information on water flow governed by international treaties, most of this information will be publicly accessible.

National Aquifer Mapping Program (NAQUIM)

- ❖ It is being implemented by the **Central Ground Water Board (CGWB)**.
- ❖ It has mapped the country's aquifers at a resolution of 1:50000
- ❖ Under the second phase of the programme – expects to improve the resolution by five times in the country. So far, an area of 25.15 lakh square km has been covered under the NAQUIM studies.

What is an Aquifer?

- ❖ An aquifer is an underground layer of water-bearing, permeable rock, rock fractures, or unconsolidated materials (gravel, sand, or silt). Groundwater from aquifers can be extracted using a water well.

About Central groundwater Water-Board

- ❖ It is a **subordinate office of the Ministry of Jal Shakti** and is the **National Apex Agency** entrusted with the responsibilities of providing scientific inputs for management, exploration, monitoring, assessment, augmentation and regulation of ground water resources of the country.
- ❖ Major activities being taken up by CGWB include macro/micro-level ground water management studies, exploratory drilling programme, monitoring of groundwater levels and water quality through a network of groundwater observation wells comprising both large diameter open wells and purpose-built bore/tube wells (piezometers).



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33.GREAT NICOBAR ISLAND PROJECT

Source: The Hindu

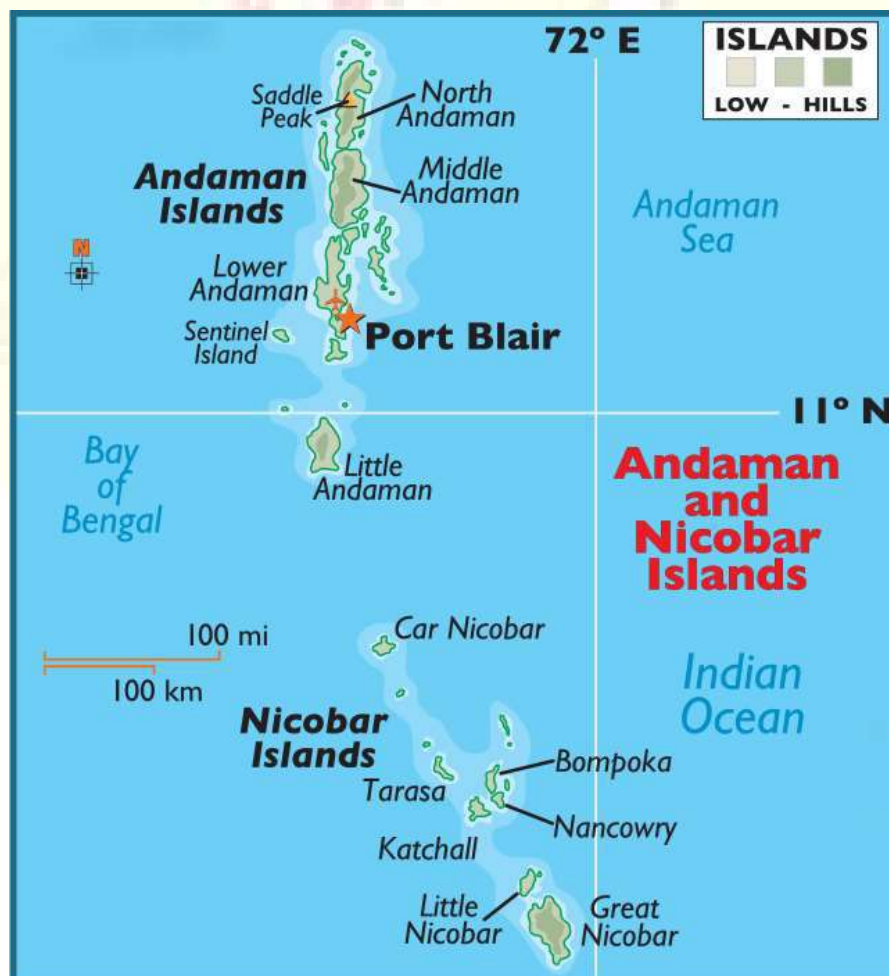
News: The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** has issued a stay on the **Great Nicobar Island project** worth **₹72,000 crore** and created a committee to review the environmental clearance granted by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**.



What is the Great Nicobar Island Project?

- The **Great Nicobar Island (GNI) Project** is a mega project to be implemented at the southern end of the **Andaman and Nicobar islands**.
- The project includes
 - ❖ **international container transshipment terminal**
 - ❖ **a greenfield international airport**
 - ❖ **township development** and a
 - ❖ **450 MVA gas and solar based power plant** over an extent of 16,610 hectares in the island.
- **Purpose:**
 - ❖ **participate in the regional and global maritime economy by becoming a major player in cargo transshipment.**
 - ❖ The proposal to develop Great Nicobar was first floated in the **1970s**, and its importance for national security and consolidation of the **Indian Ocean Region** has been repeatedly underlined.
- **Criticism**
- **Impact on Biodiversity:**

