



# DHEERAN IAS ACADEMY®

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## GENERAL STUDIES – 1

### TOPIC: HISTORY

1. UNESCO lists 50 iconic indian textiles
2. Heritage conservation
3. Subash chandra bose

### TOPIC: GEOGRAPHY

1. Urban floods mitigation
2. Rainbow clouds
3. Hurricane IAN

## GENERAL STUDIES- 2

### TOPIC: POLITY

1. Chief of defence staff
2. Tamil nadu's new breakfast scheme in schools
3. The hijab case and the doctrine of essentiality
4. Death penalty: sc moots fair hearing
5. Electricity amendment bill 2022
6. Attorney-general (a-g) of india
7. Uniform civil code
8. Hindi not a competitor of regional languages: home minister
9. Centre adds 4 new tribes to scheduled tribes(st) list
10. Adoption in india
11. Citizenship amendment act (caa), 2019
12. Rajpath, central vista lawns renamed 'kartavya path'
13. Mother tongue as a medium of instruction
14. Preventive detention
15. Ews quota
16. Regional benches of supreme court

### TOPIC: IR/IO

1. Eastern economic forum
2. G20 summit will open pandora of opportunities
3. G4 grouping

4. Pm modi to attend sco meet
5. Kushiyara river treaty
6. India- china disengage at lac friction points in ladakh
7. Un slams sri lanka's rights record
8. India bangladesh relations
9. Nord stream pipeline to remain shut
10. Quad
11. Un accuses china of uighur rights abuses

### TOPIC: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. All women have right to legal and safe abortion: supreme court
2. Odisha offering cash incentive for pvtgs marriages
3. Sc seeks centre's reply on issue of marital rape

### TOPIC: EDUCATION

1. Eklavya schools get short shrift in teacher recruitments

### TOPIC: SCHEMES

1. MGNREGA

## GENERAL STUDIES-3

### TOPIC: ECONOMY

1. Forex reserves to dip by \$23 billion by dec
2. Centre defers new foreign trade policy
3. High inflation in india
4. Consumer price index
5. Gst council
6. Windfall tax
7. Periodic labour force survey (PLFS)

### TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Vande bharat

**TOPIC: ENVIRONMENT**

1. Fame india
2. Neelakurinji
3. Cheetah reintroduction
4. Ban on single-use plastics

**TOPIC: SCIENCE AND TECH**

1. Lumpy skin disease in india
2. Nasa's dart mission prepares for an asteroid dimorphos collision
3. Isro tests system recoverable rocket 'inflatable aerodynamic decelerator
4. India's first dark sky reserve to come up in ladakh

**TOPIC: DEFENSE AND SECURITY**

1. Left wing extremism
2. Exercise vostok-22

**MISCELLANEOUS****TOPIC: INDEX/ REPORT**

1. India ranks 132 in HDI as score drops
2. Global innovation index

## TOPIC: HISTORY

### UNESCO LISTS 50 ICONIC INDIAN TEXTILES

#### In News:

The UNESCO has released a list of 50 exclusive and iconic heritage textile crafts of the country.

#### Analysis of Background:

- The report is titled- Handmade for the 21st Century: Safeguarding Traditional Indian Textile.
- It lists the histories and legends behind the textiles, describes the complicated and secret processes behind their making, mentions the causes for their dwindling popularity, and provides strategies for their preservation.
- The publication, which aims to bridge this gap, brings together years of research on the 50 selected textiles.

#### Key heritage textiles mentioned in the list:

- Toda embroidery and Sungadi from Tamil Nadu
- Himroo from Hyderabad
- Bandha tie and dye from Sambalpur in Odisha
- Khes from Panipat, Haryana
- Chamba rumals from Himachal Pradesh
- Thigma or wool tie and dye from Ladakh
- Awadh Jamdani from Varanasi, UP
- Ilkal and Lambadi or Banjara embroidery from Karnataka
- Sikalnayakanpet Kalamkari from Thanjavur, TN
- Kunbi weaves from Goa
- Mashru weaves and Patola from Gujarat
- Himroo from Maharashtra and
- Garad-Koirial from West Bengal

#### About UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization):

- The UNESCO is a specialised agency of the UN aimed at promoting world peace and security through international cooperation in education, arts, sciences and culture.
- It has 193 member states and 12 associate members, as well as partners in the non-governmental, intergovernmental and private sector.
- UNESCO was founded in 1945 as the successor to the League of Nations's International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation.
- It pursues this objective through five major program areas: education, natural sciences, social/human sciences, culture and communication/information.

## HERITAGE CONSERVATION

### In News:

Despite all the public talk of the importance of conserving our national heritage, the budget of the ASI, the primary institutional guardian of monuments, in 2021-22 has been reduced by more than Rs 200 cr.

### Analysis of Background:

**Define heritage:** Heritage is the full range of our inherited traditions, monuments, objects, and culture. Most important, it is the range of contemporary activities, meanings, and behaviours that we draw from them.

### Threats to Indian Heritage:

- **Theft:** The incidents of thefts have been observed usually from unprotected monuments, ancient temples. The thefts cases have also been seen in the protected monuments and museums as well. It is due to negligence of security guards in museums, monuments etc.
- **Smuggling:** illicit traffic and smuggling in antiquities. Illicit traffic is motivated often by profit and sometimes by the demand for luxuries.
- **Tourism:** Unregulated tourism, tourist activities run by touts, private agents have affected the art heritage places. The Culture Ministry of India has reported that up to 24 Indian monuments have been declared “untraceable” or “missing” by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- **Issues with security of museums:** Most of the museums are poorly guarded due to shortage of manpower leading to theft of artifacts, fire accidents etc.
- **Duplication:** Fakes paintings and art forms leading to threat to livelihoods of artists.
- **Poor Maintenance:** The state of the wall paintings in Ajanta caves is continuously getting worse, which can be attributed to humidity as well as to a lack of care.
- **Encroachment on monuments:** Another miss from the ministry has been encroachments of monuments. Over 278 centrally protected monuments have been encroached upon or have illegal occupants, as per government data.

### Why should protect our heritage?

- **Evolution of human consciousness is a continuous process:** History here serves as a laboratory and the past serves as a demarcation to understand the regional laws and social structures. This understanding helps in our progress towards an ideal society.
- **Pride of country:** The art heritage is the identity and pride of our country. It is duty of every citizen to protect, preserve and perpetuate the cultural richness.
- **Tourism potential:** for art monuments and museums is very high. Tourism generates revenue for the state as well as private artists due to the money-multiplier quality.
- **Infrastructure development:** takes place in and around the areas. Eg. Hampi despite being a small town has excellent infrastructure.
- **Jobs:** It creates jobs for a lot of people from art industry and tourism industry as well
- **Strengthen conviction:** Every historical site has an important story to tell and these

stories have inspired many people to strengthen their convictions and commitment to fight injustice and oppression.

- **Soft power:** Art and culture is also a part of soft power in world politics.

#### **About Archaeological Survey of India (ASI):**

- The ASI is an attached office of the Ministry of Culture.
- It was founded in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham who also became its first Director-General.
- Under the provisions of the AMASR Act of 1958, the ASI administers more than 3650 ancient monuments, archaeological sites and remains of national importance.
- These can include everything from temples, mosques, churches, tombs, and cemeteries to palaces, forts, step-wells, and rock-cut caves.

### **SUBASH CHANDRA BOSE**

#### **In News:**

In the year of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the nation pays tribute to Subhas Bose on September 8 as his statue rises tall next to India Gate.

#### **Analysis of Background:**

##### **Brief of Subash Chandra Bose:**

- Bose was the ninth child in 14 and the sixth son to Janakinath Bose, a lawyer from the Kayasth caste.
- He passed matriculation in 1913 from Cuttack and joined the Presidency College in Kolkata (then Calcutta).
- The teachings of Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramhansa led to a spiritual awakening in Bose at the young age of 15.
- Subhash Chandra Bose reached Singapore on July 2, 1943, at the invitation of Rash Behari Bose. He took charge as the President of the Indian Independence League and took over as the leader for East Asia.
- On October 23 1943, with the help of the Japanese Army, Netaji declared war on the United States and Britain.
- He was fondly called Netaji and was arrested 11 times in his freedom struggle and died under mysterious circumstances in an air crash over Taipei.

##### **His vision for INA march in India**

- **Creating revolutionary conditions:** Bose had hoped to capture Imphal. That would give the INA a large number of Indian soldiers. Once this was achieved, fighting in India would create revolutionary conditions.
- **Organization of INA divisions at border:** When the fighting commenced, the INA had only one division stationed on India's borders. Another was on the move towards Burma. And the third was in the process of formation. All three divisions were

expected to be in Burma by the time Imphal fell.

- Rapid invasion from north east: Bose was confident of raising three more divisions from among the Indian troops that would fall to him after the capture of Imphal. With six divisions, the INA would be the single largest force in the region. The rapid advance into India would create the right conditions for the Indian army to switch sides along with the people of the Northeast.

#### **Azad Hind Radio:**

- This radio station was created to encourage countrymen to fight for freedom under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose.
- The radio station used to broadcast news at weekly intervals in various languages like English, Hindi, Tamil, Punjabi, Urdu, etc.
- The main aim for the formation of the Azad Hind Radio was to counter the broadcast of allied radio stations and to fill Indian nationals with pride and motivation to fight for freedom.

#### **The Rani Jhansi Regiment:**

- Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was a firm believer of women's power and women were also greatly inspired by his words.
- He had always wanted to form an only women's regiment and his dream came to fruition with the formation of the Rani Jhansi Regiment on 12th July 1943.
- About 170 women cadets joined the force and their training camp was set in Singapore.
- They were given ranks according to their educational background.
- By November of 1943, this unit had more than 300 cadets as camps were also established in Rangoon and Bangkok.
- The women cadets were given military and combat training, weapons training, and route marches. Some of them were also chosen for advanced training and some were also chosen for training as a nurse.
- The Rani Jhansi Regiment mainly worked as care and relief givers.
- The unit later disbanded after the fall of Rangoon and the withdrawal of the Azad Hind Government.

## TOPIC: GEOGRAPHY

### URBAN FLOODS MITIGATION

In News: Floods in Bangalore cities during S-W monsoon.

#### Analysis of Background:

**Flood:** Floods are the most frequent type of natural disaster and occur when an overflow of water submerges land that is usually dry. Floods are often caused by heavy rainfall, rapid snowmelt or a storm surge from a tropical cyclone or tsunami in coastal areas.

#### Causes of frequent urban floods:

##### Natural

- **Meteorological Factors:** Heavy rainfall, cyclonic storms and thunderstorms causes water to flow quickly through paved urban areas and impound in low lying areas.
- **Hydrological Factors:** Overbank flow channel networks, occurrence of high tides impeding the drainage in coastal cities.
- **Climate Change:** Climate change due to various anthropogenic events has led to extreme weather events.

##### Anthropological

- **Unplanned Urbanization:** Unplanned Urbanization is the key cause of urban flooding. A major concern is blocking of natural drainage pathways through construction activity and encroachment on catchment areas, riverbeds and lakebeds.
- **Destruction of lakes:** A major issue in India cities. Lakes can store the excess water and regulate the flow of water. However, pollution of natural urban water bodies and converting them for development purposes has increased risk of floods.
- **Unauthorised colonies and excess construction:** Reduced infiltration due paving of surfaces which decreases ground absorption and increases the speed and amount of surface flow
- **Poor Solid Waste Management System:** Improper waste management system and clogging of storm-water drains because of silting, accumulation of non-biodegradable wastes and construction debris.
- **Drainage System:** Old and ill maintained drainage system is another factor making cities in India vulnerable to flooding.
- **Irresponsible steps:** Lack of attention to natural hydrological system and lack of flood control measures.

#### Impact of the devastation due to floods:

- **On economy:** Damage to infrastructure, roads and settlements, industrial production, basic supplies, post disaster rehabilitation difficulties etc.
- **On human population and wildlife:** Trauma, loss of life, injuries and disease outbreak, contamination of water etc.
- **On environment:** Loss of habitat, tree and forest cover, biodiversity loss and large scale greenery recovery failure.



- On transport and communication: Increased traffic congestion, disruption in rail services, disruption in communication- on telephone, internet cables causing massive public inconvenience.

### **Solutions for effective flood management**

- Improved flood warning systems: effective flood warning systems can help take timely action during natural calamities and can save lives. Pre-planning can significantly reduce the effects of floods, giving people time to migrate to safer locations and stock up essentials.
- Building flood-resilient housing systems: concreting floors can be very useful during floods. Houses should be water proofed and electric sockets should be placed at higher levels up the walls to reduce the chances of shocks.
- Constructing buildings above flood levels: buildings should be constructed a metre above from the ground to prevent flood damage and evacuation during floods.
- Resilience to Climate change: drastic climate changes have increased the frequency of natural disasters in many parts of the world. Governments should bring about environment-friendly policy level changes and eliminate the ones hazardous to the environment to tackle the problem of global warming.
- Create wetlands and encourage reforestation: creating more and more wetlands can help soak up excessive moisture since wetlands act as sponges. Wooded areas can also slow down heavy water flow, minimizing the effects of floods. Reforesting upstream regions can significantly reduce the effects of flood damage.
- Improve soil conditions: improper soil management, animal hooves, and machinery can make soil compacted. As a result, instead of holding water in and absorbing moisture, the water runs off immediately. Properly drained soil can absorb large amounts of rainwater and can prevent it from flowing into the rivers.
- Installing flood barriers: these are flood gates designed to prevent the area behind the barrier from flooding. They can also be kept around buildings to keep floodwaters outside the boundary created.
- Development of GIS– Geographical Information System (GIS) based National Database: for disaster management. GIS is an effective tool for emergency responders to access information in terms of crucial parameters for disaster-affected areas.
- Developing a Federal flood management plan: with responsibilities of union and state clearly defined.

## RAINBOW CLOUDS

**In News:** Last week, pictures of an unusually-shaped rainbow cloud that appeared over China were widely shared on social media.

### **Analysis of Background:**

#### **Pileus Cloud:**

- A pileus cloud is usually formed over a cumulus or cumulonimbus cloud.
- It is formed when the base cloud pushes a moist current of air upwards and the water vapour from the current condenses to somewhat resemble wave-like crests, or umbrellas.
- A pileus cloud is transient in nature and lasts barely for a few minutes, making it difficult, and at the same time, exciting, to spot.

#### **Cloud iridescence:**

- Cloud iridescence or Irisation is an optical phenomenon that mostly occurs in wave-like clouds, including pileus and Altopumulus lenticularis.
- Iridescence in clouds means the appearance of colours on clouds, which can either be in the form of parallel bands like in a rainbow, or mingled in patches.
- In ancient Greek mythology, Iris is the goddess of rainbow. "Irisation", the phenomenon of rainbow-like colours in clouds, is derived from her name.

#### **Photometeor:**

- Iridescence of clouds is a photometeor.
- It is an optical phenomenon produced by the reflection, refraction, diffraction or interference of sunlight.

#### **Causes cloud iridescence:**

- In pileus clouds, small water droplets or ice crystals, usually of a similar size, diffract the sunlight falling on them.
- The thinness of the cloud ensures more exposure to sunlight for each water droplet or ice crystal.
- To ensure its wave crest-like appearance, water droplets or ice crystals in these clouds are always moving – droplets form at one side of the cloud and evaporate from the other end – and hence these clouds remain small and thin since the droplets have no way of combining and growing in size.
- In its International Cloud Atlas, the World Meteorological Organisation says that iridescence or Irisation is caused by diffraction within 10 degrees from the sun.
- Beyond ten degrees and up till about 40 degrees, interference of light is the main cause of iridescence.

## HURRICANE IAN

### In News:

Hurricane Ian made landfall in southwestern Florida as a major Category 4 storm, causing dangerous storm surge, winds and flooding.

### Analysis of Background:

- Hurricane Ian is one of the most powerful storms in U.S. history, tearing apart homes and buildings.
- The storm made landfall near Cayo Costa as a Category 4 storm with maximum sustained winds measured at a stunning 150 mph. This is only 7 mph slower than a Category 5 - the highest status on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale of Hurricane Intensity.

### Tropical Storms

- Hurricanes, cyclones and typhoons are all types of tropical storms. But are given different names depending on where they appear.
- Hurricanes are tropical storms that form over the North Atlantic Ocean and Northeast Pacific.
- Cyclones are formed over the South Pacific and Indian Ocean.
- Typhoons are formed over the Northwest Pacific Ocean.