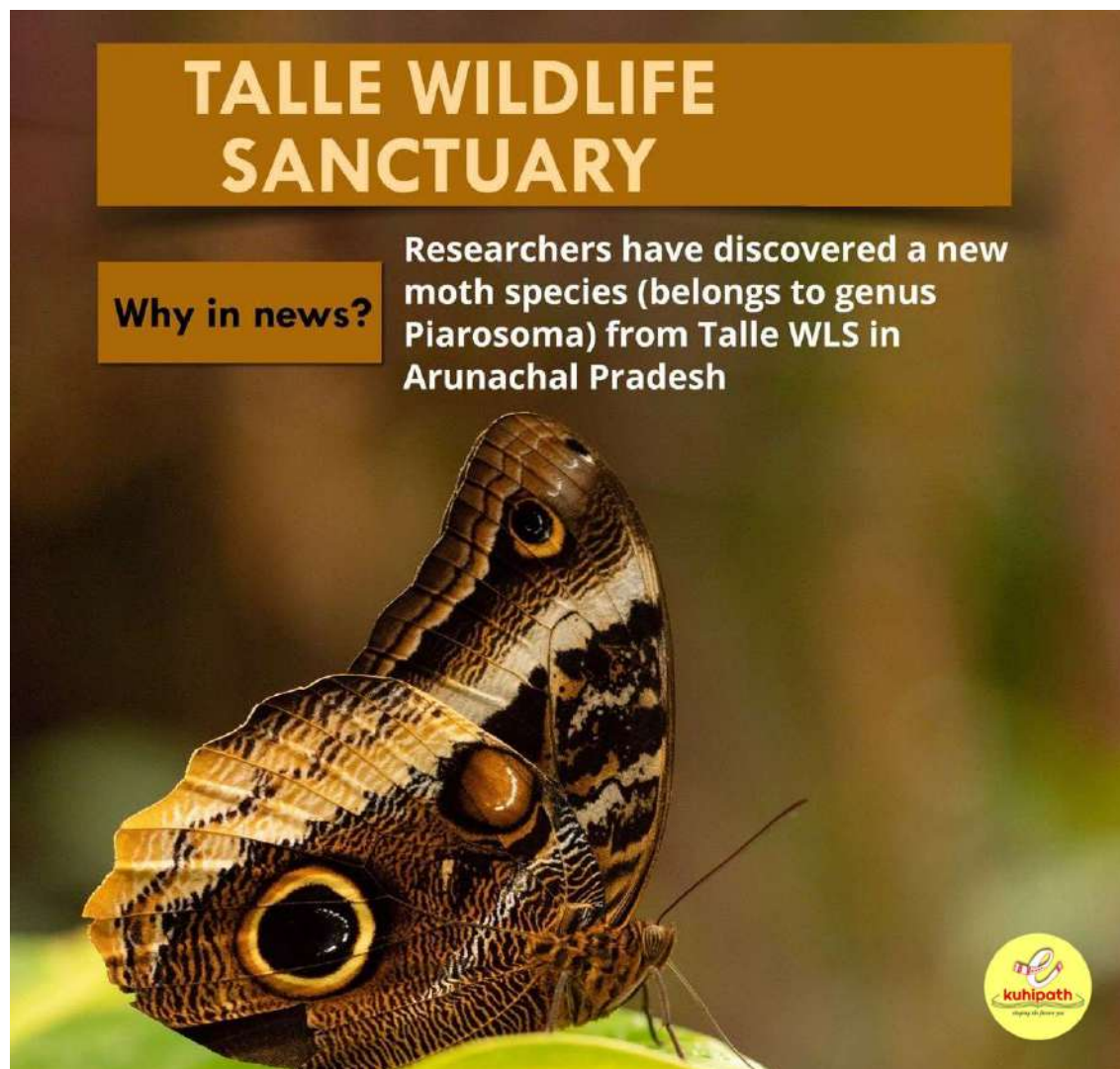
- ❖ its adverse impact on the **rich biodiversity of the area** and damage to the habitats of endangered species.
 - ❖ The project area is part of **Coastal Regulation Zones-IA and IB**, and the Galathea bay which is a nesting ground for birds.
 - ❖ Also, **turtle nesting sites, dolphins and other species** will be harmed by **dredging**.
- **Impact on Tree Cover and Mangroves:**
- ❖ Environmentalists have also flagged the loss of tree cover and mangroves on the island as a result of the development project.
- **Lack of Adequate Assessment**
- **Encroachment in Tribal Space**
- ❖ Critics argue that while **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** are accorded the highest level of protection by local administration, they still face **numerous challenges due to encroachment into their areas in the name of development**.





34.TALLE WLS

News: Researchers have discovered a new moth species (belongs to genus Piarosoma) from Talle WLS in Arunachal Pradesh.



- ❖ Talle WLS lies between subansiri, Sipu and Pange rivers surrounded by densely forested mountains ranging for 2,000 to 4,000 mtr. altitude.
- ❖ Forest types: Sub-tropical broad leafed, temperate broad leafed and temperate conifer types. Biodiversity includes clouded leopard, Himalayan black bear, Indian elephant, Flying squirrel etc.



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MCQ prelims

Q. Talle Valley Wild life sanctuary is located in which of the following states?

- a) West Bengal
- b) Odisha
- c) Arunachal Pradesh
- d) Mizoram

Answer: C



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NORTH EAST

35.GAJ UTSAV 2023: 30 YEARS OF PROJECT ELEPHANT

Source: India Today

News: President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the 'Gaj Utsav 2023' at the Kaziranga National Park in Assam to mark 30 years of Project Elephant.



- ❖ **Project Elephant** is a **Centrally-sponsored Scheme** launched in 1992 by the Ministry of Environment to support states to ensure the long-term survival of elephants in their natural habitats.

Population

- ❖ There are about 50,000 - 60000 Asian elephants in the world.
- ❖ India has the largest number of wild Asian Elephants, estimated at 29,964 according to the 2017 census by Project Elephant, i.e. about 60% of the species' global population.
- ❖ India has **33 Elephant Reserves (ER)**. **Lemru ER (Chhattisgarh)**, **Agsthyamalai ER (Tamil Nadu)** and **Terai ER (Uttar Pradesh)** were notified in 2022.

Conservation Status

- ❖ Asian elephants are listed as **"Endangered"** on the **IUCN Red List of threatened species**.

- ❖ Asian elephants have also been listed in the Appendix I of the Convention of the Migratory species (CMS). It was decided at the Conference of Parties of CMS 13 held at Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat in 2020.

Threats posed to Elephant Population

- ❖ The demand for ivory leads to the illegal poaching of both African and Asian elephants.
- ❖ The loss of habitat due to deforestation increases in mining and agricultural activities has become problematic, especially for Asian elephants.
- ❖ It is a significant concern, as human populations increase and forest cover decreases, forcing elephants into close proximity with human settlements.
- ❖ A lack of legislation regarding the care and treatment of elephants in zoos, circuses, and tourism often leads to their mistreatment.

Other Government Initiatives

- ❖ The **National Portal** on human-elephant conflict called “Surakshya” for the collection of real-time information & also for managing the conflicts on a real-time basis.
- ❖ The government is **using LiDAR technology** in order to provide fodder and water augmentation in forest areas so that animals will get food and water in forest areas and will not come outside.
- ❖ Under the **Project RE-HAB**, bee boxes will be used as a fence to prevent the attack of elephants.
- ❖ The bee boxes are set up in the passageways of human-elephant conflict zones to block the entrance of elephants to human habitations.

36.BAILEY BRIDGES

Source : The Hindu

News: The Army may help build **Bailey bridges** in the **Kaziranga National Park**.



What is Bailey Bridge?

- ❖ A Bailey bridge is a type of portable, pre-fabricated, truss bridge. It was developed in 1940–1941 by the British for military use during the Second World War.
- ❖ A Bailey bridge has the **advantage of requiring no special tools or heavy equipment to assemble**. The wood and steel bridge elements were small and light enough to be carried in trucks and lifted into place by hand, without the use of a crane.
- ❖ The bridges are strong enough to carry tanks.

Other types of bridges

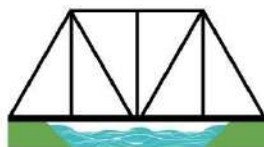
TYPES:

BEAM BRIDGE



Also called "girder bridge", it's the most basic kind. It can be seen from a simple tree log across a creek, to a massive structure supported by several beams.

TRUSS BRIDGE



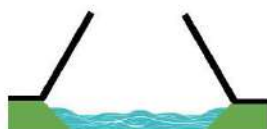
A combination of small beams subjected to compression and tension forces, forming triangular units, working together to spread out the load through the whole structure.

ARCH BRIDGE



This kind of bridge uses a curved structure that transfers its weight and load over the arch path to the supports on each end, but it requires solid and stable ground or foundation.

BASCULE BRIDGE



Also known as "draw bridge", it's a movable bridge that can lift its structure(s) to allow boat and ship traffic.

CABLE-STAYED BRIDGE



Made of a continuous girder, with one or more vertical columns along its span. The name comes from the cables that stretch down from the columns to the girder, giving support and stability.

SUSPENSION BRIDGE



Similar to cable-stayed bridges, but the cables that support the girder are vertical (hangers) and connected to a suspension cable between the vertical towers. A rope bridge can be defined as a suspension bridge without towers.

Kaziranga National Park

- ❖ The Park is the abode of more than 70% of One Horned Rhinoceros in the world. According to the 2022 count, the park has an estimated 2,613 rhinos. Kaziranga also has the highest density of tigers in India.
- ❖ It was declared a Wildlife Sanctuary in 1950 and notified as Kaziranga National Park in 1974 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, of 1972.

- ❖ It was declared a World Heritage Site back in 1985. It is recognized as an Important Bird Area by Bird Life International.

Know about the Rhinoceroses

- ❖ Rhinoceroses are large, herbivorous mammals identified by their characteristic horned snouts.
- ❖ There are five species and 11 subspecies of rhino; some have two horns, while others have one.

Types of Rhinos

Animal Spot



Javan
Rhinoceros



White
Rhinoceros



Black
Rhinoceros



Indian
Rhinoceros



Sumatran
Rhinoceros

Geographical Location

- ❖ White rhinos and black rhinos live in the grasslands and floodplains of eastern and southern Africa.
- ❖ Greater one-horned rhinos can be found in the swamps and rain forests of northern India and southern Nepal.
- ❖ Sumatran and Javan rhinos are found only in small areas of Malaysian and Indonesian swamps and rainforests.

37.DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTHCARE IN NORTH-EASTERN REGION

Source: The Hindu

News: The first All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) was inaugurated in the Northeast at Changsari near Guwahati.





- **AIIMS & medical colleges:**
 - ❖ The **AIIMS** and a **medical college** each in **Kokrajhar, Nagaon, and Nalbari** were among various projects initiated and dedicated to the nation in Assam.
 - ❖ The super speciality hospital has a capacity of 750 beds including 30 AYUSH beds and will admit 100 MBBS students annually.
- **Assam Advanced Healthcare Innovation Institute (AAHII):**
 - ❖ Assam Advanced Healthcare Innovation Institute (AAHII) was also inaugurated within the **Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati complex**.
 - ❖ Officials said the AAHII will be a **research and innovation centre** in the area of **medical sciences**.
 - ❖ It includes a 500-bed **'connected' multi-speciality hospital** spread over 12 acres.
- **Aapke Dwar Ayushman campaign:**
 - ❖ The Prime Minister also launched the **Aapke Dwar Ayushman campaign** by distributing **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana cards** to 1.1 crore eligible beneficiaries.

Significance

- ❖ The **foundation stone** of Assam Advanced Health Care Innovation Institute (AAHII) is a step towards realising the vision of **'Atmnirbhar Bharat'** and **'Make in India'** in the **areas related to health**.
- ❖ The **majority of technologies** used in healthcare in the country are **imported and developed in a different context**, which is highly **expensive** and complex to operate in the Indian environment.

The problems in the health sector in the north-eastern states (Annual Report 2014–2015 of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)

- ❖ Shortage of trained medical manpower,
 - ❖ Providing access to sparsely populated, remote, far ?ung areas,
 - ❖ Improvement of Governance in the health sector,
 - ❖ Need for improved quality of health services rendered,
 - ❖ Making effective and full utilization of existing facilities,
 - ❖ Effective and timely utilization of existing facilities,
 - ❖ Morbidity and mortality due to Malaria,
 - ❖ High level of tobacco consumption and the associated high risk of cancer, and
 - ❖ High incidence of HIV/AIDS in Nagaland, Manipur and the increasing incidence in Mizoram and Meghalaya.
-
- ❖ **Government's response:**
 - ❖ **The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)** was launched with the aim to provide effective health care to rural population throughout India with **special emphasis on 18 states** including **all the 8 northeastern states** namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

38.ASSAM AND ARUNACHAL PRADESH BOUNDARY DISPUTE

Source : Indian Express

News: Chief Ministers of the Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in the presence of Union Home Minister signed a Memorandum of Understanding over disputed areas along the roughly 800-km shared boundary.



Major Highlights of MoU

- ❖ The two states share a roughly 800-kilometer-long border and the disputed areas the MoU deals with are **123 border villages**, which span 12 districts of Arunachal Pradesh and 8 districts of Assam.
- ❖ The state governments agree that no new claim area or village will be added in future beyond these 123 villages.
- ❖ It also states that both governments “agree to effectively prevent any new encroachment in the border areas”
- ❖ MoU is “full and final” in respect to the 123 villages.

Genesis and Evolution of the dispute

- ❖ The Assam-Arunachal Pradesh boundary is the longest inter-state border in the Northeast
- ❖ The issue started with a **1951 report** which transferred 3,648 sq. km of the “plain” area of Balipara and Sadiya foothills to the Darrang and Lakhimpur districts of Assam.



- ❖ The disputes cropped up in the **1970s** and intensified in the **1990s** with frequent flare-ups along the border.
- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh was made a Union territory in 1972 carved out of Assam.
- ❖ It contended that several forested tracts in the plains that had traditionally belonged to hill tribal chiefs and communities were unilaterally transferred to Assam.
- ❖ After Arunachal Pradesh achieved statehood in 1987, a tripartite committee was appointed, which recommended that certain territories be transferred from Assam to Arunachal.
- ❖ Assam contested this and the matter went to the Supreme Court.