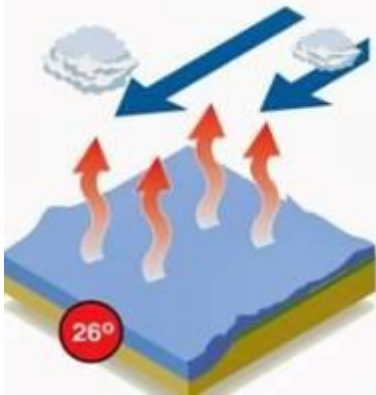
**Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Category Chart**

| Category   | Wind Speed   |
|------------|--|
| Category 1 | 74-95 mph<br>33-42 m/s, 64-82 knots, 119-153 km/h                  |
| Category 2 | 96-110 mph<br>43-49 m/s, 83-95 knots, 154-177 km/h                 |
| Category 3 | 111-129 mph<br>50-58 m/s, 96-112 knots, 178-208 km/h               |
| Category 4 | 130-156 mph<br>58-70 m/s, 113-136 knots, 209-251 km/h              |
| Category 5 | $\geq 157$ mph<br>$\geq 70$ m/s, $\geq 137$ knots, $\geq 252$ km/h |

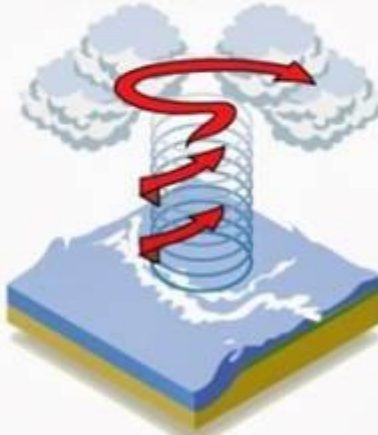
## How tropical storms are formed

High humidity and ocean temperatures of over 26°C are major contributing factors

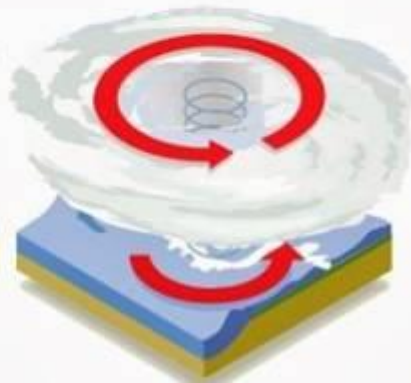
**Water evaporates** from the ocean surface and comes into contact with a **mass of cold air**, forming clouds



A **column of low pressure** develops at the centre. **Winds form** around the column

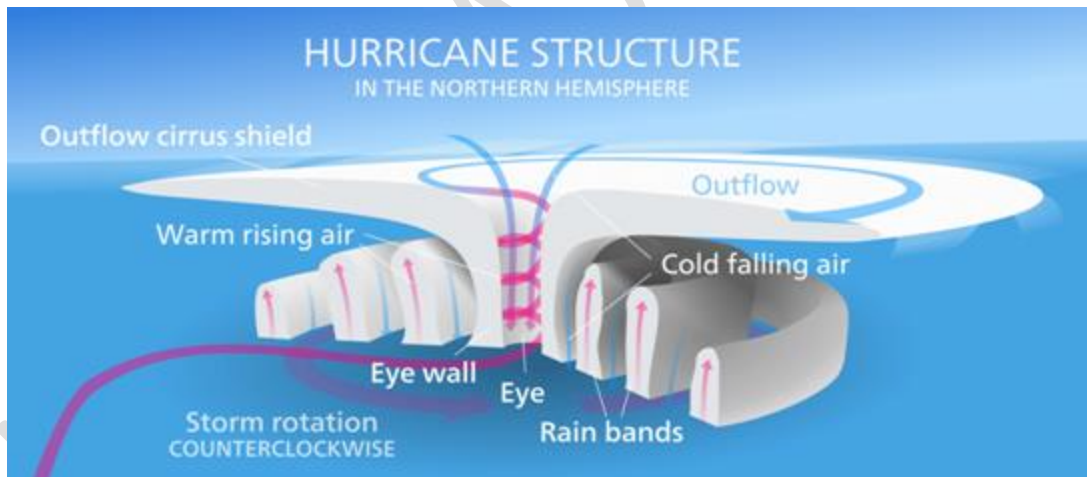


As pressure in the central column (the eye) weakens, the **speed of the wind** around it increases



### Favourable Conditions required

- Large sea surface with temperature higher than 27° C,
- Presence of the Coriolis force enough to create a cyclonic vortex,
- Small variations in the vertical wind speed,
- A pre-existing weak low-pressure area or low-level-cyclonic circulation,
- Upper divergence above the sea level system,



## TOPIC: POLITY

### CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF

#### In News:

The Government on September 28, 2022, appointed former Eastern Army Commander Lt. General Anil Chauhan as the next Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). The appointment comes more than nine months after the post fell vacant following the death of General Bipin Rawat.

#### Analysis of Background:

##### Role of the Office of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS):

- Mandate is to bring convergence in the functioning of the Army, the Navy and the Air force and bolster the country's overall military prowess.
- The CDS is a high military office that oversees and coordinates the working of the three Services, and offers seamless tri-service views and single-point advice to the Executive.
- On long-term it provides for defence planning and management, including manpower, equipment and strategy, and above all, "joint manship" in operations.
- The role of the CDS becomes critical in times of conflict.

##### Need of CDS:

- Tri-services coordination: The creation of the CDS will eventually lead to the formation of tri-service theatre commands intended to create vertical integration of the three forces.
- Single-point military advisory: The CDS will be a single-point military adviser to the government and synergise long term planning, procurements, training and logistics of the three Services.
- Efforts saving: This is expected to save money by avoiding duplication between the Services, at a time of shrinking capital expenditure within the defence budget.
- Military diplomacy: This is today supporting conventional diplomacy. That can't be done by different Services.

##### Challenges facing the new chief of Defence Staff:

- Responsibility: In terms of prioritisation and building a bridge between a government in a hurry and an organisation that is resistant to change, shackled by tradition and plagued by continued turf battles that cannot be wished away.
- Enhancing operational capability: To build operational capability at a pace that will ensure that the military power asymmetry vis-à-vis China remains manageable.
- Integrated structure: The need to create fresh structures to support integrated training, planning and operations. India-specific requirements need to be addressed.
- Maintaining balance: Balancing the need to retain the operational capability and the government's push towards self-reliance in defence manufacturing. Considering that this push demands a paradigm shift in the thinking of India's defence innovation and manufacturing ecosystem. One needs to look no further than the US, France and Israel to embrace this push. However, this again links to forcing the armed forces to step out of their comfort zone and develop diverse intellectual capital.

## TAMIL NADU'S NEW BREAKFAST SCHEME IN SCHOOLS

### In News:

Tamil Nadu CM has launched the Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme for students of Class I to V in government schools.

### Analysis of Background:

#### CM's Breakfast Scheme:

- The scheme covers around 1.14 lakh students in 1,545 schools which include 417 municipal corporation schools, 163 municipality schools and 728 taluk and village panchayat-level schools.
- The inauguration of the scheme marks an important milestone in the State's history of providing free meals to school students.

### Beneficiaries of the programme:

- As of now, there are nearly 7 lakh beneficiaries spread over 43,190 nutritious meal centres.
- This includes around 3,500 students of National Child Labour Project (NCLP) special schools.
- Besides, as a consequence of the collaborative implementation of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) and the nutritious meal programme, around 15.8 lakh children in the age group of 2+ to 5+ years receive nutritious meals.

### Impact on school education

- Rise in enrolment: After the improved version of the mid-day meal scheme in 1982, the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) at primary level (standards I to V) went up by 10% during July-September, 1982 as compared to the corresponding period in 1981.
- Girls' enrolment: The rise in boys' enrollment was 12% and in the case of girls, 7%, according to a publication brought out by the Tamil Nadu government on the occasion of the launch of the Scheme.
- Increase in attendance: Likewise, attendance during July-September 1982 rose by 33% over the previous year's figure.

### Focus areas programme:

- Anaemia is a major health problem in Tamil Nadu, especially among women and children, says the 2019-21 National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5's report.
- From 50% during the period of the 2015-16 NFHS-4, the prevalence of anaemia in children now went up to 57%.
- This and many other health issues can be addressed through the combined efforts of the departments of School Education, Public Health and Social Welfare and Women Empowerment.
- Besides, a continuous and rigorous review of the progress of the scheme and nutritious meal programme should be carried out in a sustained manner.



## THE HIJAB CASE AND THE DOCTRINE OF ESSENTIALITY

### In News:

A two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court of India is presently hearing arguments on the correctness of a Karnataka High Court judgment that upheld the ban on the use of the hijab by students in Karnataka which raises question on doctrine of essentiality.

### Analysis of Background:



### What is 'doctrine of essentiality'?

A seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court invented the doctrine of "essentiality" in the Shirur Mutt case in 1954. The court held that the term "religion" will cover all rituals and practices "integral" to a religion.

### Importance doctrine of essentiality:

In the legal framework, the doctrine of essentiality is a doctrine that has evolved to protect the religious practices that are essential or integral and does not violate any fundamental right. India being a secular country has discrete religious beliefs and to deny any is to violate the freedom of religion.

### Why hijab is not an essential practice?

Wearing of hijab (head scarf) by Muslim women does not form a part of essential religious practices in Islamic faith and it is not protected under the right to freedom of religion guaranteed under Article 25 of the Constitution of India, the High Court of Karnataka declared on March 15 2022.

### Is hijab essential part of Islam?

The Qur'an instructs Muslim women and men to dress modestly, and for some, the hijab is worn by Muslim girls and women to maintain modesty and privacy from unrelated males. According to the Encyclopedia of Islam and Muslim World, modesty concerns both men's and women's "gaze, gait, garments, and genitalia".

### How do you identify essential religion practice?

- The Court observed that in order to determine whether or not a particular practice is an essential part of religion, the test must be whether the absence of the practice itself
- Meaning of Article 26
- Freedom to manage religious affairs Subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right.

#### **Examples of the essential religious practices test:**

- While these issues are largely understood to be community-based, there are instances in which the court has applied the test to individual freedoms as well.
- In a 2004 ruling, the Supreme Court held that the Ananda Marga sect had no fundamental right to perform the Tandava dance in public streets since it did not constitute an essential religious practice of the sect.
- For example, in 2016, the Supreme Court upheld the discharge of an airman from the Indian Air Force for keeping a beard.
- It distinguished the case of a Muslim airman from that of Sikhs who are allowed to keep a beard.
- In 2015, the Supreme Court restored the Jain religious practice of Santhara/Sallekhana (a ritualistic fast unto death) by staying an order of the Rajasthan HC.

#### **What is the Supreme Court's judgement on Doctrine of Essentiality?**

- The doctrine of "essentiality" was invented by a seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court in the 'Shirur Mutt' case in 1954.
- It is a contentious doctrine evolved by the court to protect only such religious practices which were essential and integral to the religion.
- The court held that the term "religion" will cover all rituals and practices "integral" to a religion, and took upon itself the responsibility of determining the essential and non-essential practices of a religion.
- Referring to the Ayodhya case, the Constitution Bench had ruled in 1994 that A mosque is not an essential part of the practice of the religion of Islam and namaz (prayer) by Muslims can be offered anywhere, even in open.

#### **How has the doctrine been used in subsequent years?**

- The 'essentiality doctrine' of the Supreme Court has been criticised by several constitutional experts.
- Scholars of constitutional law have argued that the essentiality/integrality doctrine has tended to lead the court into an area that is beyond its competence, and given judges the power to decide purely religious questions.
- As a result, over the years, courts have been inconsistent on this question — in some cases they have relied on religious texts to determine essentiality.
- In others it relied on the empirical behaviour of followers, and in yet others, based on whether the practice existed at the time the religion originated.

#### **Issues over the doctrine:**



- In the beginning, the court engaged with the question of whether untouchability, manifested in restrictions on entry into temples, was an “essential part of the Hindu religion”.
- After examining selected Hindu texts, it came to the conclusion that untouchability was not an essential Hindu practice.
- The idea of providing constitutional protection only to those elements of religion which the court considers “essential” is problematic as it assumes that one element or practice of religion is independent of other elements or practices.
- So, while the essentiality test privileges certain practices over others, it is, in fact, all practices taken together that constitute a religion.

#### **How does essentiality square up against religious freedom?**

- Freedom of religion was meant to guarantee freedom to practice one’s beliefs based on the concept of “inward association” of man with God.
- The apex court in ‘Ratilal Panachand Gandhi vs The State of Bombay and Ors’ (March 18, 1954) acknowledged that “every person has a fundamental right to entertain such religious beliefs as may be approved by his judgment or conscience”.
- The framers of the Constitution wanted to give this autonomy to each individual. Scholars have argued that the essentiality test impinges on this autonomy.
- The apex court has itself emphasised autonomy and choice in its Privacy (2017), 377 (2018), and Adultery (2018) judgments.

#### **Its effect on society,**

- **Narrowing of safeguards to religious customs:** It has allowed the Court to narrow the extent of safeguards available to religious customs by directly impinging on the autonomy of groups to decide for themselves what they deem valuable, violating, in the process, their right to ethical independence.
- **Negated legislation that might otherwise enhance the cause of social justice:** It has also negated legislation that might otherwise enhance the cause of social justice by holding that such laws cannot under any circumstances encroach on matters integral to the practice of a religion. For example, in 1962, the Court struck down a Bombay law that prohibited excommunications made by the Dai of the Dawoodi Bohra community when it held that the power to excommunicate is an essential facet of faith and that any measure aimed at social welfare cannot reform a religion out of its existence.
- **A principle of anti-exclusion:** Its application would require the Court to presume that a practice asserted by a religious group is, in fact, essential to the proponents of its faith. But regardless of such grounding, the Constitution will not offer protection to the practice if it excludes people on grounds of caste, gender, or other discriminatory criteria.

## DEATH PENALTY: SC MOOTS FAIR HEARING

### In News:

The Supreme Court has referred to a Constitution Bench the question of how to provide accused in death penalty cases a “meaningful, real and effective” hearing of their mitigating circumstances before a trial judge.

### Analysis of Background:

- Capital punishment, sometimes called death penalty, is execution of an offender sentenced to death after conviction by a court of law for a criminal offense.
- It should be distinguished from extrajudicial executions carried out without due process of law.
- The term death penalty is sometimes used interchangeably with capital punishment, though imposition of the penalty is not always followed by execution, because of the possibility of commutation to life imprisonment.

### When is it awarded?

- The term “Capital Punishment” stands for most severe form of punishment.
- It is the punishment which is to be awarded for the most heinous, grievous and detestable crimes against humanity.
- While the definition and extent of such crimes vary, the implication of capital punishment has always been the death sentence.

### Special factors on the death penalty jurisprudence in India

#### (a) Increase in Sexual Offences

- The report on death penalty published by NLU Delhi shows that the rate of awarding capital punishment to the offences of rape with murder is much higher than other offences.
- There is no doubt that rape is one of the most heinous crimes.

#### (b) Sedition and waging War against India

- India has seen many cases of treason, terrorism and seditious activities.
- It is in fact the most vulnerable state for such crimes.
- Judicial observations related to Death Penalty
- The Supreme Court has always said that the death sentence should be given rarely.

### Judgments against:

#### (a) Mithu vs State of Punjab (1983):

- The Supreme Court ruled that the mandatory death penalty is unconstitutional.
- It struck down Section 303 in the IPC, which entailed a mandatory death sentence for a person who commits murder while serving a life term in another case.
- The Supreme Court ruled Section 303 violated Articles 14 (right to equality) and 21 (right to life) since an unreasonable distinction was sought to be made between two classes of murders.

#### (b) State of Punjab vs Dalbir Singh (2012):

- Similarly, the Supreme Court ruled that mandatory death penalty as punishment for crimes under Section 27 (3) of the Arms Act, 1959, was unconstitutional.
- (c) Channulal Verma vs State of Chhattisgarh (2018):
- In Channulal, the Supreme Court, through Justice Kurian Joseph noted that the time was appropriate to review the constitutionality of the death penalty and take into consideration reformative aspects of punishment

#### **Judgments in favour:**

- In Jagmohan Singh vs State of UP' (1973), then in 'Rajendra Prasad vs State of UP' (1979), and finally in 'Bachan Singh vs State of Punjab' (1980) the Supreme Court affirmed the constitutional validity of the death penalty.
- It said that if capital punishment is provided in the law and the procedure is a fair, just and reasonable one, the death sentence can be awarded to a convict.
- This will, however, only be in the "rarest of rare" cases, and the courts should render "special reasons" while sending a person to the gallows.

#### **Arguments in favor:**

- Forfeiture of life: Supporters of the death penalty believe that those who commit murder, because they have taken the life of another, have forfeited their own right to life.
- Moral indignation of the victim: It is a just form of retribution, expressing and reinforcing the moral indignation not only of the victim's relatives but of law-abiding citizens in general.
- Highest form of Justice: For heinous crimes such as the Nirbhaya Gangrape Case, no other punishment could have deterred the will of the convicts.
- Deterrent against crime: Capital punishment is often justified with the argument that by executing convicted murderers, we will deter would-be murderers from killing people.
- Proportional punishment: The guilty people deserve to be punished in proportion to the severity of their crime.
- Prevailing lawlessness: The crimes we are now witnessing cannot be addressed by simple punishments. We are seeing horrific attacks on women, young girls, minority communities and Dalits etc.
- Prevention of crime is non-existent: Despite of stringent regulations, it is certainly visible that some crimes can never be prevented in our society.

#### **Arguments against:**

- Eye for an eye: Reformative justice is more productive, that innocent people are often killed in the search for retribution, and that "an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.
- Deterrence is a myth: Death penalty is not a deterrent to capital crimes state that there is no evidence to support the claim that the penalty is a deterrent.
- Political tool of suppression: The authorities in some countries, for example Iran and Sudan, use the death penalty to punish political opponents.

- Reverence for life' principle: Death penalty is an immoral punishment since humans should not kill other humans, no matter the reasons, because killing is killing.
- Stigma against killing: With the introduction of lethal injection as execution method, medical professionals participate in executions. Many professionals have now refused to administer such deaths.
- Skewed justice systems: In many cases recorded by Amnesty International, people were executed after being convicted in grossly unfair trials, on the basis of torture-tainted evidence and with inadequate legal representation.
- Discriminatory nature: The weight of the death penalty is disproportionately carried by those with less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds or belonging to a racial, ethnic or religious minority.
- Penalizing the innocents: The risk of executing the innocent precludes the use of the death penalty. Our colonial history has witnessed many such executions.

## ELECTRICITY AMENDMENT BILL 2022

### In News:

Concerns of states on some provisions of the new Electricity Bill are justified. But the legislation proposes welcome correctives to longstanding problems of the power sector.

### Analysis of Background:

#### Important provisions of the bill

- **Payment security:** The Bill provides that electricity will not be scheduled or despatched if adequate payment security is not provided by the discom. The central government may prescribe rules regarding payment security.
- **Contract enforcement:** The Bill empowers the CERC and SERCs to adjudicate disputes related to the performance of contracts. These refer to contracts related to the sale, purchase, or transmission of electricity. Further, the Commissions will have powers of a Civil Court.
- **Renewable purchase obligation:** The Act empowers SERCs to specify renewable purchase obligations (RPO) for discoms. RPO refers to the mandate to procure a certain percentage of electricity from renewable sources. The Bill adds that RPO should not be below a minimum percentage prescribed by the central government. Failure to meet RPO will be punishable with a penalty between 25 paise and 50 paise per kilowatt of the shortfall.
- **Selection committee for SERCs:** Under the Act, the Chairperson of the Central Electricity Authority or the Chairperson of the CERC is one of the members of the selection committee to recommend appointments to the SERCs. Under the Bill, instead of this person, the central government will nominate a member to the selection committee. The nominee should not be below the rank of Additional Secretary to the central government.
- **Composition of Commissions and APTEL:** The Bill increases the number of members

(including the chairperson) in SERCs from three to four. Further, at least one member in both the CERC and SERCs must be from law background. Under the Act, Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (APTEL) consists of a chairperson and three other members. The Bill instead provides that the APTEL will have three or more members, as may be prescribed by the central government.