Efforts to resolve this issue

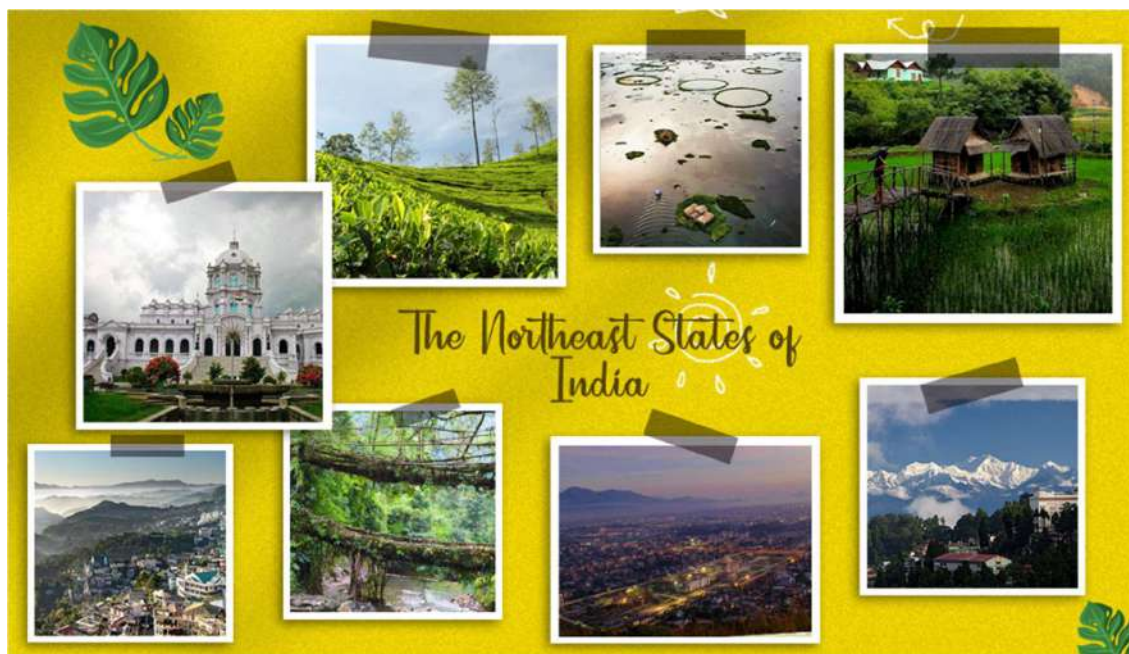
- ❖ In April **1979**, a **high-powered tripartite committee** was constituted to delineate the boundary on the basis of Survey of India maps, as well as discussions with both sides. Around 489 km of the 800 km were demarcated by 1983-84, further demarcation could not take place because Arunachal did not accept the recommendations and claimed several kilometers of the 3,648 sq km, which was transferred to Assam in line with the 1951 report.
- ❖ Assam objected to this and filed a case in the **Supreme Court** in **1989**, highlighting an “encroachment” made by Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The apex court appointed a **local boundary commission in 2006**, headed by a retired SC judge to resolve the dispute between the states.
- ❖ In **September 2014**, the local commission submitted its report.
 - ❖ Several recommendations were made (some of which suggested Arunachal Pradesh get back some of the territory which was transferred in 1951), and it was suggested that both states should arrive at a consensus through discussions. However, nothing came of it.
- ❖ **Namsai Declaration:** The Namsai Declaration, which aims to reduce the inter-State border dispute affecting 123 villages, was signed by Assam and Arunachal Pradesh chief ministers in July 2022.
 - ❖ The Namsai district in southern Arunachal Pradesh is headquartered in Namsai.

Importance of Recent MoU

- ❖ MoU was signed on basis of a ‘give and take’ policy where Assam gave some disputed areas to Arunachal Pradesh and vice versa.
- ❖ It’s a historic day for Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. It will end the border dispute between both states which had been pending for more than 50 years.
- ❖ The boundary settlement would usher in all-around development and peace in the Northeast.
- ❖ It will strengthen our federal structure as it brings a new paradigm to resolve differences between states.

39. NORTHEAST TOP TOURIST DESTINATION IN 2022

News: The year 2022 witnessed record-breaking tourism in the **Northeast Region** having over **11.8 million domestic visitors** and over 100,000 international travelers.



Why Record-Breaking Tourism in the Northeast?

- ❖ The Northeast region of India has a **rich cultural heritage** and is home to **diverse landscapes, including hills, mountains, and valleys**.
- ❖ The region has been relatively unexplored, but with the recent surge in tourism, more people are discovering the beauty and charm of the Northeast.
- ❖ It is the result of Government of India's **Destination Northeast India** initiative massive infrastructural push.

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What are the Top Destinations?


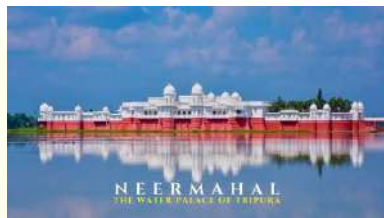

Arunachal Pradesh	Tawang Monastery: One of the oldest and largest Buddhist monasteries in India.	
	Namdapha National Park: Home to diverse flora and fauna, including tigers, flying squirrel and leopards	
Assam:	Kamakhya Temple: A revered Hindu temple dedicated to the goddess Kamakhya.	
	Kaziranga National Park: A UNESCO World Heritage site and home to the one-horned rhinoceros	



	<p>Majuli Island: Located in the Brahmaputra River, is the largest river island in the world and a cultural hub in Northeast India.</p>	
Manipur	<p>Loktak Lake: The largest freshwater lake in Northeast India and home to the floating Keibul Lamjao National Park.</p>	
	<p>Imphal War Cemetery: A significant religious site for those who lost their lives in the Second World War.</p>	
Meghalaya	<p>Nohkalikai Falls: The tallest plunge waterfall in India.</p>	
	<p>Living Root Bridges: A unique natural wonder created by the Khasi and Jaintia tribes.</p>	



Mizoram	Phawngpui National Park: Home to the highest peak in Mizoram and diverse flora and fauna.	
	Solomon's Temple: A unique religious site built by a local pastor, resembling the biblical Temple of Solomon.	
Nagaland	Hornbill Festival: The festival is named after the hornbill bird, which is revered by the Naga tribes as a symbol of their folklore and tradition.	
	Dzukou Valley: A picturesque valley known for its stunning landscapes and diverse flora and fauna. Treeless but unbelievably green and floral	
Sikkim	Tsomgo Lake: A sacred lake considered by local people, it is believed that the water of the lake has medicinal properties. Lake is surrounded by snow-capped mountains and is fed by the melting snow from the mountains	

	<p>Rumtek Monastery: A prominent Buddhist monastery and the largest in Sikkim.</p>	
Tripura	<p>Neermahal Palace: A unique palace located in the middle of Rudrasagar Lake, a unique example of a fusion of Hindu and Islamic architectural styles. The palace is designed in the shape of a half-moon and is surrounded by water on three sides</p>	
	<p>Unakoti: A significant religious site featuring rock-cut sculptures and carvings. The largest sculpture at Unakoti is a 30-foot-high image of Lord Shiva, known as Unakotiswara Kal Bhairava. The site also features several waterfalls and natural rock formations.</p>	

What are the Prospects of Tourism in North East India?

- **Adventure Tourism:** The Northeast region offers numerous adventure tourism opportunities, including trekking, mountaineering, river rafting, and paragliding.
 - ❖ Adventurous sites such as Gangtok, Shillong etc. can attract adventure enthusiasts from all over the world.
- **Tribal Communities:** The Northeast is home to several indigenous tribal communities such as **Mismi, Garo, Khasi, Jaintia** etc., each with their **unique culture, language, and traditions**.
 - ❖ Tourism can provide an opportunity for these communities to showcase their heritage and generate income.
- **Winter Tourism:** The Northeast region **experiences heavy snowfall** during the winter months, making it an **ideal destination** for winter tourism.
 - ❖ However, this season remains relatively unexplored and has the potential for further development.
- **Sustainable Tourism:** To minimize the negative impact of tourism, sustainable tourism practices should be promoted. This includes responsible waste



management, promoting eco-friendly accommodations, and respecting the cultural practices of local communities

What are the Benefits and Concern of Tourism in North East India?

➤ Benefits

- ❖ Tourism has the potential to **create jobs, generate income**, and boost the **local economy**.
- ❖ As more tourists visit the region, there will be a higher demand for goods and services, leading to the growth of various sectors.

➤ Challenges:

- ❖ **Environmental Impact:** Increased tourism can lead to **increased pollution, littering, and damage to natural habitats**, which can have long-term negative impacts on the environment and wildlife.
- ❖ **Cultural Impact:** Tourism can lead to **changes in traditional cultural practices and beliefs**, as well as the commodification of cultural artifacts and practices, which can erode the cultural heritage of local communities.
- ❖ **Connectivity:** Despite recent infrastructural development, the Northeast still faces connectivity challenges. Better road and air connectivity can help attract more tourists to the region.

Way Forward

- ❖ To boost tourism in North East India, **effective marketing campaigns** should be developed to promote the region's attractions, culture, and heritage.
- ❖ **Infrastructure development** and **diversifying tourism** offerings can attract more tourists, while sustainable tourism practices should be promoted to protect the environment and local culture.
- ❖ **Encouraging community-based tourism** and **public-private partnerships** can also help generate income and improve services.

Previous Year Question UPSC

Q. Consider the following pairs: (2013)

1. Nokrek Biosphere Reserve: Garo Hills
2. Logtak (Loktak) Lake: Barail Range
3. Namdapha National Park: Dafla Hills

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) None

Ans: (a)

40.A NEW TROIKA FOR INDIA'S NORTHEAST REGION

News: The third India-Japan Intellectual Dialogue hosted by the Asian Confluence (ASCON), Tripura, was an ideal opportunity to assess the evolving thinking of experts and policymakers. It showed that the current decade may produce path-breaking changes in the northeast, bringing the troika of Bangladesh, India and Japan closer.



Significant changes in the North East India

- ❖ The region comprising India's eight north-eastern States (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim) is undergoing dramatic change.
- ❖ It has overcome several (but not all) security challenges and is now heading toward economic development.
- ❖ Political changes have been helpful. So is the extensive web of linkages with neighbouring Bangladesh. Besides, Japan has emerged as a significant development partner for both India and Bangladesh.



Japan's historical ties with the North Eastern region of India

- ❖ **Cultural ties:** There are deep cultural ties between the North Eastern region of India and Japan, with Buddhism being a common thread that binds the two regions.
- ❖ **World War II:** The North Eastern region of India played a crucial role in World War II, with the Battle of Imphal and Kohima considered to be turning points in the war. The Japanese army had advanced into the region and fought fiercely against the Allied forces.
- ❖ **Post-Independence:** In the 1950s, the Indian government started building roads and infrastructure to connect the region with the rest of the country. Japan also played a role in the region's development, with its assistance in building the Dimapur-Imphal highway.
- ❖ **Economic ties:** Japan has been investing in infrastructure projects in the region, such as the Guwahati water supply project and the Northeast Road Network Connectivity Improvement Project.
- ❖ **Connectivity:** Improved connectivity between the North Eastern region of India and Japan is seen as a key factor in strengthening the historical ties between the two regions.

What is Asian Confluence?

- ❖ The Asian Confluence is a think tank and cultural centre based in Shillong, Meghalaya, India.
- ❖ It was established in 2012 with
- ❖ Aim of promoting and strengthening cultural and economic ties between the North-eastern region of India and the countries of Southeast Asia.

Opportunities for Northeast India

- ❖ **Matarbari Deep Sea Port:** The development of the Matarbari Deep Sea Port in Bangladesh, with Japanese assistance, is expected to be a game changer for the region. To be optimally viable, the port will have to cater to the needs of Bangladesh and India's northeast, serving a population of 220 million.
- ❖ **Competitive advantage:** The creation of regional industrial value chains and rapid industrialization in sectors where the northeast has a competitive advantage will be crucial to ensure that the new connectivity links are fully utilized and productive.
- ❖ **Natural resources and strategic location:** The region's natural resources and strategic location make it an attractive destination for investors in diverse sectors such as agro-processing, man-made fibers, handicrafts, assembly of two-wheelers, mobile phones, and pharmaceuticals.

What are the Challenges?

- ❖ **Insufficient investment:** Japan as a single investor in the northeast is unworkable. Indian companies must also invest, and India needs to ease restrictions on the flow of investments from Bangladesh.
- ❖ **Security challenges:** While the northeastern region has overcome several security challenges, not all of them have been addressed.

- ❖ **Infrastructure connectivity:** While Bangladesh and India have made progress in restoring pre-1965 infrastructure connectivity, other countries in the region need to reciprocate with similar connectivity initiatives.
- ❖ **Environmental concerns:** As industrialization and development take place, there is a need to ensure that environmental concerns are addressed and sustainability is prioritized.
- ❖ **Lack of attention to BIMSTEC:** When issues of regional cooperation and integration are discussed, scant attention seems to be paid to the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), which is self-defeating.

What measures should be taken?

- ❖ **Limited policy convergence:** Policy convergence must be expanded to address challenges in the region.
- ❖ **Need for closer linkages:** The three governments of Bangladesh, India, and Japan should forge closer linkages of economic cooperation.
- ❖ **Investment:** Indian companies need to invest in the northeast along with Japanese companies. India should also ease restrictions on the flow of investments from Bangladesh.
- ❖ **Infrastructure connectivity:** Bangladesh facilitated much connectivity with India and now needs reciprocity from other countries, particularly India, so that it is better connected with other neighbors, including Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar.
- ❖ **Need for leadership:** The goal of connecting a large part of South Asia with Southeast Asia requires an astute pilot. This leadership can come from the triad of Bangladesh, India, and Japan.