#### **State apprehensions of the bill:**

- **Multi state license:** The clause pertaining to applicants seeking a distribution licence in more than one state. It states that the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC), and not the SERC, will grant the licence. This is problematic because a SERC is likely to be more aware of the field-level conditions in a state than its central counterpart.
- **Centre can bypass state:** The Bill has a provision empowering the Centre to give directions directly to the SERCs. Till now, the CERC received instructions from the Centre and the SERCs were under the state. The new Bill enables the Centre to bypass state governments. It's not surprising that this is a matter of concern for the states.
- **Direct appointment by centre:** The Bill states that the SERC chairperson will now be a nominee of the central government and will be an additional secretary-level official. This gives the impression that the Centre is trying to control the appointments to the SERCs.

#### **Why the bill is important?**

- **Compensation clause:** The Bill states that if power purchase agreement PPAs are renegotiated, the affected party has to be compensated within 90 days from the date of submission of the petition.
- **Uniformity in tariffs revision:** New tariffs have to be made applicable from the beginning of the financial year. New tariffs often come into force in the middle of the financial year (due to delays in the issuing of orders by SERCs). This means that discoms do not earn their full revenues leading to cash flow problems.
- **Easy tariff petition processing now:** The Bill has proposed a reduction in the time for processing tariff petitions from 120 days to 90 days.
- **Suo moto jurisdiction:** Regulatory commissions have been given suo motu jurisdiction if tariff petitions are not filed within 30 days of the stipulated time. This too is a step in the right direction.
- **More teeth to load dispatcher:** the Bill proposes to give more teeth to the national load dispatcher. We need to strengthen the load dispatcher for the smooth functioning of the grid, especially with a huge renewable capacity where intermittency of generation is a major issue in the offing.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL (A-G) OF INDIA

### In News:

A senior and renowned advocate has declined the offer from the Union government to be the next Attorney-General (A-G) of India as the incumbent AGI is set to retire this week.  
Attorney General of India (AGI)

### Analysis of Background:

- The AGI is the Indian government's chief legal advisor and is a primary lawyer in the Supreme Court of India.
- They can be said to be the advocate from the government's side.
- They are appointed by the President of India on the advice of Union Cabinet under Article 76(1) of the Constitution and holds office during the pleasure of the President.
- They must be a person qualified to be appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court ( i.e. a judge of some high court for five years or an advocate of some high court for ten years or an eminent jurist, in the opinion of the President and must be a citizen of India.).

### Functions and duties:

- The AGI is necessary for advising the Government of India on legal matters referred to them.
- They also perform other legal duties assigned to them by the President.
- The AGI has the right of audience in all Courts in India as well as the right to participate in the proceedings of the Parliament, though not to vote.
- The AGI appears on behalf of the Government of India in all cases (including suits, appeals and other proceedings) in the Supreme Court in which GoI is concerned.
- They also represent the Government of India in any reference made by the President to the Supreme Court under Article 143 of the Constitution.
- The AG is assisted by a Solicitor General and four Additional Solicitors General.
- Powers of AG
- The AG can accept briefs but cannot appear against the Government.
- They cannot defend an accused in criminal proceedings and accept the directorship of a company without the permission of the Government.
- The AG is to be consulted only in legal matters of real importance and only after the Ministry of Law has been consulted.
- All references to the AG are made by the Law Ministry.

### Limitations to his powers

#### The AG,

- should not advise or hold a brief against the Government of India
- should not defend accused persons in criminal cases without the permission of the government of India
- should not accept appointment as a director in any company without the permission of the government.

## UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

### In News:

The expert committee formed by the Uttarakhand government to examine ways for the implementation of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) has launched a website, seeking public opinion on the plan.

### Analysis of Background;

#### About Uniform Civil Code:

- A Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is one that would provide for one personal civil law for the entire country.
- This would be applicable to all religious communities in their personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption etc.

#### Basis for Uniform Civil Code:

- Article 44, one of the Directive Principles of the Constitution lays down that the state shall endeavour to secure a UCC for the citizens throughout the territory of India.
- These, as defined in Article 37, are not justiciable (not enforceable by any court) but the principles laid down therein are fundamental in governance.

#### UCC vs. Right to Freedom of Religion:

- Article 25 lays down an individual's fundamental right to religion
- Article 26(b) upholds the right of each religious denomination or any section thereof to "manage its own affairs in matters of religion"
- Article 29 defines the right to conserve distinctive culture

#### Reasonable restrictions on the Freedom of Religion

- An individual's freedom of religion under Article 25 is subject to "public order, health, morality" and other provisions relating to FRs, but a group's freedom under Article 26 has not been subjected to other FRs.
- In the Constituent Assembly, there was division on the issue of putting UCC in the fundamental rights chapter. The matter was settled by a vote.
- By a 5:4 majority, the fundamental rights sub-committee headed by Sardar Patel held that the provision was outside the scope of FRs and therefore the UCC was made less important.

#### Enacting and Enforcing UCC

- Fundamental rights are enforceable in a court of law.
- While Article 44 uses the words "state shall endeavour", other Articles in the 'Directive Principles' chapter use words such as "in particular strive"; "shall in particular direct its policy"; "shall be obligation of the state" etc.
- Article 43 mentions "state shall endeavour by suitable legislation" while the phrase "by suitable legislation" is absent in Article 44.

- All this implies that the duty of the state is greater in other directive principles than in Article 44.

### **Why need UCC?**

- UCC would provide equal status to all citizens
- It would promote gender parity in Indian society.
- UCC would accommodate the aspirations of the young population who imbibe liberal ideology.
- Its implementation would thus support the national integration.

### **Hurdles to UCC implementation**

- There are practical difficulties due to religious and cultural diversity in India.
- The UCC is often perceived by minorities as an encroachment of religious freedom.
- It is often regarded as interference of the state in personal matters of the minorities.
- Experts often argue that the time is not ripe for Indian society to embrace such UCC.

## **HINDI NOT A COMPETITOR OF REGIONAL LANGUAGES: HOME MINISTER**

### **In News:**

Union Home Minister has appealed to guardians to speak to children in their mother tongue to enable them to learn Hindi without much effort, on the Hindi Divas.

### **Analysis of Background:**

#### **What did HM say on Hindi?**

- He said it was time that inferiority complex around Indian languages, instilled by the British, was overthrown from people's conscience with the help of regional languages and Hindi.
- He also said that Hindi was not a competitor but a "friend" of all the other regional languages in the country and they were mutually dependent on each other for their growth.
- He said there was a concerted disinformation campaign to pit Hindi against other languages such as Marathi and Tamil, and underlined the need to strengthen local languages with Hindi.

### **Debate over Hindi**

- Between September 12 and 14, 1949, that the Constituent Assembly debated the status of India's languages.
- Among the issues that were discussed were the use of the term 'national language' instead of 'official' language.
- Hindi author Seth Govind Das, who represented the Central Provinces and Berar, argued for 'one language and one script' and suggested that Hindi should replace English at the earliest.



### What is the status of Hindi?

- Finally, the Constituent Assembly adopted what was known as “Munshi-Ayyangar Formula.”
- According to this, Hindi in the Devnagari script would be the official language of the Union.

### Official, not national:

- English would continue to be used for all official purposes for the next 15 years, to enable a smooth transition for non-Hindi speaking states.
- The deadline was 26 January 1965.
- Under Article 343 of the Constitution, the official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script.
- The international form of Indian numerals will be used for official purposes.

### Why has language become a sensitive issue?

- **Self-identification:** A strong identification with one’s regional language and an underlying fear of homogenisation is at the heart of the national language question in India. An individual conceptualises and communicates his thoughts in a language, enabling him to be an active part of society.
- **Language defines primary group:** People identify with one another based on language, thus giving them a primary group. A nation is the largest primary group that once can address.
- **Learning abilities at stake:** The dangers of imposing a language are manifold. It can affect the learning ability of non-native speakers thereby affecting their self-confidence.
- **Threats to endangered languages:** It can also endanger other languages and dialects and reduce diversity.
- **Threats to diversity:** National integration cannot come at the cost of people’s linguistic identities. Language is integral to culture and therefore privileging Hindi over all other languages spoken in India takes away from its diversity.
- **Promises made by Constituent Assembly:** Then PM Pt. Nehru had promised that Hindi would only serve as a linking language and it would not be imposed on non-Hindi speaking states as long as they were against it.

### Benefits of having a national language

- **Wide range of speakers:** Hindi is still the most widely spoken language in the country with an estimated 258 million people declaring that Hindi is their native language and millions more comfortable with Hindi.
- **Language as a unifying language:** A complete usage of Hindi language whilst respecting the various native languages would also ensure better coordination and cooperation among all the states and act as a strong unifying factor and eliminate all regional differences.

### Issues with Hindi

- **Inherent opposition to Hindi:** The Constituent Assembly was bitterly divided on the

question, with members from States that did not speak Hindi initially opposing the declaration of Hindi as a national language.

- Fear of imposition: Opponents were against English being done away with, fearing that it may lead to Hindi domination in regions that did not speak the language.
- Symbol of identity politics: The approach towards linguistic policy seems to be driven more by the politics of identity than values of aspiration or accommodation.
- Favour for majoritarianism: The primary argument in favour of Hindi has been reduced to assertions of slim majoritarianism.
- Demographic barriers: Today nearly 35% of people are migrating daily for work. In such a situation, we have to conceptualise a new form of language identity for our states.
- Economic barriers: Any idea of one link language, whether Hindi or English, will be economically disastrous for India. It will slow down migration and reduce the ease of capital flow.
- Multiple dialects: Only five states in India have Hindi as their 'native language'. However, in those states, too, the dialects of Hindi are associated with locals and their communities.

#### **Why Hindi cannot be the national language?**

- Multiple dialects: Hindi has largely been influenced by Persian — and then English, among other languages. Also, when the languages were enumerated, Hindi subsumed Bhojpuri, which is spoken by a little over five crore people.
- Inefficacy of Sanskrit: There were demands to make Sanskrit the official language, while some argued in favour of 'Hindustani'.
- Issue over Script: There were differences of opinion over the script too. When opinion veered towards accepting Hindi, proponents of the language wanted the 'Devanagari' script to be adopted both for words and numerals.

#### **Why this issue needs a rational consideration?**

- Linguistic chauvinism: Various policies on language have been framed both by the central and state governments that have been termed as forms of linguistic chauvinism. Ex. Obsession for Marathi in Mumbai
- Secular fabric under threat: The states' fear of the central government's ideology of monopolising faith, education, and language will adversely affect the Indian political system, which is based on pluralism and accommodation.
- Monolingualism can prove disastrous: If there is a mechanical and monolithic idea of unity followed by any entity, such an entity generally generates great hostility beyond its immediate borders. In neighbouring Bangladesh — then East Pakistan — the language movement against the imposition of Urdu on Bengali speakers was a key driver of Pakistan splitting into two nations.

## CENTRE ADDS 4 NEW TRIBES TO SCHEDULED TRIBES (ST) LIST

### In News:

The Union Cabinet under the chairmanship of PM has approved the addition of four tribes to the list of Scheduled Tribes (ST), including those from Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh.

### Analysis of Background:

#### Which tribes are we talking about?

- Hatti tribe in the Trans-Giri area of Sirmour district in Himachal Pradesh
- Narikoravan and Kurivikkaran hill tribes of Tamil Nadu and
- Binjhia tribe in Chhattisgarh, which was listed as ST in Jharkhand and Odisha but not in Chhattisgarh

#### Other tribes in news

- The Cabinet also approved 'Betta-Kuruba' as a synonym for the Kadu Kuruba tribe in Karnataka.

### About the Scheduled Tribes:

- The term 'Scheduled Tribes' first appeared in the Constitution of India.
- Article 366 (25) defined scheduled tribes as "such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this constitution".
- Article 342 prescribes procedure to be followed in the matter of specification of scheduled tribes.
- Among the tribal groups, several have adapted to modern life but there are tribal groups who are more vulnerable.
- The Dhebar Commission (1973) created a separate category "Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs)" which was renamed in 2006 as "Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)".

### How are STs notified?

- The first specification of Scheduled Tribes in relation to a particular State/ Union Territory is by a notified order of the President, after consultation with the State governments concerned.
- These orders can be modified subsequently only through an Act of Parliament.
- Status of STs in India
- The Census 2011 has revealed that there are said to be 705 ethnic groups notified as Scheduled Tribes (STs).
- Over 10 crore Indians are notified as STs, of which 1.04 crore live in urban areas.
- The STs constitute 8.6% of the population and 11.3% of the rural population.

## ADOPTION IN INDIA

### In News:

There is confusion over the implementation of new adoption rules that require the transfer of adoption petitions from courts to District Magistrates (DMs).

### Analysis of Background:

- In 2015, the then Minister for Women and Child Development centralised the entire adoption system by empowering Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA).
- It was empowered to maintain in various specialised adoption agencies, a registry of children, prospective adoptive parents as well as match them before adoption.
- This was aimed at checking rampant corruption and trafficking as child care institutions and NGOs could directly give children for adoption after obtaining a no-objection certificate from CARA.

### DMs to issue Adoption Orders:

- The Parliament passed the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill, 2021 in order to amend the Juvenile Justice Act (JJ Act), 2015.
- The key changes include authorising District Magistrates and Additional District Magistrates to issue adoption orders under Section 61 of the JJ Act by striking out the word “court”.
- This was done “in order to ensure speedy disposal of cases and enhance accountability,” according to a government statement.
- The DMs have also been empowered under the Act to inspect child care institutions as well as evaluate the functioning of district child protection units, child welfare committees, juvenile justice boards, specialised juvenile police units, child care institutions etc.

### Why is there concern over the revised rules?

- Parents, activists, lawyers and adoption agencies will have to be transferred and the process will have to start afresh.
- A delay in such an order can often mean that a child can't get admission into a school because parents don't yet have a birth certificate.
- Parents and lawyers also state that neither judges, nor DMs are aware about the change in the JJ Act leading to confusion in the system and delays.
- DMs don't handle civil matters that bestow inheritance and succession rights on a child.
- If these rights are contested when a child turns 18, a judicial order is far more tenable to ensure the child is not deprived of his or her entitlements.

### Is it such a big issue?

- The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) says there are nearly 1,000 adoption cases pending before various courts in the country.
- This is not such a huge burden.

## **What is the adoption procedure in India?**

### **Adoptions in India are governed by two laws:**

- Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 (HAMA): It is a parent-centric law that provides son to the son-less for reasons of succession, inheritance, continuance of family name and for funeral rights and later adoption of daughters was incorporated because kanyadaan is considered an important part of dharma in Hindu tradition.
- Juvenile Justice Act, 2015: It handles issues of children in conflict with law as well as those who are in need of care and protection and only has a small chapter on adoptions.
- Both laws have their separate eligibility criteria for adoptive parents.
- Those applying under the JJ Act have to register on CARA's portal after which a specialised adoption agency carries out a home study report.
- After it finds the candidate eligible for adoption, a child declared legally free for adoption is referred to the applicant.
- Under HAMA, a "dattaka hom" ceremony or an adoption deed or a court order is sufficient to obtain irrevocable adoption rights.

### **Issues with child adoption in India**

- Parent-centrism: The current adoption approach is very parent-centred, but parents must make it child-centred.
- Age of child: Most Indian parents also want a child between the ages of zero and two, believing that this is when the parent-child bond is formed.
- Institutional issues: Because the ratio of abandoned children to children in institutionalised care is lopsided, there are not enough children available for adoption.
- Lineage discrimination: Most Indians have a distorted view of adoption because they want their genes, blood, and lineage to be passed down to their children.
- Red-tapism: Child adoption is also not so easy task after the Juvenile Justice Rules of 2016 and the Adoption Regulations of 2017 were launched.

### **Practical issues in adoption**

- There are no rules for monitoring adoptions and verifying sourcing of children and determining whether parents are fit to adopt.
- There are many problems with the adoption system under CARA but at the heart of it is the fact that there are very few children in its registry.
- According to the latest figures there are only 2,188 children in the adoption pool, while there are more than 31,000 parents waiting to adopt a child.

## CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT (CAA), 2019

### In News:

A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) U U Lalit will hear the challenge to the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

### Analysis of Background:

#### What is Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019?

- The act is sought to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 to make Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian illegal migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, eligible for citizenship of India.
- In other words, it intends to make it easier for non-Muslim immigrants from India's three Muslim-majority neighbours to become citizens of India.
- Under The Citizenship Act, 1955, one of the requirements for citizenship by naturalization is that the applicant must have resided in India during the last 12 months, as well as for 11 of the previous 14 years.
- The amendment relaxes the second requirement from 11 years to 6 years as a specific condition for applicants belonging to these six religions, and the aforementioned three countries.
- It exempts the members of the six communities from any criminal case under the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport Act, 1920 if they entered India before December 31, 2014.

### Defining illegal migrants:

- Illegal migrants cannot become Indian citizens in accordance with the present laws.
- Under the CAA, an illegal migrant is a foreigner who: (i) enters the country without valid travel documents like a passport and visa, or (ii) enters with valid documents, but stays beyond the permitted time period.
- Illegal migrants may be put in jail or deported under the Foreigners Act, 1946 and The Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920.

### Exceptions:

- The Bill provides that illegal migrants who fulfil four conditions will not be treated as illegal migrants under the Act. The conditions are:
- they are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis or Christians;
- they are from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan;
- they entered India on or before December 31, 2014;
- they are not in certain tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, or Tripura included in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution, or areas under the "Inner Line" permit, i.e., Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, and Nagaland.

### Controversy with the Act:

- Country of Origin: The Act classifies migrants based on their country of origin to include only Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

- Other religious minorities ignored: It is unclear why illegal migrants from only six specified religious minorities have been included in the Act.
- Defiance of purpose: India shares a border with Myanmar, which has had a history of persecution of a religious minority, the Rohingya Muslims.
- Date of Entry: It is also unclear why there is a differential treatment of migrants based on their date of entry into India, i.e., whether they entered India before or after December 31, 2014.
- Against the spirit of Secularism: Further, granting citizenship on the grounds of religion is seen to be against the secular nature of the Constitution which has been recognised as part of the basic structure that cannot be altered by Parliament.

### **Basis of challenging in Supreme Court**

- The challenge rests primarily on the grounds that the law violates Article 14 of the Constitution that guarantees that no person shall be denied the right to equality before law or the equal protection of law in the territory of India.
- The Supreme Court has developed a two-pronged test to examine a law on the grounds of Article 14.
- First, any differentiation between groups of persons must be founded on “intelligible differentia”
- Second, that differentia must have a rational nexus to the object sought to be achieved by the Act
- Simply put, for a law to satisfy the conditions under Article 14, it has to first create a “reasonable class” of subjects that it seeks to govern under the law.
- Even if the classification is reasonable, any person who falls in that category has to be treated alike.