Conclusion

- ❖ The triad of Bangladesh, India, and Japan (BIJ) can provide astute leadership in connecting a large part of South Asia with Southeast Asia. A BIJ Forum should be launched at the level of Foreign Ministers, a move that will be welcomed in the northeast. The three governments should forge closer linkages of economic cooperation.



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41.GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION

Source: The Hindu

➤ PM-DevINE:

- ❖ **Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE)** is a new scheme for the North-eastern states which was announced in the Union Budget.
- ❖ The scheme will be operational for the remaining four years of the 15th Finance Commission, from 2022-23 to 2025-26, and will have an outlay of Rs 6,600 crore.
- ❖ **PM-DevINE will target:**
 - ❖ The creation of infrastructure,
 - ❖ Support industries,
 - ❖ Social development projects and
 - ❖ Create livelihood activities for the youth and women, with a focus on job creation.
- ❖ These projects will include basic infrastructure in all primary healthcare centres and government schools.



The infographic features a pink and white color scheme. At the top left is the Ministry of Finance logo. In the center is a portrait of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. To the right is a large yellow Indian Rupee symbol. Below the portrait is a map of the North-Eastern region of India. At the bottom left is a photograph of a woman in traditional North-Eastern attire. The title 'Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE)' is prominently displayed in the center. Below the title are four bullet points detailing the scheme's features.

Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE)

- Initial allocation of Rs 1,500 crore will be made initially in 8 projects
- Will fund infrastructure, in the spirit of PM GatiShakti, and social development projects based on felt needs
- Will be implemented through the North-Eastern Council
- Will not be a substitute for existing central and state sponsored schemes



➤ **North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS):**

- ❖ The aim of the scheme is to enhance the physical infrastructure related to power, connectivity and water supply, and social infrastructure in the form of health infrastructure. It is a Central Sector Scheme.

➤ **Northeast Desk:**

- ❖ Under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, a dedicated Northeast Desk has been set up within Invest India, which supports the North-east States in their outreach activities to the investors as well as in facilitating and handholding select companies.

➤ **NITI Forum for North East:**

- ❖ In collaboration with the NITI Aayog, the 'NITI Forum for North East' constituted for accelerated, inclusive and sustainable development in the North East Region has identified 5 focus sectors, viz. Tea, Tourism, Bamboo, Dairy and Pisciculture.

➤ **Mission Organic Value Chain Development (MOVCD-NER):**

- ❖ The program has been implemented in the North-Eastern states since 2017. The aim of the mission is to promote organic farming in the region. It seeks to replace traditional subsistence farming with a cluster-based approach.

➤ **Sub Mission on Seeds and Planting Material (SMSP):**

- ❖ It aims to increase the availability of seeds of the High Yielding Varieties of crops. The overall objective is to double farmers' income by 2022, as envisioned by the Government. The scheme is run alongside other support programs like Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), integrated farming systems etc.

➤ **Connectivity Projects:**

- ❖ To create alternate routes to the region and decrease its dependence on the Chicken's Neck, the Indian government has planned additional routes through South East Asia like **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Project, Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Corridor, etc.**
- ❖ India's Look-East connectivity projects connect Northeast India to East Asia and ASEAN.

➤ **Creation of separate ministry for the region:**

- ❖ The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region is a Government of India ministry, established in September 2001.

- ❖ It functions as the nodal Department of the Central Government to deal with matters related to the socio-economic development of the eight States of Northeast India.

42.RENOVATION WORK OF BEZBARUAH'S SAMBALPUR HOUSES UNDERWAY

Source: Times of India

News: The Sadhana Griha or work place of Lakshminath Bezbaruah, the doyen of Assamese literature, which was in ruins on the banks of the Mahanadi in Sambalpur in Odisha, has been renovated and restored would be thrown open to the people soon. The house has been declared a heritage structure is being restored by INTACH. Lakshminath Bezbaroa stayed in Odisha for 20 years from 1917 to 1937 for a timber business that he started in 1895.

Lakshmi Nath Bezbaruah

Lakshminath Bezbarua (14 November 1864), was an Assamese poet, novelist and playwright of modern Assamese literature. He was one of the literary stalwarts of the Jonaki Era, the age of romanticism in Assamese literature when through his essays, plays, fiction, poetry and satires, he gave a new impetus to the then stagnating Assamese literary caravan.



Literary Contribution Lakshmi Nath Bezbaruah

Poetry Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Kodom Koli (কদম কলি) (1913) ❖ Podum Koli (পদুম কলি) (1968)
Novel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Podum Kunwori (পদুম কুঁৱৰী)



Short Story Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Surobhi (সুৰভি)(Short Stories, 1909) ❖ Xadhukothaar Kuki (সাধুকথাৰ কুঁকি)(Short Stories, 1912) ❖ Junbiri (জোনবিৰি)(Short Stories, 1913) ❖ Kehukoli (কেহোঁকলি)
Children's literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Junuka (জুনুকা) (Folk tales, 1910) ❖ Burhi aair xadhu (বুঢ়ী আইৰ সাধু)(Folk tales, 1911) ❖ Kokadeuta aaru nati lora ("Grandfather and Grandsons") (ককাদেউতা আৰু নাতি-ল'ৰা)(Folk tales, 1912) ❖ Baakhor (বাখৰ)
Collection of satire essays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Kripabor Barbaruar Kaakotor Tupula (কৃপাবৰ বৰবৰুৱাৰ কাকতৰ টোপোলা) (1904) ❖ Kripabor Barbaruar Ubhutoni (কৃপাবৰ বৰবৰুৱাৰ ওভোতনি)(1909) ❖ Barbaruar Bhabor Burburoni (বৰবৰুৱাৰ ভাবৰ বুৰবুৰণি) ❖ Barbaruar Buloni (বৰবৰুৱাৰ বুলনি)
Comic Plays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Litikai (লিটিকাই) ❖ Nomal (নোমল) ❖ Paachani (পাচনি) ❖ Chikarpati Nikarpati (চিকৰপতি নিকৰপতি)
Plays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Joymoti Kunwari (জয়মতী কুঁৱৰী)(1915) ❖ Chakradhwaj Singha (চক্ৰধ্বজ সিংহ)(1915) ❖ Belimaar (বেলিমাৰ)(1915) ❖ Litikai (লিটিকাই) (1890) ❖ Chikarpati-Nikarpati (চিকৰপতি-নিকৰপতি) (1913) ❖ Nomal (নোমল) (1913) ❖ Pachoni (পাচনি) (1913)
Biographies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Dinanath Bejbaruar Xankhipto Jibon Charit (দীননাথ বেজবৰুৱাৰ সংক্ষিপ্ত জীৱন চৰিত) ❖ Sri Sri Shankardev (শ্ৰীশ্ৰী শংকৰদেৱ) ❖ Mahapurush Sri Sankardev and Sri Madhabdev (মহাপুৰুষ শ্ৰীশংকৰদেৱ আৰু শ্ৰীমাধৱদেৱ)