### **What happens next?**

- The listing of the CAA challenge indicates that the hearing will be fast-tracked.
- The court will have to ensure that all pleadings, written submissions are filed and served to the opposite party before it is listed for final hearing.
- Some petitioners could also seek a referral to a larger Constitution Bench.
- However, the challenge is to a statute and does not directly involve interpretation of the Constitution.
- These issues are also likely to be debated before the court allots time for the final hearing.

## **RAJPATH, CENTRAL VISTA LAWNS RENAMED 'KARTAVYA PATH'**

### **In News:**

Rajpath and Central Vista Lawns in the national capital will now be known as “Kartavya Path”, the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) announces.

### **Analysis of Background:**

#### **Updating to Kartavya Path**

- The entire stretch and the area from the Netaji statue under the Grand Canopy to the Rashtrapati Bhavan will be known as Kartavya Path.
- Kartavya Path, which will be opened to the public at the end of the official function, will exhibit landscapes, lawns with walkways, added green spaces, refurbished canals, amenity blocks, improved signages and vending kiosks.
- New pedestrian underpasses, improved parking spaces, new exhibition panels, and upgraded night lighting are some other features that will enhance the public experience.
- It also includes a number of sustainability features like solid waste management, storm-water management, recycling of used water, rainwater harvesting, water conservation and energy-efficient lighting systems, among others.

#### **Kingsway to Rajpath**

- Called Kingsway during British rule, the three-km stretch was built as a ceremonial boulevard by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker, the architects of New Delhi, more than a hundred years ago.
- The capital of the Raj moved to New Delhi from Calcutta in 1911, and construction continued for several years thereafter.
- Lutyens conceptualised the modern imperial city centred on a “ceremonial axis”, which was named Kingsway in honour of the then Emperor of India, George V.
- He visited Delhi during the Durbar of 1911, where he formally proclaimed the decision to move the capital.
- The nomenclature followed that of the Kingsway in London, an arterial road built in 1905, which was named in honour of King Edward VII, the father of George V.
- Following Independence, the road was given its Hindi name, Rajpath, on which the Republic Day parades took place over the decades that followed.

#### **Why sudden renaming?**

- During his address from the Red Fort on August 15, Modi had stressed on the abolition of symbols of colonialism.
- The new name and look of Rajpath, as well as the installation of the 28-foot statue of Netaji under the Grand Canopy under which a statue of George V once stood, are meant to represent that spirit of the proud new India.

#### **Significance of all recent event**

- The construction of the Central Vista Redevelopment Project began in February 2021, with the new Parliament building and redevelopment of the Central Vista Avenue in the first phase.



- The aim is to build an iconic avenue that truly befits the New India, the government has said about the Rs 608 crore Central Vista Avenue project.
- It symbolizes a shift from erstwhile Rajpath being an icon of power to Kartavya Path being an example of public ownership and empowerment.

## MOTHER TONGUE AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

### In News:

English should be taught effectively not as the medium, but as a second language

### Analysis of Background:

- Over the years, there has been a raging debate over the need for children to have their mother tongue as the medium of instruction in schools.
- While educationists have emphasised the importance of learning in the mother tongue to enhance a child's learning and overcome glaring inequities, there has been an equally steady demand for English-medium schools in several States.

### Historic context to this debate

- **Orientalist:** Orientalists were the group of people who wanted to give education to Indian people in the Indian language. The emphasis was on the knowledge of the East. They wanted Indians to learn about Indian philosophy, science, and literature. In the Initial stage, company officials favoured oriental learning.
- **Anglicist:** Anglicists were those people who supported the teaching of modern western education to Indian people in the English language. People who favoured Anglicists were Thomas Babington, Macaulay, James's mill, Charles wood, Charles Trevelyan, and Elphinstone. The Anglicists were supported by the most advanced Indians like Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

### Why mother tongue is important?

- **Suitability to child:** There is an almost-complete consensus among educationists, linguistic experts and psychologists that the mother tongue, or the language of the region where the child lives, is the only appropriate language of learning for the child.
- **Incomprehension:** A child can be taught any number of languages, particularly later in life, but the medium of learning should be the mother tongue. As a number of classrooms today are stalked by the curse of incomprehension.
- **Pressure of English language:** There are a growing number of schools, mostly private, that teach in English. Government schools too in States like Tamil Nadu, unable to bear the pressure from parents and to stop students from migrating to private schools, are switching to English medium.
- **Development in every way:** The mother tongue, home language or the first language educationally means the language which the child is using to connect to the world, to people, to nature, to the environment, and to make sense of everything that's going on. This is the language which helps the child to build, grow and develop in every way.
- **Inability to learn:** English medium education is a profound tragedy in Indian education today. Millions are languishing because of their inability to learn in English not English

as a language but as a medium through which they acquire any knowledge of any subject.

### **Why English Should Be the Medium of Instruction in Schools, Colleges?**

- **Connectivity with The Rest of the World:** To communicate and be on par with the world, the first language that stands common is English. With English, a student can remain on par with what is happening across the globe. Lack of English knowledge or alone mother tongue does not allow children to progress with the rest of the world.
- **Technologies Can Be Used Only With English Instruction:** Most of the modern technologies are invented, reinvented and modernized in foreign shores. The inventors keep the English language for the instruction manual of the technological gadget so that the gadget can be used worldwide.
- **Higher Education Emphasizes on The English language:** The main focus of teaching medium in higher secondary as well as in graduation and post-graduation colleges in India. There is no doubt that lecturers also teach in Hindi or other regional languages. However, question design comes in both English and regional language. But most of the classes are taught in English.

### **How multilingual approach helps,**

- Firstly, multilingualism gives equal status to all languages and there's enough work, history and research on this.
- Second, children come from different backgrounds, and in some cases, they are first-generation learners with not much support at home.
- The multilingual approach thus, is much more flexible, closer to the child, and inclusive. It is democratic, and it accepts that the teacher is not coming from a place of authority and is only correcting spellings and pronunciations.

## **PREVENTIVE DETENTION**

### **In News:**

Preventive detentions in 2021 saw a rise by over 23.7% compared with the year before, with over 1.1 lakh people being placed under preventive detention, according to statistics released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

### **Analysis of Background:**

#### **What does NCRB report say on Preventive Detention?**

- Over 24,500 people placed under preventive detention were either in custody or still detained as of 2021-end — the highest since 2017 when the NCRB started recording this data.
- Over 483 were detentions under the National Security Act, of which almost half (241) were either in custody or still detained as of 2021-end.
- In 2017, the NCRB's Crime in India report found that 67,084 persons had been detained as a preventive measure that year.

- Of these, 48,815 were released between one and six months of their detention and 18,269 were either in custody or still in preventive detention as of the end of the year.

#### **Various provisions invoked for Preventive Detention:**

- Among other laws under which the NCRB has recorded data on preventive detentions are the:
- Goonda Act (State and Central) (29,306),
- Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988 (1,331), and
- A category classified as “Other Detention Acts”, under which most of the detentions were registered (79,514).
- Since 2017, the highest number of persons to be placed under preventive detention has consistently been under the “Other Detention Acts” category.

#### **Concerns over the report**

- The number of persons placed under detention has been increasing since 2017 — to over 98,700 in 2018 and over 1.06 lakh in 2019 — before dipping to 89,405 in 2020 (due to lockdowns).
- The number of persons placed under preventive detention has seen an increase in 2021.

#### **What is Preventive Detention?**

- Preventive detention means detaining a person so that to prevent that person from committing on any possible crime.
- In other words, preventive detention is an action taken by the administration on the grounds of the suspicion that some wrong actions may be done by the person concerned which will be prejudicial to the state.

#### **Preventive Detention in India**

- A police officer can arrest an individual without orders from a Magistrate and without any warrant if he gets any information that such an individual can commit any offense.
- Preventive Detention Law, 1950: According to this law any person could be arrested and detained if his freedom would endanger the security of the country, foreign relations, public interests, or otherwise necessary for the country.
- Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) 1968: Within the ambit of UAPA law the Indian State could declare any organization illegal and could imprison anyone for interrogation if the said organization or person critiqued/questioned Indian sovereignty territorially.

#### **What is the difference between Preventive Detention and an Arrest?**

- An ‘arrest’ is done when a person is charged with a crime.
- In the case of preventive detention, a person is detained as he/she is simply restricted from doing something that might deteriorate the law-and-order situation.
- Article 22 of the Indian Constitution provides protection against arrest and detention in

certain cases.

### **Rights of an Arrested Person in India**

A/c to Article 22(1) and 22(2) of the Indian constitution:

- A person cannot be arrested and detained without being informed why he is being arrested.
- A person who is arrested cannot be denied to be defended by a legal practitioner of his choice. This means that the arrested person has right to hire a legal practitioner to defend himself/ herself.
- Every person who has been arrested would be produced before the nearest magistrate within 24 hours.
- The custody of the detained person cannot be beyond the said period by the authority of magistrate.

### **Exceptions for Preventive Detention**

- Article 22(3) says that the above safeguards are not available to the following:
- If the person is at the time being an enemy alien
- If the person is arrested under certain law made for the purpose of "Preventive Detention"

### **Constitutional provision**

- It is extraordinary that the framers of the Indian Constitution, who suffered most because of the Preventive Detention Laws, did not hesitate to give Constitutional sanctity.
- B.R. Ambedkar was of the opinion that the freedom of the individual should not supersede the interests of the state.
- He had also stated that the independence of the country was in a state of infancy and in order to save it, preventive detention was essential.

### **Issues with preventive detention**

- Arbitrariness: The police determinations of whether a person poses a threat are not tested at a trial by leading evidence or examined by legally trained persons.
- Rights violation: Quiet often, there is no trial (upto 3 months), no periodic review, and no legal assistance for the detained person.
- Abuse: It does not provide any procedural protections such as to reduce detainees' vulnerability to torture and discriminatory treatment, and to prevent officials' misusing preventive detention for subversive activities.
- Tool for suppression: In the absence of proper safeguards, preventive detention has been misused, particularly against the Dalits and the minorities.

### **What has the apex court recently rule?**

- Preventive detention is a necessary evil only to prevent public disorder, ruled the Supreme Court in 2021.
- The State should not arbitrarily resort to "preventive detention" to deal with all sundry

“law and order” problems, which could be dealt with by the ordinary laws of the country.

- Whenever an order under a preventive detention law is challenged, one of the questions the court must ask in deciding its legality is: was the ordinary law of the land sufficient to deal with the situation?
- If the answer is in the affirmative, the detention order will be illegal.

### **Upholding the Article 21**

- Preventive detention must fall within the four corners of Article 21 (due process of law) read with Article 22 (safeguards against arbitrary arrest and detention) and the statute in question, Justice Nariman ruled.
- The Liberty of a citizen is a most important right won by our forefathers after long, historical, and arduous struggles.

### **Way forward**

- Having such kind of acts has a restraining influence on the anti-social and subversive elements.
- India is a large country and many separatist tendencies against the national security and integrity existed and existing and a strict law is required to counter the subversive activities.
- The number of persons detained in these acts is not a very large and due attention is made before preventive detention.
- The state should have very effective powers to deal with the acts in which the citizens involve in hostile activities, espionage, coercion, terrorism, etc.

## **EWS QUOTA**

### **In News:**

A five-judge Constitution Bench led by CJI U.U. Lalit are hearing petitions challenging the 10% quota for the economically weaker sections (EWS) and an Andhra Pradesh law that grants reservation to Muslims.

### **Analysis of Background:**

- The five-judge Bench, led by CJI, is considering the validity of the 103rd Constitutional Amendment.
- The said amendment provides the 10% reservation to economically weaker sections (EWS) of society in government jobs and educational institutions.
- Economic reservation was introduced by amending Articles 15 and 16 and adding clauses empowering the State governments to provide reservation on the basis of economic backwardness.

### **EWS Quota:**

- The 10% reservation was introduced through the 103rd Constitution Amendment and enforced in January 2019.
- It added Clause (6) to Article 15 to empower the Government to introduce special

provisions for the EWS among citizens except those in the classes that already enjoy reservation.

- It allows reservation in educational institutions, both public and private, whether aided or unaided, excluding those run by minority institutions, up to a maximum of 10%.
- It also added Clause (6) to Article 16 to facilitate reservation in employment.
- The new clauses make it clear that the EWS reservation will be in addition to the existing reservation.

### **Significance of the quota**

- The Constitution initially allowed special provisions only for the socially and educationally backward classes.
- The Government introduced the concept of EWS for a new class of affirmative action program for those not covered by or eligible for the community-based quotas.

### **What are the court's questions about the criteria?**

- Reduction within general category: The EWS quota remains a controversy as its critics say it reduces the size of the open category, besides breaching the 50% limit on the total reservation.
- Arbitrariness over income limit: The court has been intrigued by the income limit being fixed at ₹8 lakh per year. It is the same figure for excluding the 'creamy layer' from OBC reservation benefits.
- Socio-economic backwardness: A crucial difference is that those in the general category, to whom the EWS quota is applicable, do not suffer from social or educational backwardness, unlike those classified as the OBC.
- Metropolitan criteria: There are other questions as to whether any exercise was undertaken to derive the exceptions such as why the flat criterion does not differentiate between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas.
- OBC like criteria: The question the court has raised is that when the OBC category is socially and educationally backward and, therefore, has additional impediments to overcome.
- Not based on relevant data: In line with the Supreme Court's known position that any reservation or norms for exclusion should be based on relevant data.
- Breaches reservation cap: There is a cap of 50% on reservation as ruled in the Indira Sawhney Case. The principle of balancing equality ordains reservation.

### **What is the current status of the EWS quota?**

- The reservation for the EWS is being implemented by the Union Government for the second year now.
- Recruitment test results show that the category has a lower cut-off mark than the OBC, a point that has upset the traditional beneficiaries of reservation based on caste.
- The explanation is that only a small number of people are currently applying under the EWS category — one has to get an income certificate from the revenue authorities — and therefore the cut-off is low.
- However, when the number picks up over time, the cut-off marks are expected to rise.

### **Practical issues with EWS Quota:**

- The EWS quota will come in for judicial scrutiny soon. But it's not only a matter for the judiciary, India's Parliament should revisit the law too.
- Hasty legislation: This law was passed in haste. It was passed in both the houses within 48 hours, and got presidential approval the next day.
- Minority appeasement: It is widely argued that the law was passed to appease a certain section of upper-caste society and to suppress the demands for minority reservations.
- Morality put to question: Imagine! A constitutional amendment has been made with few hours of deliberation and without consultation of the targeted group. This is certainly against constitutional morality and propriety.
- Substantial backing is missing: This amendment is based on a wrong or unverified premise. This is at best a wild guess or a supposition because the government has not produced any data to back this point.
- Under-reservation of Backward Classes: The assertion is based on the fact that we have different data to prove the under-representation of SC, ST, OBCs. That implies that 'upper' castes are over-represented (with 100 minus reservation).
- Rationale of 10%: There is one more problem in this regard. The SC and ST quota is based on their total population. But the rationale for the 10 per cent quota was never discussed.
- Principle of Equality: Economic backwardness is quite a fluid identity. It has nothing to do with historic wrongdoings and liabilities caused to the Backward Classes.

## **REGIONAL BENCHES OF SUPREME COURT**

### **In News:**

TN Chief Minister yet again reiterated the State's request for establishing a Regional Bench of the Supreme Court in Chennai and allowing Tamil to be used in the Madras High Court as one of its official languages.

### **Analysis of Background:**

#### **Why the Supreme Court is located in New Delhi?**

- Article 130 of the Constitution of India reads- The Supreme Court shall sit in Delhi or in such other place or places, as the Chief Justice of India may, with the approval of the President, from time to time, appoint.
- The law thus provides scope for setting up the Supreme Court in multiple places, subject to the concurrence of the CJI and the President.

#### **Who can establish the SC benches outside New Delhi?**

- The Supreme Court in *Union of India v. S.P. Anand* Verdict (2009), held that the Article vests exclusive discretionary powers on the matter with the Chief Justice of India.
- It is an enabling provision and if the Chief Justice (after taking relevant factors into account) feels that the Court should sit elsewhere, s/he can seek the President's

approval for it.

- No authority can compel the Chief Justice of India to act in a particular way under the Article.
- Voices for circuit benches
- The Law Commission in its 229th Report had suggested setting up a Constitution Bench of the Court in New Delhi and four other benches in different regions i.e., Northern region in Delhi, Southern region in Chennai/Hyderabad, Eastern region in Kolkata and Western region in Mumbai.
- However, this idea did not find favour with the Judges of the Supreme Court.

### **Reasons for having Regional/Circuit Benches**

- Access to Justice: Many litigants are discouraged to travel to Delhi from far away locations like south or northeast India.
- Geographical Constraints: A disproportionately high number of cases filed in the Supreme Court originated in High Courts closer to Delhi. Hence coming up with regional benches will remove this constraint.
- Huge pendency of cases: Increased workload on the Supreme Court and at present more than 65,000 cases are pending in the Supreme Court, and disposal of appeals takes many years.
- Reducing Cost of Justice: It is observed that besides travelling to New Delhi, engaging expensive Supreme Court counsel to pursue a case is beyond the means of most litigants.
- Advantages of having circuit courts
- Promotes Article 39A: It has been pointed out that Article 39A says that the state shall secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice, on a basis of equal opportunity.
- Remove Geographical Constraints: It is high time we had more benches because in a country as vast as India the litigants have to travel long distances and spend a huge amount of money and energy.
- Upholding the spirit of the constitution: Setting up Benches outside Delhi would neither impair unity and integrity nor undermine the importance of the Supreme Court.



## TOPIC: IR/IO

### EASTERN ECONOMIC FORUM

#### In News:

Russia hosted the seventh Eastern Economic Forum- EEF Vladivostok from September 5 to 8. The four-day forum is a platform for entrepreneurs to expand their businesses into Russia's Far East (RFE).

#### Analysis of Background:

##### Eastern Economic Forum:

- The EEF was established in 2015 aiming to encourage foreign investments in the RFE to display:
  - Economic potential
  - Suitable business conditions and
  - Investment opportunities in the region
  - Focus areas: The agreements focus on infrastructure, transportation projects, mineral excavations, construction, industry and agriculture.
- With EEF, Russia is trying to attract the Asian economies in investing and developing the Far East.
- This year, the Forum aimed at connecting the Far East with the Asia-Pacific

##### EEF aim:

- FDI inflows: The primary objective of the EEF is to increase the Foreign Direct Investments in the RFE.
- Natural resource exploitation: The region encompasses one-third of Russia's territory and is rich with natural resources such as fish, oil, natural gas, wood, diamonds and other minerals.
- Demographic revamp: The sparse population living in the region is another factor for encouraging people to move and work in the Far East.
- Unleashing economic potential: The region's riches and resources contribute to five percent of Russia's GDP.

##### Success of EEF:

- Agreements signed at the EEF increased from 217 in 2017 to 380 agreements in 2021, worth 3.6 trillion roubles.
- As of 2022, almost 2,729 investment projects are being planned in the region.
- Who are the major actors in the EEF?
- China is the biggest investor in the region as it sees potential in promoting the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative and the Polar Sea Route in the RFE.
- China's investments in the region account for 90% of the total investments.
- South Korea has invested in shipbuilding projects, manufacturing of electrical equipment, gas-liquefying plants, agricultural production and fisheries.
- Japan is another key trading partner. In 2017, its investments through 21 projects

amounted to \$16 billion.

### **How does Russia see Chinese investment in EEF?**

- Russia has been welcoming Chinese investments since 2015; more now than ever due to the economic pressures caused by the war in Ukraine.
- The Trans-Siberian Railway has further helped Russia and China in advancing trade ties.
- The countries share a 4000-km-long border, which enables them to tap into each other's resources with some infrastructural assistance.
- China is also looking to develop its Heilongjiang Province which connects with the RFE.
- Both nations have invested in a fund to develop connectivity between the cities of Blagoveshchensk and Heihe.

### **India and Russia's Far East:**

- India seeks to expand its influence in the RFE.
- In 2019, India also offered a \$1 billion line of credit to develop infrastructure in the region.
- During the forum, PM Modi expressed the country's readiness in expanding trade, connectivity and investments in Russia.
- India is keen to deepen its cooperation in energy, pharmaceuticals, maritime connectivity, healthcare, tourism, the diamond industry and the Arctic.

### **Strategic significance of EEF for Russia**

- Gateway to Asia: The RFE is geographically placed at a strategic location; acting as a gateway into Asia.
- Negating the Ukrainian war impact: The Ukraine war is a worrying issue as it affects the economic growth of the country.
- Surviving sanctions: Although, the EEF is an annual gathering, the forum comes at an opportune time for Russia who is dealing with the impact of the sanctions.
- Supply chain resilience: The IPEF will also play a key role in building resilient supply chains.

## **G20 SUMMIT WILL OPEN PANDORA OF OPPORTUNITIES**

### **In News:**

India is going to be at the centre stage of geopolitical spectrum as India will be hosting G20 summit presidency from December 2022. As Harsh V. Shringla, India's chief G20 coordinator and former Foreign Secretary, (Amitabh Kant is G20 Sherpa of India) recently said, "Our G20 Presidency would place India on the global stage, and provide an opportunity for India to place its priorities and narratives on the global agenda."

### **Analysis of Background:**

#### **About G20:**

- Composed of most of the world's largest economies: 19 countries plus European Union, including both industrialized and developing nations. Together, its members

represent more than 80% of the world's GDP, 75% of international trade and 60% of the world's population.

- Role: To address major issues related to the global economy such as international financial stability, climate change mitigation, and sustainable development.
- It is an Intergovernmental forum.
- Strategic role: The G20 holds a strategic role in securing global economic growth and prosperity.



### India and the presidency of G20 summit

- In November this year, the 17th G20 Heads of State and Government Summit will take place in Bali.
- After Indonesia, India will assume the presidency of the G20 from December 1, 2022 to November 30, 2023.
- By hosting the summit of the G20, India will have the opportunity to assume centre stage in proposing and setting the global agenda and discourse.
- India can assert its political, economic and intellectual leadership while hosting the G20 presidency.
- Further it Provides India an opportunity to also champion the causes of developing and least developed countries.
- India could invite and engage countries from Africa and South America to ensure better and more balanced representation at the G20.

### Challenges before India:

#### Global

- World affected by the pandemic: Uneven vaccine availability has been flagged by many countries. Vaccine issue upset some countries.
- Ukraine conflict: According to external affairs ministers Dr.S.Jaishankar due to Ukraine conflict world is divided and this poses the challenge for India to bring rival camp on same stage
- Climate change: Divergent view of developed and developing countries on climate change can be the bone of contention between west and the rest.

- The rise of an assertive China: To maintain the delicate balance between NATO, G7 on the one hand while Russia and China on the other (as India is part of both QUAD and SCO).

### **Domestic**

- Economic challenges: Such as stagflation, unemployment, exchange rate, declining prospects for exports and rising trade deficit.
- Terrorism: Cross border terrorism emanating from Pakistan.
- Indonesia has focused on three key pillars in its presidency of G20 presidency:
- Global health architecture: president of Indonesia Joko Widodo talked about a global contingency fund for medical supplies, building capacity in developing countries to manufacture vaccines and the creation of global health protocols and standards.
- Sustainable energy transition: as part of its roadmap to reach net zero by 2060, Indonesia had slashed the coverage area of forest fires sevenfold. The country has restored peatlands and rehabilitated 50,000 hectares of mangrove forests.

### **Why G20 summit presidency is an opportunity for India?**

- India exchanged the G20 presidency with Indonesia and chose 2023 instead of 2022 to host the G20 countries.
- India wanted to showcase its prowess in its 75<sup>th</sup> year of independence as cornerstone of new emerging world order. As India is part of Quad and SCO BRICS -the warring factions at world stage, it's an opportunity in crisis to become the bridge of the divided world.
- India is hosting the summit in Kashmir. World media will be in the Kashmir. In the direct message to world India will again assert that Kashmir is an integral part of India.

## **G4 GROUPING**

### **In News:**

Germany, Brazil, Japan and India reiterate support for each other's bids to become permanent members of the UNSC, and for representation of African countries.

### **Analysis of Background:**

- Reform of the United Nations has been a central theme of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to the United Nations, and he met with his counterparts from Germany, Brazil and Japan under The Group of Four (G4) banner.
- The group is primarily focused on U.N. Security Council (UNSC) reform, and permanent membership of the body for G4 members, among others.
- The G4 felt that the U.N. decision making bodies needed to be urgently reformed as global issues were increasingly complex and interconnected, a joint press statement from the group said.
- The "inability" of the UNSC to "effectively" address these problems "vividly demonstrate[s] the urgent need" for UNSC reform, the statement said.

- G4 ministers expressed concern that the 76 th Session of the U.N. General Assembly (i.e., the year-long session that just concluded) did not make “meaningful progress” in the Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN), which, according to the G4, was constrained by a lack of transparency.
- The G4 Ministers welcomed the recommendation of the President of the 76 th General Assembly to “gradually move the process towards text based negotiations”, and hoped this principle would be followed in the 77th General Assembly Session.

## **PM MODI TO ATTEND SCO MEET**

### **In News:**

PM Modi will travel to Samarkand in Uzbekistan to attend the first in-person summit of the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) countries since the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Analysis of Background:**

#### **About SCO:**

- After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the then security and economic architecture in the Eurasian region dissolved and new structures had to come up.
- The original Shanghai Five were China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan.
- The SCO was formed in 2001, with Uzbekistan included. It expanded in 2017 to include India and Pakistan.
- Since its formation, the SCO has focused on regional non-traditional security, with counter-terrorism as a priority.
- The fight against the “three evils” of terrorism, separatism and extremism has become its mantra. Today, areas of cooperation include themes such as economics and culture.

#### **India’s entry to the SCO**

- India and Pakistan both were observer countries.
- While Central Asian countries and China were not in favor of expansion initially, the main supporter — of India’s entry in particular — was Russia.
- A widely held view is that Russia’s growing unease about an increasingly powerful China prompted it to push for its expansion.
- From 2009 onwards, Russia officially supported India’s ambition to join the SCO in 2017.
- China then asked for its all-weather friend Pakistan’s entry.

#### **India and SCO: Present status**

- India will host the SCO summit next year, and Varanasi has been selected as the SCO region’s first “Tourism and Cultural Capital”.
- India will also be chairing the summit.

## KUSHIYARA RIVER TREATY

### In News:

For the first time in 26 years, India and Bangladesh agreed to share the waters of a significant transboundary river, the Kushiyara, while negotiations over a long-delayed agreement to share the Teesta River's waters, which are politically sensitive are still ongoing.

### Analysis of Background:

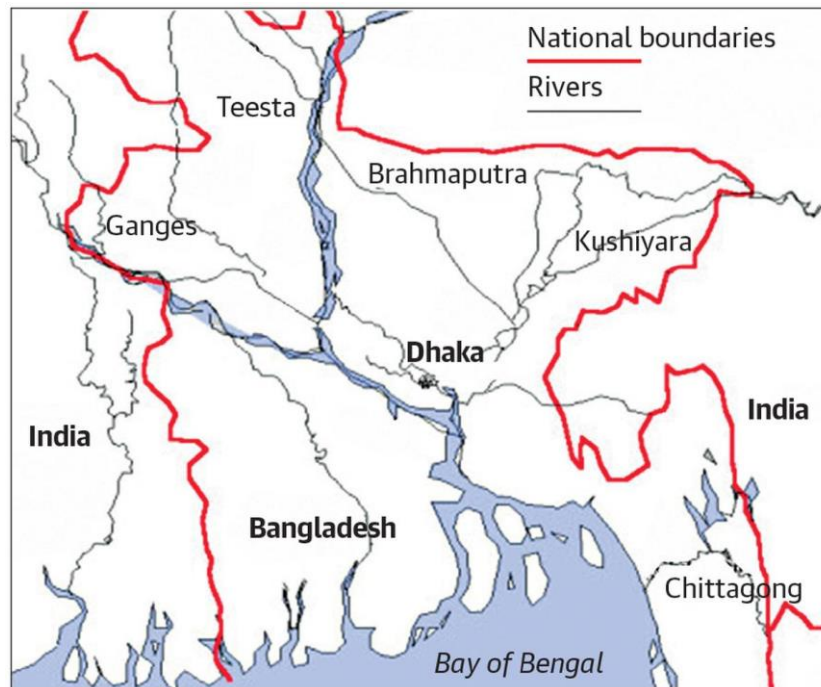
#### India-Bangla water disputes:

- The Teesta River and the Ganges River dispute are the two main long-standing water conflicts between India and Bangladesh.
- Both rivers are important supplies of water for fishermen, farmers, and boatmen in both nations.
- Since the sacred river flows from India to Bangladesh, the Ganga river dispute has been a source of contention between the two countries for the past 35 years.
- There hasn't been a long-term solution for sharing water offered despite several rounds of bilateral negotiations failing.
- In order to establish a water sharing arrangement for the following 30 years, a treaty was signed in 1996. This deal is about to expire.

#### Kushiyara River Treaty:

- The first such deal since the 1996 signing of the Ganga water treaty, India and Bangladesh reached an interim agreement on water sharing for the Kushiyara River.
- India withdrew its objection to withdrawal of Kushiyara's waters by Bangladesh through the Rahimpur Canal.
- Over the last century, the flow of the Barak river has changed in such a way that the bulk of the river's water flows into Kushiyara while the rest goes into Surma.
- The agreement is aimed at addressing part of the problem that the changing nature of the river has posed before Bangladesh as it unleashes floods during the monsoon.
- It goes dry during the winter when demand of water goes up because of a crop cycle in Sylhet.





### Terms of the treaty

- Under this MoU, Bangladesh will be able to withdraw 153 cusecs (cubic feet per second) of water from the Kushiyara out of the approximately 2,500 cusecs of water that is there in the river during the winter season.
- The agreement addresses Bangladesh's concern over water supply along the river, during the winter months but flood control in the basin of Kushiyara is expected to require much more work.

### How will Bangladesh use the water?

- The water of Kushiyara will be channelled through the Rahimpur Canal project in Sylhet.
- The eight km long canal is the only supplier of water from the Kushiyara to the region and Bangladesh has built a pump house and other facilities for withdrawal of water that can now be utilised.

### Why is the water from the Kushiyara so important for Rahimpur Canal?

- The water of the Kushiyara has been used for centuries in Sylhet's subdivisions like the Zakiganj, Kanaighat and Beanibazar areas.
- But Bangladesh has witnessed that the flow and volume of water in the canal has reduced during the lean season.
- The utility of the river and the canal during the lean/winter season had gone down, affecting cultivation of rice as well as a wide variety of vegetables for which Sylhet is famous.

### What was India's objection to the Rahimpur Canal?

- India objected to the clearing and dredging of canal.
- It claimed that the dyke and other infrastructure interfered in border security as Kushiyara itself forms part of the border between the two sides.



- However, the agreement indicates that the economic benefits possible from the river outweighed the security

### What are the hurdles to the Teesta agreement?

- The Kushiyara agreement is relatively smaller in scale in comparison to Teesta that involves West Bengal, which has problems with the proposal.
- The Kushiyara agreement did not require a nod from any of the States like Assam from which the Barak emerges and branches into Kushiyara and Surma.

## INDIA- CHINA DISENGAGE AT LAC FRICTION POINTS IN LADAKH

### In News:

- India and China have announced that their Armies have begun to disengage from Patrolling Point-15 in the Gogra-Hot springs area at LAC.

### Analysis of Background:



### What is LAC- the Line of Actual Control?

- The LAC is the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.
- India considers the LAC to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.
- It is divided into three sectors: the eastern sector which spans Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, the middle sector in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, and the western sector in Ladakh.
- The LAC is only a concept – it is not agreed upon by the two countries, neither delineated on a map nor demarcated on the ground.

### What is the disagreement?

- The alignment of the LAC in the eastern sector is along the 1914 McMahon Line, and there are minor disputes about the positions on the ground as per the principle of the

high Himalayan watershed.

- The major disagreements are in the western sector where the LAC emerged from two letters written by Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai to PM Jawaharlal Nehru in 1959, after he had first mentioned such a 'line' in 1956.

#### **When did India accept the LAC?**

- The LAC was discussed during Chinese Premier Li Peng's 1991 visit to India, where PM P V Narasimha Rao and Li reached an understanding to maintain peace and tranquillity at the LAC.
- India formally accepted the concept of the LAC when Rao paid a return visit to Beijing in 1993 and the two sides signed the Agreement to Maintain Peace and Tranquillity at the LAC.
- The reference to the LAC was unqualified to make it clear that it was not referring to the LAC of 1959 or 1962 but to the 'LAC' at the time when the agreement was signed.
- To reconcile the differences about some areas, the two countries agreed that the Joint Working Group on the border issue would take up the task of clarifying the alignment of the LAC.

#### **How was the disengagement carried on?**

- As per the understanding reached earlier on disengagement, a buffer zone is to be created at the friction points.
- Once troops are withdrawn by both sides, new patrolling norms are to be worked out after complete disengagement and de-escalation.

#### **Why sudden disengagement?**

- The move comes ahead of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Uzbekistan next week.
- However, neither side has, so far, confirmed if the two leaders would hold bilateral talks on the sidelines of the summit.
- The leaders have not spoken to each other since a November 2019 meeting during the BRICS Summit in Brasilia and the beginning of the stand-off in April 2020.

#### **Significance of the disengagement:**

- Since the stand-off began in May 2020, the two sides have so far held 16 rounds of talks.
- Earlier, disengagement was undertaken from both sides of Pangong Tso in February 2021, and from PP-17 in the Gogra-Hot springs area in August, in addition to Galwan in 2020 after the violent clash.
- The friction points that remain now are Demchok and Depsang, which China has constantly refused to accept, maintaining that they are not a part of the current stand-off.

#### **What was the dispute over LAC?**

- In what was the worst clash between the two countries in over 40 years, the Galwan

incident reverberated around the world.

- The casualties in the clash were the first in the disputed Sino-Indian border since 1975.
- The Galwan episode led to a rapid build-up of forces on both sides of the Line of Actual Control.
- This incident is being seen as major punctuation in the bilateral relations between India and China and what does the future hold for both neighbors.

#### **Why did India change its stance on the Line of Actual Control?**

- Indian and Chinese patrols were coming in more frequent contact during the mid-1980s.
- This was after the government formed a China Study Group in 1976 which revised the patrolling limits, rules of engagement and pattern of Indian presence along the border.

#### **Is the LAC also the claim line for both countries?**

- Not for India. India's claim line is the line seen in the official boundary marked on the maps as released by the Survey of India, including both Aksai Chin and Gilgit-Baltistan.
- In China's case, it corresponds mostly to its claim line, but in the eastern sector, it claims entire Arunachal Pradesh as South Tibet.
- However, the claim lines come into question when a discussion on the final international boundaries takes place, and not when the conversation is about a working border, say the LAC.

#### **Why are these claim lines controversial in Ladakh?**

- When the Shimla Agreement on the McMahon Line was signed by British India, Aksai Chin in Ladakh province of the princely state of J&K was not part of British India, although it was a part of the British Empire.
- Thus, the eastern boundary was well defined in 1914 but in the west in Ladakh, it was not.
- India, in July 1948, had two maps: one had no boundary shown in the western sector, only a partial colour wash; the second one extended the colour wash in yellow to the entire state of J&K, but mentioned "boundary undefined".

## UN SLAMS SRI LANKA'S RIGHTS RECORD

### In News:

- Linking Sri Lanka's past on human rights record to its current economic crisis, the UN Human Rights Chief on said "impunity" for human rights abuses, economic crimes, and corruption was the underlying reason for the country's collapse.

### Analysis of Background:

#### UNHRC report on Sri Lanka:

- The UNHRC report warned that Sri Lanka's failure to address human rights violations and war crimes committed in the past had put the country on a "dangerous path".
- It rose that this could lead to a "recurrence" of policies and practices that gave rise to the earlier situation.
- It flagged the accelerating militarization of civilian governmental functions, a reversal of important constitutional safeguards, political obstruction of accountability, intimidation of civil society, and the use of anti-terrorism laws.
- The shrinking space for independent media and civil society and human rights organizations are also themes in the report.

#### The Resolution 30/1:

- The resolution 30/1 launched in 2015 deals with promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka.
- It extended an opportunity to make good on its promises for justice and offered extensive support to accomplish that objective.

#### Sri Lanka's intention:

- It is more than Sri Lanka has failed to – and doesn't intend to — take the necessary, decisive, and sustainable steps necessary to achieve domestic justice and reconciliation.
- Sri Lanka has officially sought India's help to muster support against the resolution, which it has described as "unwanted interference by powerful countries".