Autobiographical

- ❖ Mor Jiban Sowaran (মোর জীবন সোঁরষণ)
- ❖ Patralekha, Dinalekha (পত্রলেখা, দিনলেখা)

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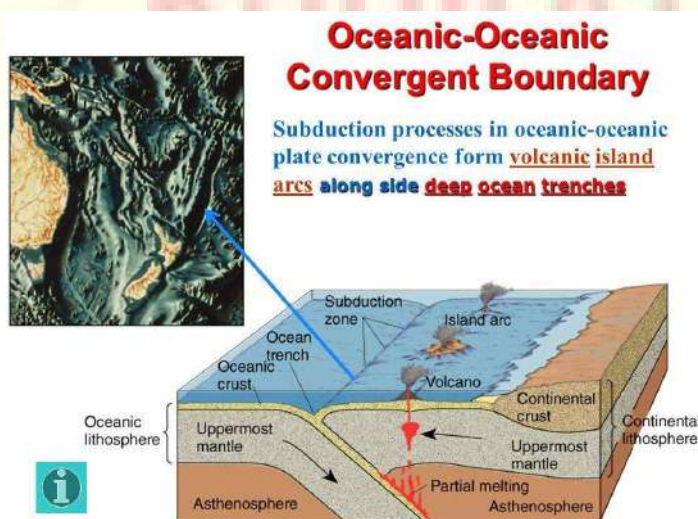
SAMPLE ANSWER FOR MAINS CCE 2022

Q. The Ring of Fire, also referred to as the Circum-Pacific Belt, is a path along the Pacific Ocean characterized by active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes. Discuss the reasons for it. (250 words)

Introduction: The Ring of Fire is a Pacific region home to over 450 volcanoes, including three of the world's four most active volcanoes – Mount St. Helens in the USA, Mount Fuji in Japan and Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines. It is also sometimes called the circum-Pacific belt. Around 90% of the world's earthquakes occur in the Ring of Fire, and 80% of the world's largest earthquakes.

Location of Circum-Pacific Region (“Pacific Ring of fire”):

- ❖ It stretches along the Pacific Ocean coastlines, where the Pacific Plate grinds against other, smaller tectonic plates that form the Earth's crust – such as the Philippine Sea plate and the Cocos and Nazca Plates that line the edge of the Pacific Ocean.
- ❖ The 40,000 kilometre horse-shoe-shaped ring loops from New Zealand to Chile, passing through the coasts of Asia and the Americas on the way.
- ❖ The chain of volcanoes extends from Aleutian Islands into Kamchatka, Japan, the Philippines and Indonesia, southward into Pacific Islands of Solomon, Tonga and New Zealand. On the other side of the Pacific, the chain continues from the Andes to Central America (Guatemala, Costa Rica and Nicaragua), Mexico and right up to Alaska.
- ❖ Example: Mt. Fuji, Mt. Vesuvius, Stromboli, Etna etc. Formation is due to the Ocean – Ocean plate collision and Ocean – Continent plate collision:



❖ The Ring of Fire is a direct outcome of the tectonic activities in the Pacific Ocean. The lithosphere plates are in constant motion and collisions.

❖ These plates making up the outermost layer of the earth are always moving on top of the mantle and sometimes pull apart, collide, or slide past each other resulting in divergent boundaries, convergent boundaries, and transform boundaries respectively.

- ❖ The Ring of Fire is the result from subduction of oceanic tectonic plates beneath lighter continental plates. The area where these tectonic plates meet is called a subduction zone.

- ❖ Subduction zones are also predominant due to the action of the tectonic movements when heavier plates slip under lighter plates, creating deep trenches.
- ❖ The subduction alters the heavy mantle into buoyant magma which moves up the crust to the surface of the earth. When this occurs over millions of years, the rising magma brings about a series of active volcanoes referred to as volcanic arc.
- ❖ The volcanic arcs and ocean trenches run parallel to each other thereby bringing about the ever expanding Pacific Ring of Fire.



- ❖ For example, the Aleutian Islands in Alaska run parallel to the Aleutian Trench. What's more, the Andes Mountains of South America runs parallel to the Peru-Chile Trench.
- ❖ These parallel geologic features are the ones responsible for the subductions of the Plates.
- ❖ When it comes to plate tectonic boundaries, it leads to faulting, crashing, and formation of rift valleys on the sea floor which contributes to the ejection of magma and powerful shaking of the ocean floor.
- ❖ This leads to the formation of more cracks, vents, and fault lines which can trigger strong earthquakes and volcanic activities.
- ❖ The ejected magma is cooled by the seawater to form new crust, creating high ridges on the ocean floor.
- ❖ The East Pacific Rise is one of the major locations experiencing fast seafloor spreading in the ring of fire.
- ❖ The world's deepest earthquakes happen in subduction zone areas as tectonic plates scrape against each other – and the Ring of Fire has the world's biggest concentration of subduction zones.



- ❖ As energy is released from the earth's molten core, it forces tectonic plates to move and they crash up against each other, causing friction. The friction causes a build-up of energy and when this energy is finally released it causes an earthquake. If this happens at sea it can cause devastating tsunamis.
- ❖ Tectonic plates usually only move on average a few centimetres each year, but when an earthquake strikes, they speed up massively and can move at several metres per second.

Conclusion

Volcanoes have a huge impact on man and material as urbanization and globalization increases. The effects have impacts on flora, fauna and the global warming which can accelerate the climate change.

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PERSONALITIES IN NEWS

**Raja Ravi Varma (29th April 1848-
2nd October 1906)**



- ❖ Raja Ravi Varma's unfinished works to be unveiled at Kilimanoor Palace in Kerala on 175th birth anniversary.
- ❖ He was an Indian painter, born in Kerala, best known for **uniting Hindu mythological subject matter with European realist historicist painting style**.
- ❖ He was the **first Indian artist to use oil paints**, which were brought to India by the Britishers. His painting '**Hamsa Damayanti**', which depicts the story of King Nala and Damayanti from Mahabharata won the **first prize at Vienna Exhibition in 1873**.
- ❖ Other major work includes **Nair Lady Adorning Her Hair**. British government awarded him with **Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal in 1904**.
- ❖ He was a pioneer in **using art as a means of social reform**, promoting education for women and advocating against social evils like child marriage.

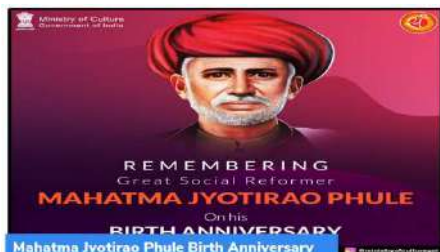
**Martyrdom Day of Baba Banda
Singh Bahadur**



- ❖ Baba Banda Singh Bahadur was a great Sikh warrior and a commander of Khalsa army who defeated the Mughals and freed a large part of North India.
- ❖ He established the **Khalsa rule** in Punjab.
- ❖ Banda Singh Bahadur **abolished the Zamindari system** and granted property rights to the tillers of the land.
- ❖ He was captured by Mughal ruler Farrukhsiyar and brought to Delhi and put to death in a most inhuman manner. This martyrdom took place in Mehrauli where a monument still stands in memory of his martyrdom which is an icon of exemplary courage, bravery and deep-rooted faith in dharma.
- ❖ Red fort, New Delhi is the place from where the mughals gave firman for his killing.



Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jayanti



- ❖ **Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jayanti** is a day observed on 11 April every year to remember the works of **Jyotirao Govindrao Phule**, a social activist, thinker, writer and anti-caste social reformer born on the same day in 1827 in Maharashtra.
- ❖ Jyotiba Phule, together with his wife, **Savitribai Phule**, fought for women's education in India and were the first to facilitate schooling for women in the country.
- ❖ Jyotirao Govindrao Phule worked towards **eradicating untouchability and the caste system in India**, and his contributions to society are remembered and honored on Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jayanti.



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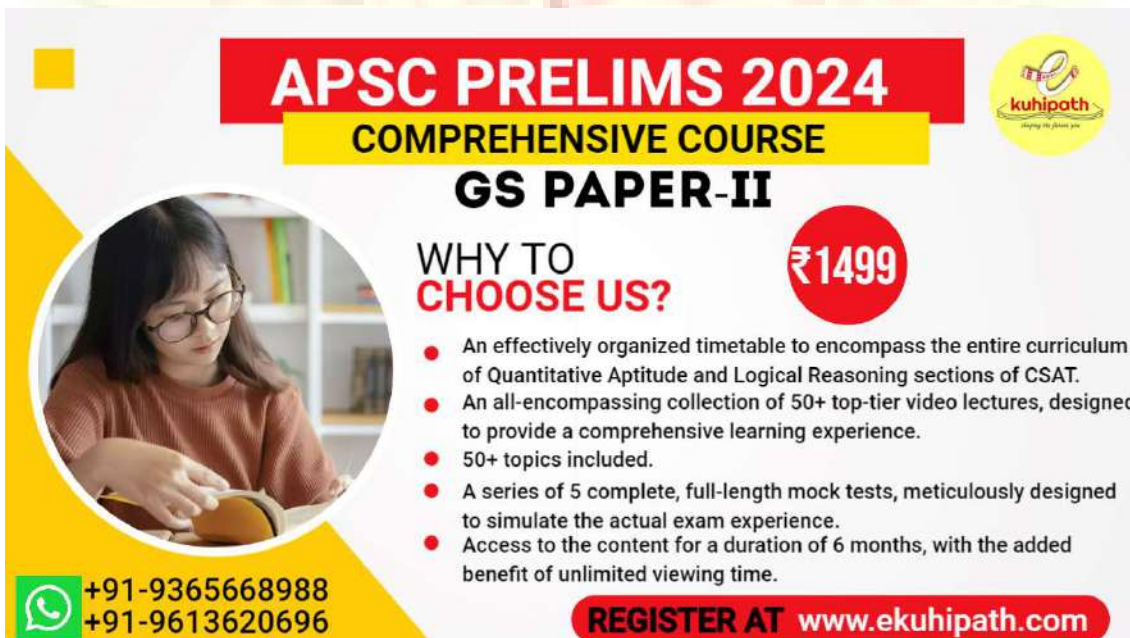


PLACES IN NEWS

Israel (Capital: Jerusalem)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Prime Minister congratulated people of Israel on 75th anniversary of their independence. <p>Political Boundaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Israel is a small country in the Middle East. It shares border with Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, and Egypt. Geographical features Snowy mountains in the north and the hot desert (Negev Desert) in the south.❖ Lowest point: The Dead Sea (also the lowest point on the Earth's surface at 416 meters below sea level)❖ Highest point: Mount Hermon Major river: Jordan
Nagorno-Karabakh	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Azerbaijan had established a checkpoint at Lachin corridor, the only land route linking Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh.❖ Nagorno-Karabakh, known as Artsakh by Armenians, is a landlocked mountainous area in South Caucasus.❖ It was claimed by both Azerbaijan and Armenia after the fall of Russian Empire in 1917 and has remained a point of tension ever since.❖ Territory is internationally recognised as part of oil-rich Azerbaijan, but its inhabitants are predominantly ethnic Armenians.
Al-Aqsa Mosque: Significance and Contentions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Recently, a raid by Israeli police on Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque sparked an intense reaction from Palestinians across the occupied West Bank and the wider Arab and Muslim world. The incident underscores the sensitivity and significance of the Al-Aqsa mosque, a flashpoint for deadly violence over matters of sovereignty and religion in Jerusalem.❖ <i>Location of the Al-Aqsa Mosque</i>❖ The Al-Aqsa mosque sits at the heart of Jerusalem's Old City on a hill that is named by Jews as Har ha-Bayit, or Temple Mount, and by Muslims as al-Haram al-Sharif, or The Noble Sanctuary. The site is a compound that overlooks the Western Wall, a sacred place of prayer for Jews.



Mount Kilimanjaro and the Promotion of Gaddi Culture	Mount Kilimanjaro: The Highest Mountain in Africa <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Mount Kilimanjaro is a dormant volcano situated in Tanzania, in the eastern part of Africa. It is the highest summit in the continent and the highest single free-standing mountain in the world, with its summit reaching an elevation of 5,895 meters above sea level. The mountain is made up of three distinct volcanic cones, namely Kibo, Mawenzi, and Shira, with Kibo being the highest and most well-known of the three.❖ Anjali Sharma is a mountaineer from India who recently made headlines by scaling Mount Kilimanjaro in South Africa while wearing a traditional Gaddi dress. She has been climbing mountains since the age of 15 and has already conquered a peak of 5289 meters. In addition, she has also climbed Hanuman Tibba and Pahar Deo, both over 6001 meters in height.
Nevado del Ruiz Volcano	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Nevado del Ruiz is a stratovolcano located in the central part of Colombia. It is considered one of the most active and dangerous volcanoes in the country, with a history of generating destructive lahars and pyroclastic flows. In this article, we will delve into the facts and information about the Nevado del Ruiz volcano.



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