#### Where India comes in?

- The UNHRC is scheduled to hold an "interactive" session on Sri Lanka where the report was to be discussed, and member countries were to make statements.
- Country-specific resolutions against Sri Lanka have regularly come up at the UNHRC in the last decade.
- New Delhi voted against Sri Lanka in 2012 and abstained in 2014. It was spared the dilemma in 2015 when Sri Lanka joined resolution 30/1.
- With elections coming up in Tamil Nadu, and PM declaring on a recent visit that he was the first Indian leader to visit Jaffna, Sri Lanka has begun reading the tea leaves.
- Whichever way it goes, the resolution is likely to resonate in India-Sri Lanka Relations and for India internally, in the run-up to the Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu.

## INDIA BANGLADESH RELATIONS

### In News:

- Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina's four-day visit to India to boost bilateral ties.

### Analysis of Background:

- India's links with Bangladesh are civilization, cultural, social and economic.
- There is much that unites the two countries – a shared history and common heritage, linguistic and cultural ties, passion for music, literature and the arts.
- India was one of the first countries, along with Bhutan, to recognise Bangladesh as a sovereign state on 6 December 1971.
- It is also worth recalling that India shares its longest border of 4,096.7 kilometres with Bangladesh, which is also the fifth-longest border in the contemporary world.

### Trade between two

- CEPA: Trade will be a focal point during Ms. Hasina's visit as the two countries gear up to sign a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.
- Bangladesh dependency: Bangladesh imports critical industrial raw material from India on which its exports are reliant.
- Leveraging Indian support: Bangladesh also could improve several manufacturing industries by leveraging Indian expertise in service sectors.

### Connectivity

- IMT highway: Bangladesh has expressed its interest in joining the India-Myanmar-Thailand highway project.
- Waterway: India-Bangladesh bilateral waterway trade will get boosted as India can now use the Mongla and Chittagong ports.
- Logistics: India's Northeast and Bangladesh is important for bilateral cooperation. Currently, three express trains and international bus services operate between Indian and Bangladesh.

### Regional geopolitics

- Chinese influence: Chinese inroads into the neighbourhood have been a cause of worry for India. China has been actively pursuing bilateral ties with Bangladesh. Bangladesh had successfully approached China for a mega project to enhance Teesta river water flow.
- Strategic location: From the perspective of India's Northeast, Bangladesh is India's most strategic neighbour, whom New Delhi cannot ever afford to ignore.
- Cooperation needed: India's dream of 'Act East Policy' can only be materialized with the helping hands of Dhaka.
- Gateway to northeast: The bridge 'Maitri Setu' has been built over the Feni River which flows between the Indian boundary in Tripura State and Bangladesh. It is set to become the 'Gateway of North East' with access to Chittagong Port of Bangladesh, which is just 80 kms from Sabroom.

## Way forward

- The future will present itself with an abundance of opportunities to help the two countries to reach a new plane of bilateral relations higher than ever before.
- Both nations should play their diplomatic cards with more maturity and pragmatism, keeping the regional aspirations and nuances of both countries in mind.
- A judicious aggregation of regional expectations on both sides of the border will help in achieving their mutual national objectives.
- To make the recent gains irreversible, both countries need to continue working on the three Cs — cooperation, collaboration, and consolidation.

## NORD STREAM PIPELINE TO REMAIN SHUT

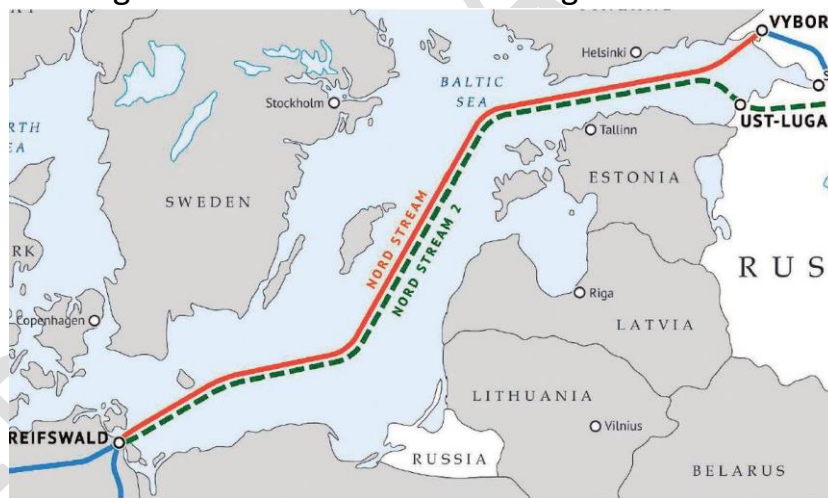
### In News:

Russian has said that it can't resume the supply of natural gas through a key pipeline to Germany for now because of what it said was a need for urgent maintenance work.

### Analysis of Background:

#### Why in news?

- There are growing concerns in European countries that Russia would shut down its gas supplies in retaliation against the current sanctions against Moscow.



### What is Nord Stream 1?

- It is a system of offshore natural gas pipelines running under the Baltic Sea from Russia to Germany.
- Nord Stream 1 is a 1,224 km underwater gas pipeline that runs from Vyborg in northwest Russia to Lubmin in northeastern Germany via the Baltic Sea.
- Two further pipelines under construction running from Ust-Luga to Lubmin termed Nord Stream 2.
- Majority owned by the Russian energy giant Gazprom, the pipeline is the primary route through which its gas enters Germany.

### Worry for Europe

- There have been growing concerns that there could be further restrictions to European

gas supplies.

- European countries rely on Russian energy for their cold winters.
- But now they believe that Russia could weaponized their dependency as a response to their sanction due to the conflict in Ukraine.

### **What are Europe's alternative sources of energy?**

- As an alternative source for energy, European countries have increasingly turned towards the US, from whom they purchase liquified natural gas (LNG) that comes via ships.
- Since ship-delivered gas ends up being far more expensive, there are also attempts to get non-Russian pipeline gas from Norway and Azerbaijan.
- While EU countries were earlier seeking to phase out fossil fuels and emphasize renewable forms of energy, many are now returning to coal to deal with the energy crisis.

## **QUAD**

### **In News:**

New Delhi will host an official-level meeting of the Quad grouping with the US, Japan and Australia next week, the first such "senior officers meeting" (SOM) to be held since the recent escalation of tensions over the Taiwan Strait.

### **Analysis of Background:**

#### **About Quadrilateral Security Dialogue:**

- Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or the Quad is an informal strategic forum between the United States, Japan, India and Australia that is maintained by semi-regular summits, information exchanges and military drills between member countries.
- The US, Japan, India and Australia came together in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami to assist the devastated countries.
- Later, officials of the four countries met in 2007 "to look at issues of common interest." During an India visit, then Japanese PM Shinzo Abe unveiled the idea of "the Confluence of the Two Seas" that gave birth to the concept of the Indo-Pacific.
- A decade later officials of the four countries met in the Philippines in 2017 to talk about an aggressively rising China.
- In 2019, the foreign ministers of the Quad countries met in Washington for the first time.
- In November, the Quad nations came together to participate in a two-phase joint military exercise, Malabar 2020, in the Bay of Bengal and in the Arabian Sea.
- Now it is increasingly viewed as 'Asian NATO'.

### **Focus on Indo-Pacific: For the China-wary world**

- The latest meeting of Quad comes at a time when all four countries have either trade



or security disputes with China.

- Despite not explicitly mentioning China, Quad has been openly supporting a “free and fair” Indo-Pacific which is seen as a clear message to Beijing that it needs to curb its assertive behaviour.
- The optics were hard to miss when India, the US, Japan and Australia joined their navies for the mega Malabar military exercise late last year, an activity which raised alarm in Beijing.

### **This posturing by the Quad nations sent a strong signal to China.**

#### **(1) US vs China**

- USA had followed a policy to contain China’s increasing influence in East Asia. Therefore, USA sees the coalition as an opportunity to regain its influence in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The US has described China, along with Russia, as a strategic rival in its National Security Strategy, National Defence Strategy and the Pentagon’s report on Indo-Pacific Strategy.
- Both are navigating intense disagreements over trade and human rights in Tibet, Hong Kong and the western Xinjiang region, as well as the coronavirus pandemic and increasing Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea.

#### **(2) Australia vs China**

- Australia is concerned about China’s growing interest in its land, infrastructure and politics, and influence on its universities.
- Ties have been on a downward spiral since 2018 when Australia, accusing China of meddling in its domestic affairs, passed a new law against foreign interference and espionage.
- It also barred Huawei from building the country’s 5G mobile network, among the first countries to do so, citing national security.
- The atmosphere worsened when PM Scott Morrison’s government called for an international inquiry into the origins of the coronavirus that causes Covid-19.

#### **(3) Japan vs. China**

- Tensions between Japan and China over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands dispute have recently increased.
- China has relentlessly continued attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by coercion in the sea area around the Senkaku Islands.
- The more salient indicator is the number of Chinese patrols inside the territorial sea of the islands, which Japan sees as an explicit violation of its territorial sovereignty.

#### **(4) India vs. Quad**

- India’s strained relations with China needs no explanation. The year long border dispute is the testimony.
- The Quad summit is taking place in the backdrop of an ongoing military disengagement between India and China following their months-long border standoff in eastern Ladakh.
- China is increasing its footprint in our neighborhood through its Belt and Road policy and political coercion following the debt trap are some of the increasing concerns

other than economic imbalance.

### **Opportunities unveiled for India**

India's engagement with the Quad goes back to China's expanding footprint in South Asia and the Indian Ocean Region over the last few years. India can reap some benefits as discussed below:

#### **(1) Checkmating the Chinese**

- The maritime sphere is wide open to India to undertake coalition building, rule sets, and other forms of strategic exploration than compared to land borders.
- The maritime space is more important to China than engaging in land grab attempts in the Himalayas. A huge chunk of Chinese trade happens via the Indian oceanic routes that pass through maritime chokepoints.

#### **(2) Channelizing geo-politics**

- There is a growing great power interest in the maritime sphere, especially with the arrival of the concept of 'Indo-Pacific'. For instance, many European countries have recently released their Indo-Pacific strategies.
- The most recent was for France to send its warship in the international waters of the South China Sea.

#### **(3) Maritime domain for India**

- Above is the backdrop against which one must see the progressive evolution of Exercise "Malabar",
- In the beginning, it was a bilateral event involving just the Indian and US navies. It became tri-lateral with the inclusion of Japan in 2015.
- And now it has transformed into a four-cornered naval drill that will also include Australia.

#### **(4) Check on China's India Ocean Ambitions**

- The Quad has a valuable role to play as a check on China's Indian Ocean ambitions.
- India must develop ingrained habits of interoperable cooperation with its Quad partners.
- This interoperable cooperation could pre-emptively dissuade China from mounting a naval challenge in its backyard.

#### **(5) Eccentricity in South Asia**

- With India, located right at the centre of the Indo-Pacific geopolitical imagination can realize the vision of a 'broader Asia' that can extend its influence away from geographical boundaries.
- Further, India with Quad countries can check the imperialist policies of China in the Indian Ocean region and ensure Security and growth for all in the region.

### **Issues with Quad:**

#### **(1) Structural problems**

- The Quad has a core structural problem as its objective pivots around the U.S.
- The Quad riles China as a hostile grouping, but hardly serves the security interests of its members.
- Despite rhetoric relating to the promotion of a 'rules-based' world order, the Quad

neither shares a strategic vision nor is it animated by a shared agenda.

#### (2) Nature of alliance

- Alliances involve written commitments to come to the defence of the other against a third party.
- Despite the potential for cooperation, the Quad remains a mechanism without a defined strategic mission.

#### (3) Economic alliance not feasible

- Quad is neither a military alliance nor an economic partnership.
- Its intention to counter China in the rare-earth sector is logical given the dominant role the country plays in supplying more than half of the world's such key materials.
- But, for a country like India, the lack of relevant technologies and talent pool could obstruct its progress in building up a supply chain from scratch.

#### (4) Overt emphasis on Maritime domain

- The entire focus on the Indo-Pacific makes the Quad a maritime, rather than a land-based grouping, raising questions whether the cooperation extends to the Asia-Pacific and Eurasian regions.
- India's core concerns with China are primarily undemarcated borders and trade deficit.

#### (5) Lack of existence of Indo-Pacific system

- There has never been Indo-Pacific system ever since the rise of the port-based kingdoms of Indochina in the first half of the second millennium.
- There were two Asian systems — an Indian Ocean system and an East Asian system — with intricate sub-regional balances.
- The effort by a U.S. to artificially manufacture to combine the Indo and the Pacific into a unitary system is unlikely to succeed.

#### (6) Indian borders can go more vulnerable

- A lesson for India is China's long-held and strategic interest in parts of Jammu and Kashmir.
- It is wrongly argued that it is Pakistan that is the issue in J&K.
- China undoubtedly is as big an issue but has quietly hidden behind Pakistan's cover.

### **Challenges: China will retaliate**

#### (1) China's assertiveness

- China claims that it has historical ownership over nearly the entire region of South China Sea, which gives it the right to manufacture islands.
- However, the International Court of Arbitration rejected the claim in 2016.
- Since then, the incidences of Chinese transgression has only increased making China more assertive for its interest.

#### (2) Preying small nations

- The ASEAN countries have a well-knit relationship with China. So are other SAARC countries have fallen prey to Chinese debt traps.
- The Regional Cooperation Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a recent example of China's increasing influence over ASEAN nations to which Australia is even a forerunner.

#### (3) Chinese monopoly

- Considering the economic might of China and the dependence of Quad nations like Japan and Australia on China, the Quad nations cannot afford to have strained relations with it in the long run.
- India too, is still very heavily dependent on Chinese exports.

## UN ACCUSES CHINA OF UIGHUR RIGHTS ABUSES

### In News:

The UN accused China of serious human rights violations that may amount to “crimes against humanity” in a report examining a crackdown on Uighurs and other ethnic groups.

### Analysis of Background:

#### Who are the Uighurs?

- There are about 12 million Uighurs, mostly Muslim, living in north-western China in the region of Xinjiang, officially known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR).
- The Uighurs speak their own language, similar to Turkish, and see themselves as culturally and ethnically close to Central Asian nations.
- They make up less than half of the Xinjiang population.
- In recent decades, there’s been a mass migration of Han Chinese (China’s ethnic majority) to Xinjiang, and the Uighurs feel their culture and livelihoods are under threat.
- In the early 20th Century, the Uighurs briefly declared independence, but the region was brought under complete control of mainland China’s new Communist government in 1949.

#### Where is Xinjiang?

- Xinjiang lies in the north-west of China and is the country’s biggest region.
- Like Tibet, it is autonomous, meaning – in theory – it has some powers of self-governance. But in practice, both face major restrictions by the central government.
- It is a mostly desert region, producing about a fifth of the world’s cotton.
- It is also rich in oil and natural gas and because of its proximity to Central Asia and Europe is seen by Beijing as an important trade link.



### **What was the build-up to the Uighur crackdown?**

- Anti-Han and separatist sentiment rose in Xinjiang from the 1990s, flaring into violence on occasion.
- In 2009 some 200 people died in clashes in Xinjiang, which the Chinese blamed on Uighurs who want their own state.
- Xinjiang is now covered by a pervasive network of surveillance, including police, checkpoints, and cameras that scan everything from number plates to individual faces.
- According to Human Rights Watch, police are also using a mobile app to monitor peoples' behaviour, such as how much electricity they are using and how often they use their front door.
- Since 2017 when President Xi Jinping issued an order saying all religions in China should be Chinese in orientation, there have been further crackdowns.

### **Chinese narrative**

- China says the crackdown is necessary to prevent terrorism and root out Islamist extremism and the camps are an effective tool for re-educating inmates in its fight against terrorism.
- It insists that Uighur militants are waging a violent campaign for an independent state by plotting bombings, sabotage and civic unrest.
- China has dismissed claims it is trying to reduce the Uighur population through mass sterilizations as "baseless", and says allegations of forced labor are "completely fabricated".

## TOPIC: SOCIAL ISSUES

### ALL WOMEN HAVE RIGHT TO LEGAL AND SAFE ABORTION: SUPREME COURT

#### In News:

The Supreme Court has held that all women, irrespective of their marital status, are entitled to safe and legal abortion till 24 weeks of pregnancy under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act.

#### Analysis of Background:

- A Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud was hearing the appeal of a woman who wanted to abort her 24-week pregnancy after her relationship failed and her partner left her.
- The lower court had taken an “unduly restrictive view” that her plea for a safe abortion was not covered under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act.
- This was since the pregnancy arose from a consensual relationship outside wedlock.

#### About Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act:

- Abortion in India has been a legal right under various circumstances for the last 50 years since the introduction of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act in 1971.
- The Act was amended in 2003 to enable women’s access to safe and legal abortion services.
- Abortion is covered 100% by the government’s public national health insurance funds, Ayushman Bharat and Employees’ State Insurance with the package rate for surgical abortion.
- The idea of terminating your pregnancy cannot originate by choice and is purely circumstantial.
- There are four situations under which a legal abortion is performed:
  1. If continuation of the pregnancy poses any risks to the life of the mother or mental health
  2. If the foetus has any severe abnormalities
  3. If pregnancy occurred as a result of failure of contraception (but this is only applicable to married women)
  4. If pregnancy is a result of sexual assault or rape
- The pregnancy can be terminated upto 24 weeks of gestational age after the opinion of two registered medical practitioners under these conditions —
  1. If the woman is either a survivor of sexual assault or rape or incest
  2. If she is a minor
  3. If her marital status has changed during the ongoing pregnancy (i.e. either widowhood or divorce)
  4. If she has major physical disabilities or is mentally ill
  5. On the grounds of foetal malformation incompatible with life or if the child is

born, it would be seriously handicapped

6. If the woman is in humanitarian settings or disaster, or emergency situations as declared by the government

**These are the key changes that the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, 2021, has brought in:**

- The gestation limit for abortions has been raised from the earlier ceiling of 20 weeks to 24 weeks, but only for special categories of pregnant women such as rape or incest survivors. But this termination would need the approval of two registered doctors.
- All pregnancies up to 20 weeks require one doctor's approval. The earlier law, the MTP Act 1971, required one doctor's approval for pregnancies upto 12 weeks and two doctors' for pregnancies between 12 and 20 weeks.
- Women can now terminate unwanted pregnancies caused by contraceptive failure, regardless of their marital status. Earlier the law specified that only a "married woman and her husband" could do this.
- There is also no upper gestation limit for abortion in case of foetal disability if so decided by a medical board of specialist doctors, which state governments and union territories' administrations would set up.

**Criticism of Abortion:**

- Foetuses feel the pain: If the foetus is beyond 20 weeks of gestation, gynaecologists assume that there will be pain caused to the foetus.
- Abortions cause psychological damage: Young adult women who undergo abortion may be at increased risk for subsequent depression.
- Abortions reduce the number of adoptable babies: Instead of having the option to abort, women should give their unwanted babies to people who cannot conceive. Single parenthood is also gaining popularity in the US.
- Cases of selective abortion: Such cases based on physical and genetic abnormalities (eugenic termination) is overt discrimination.
- Abortion as a form of contraception: It is immoral to kill an unborn child for convenience. Many women are using abortion as a contraceptive method.
- Morality put to question: If women become pregnant, they should accept the responsibility that comes with producing a child. People need to take responsibility for their actions and accept the consequences.
- Abortion promotes throwaway culture: The legalization of abortion sends a message that human life has little value and promotes the throwaway culture.

**Arguments in favour for Abortion Rights:**

- Upholding individual conscience and decision-making: The US Supreme Court has declared abortion to be a fundamental right guaranteed by the US Constitution.
- Reproductive choice empowers women: The choice over when and whether to have children is central to a woman's independence and ability to determine her future.
- Foetal viability occurs post-birth: Personhood begins after a foetus becomes "viable" (able to survive outside the womb) or after birth, not at conception. Abortion is the



termination of a pregnancy, not a baby.

- No proof of foetal pain: Most neuroscientists believe that the cortex is necessary for pain perception. The cortex does not become functional until at least the 26th week of a foetus' development.
- Preventing illegal abortions: Access to legal, professionally-performed abortions reduces maternal injury and death caused by unsafe, illegal abortions.
- Mother's health: Modern abortion procedures are safe and do not cause lasting health issues such as cancer and infertility.
- Child's health: Abortion gives pregnant women the option to choose not to bring fetuses with profound abnormalities to full term.
- Prevents women's exclusion: Women who are denied abortions are more likely to become unemployed, to be on public welfare, to be below the poverty line, and to become victims of domestic violence.
- Reproductive choice protects women from financial disadvantage: Many women who choose abortion don't have the financial resources to support a child.
- Justified means of population control: Many defend abortion as a way to curb overpopulation. Malnutrition, starvation, poverty, lack of medical and educational services, pollution, underdevelopment, and conflict over resources are all consequences of overpopulation.

## ODISHA OFFERING CASH INCENTIVE FOR PVTGS MARRIAGES

### In News:

Keeping the rampant child marriages among the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of Odisha in mind, the State government is providing an incentive of ₹20,000 to the couples marrying after the age of 18 years.

### Analysis of Background:

#### Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

- There are certain tribal communities who have declining or stagnant population, low level of literacy, pre-agricultural level of technology and are economically backward.
- They generally inhabit remote localities having poor infrastructure and administrative support.
- These groups are among the most vulnerable section of our society as they are few in numbers, have not attained any significant level of social and economic development.
- 75 such groups have been identified and categorized as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

#### Origin of the concept

- The Dhebar Commission (1960-1961) stated that within Scheduled Tribes there existed an inequality in the rate of development.
- During the fourth Five Year Plan a sub-category was created within Scheduled Tribes to identify groups that considered to be at a lower level of development.
- This was created based on the Dhebar Commission report and other studies.
- This sub-category was named "Primitive tribal group".

### **Features of PVTGs:**

The features of such a group include a:

- Pre-agricultural system of existence
- Practice of hunting and gathering
- Zero or negative population growth
- Extremely low level of literacy in comparison with other tribal groups
- Groups that satisfied any one of the criterion were considered as PTG.
- In 2006 the government of India proposed to rename “Primitive tribal group” as Particularly vulnerable tribal group”.

## **SC SEEKS CENTRE’S REPLY ON ISSUE OF MARITAL RAPE**

### **In News:**

The Supreme Court has sought a response from the government on appeals to criminalize marital rape.

### **Analysis of Background:**

#### **What is Marital Rape?**

- Marital rape is the act of sexual intercourse with one’s spouse without her consent.
- It is no different manifestation of domestic violence and sexual abuse.
- It is often a chronic form of violence for the victim which takes place within abusive relations.

### **Status in India:**

- Historically considered as right of the spouses, this is now widely classified as rape by many societies around the world.
- In India, marital rape is not a criminal offense (as protected under IPC section 375).
- India is one of fifty countries that have not yet outlawed marital rape.

### **Reasons for disapproval of this concept:**

The reluctance to define non-consensual sex between married couples as a crime and to prosecute has been attributed to:

- Traditional views of marriage
- Interpretations of religious doctrines
- Ideas about male and female sexuality
- Cultural expectations of subordination of a wife to her husband
- It is widely held that a husband cannot be guilty of any sexual act committed by himself upon his lawful wife their on account of their mutual matrimonial consent.

### **Why it must be a crime?**

- Associated physical violence: Rape by a spouse, partner or ex-partner is more often associated with physical violence.

- **Mental harassment:** There is research showing that marital rape can be more emotionally and physically damaging than rape by a stranger.
- **Compulsive relationship:** Marital rape may occur as part of an abusive relationship.
- **Revengeful nature:** Furthermore, marital rape is rarely a one-time event, but a repeated if not frequent occurrence.
- **Obligation on women:** In the case of marital rape the victim often has no choice but to continue living with their spouse.

### **Violation of fundamental rights**

- Marital rape is considered as the violation of FR guaranteed under Article 14 of the Indian constitution which guarantees the equal protection of laws to all persons.
- By depriving married women of an effective penal remedy against forced sexual intercourse, it violates their right to privacy and bodily integrity, aspects of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21.

### **Problems in prosecuting marital rape**

- **Lack of awareness:** A lack of public awareness, as well as reluctance or outright refusal of authorities to prosecute, is common globally.
- **Gender norms:** Additionally, gender norms that place wives in subservient positions to their husbands, make it more difficult for women to recognize such rape.
- **Acceptability of the concept:** Another problem results from prevailing social norms that exist.

### **Present regulations in India**

- Indian Penal Code criminalizes rape in most cases, although marital rape is not illegal when the woman is over the age of 18.
- However, until 2017, men married to those between 15 and 18 could not be convicted of rape.
- Marital rape of an adult wife, who is unofficially or officially separated, is a criminal offence punishable by 2 to 7 year in prison; it is not dealt by normal rape laws which stipulate the possibility of a death sentence.
- According to the Protection of Women From Domestic Violence Act (2005), other married women subject to such crime by their husband may demand for financial compensation.
- They also have the right to continue to live in their marital household if they wish, or may approach shelter or aid homes.
- However, marital rape is still not a criminal offence in this case and is only a misdemeanor.

### **Arguments against criminalization**

- **Subjective:** It is very subjective and intricate to determine whether consent was acquired or not.
- **Prone to Misuse:** If marital rape is criminalized without adequate safeguards it could be misused like the current dowry law by the dissatisfied wives to harass and torture

their Husbands.

- Burden on Judiciary: It will increase the burden of judiciary which otherwise may serve other more important causes.

## TOPIC: EDUCATION

### EKLAVYA SCHOOLS GET SHORT SHRIFT IN TEACHER RECRUITMENTS

#### In News:

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has so far been unable to fix the teacher shortage faced across 378 of Eklavya model residential schools (EMRS) that are currently functional.

#### Analysis of Background:

##### Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS):

- EMRS started in the year 1997-98 to impart quality education to Scheduled Tribes (ST) children in remote areas in order.
- It aims to enable them to avail of opportunities in high and professional educational courses and get employment in various sectors.
- The schools focus not only on academic education but on the all-round development of the students.
- Each school has a capacity of 480 students, catering to students from Class VI to XII.
- Hitherto, grants were given for construction of schools and recurring expenses to the State Governments under Grants under Article 275 (1) of the Constitution.
- Eklavya schools are on par with Navodaya Vidyalaya and have special facilities for preserving local art and culture besides providing training in sports and skill development.

#### Features of Eklavya Schools:

- Admission to these schools will be through selection/competition with suitable provision for preference to children belonging to Primitive Tribal Groups, first-generation students, etc.
- Sufficient land would be given by the State Government for the school, playgrounds, hostels, residential quarters, etc., free of cost.
- The number of seats for boys and girls will be equal.
- In these schools, education will be entirely free.

#### Where are the Eklavya schools located?

- It has been decided that by the year 2022, every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons, will have an EMRS.
- Wherever density of ST population is higher in identified Sub-Districts (90% or more), it is proposed to set up Eklavya Model Day Boarding School (EMDBS) on an experimental basis.
- They aim for providing additional scope for ST Students seeking to avail school education without residential facility.

## TOPIC: SCHEMES

### MGNREGA

#### In News:

The delay in payment of wages has pushed MGNREGS workers in West Bengal to the brink. There are allegations of corruption against the State government, the Centre's reluctance in releasing payments, and the plight of the workers caught in this tussle.

#### Analysis of Background:

##### About MGNREGA:

- The MGNREGA stands for Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005. This is labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'Right to Work'. The act was first proposed in 1991 by P.V. Narasimha Rao.

#### Significant Features of the scheme

- Fixed employment: MGNREGA is unique in not only ensuring at least 100 days of employment to the willing unskilled workers, but also in ensuring an enforceable commitment on the implementing machinery i.e., the State Governments, and providing a bargaining power to the labourers.
- Assured compensation: The failure of provision for employment within 15 days of the receipt of job application from a prospective household will result in the payment of unemployment allowance to the job seekers.
- Locality is ensured: Employment is to be provided within 5 km of an applicant's residence, and minimum wages are to be paid.
- Legal backing: Thus, employment under MGNREGA is a legal entitlement.

#### Key issues:

- Non-purposive spending and corruptions: Many works sanctioned under MGNREGA often seem to be non-purposive. Quite often, they are politically motivated hotspots to create rampant corruption by dominant sections of the local population. Even social audits of such projects are locally manipulated.
- Workers penalized for administrative lapses: The ministry withholds wage payments for workers of states that do not meet administrative requirements within the stipulated time period (for instance, submission of the previous financial year's audited fund statements, utilization certificates, bank reconciliation certificates etc). There is no logical or legal explanation for this bizarre arrangement. It is beyond any logic as to why workers would be penalized for administrative lapses.
- Genuine job cards being deleted: Genuine job cards are being randomly deleted as there is a huge administrative pressure to meet 100 per cent DBT implementation targets in MGNREGA. In states like Jharkhand, there are multiple examples where the districts had later requested to resume job cards after civil society interventions into the matter.
- Too much centralization weakening local governance: A real-time MIS-based

implementation and a centralised payment system has further left the representatives of the Panchayati Raj Institutions with literally no role in implementation. It has become a burden as they hardly have any power to resolve issues or make payments.

- Local priorities being ignored: MGNREGA could be a tool to establish decentralized governance. But, with the administration almost dictating its implementation, it is literally a burden now for the people and especially for the local elected representatives. The Gram Sabhas and gram panchayats' plans are never honoured. This is a blatant violation of the Act as well.

#### **Lack of fund has negative implications**

- Delayed payment: Due to this, payments for MGNREGA workers as well as material costs will be delayed, unless States dip into their own funds.
- Livelihood loss: MGNREGA data shows that 13% of households who demanded work under the scheme were not provided work.
- Halt of work: Many workers are simply turned away by officials when they demand work, without their demand being registered at all.
- Fall in demands: This has led to stop the generation of work. There is an artificial squeezing of demand.

#### **Some innovation in MGNREGA can address the challenges**

##### 1) Looping in the skilled worker

- First, there is a suggestion to use it to meet the wage cost of their employment in small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
- Accordingly, skilled migrant workers may be placed in SMEs and their wages would be charged to MGNREGA.

##### 2) Including farm related works

- In the last few years, un-remunerative prices of several crops have been the root cause of widespread agrarian distress.
- The suggestion is to allow farmers to employ MGNREGA workers in agricultural operations like land preparation, sowing, transplantation of paddy, plucking of cotton, intercultural operations and harvesting of crops etc. so as to reduce the cost of cultivation.
- The idea is to pay part of the wages of labour in agricultural operations from MGNREGA.

##### 3) Increasing the number of Work Schemes

- Currently, there are only 2-3 work schemes (say PMAY) running per panchayat, which is leading to the crowding of workers at worksites.
- To prevent this and to ensure that all willing households are able to access employment through NREGA, the number of schemes needs to be increased, and 6-8 schemes must be introduced in each village.

##### 4) Paying Workers Immediately

- Rural households urgently need cash-in-hand, and so the emerging demand is for immediate payment to workers. NREGA payments are frequently delayed by weeks or months.
- Given the circumstances, such delays will be entirely counterproductive.

- It is recommended that in remote areas, wage payments should be made in cash, and paid on the same day.

## TOPIC: ECONOMY

### FOREX RESERVES TO DIP BY \$23 BILLION BY DEC

#### In News:

India's depleted foreign exchange reserves are likely to drop further, falling to their lowest level in more than two years by end-2022.

#### Analysis of Background:

##### Forex to dip

- In a battle that has so far failed to staunch the rupee's fall to a record low against the greenback, the RBI has drawn down its foreign exchange reserves by close to \$100 billion, to \$545 billion.
- Those reserves are forecast to fall another \$23 billion to \$523 billion by the end of this year.

#### About Foreign Exchange (Forex) Reserve:

- Foreign exchange reserves are important assets held by the central bank in foreign currencies as reserves.
- They are commonly used to support the exchange rate and set monetary policy.
- In India's case, foreign reserves include Gold, Dollars, and the IMF's quota for Special Drawing Rights.
- Most of the reserves are usually held in US dollars, given the currency's importance in the international financial and trading system.
- Some central banks keep reserves in Euros, British pounds, Japanese yen, or Chinese yuan, in addition to their US dollar reserves.

#### India's forex reserves cover:

1. Foreign Currency Assets (FCAs)
2. Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)
3. Gold Reserves
4. Reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
5. Countries with the highest foreign reserves

Currently, China has the largest reserves followed by Japan and Switzerland. India has overtaken Russia to become the fourth largest country with foreign exchange reserves. (Data from August 2022)

- China – \$3,349 Billion
- Japan – \$1,376 Billion
- Switzerland – \$1,074 Billion



- India – \$612.73 Billion
- Russia – \$597.40 Billion

### **Why Forex are so important?**

- All international transactions are settled in US dollars and, therefore, required to support India's imports.
- More importantly, they need to maintain support and confidence for central bank action, whether monetary policy action or any exchange rate intervention to support the domestic currency.
- It also helps to limit any vulnerability due to sudden disturbances in foreign capital flows, which may arise during a crisis.
- Holding liquid foreign currency provides a cushion against such effects and provides confidence that there will still be enough foreign exchange to help the country with crucial imports in case of external shocks.

### **Initiatives taken by the government to increase forex**

- To increase the foreign exchange reserves, the Government of India has taken many initiatives like AatmaNirbhar Bharat, in which India has to be made a self-reliant nation so that India does not have to import things that India can produce.
- Other than AatmaNirbhar Bharat, the government has started schemes like Duty Exemption Scheme, Remission of Duty or Taxes on Export Product (RoDTEP), Nirvik (Niryat Rin Vikas Yojana) scheme, etc.
- Apart from these schemes, India is one of the top countries that attracted the highest amount of Foreign Direct Investment, thereby improving India's foreign exchange reserves.

## **CENTRE DEFERS NEW FOREIGN TRADE POLICY**

### **In News:**

The government has extended the launch of new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) (2022-27) by six more months and would continue with the existing one.

### **Analysis of Background:**

#### **Why such delay in Foreign Trade Policy?**

- Geopolitical uncertainty: The geo-political situation is not suitable for long-term foreign trade policy, said Union Commerce Minister.
- Global recession: Currently, fears of a recession in major economies like the US and Europe have escalated a panic among investors.
- Decline in USD inflows: Foreign investors have begun to pull back their money from equities.
- Rupee depreciation: The US Dollar is at a 22-year high, while the Rupee hit a new all-time low of \$81.6.
- Huge trade deficit: The trade deficit widened by more than 2-folds to \$125.22 billion (April – August 2022) compared to \$53.78 billion in the same period last year.
- What is a Foreign Trade Policy?

- India's Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) is a set of guidelines for goods and services imported and exported.
- These are developed by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's regulating body for the promotion and facilitation of exports and imports.
- FTPs are enforceable under the Foreign Trade Development and Regulation Act 1992.

### **What is India's Foreign Trade Policy?**

- In line with the 'Make in India,' 'Digital India,' 'Skill India,' 'Startup India,' and 'Ease of Doing Business' initiatives, the Foreign Trade Policy (2015-20) was launched on April 1, 2015.
- It provides a framework for increasing exports of goods and services, creating jobs, and increasing value addition in the country.
- The FTP statement outlines the market and product strategy as well as the steps needed to promote trade, expand infrastructure, and improve the entire trade ecosystem.
- It aims to help India respond to external problems while staying on top of fast-changing international trading infrastructure and to make trade a major contributor to the country's economic growth and development.
- Issues with FTP (2015-2020)
- Acting on Washington's protest, a WTO dispute settlement panel ruled in 2019 that India's export subsidy measures are in violation of WTO norms and must be repealed.
- Tax incentives under the popular Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) (now renamed as RODTEP Scheme) and Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS) programmes were among them.
- The panel found that because India's per capita gross national product exceeds \$1,000 per year, it may no longer grant subsidies based on export performance.

## **HIGH INFLATION IN INDIA**

### **In News:**

It seems that inflation may hover around 7 per cent despite RBI's tightening of monetary policy in the months to come.

### **Analysis of Background:**

#### **Inflation:**

Inflation is an increase in the level of prices of the goods and services that households buy. It is measured as the rate of change of those prices. Typically, prices rise over time, but prices can also fall (a situation called deflation).

#### **Inflation Rate**

- Inflation Rate is the percentage change in the price level from the previous period. If a normal basket of goods was priced at Rupee 100 last year and the same basket of goods now cost Rupee 120, then the rate of inflation this year is 20%.

- Inflation Rate=  $\{(Price\ in\ year\ 2 - Price\ in\ year\ 1) / Price\ in\ year\ 1\} * 100$

## **Types of Inflation**

### **Creeping Inflation**

- Creeping or mild inflation is when prices rise 3% a year or less. This kind of mild inflation makes consumers expect that prices will keep going up. That boosts demand. Consumers buy now to beat higher future prices. That's how mild inflation drives economic expansion.

### **Walking Inflation**

- This type of strong, or pernicious, inflation is between 3-10% a year. It is harmful to the economy because it heats up economic growth too fast. People start to buy more than they need, just to avoid tomorrow's much higher prices. This drives demand even further so that suppliers can't keep up. More important, neither can wages. As a result, common goods and services are priced out of the reach of most people.

### **Galloping Inflation**

- When inflation rises to 10% or more, it wreaks absolute havoc on the economy. Money loses value so fast that business and employee income can't keep up with costs and prices. Foreign investors avoid the country, depriving it of needed capital. The economy becomes unstable, and government leaders lose credibility. Galloping inflation must be prevented at all costs.

### **Hyperinflation**

- Hyperinflation is when prices skyrocket more than 50% a month. It is very rare. In fact, most examples of hyperinflation have occurred only when governments printed money to pay for wars. Examples of hyperinflation include Germany in the 1920s, Zimbabwe in the 2000s, and Venezuela in the 2010s. The last time America experienced hyperinflation was during its civil war.

### **Core Inflation**

- The core inflation rate measures rising prices in everything except food and energy. That's because gas prices tend to escalate now and then. Higher gas costs increase the price of food and anything else that has large transportation costs.

## CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

### In News:

CPI is used to monitor changes in the cost of living over time. When the CPI rises, the average Indian family has to spend more on goods and services to maintain the same standard of living. The economic term used to define such a rising prices of goods and services is Inflation.

### Analysis of Background:

#### Whole sale Price Index

WPI is used to monitor the cost of goods and services bought by producer and firms rather than final consumers. The WPI inflation captures price changes at the factory/wholesale level.

#### GDP Deflator

- Another important measure of calculating standard of living of people is GDP Deflator. GDP Deflator is the ratio of nominal GDP to real GDP.
- The nominal GDP is measured at the current prices whereas the real GDP is measured at the base year prices. Therefore, GDP Deflator reflects the current level of prices relative to prices in a base year.
- Example, In India the base year of calculating deflator is 2011-12.

#### Factors fuelling inflation in India

- Falling rupee: Inflation is here to stay because it has much to do with the decline in value of the rupee that has fallen to its lowest, which makes imports of oil and gas more expensive.
- Ukraine crisis: The war in Ukraine has the same effect and pushes the price of some food items upward.
- Poor inflation management: With inflation, as measured by the consumer price index, in August going back to 7 per cent, and the wholesale price index coming in at 12.4 per cent, one thing is clear India is not out of the woods on inflation management.

#### Rising inflation have these implications

- **Impact on the poor:** This upsurge of inflation is affecting the poor more because some of the commodities whose prices are increasing the most represent a larger fraction of the budget of the most vulnerable sections of society.
- **Rising inequality:** As a result, inequalities which were already on the rise are increasing further. Recently, the State of Inequality in India report showed that an Indian making Rs 3 lakh a year belonged to the top 10 per cent of the country's wage earners.
- **Inequality in healthcare:** India's spending on healthcare is among the lowest in the world. Decent level of healthcare is available only to the ones who can afford it because of increasing out-of-pocket expenditure the payment made directly by individuals for the health service, not covered under any financial protection scheme.

- Overall, these out-of-pocket expenses on healthcare are 60 per cent of the total expenditure on public health in India, which is one of the highest in the world.

### **Need for bold steps on three fronts to tackle inflation**

#### **1] Tightening of loose monetary policy:**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is mandated to keep inflation at 4 per cent, plus-minus 2 per cent.
- The RBI has already started the process of tightening monetary policy by raising the repo rate, albeit a bit late.
- It is expected that by the end of 2022-3, the repo rate will be at least 5.5 per cent, if not more.
- It will still stay below the likely inflation rate and therefore depositors will still lose the real value of their money in banks with negative real interest rates.
- That only reflects an inbuilt bias in the system — in favour of entrepreneurs in the name of growth and against depositors, which ultimately results in increasing inequality in the system.

#### **2] Prudent fiscal policy:**

- Fiscal policy has been running loose in the wake of Covid-19 that saw the fiscal deficit of the Union government soar to more than 9 per cent in 2020-21 and 6.7 per cent in 2021-22, but now needs to be tightened.
- Government needs to reduce its fiscal deficit to less than 5 per cent, never mind the FRMB Act's advice to bring it to 3 per cent of GDP.
- However, it is difficult to achieve when enhanced food and fertiliser subsidies, and cuts in duties of petrol and diesel will cost the government at least Rs 3 trillion more than what was provisioned in the budget.

#### **3] Rational trade policy:**

- Export restrictions/bans go beyond agri-commodities, even to iron ore and steel, etc. in the name of taming inflation.
- But abrupt export bans are poor trade policy and reflect only the panic-stricken face of the government.
- A more mature approach to filter exports would be through a gradual process of minimum export prices and transparent export duties for short periods of time, rather than abrupt bans, if at all these are desperately needed to favour consumers.

## **GST COUNCIL**

### **In News:**

FM was reacting to a case made by Fifteenth Finance Commission chief N.K. Singh to set up a Fiscal Council with the Centre and States. This is another such recommended body to act as a bridge between the GST Council and the Finance Commission.

### **Analysis of Background:**

#### **About GST Council:**

- The GST regime came into force after the 101<sup>st</sup> Constitutional Amendment was passed

by both Houses of Parliament in 2016.

- The GST Council – a joint forum of the Centre and the states — was set up by the President as per Article 279A (1) of the amended Constitution.
- The members of the Council include the Union Finance Minister (chairperson), the Union Minister of State (Finance) from the Centre.
- Each state can nominate a minister in-charge of finance or taxation or any other minister as a member.

### **Why was the Council set up?**

- The Council, according to Article 279, is meant to “make recommendations to the Union and the states on important issues related to GST, like the goods and services that may be subjected or exempted from GST, model GST Laws”.
- It also decides on various rate slabs of GST.
- For instance, an interim report by a panel of ministers has suggested imposing 28 per cent GST on casinos, online gaming and horse racing.
- A decision on this will be taken at the Council meeting.

### **Recent reforms**

- The ongoing meeting is the first since a decision of the Supreme Court in May this year, which stated recommendations of the GST Council are not binding.
- The court said Article 246A of the Constitution gives both Parliament and state legislatures “simultaneous” power to legislate on GST .
- Recommendations of the Council are the product of a collaborative dialogue involving the Union and States.
- This was hailed by some states, such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu, who believe states can be more flexible in accepting the recommendations as suited to them.

## **WINDFALL TAX**

### **In News:**

Finance Minister has defended the windfall tax imposed by the Centre on domestic crude oil producers, saying that it was not an ad hoc move but was done after full consultation with the industry.

### **Analysis of Background:**

#### **About Windfall Tax:**

- Windfall taxes are designed to tax the profits a company derives from an external, sometimes unprecedented event — for instance, the energy price-rise as a result of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.
- These are profits that cannot be attributed to something the firm actively did, like an investment strategy or an expansion of business.
- The US Congressional Research Service (CRS) defines a windfall as an “unearned, unanticipated gain in income through no additional effort or expense”.
- One area where such taxes have routinely been discussed is oil markets, where price

fluctuation leads to volatile or erratic profits for the industry.

### **When did India introduce this?**

- In July this year, India announced a windfall tax on domestic crude oil producers who it believed were reaping the benefits of the high oil prices.
- It also imposed an additional excise levy on diesel, petrol and air turbine fuel (ATF) exports.
- Also, India's case was different from other countries, as it was still importing discounted Russian oil.

### **How is it levied?**

- Governments typically levy this as a one-off tax retrospectively over and above the normal rates of tax.
- The Central government has introduced a windfall profit tax of ₹23,250 per tonne on domestic crude oil production, which was subsequently revised fortnightly four times so far.
- The latest revision was on August 31, when it was hiked to ₹13,300 per tonne from ₹13,000.

### **Why govt. introduced windfall tax?**

- There have been varying rationales for governments worldwide to introduce windfall taxes like:
- Redistribution of unexpected gains when high prices benefit producers at the expense of consumers,
- Funding social welfare schemes, and
- Supplementary revenue stream for the government

### **Why are countries levying windfall taxes now?**

- Prices of oil, gas, and coal have seen sharp increases since last year and in the first two quarters of the current year, although they have reduced recently.
- Pandemic recovery and supply issues resulting from the Russia-Ukraine conflict shored up energy demands, which in turn have driven up global prices.
- The rising prices meant huge and record profits for energy companies while resulting in hefty gas and electricity bills for households in major and smaller economies.
- Since the gains stemmed partly from external change, multiple analysts have called them windfall profits.

### **Issues with imposing such taxes**

- Companies are confident in investing in a sector if there is certainty and stability in a tax regime.
- Since windfall taxes are imposed retrospectively and are often influenced by unexpected events, they can brew uncertainty in the market about future taxes.
- IMF says that taxes in response to price surges may suffer from design problems—given their expedient and political nature.



- It added that introducing a temporary windfall profit tax reduces future investment because prospective investors will internalise the likelihood of potential taxes when making investment decisions.
- There is another argument about what exactly constitutes true windfall profits; how can it be determined and what level of profit is normal or excessive.
- Another issue is who should be taxed — only the big companies responsible for the bulk of high-priced sales or smaller companies as well— raising the question of whether producers with revenues or profits below a certain threshold should be exempt.

## PERIODIC LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (PLFS)

### In News:

Considering the importance of availability of labour force data at more frequent time intervals, National Statistical Office (NSO) launched Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) in April 2017.

### Analysis of Background:

The objective of PLFS is primarily twofold:

- To estimate the key employment and unemployment indicators (viz. Worker population ratio, labour force participation rate, unemployment rate) in the short time interval of three months for the urban areas only in the 'current weekly status' (CWS).
- To estimate employment and unemployment indicators in both 'usual status' (ps+ss) and cws in both rural and urban areas annually.

### Employment - Unemployment Surveys

- One of the major statistical hurdles in our country is the estimation of reliable employment and unemployment data. The NSSO (National Sample Survey Office) was historically conducting Employment and Unemployment Surveys as part of its National Sample Surveys.
- They were quinquennial (once in every five years) Employment and Unemployment surveys.
- These surveys were the prime source for statistics about employment and unemployment situation in the country.

### PLFS

- But from 1st April 2017, the NSSO has adopted a new employment and unemployment survey called Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS).
- First report of the PLFS was published in June 2019 for the period of 2017-18.
- The PLFS has now become the major employment and unemployment data of the NSSO; replacing the previous five-year surveys.
- Since the PLFS aims to provide more employment data for more frequent intervals (annual and quarterly), the PLFS is superior to the earlier five-year employment estimates.

- Methodologically, the PLFS is different from the earlier quinquennial surveys in terms of survey methodology, data collection mechanism and sampling design.

### **Measurement approaches under PLFS**

- Unemployment rate for PLFS is measured under two approaches – Usual Status and Current approach and Weekly Status approach. The reference period for usual status (ps+ss) approach is 1 year and that for current weekly status approach is 1 week.

### **Current Weekly Status (CWS)**

- The estimates of unemployed in current weekly status give an average picture of unemployment in a short period of 7 days during the survey period.
- Current weekly status measures the number of persons worked for at least 1 hour on any day during the 7 days preceding the date of survey.
- Thus, the workforce measured in current weekly status (CWS) gives the average picture of the workforce in a short period of one week during the survey period.

### **Usual Status**

- The Labour Force under usual status approach is estimated by considering a time period of one year. It is estimated by clubbing two categories – usual principal status (ps) category and subsidiary status (ss) category.
- The estimate of the labour force in the usual status (ps+ss) includes
  - the persons who either worked or were available for work for a relatively long part of the 365 days preceding the date of survey and also
  - persons among the remaining population who had worked at least for 30 days during the reference period of 365 days preceding the date of survey.

### **Indicators,**

#### **Worker Population Ratio (WPR):**

Worker Population Ratio (WPR) is the percentage of persons employed among the persons in the population.

#### **Unemployment rate (UR):**

Unemployment rate (UR) is defined as the percentage of unemployed persons in the labour force.

#### **Labour force participation rate (LFPR):**

LFPR is defined as the percentage of persons in the labour force in the population. (i.e. working or seeking or available for work)

#### **Activity Status- Usual Status:**

The activity status of a person is determined on the basis of the activities pursued by the person during the specified reference period. When the activity status is determined on the basis of the reference period of last 365 days preceding the date of survey, it is known as the usual activity status of the person.

### **Activity Status- Current Weekly Status (CWS):**

The activity status determined on the basis of a reference period of last 7 days preceding the date of survey is known as the current weekly status (CWS) of the person. Principal activity status- The activity status on which a person spent relatively long time (major time criterion) during 365 days preceding the date of survey, was considered the usual principal activity status of the person.

### **Causes of Poor Labour Force Participation in India**

#### **Jobless growth**

- In India, since independence, the rate of growth of employment has been considerably less than the rate of economic growth.
- Moreover, the rate of economic growth has not been adequate enough to absorb the increasing labour force in India. As a result, there is widespread unemployment.

#### **Increase in the labour force**

- Over the years, the mortality rate has declined rapidly without a corresponding fall in birth rate and the country has, thus, registered an unprecedented population growth.
- This was naturally followed by an equally large expansion in the labour force.

#### **Use of machinery**

- In India, manpower is available in large quantities. Under these circumstances, the country would have a labour intensive technique of production.
- However, in India, not only in industries but also in agriculture, the capital-intensive technique of production is being used. This policy results in large scale unemployment.

#### **Lack of skill**

- In India, vocational skill development courses which are compatible with the Indian industry are comparatively less in number. So, there is a dearth of skilled manpower needed by the industry.

#### **Expectations towards employment**

- Educated youth in India aspire for a white-collar job.
- There is a lack of innovative and entrepreneurial spirit to organize economic activities where they can be self-employed.
- In India, most of the graduates prefer to remain unemployed till they get a job which is up to their expectations in terms of salary and nature of work.

#### **Seasonal nature of agriculture**

- Agriculture in India is seasonal by nature. It depends on monsoon.
- Lack of irrigation facilities, poor soil fertility, outdated production techniques, non-availability of certified seeds and fertilizers are the factors that reduce the capacity of agriculture for other gainful employment throughout the year.
- The labourers are employed only for a few months in a year. For the rest of the year,

the labour force remains jobless.

### **Migration of rural population**

- There has been a continuous migration of people from rural to urban areas in search of jobs. This has increased the problem of unemployment in urban areas.

### **Initiatives taken by the Government to improve labor force participation**

#### **Aatmanirbhar Bharat package**

- This is to provide stimulus to business and to mitigate the adverse impact of pandemic.
- Under this package, the Government is providing fiscal stimulus of more than Rs. Twenty Seven lakh crore.
- This package comprises of various long term schemes/ programmes/ policies for making the country self-reliant and to create employment opportunities.

#### **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)**

- It is a demand driven wage employment programme which provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
- Under MGNREGS wage has been increased to Rs. 202 a day from Rs. 182.

#### **Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY)**

- It was launched in 2020 as part of Aatmanirbhar Bharat package 3.0 to incentivize employers for creation of new employment along with social security benefits and restoration of loss of employment during Covid-19 pandemic.
- This scheme being implemented through the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), seeks to reduce the financial burden of the employers and encourages them to hire more workers.

#### **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)**

- It is being implemented by the Government for facilitating self-employment.
- Under PMMY, collateral free loans upto Rs. 10 lakh, are extended to micro/small business enterprises and to individuals to enable them to setup or expand their business activities.
- Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan
- It was launched in 2020 to boost employment and livelihood opportunities for returnee migrant workers and similarly affected persons including youth in rural areas, in 6 States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

#### **PM GatiShakti**

- Launched in 2021, it is an initiative aimed at coordinated planning and execution of infrastructure projects.
- The objective is to bring down logistics costs.
- The approach is driven by seven engines, namely, Roads, Railways, Airports, Ports,

Mass Transport, Waterways, and Logistics Infrastructure. This approach is powered by Clean Energy and Sabka Prayas leading to huge job and entrepreneurial opportunities for all.

## TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

### VANDE BHARAT

#### In News:

Indian Railways had successfully completed trials of the second generation Vande Bharat train that will come with enhanced passenger comfort and safety features.

#### Analysis of Background:

##### About Vande Bharat Express:

- The Vande Bharat Express is a semi-high-speed train designed, developed, and built by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF).
- Presently there are only two Vande Bharat trains that are running — Delhi to Varanasi and Delhi to Katra.



**THE NEW VANDE BHARAT EXPRESS**

India's second indigenously built engine-less train will ply between Delhi and Katra

#### Key Features

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  <b>Engine-less</b> self-propelled train    |  <b>All air-conditioned</b> chair car service; 16 coaches     |
|  <b>Stone-pelting protection</b> on windows |  <b>CCTV surveillance;</b> GPS based information system; WiFi |

#### Vande Bharat VS Shatabdi

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  <b>130 kmph</b> Speed of Shatabdi Express |  <b>160 kmph</b> Potential speed of Vande Bharat |
|---|---|

#### Features:

- The current Vande Bharat trains have seating only in two classes — chair car and

executive chair car. But Railways is planning to upgrade it.

- The trains have fully sealed gangways for a dust-free environment, modular bio-vacuum toilets, rotating seats in Executive Class, personalized reading lights, automatic entry/exit doors with sliding footsteps, diffused LED lighting, mini pantry, and sensor-based interconnecting doors in each coach.
- They are self-propelled trains that do not require an engine. This feature is called a distributed traction power system.

### **Benefits of Vande Bharat Trains**

- Cuts Travel Time Drastically
- Energy Efficient
- Reduce Turnaround Time
- Faster Acceleration and Deceleration among others.

## **TOPIC: ENVIRONMENT**

### **FAME INDIA**

#### **In News:**

Centralized procurement of 5,450 electric buses and subsequent increase in ambition to have 50,000 e-buses on the country's roads by 2030 under FAME scheme. With the shared aim to rapidly electrify a key pillar of India's public transportation, recent governance efforts of Union and state governments have created a new business model for e-buses.

#### **Analysis of Background:**

##### **About FAME India scheme:**

- The National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) 2020: Is a National Mission document providing the vision and the roadmap for the faster adoption of electric vehicles and their manufacturing in the country.
- FAME: As part of the NEMMP 2020, Department of Heavy Industry formulated a Scheme viz. Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India (FAME India) Scheme in the year 2015 to promote manufacturing of electric and hybrid vehicle technology and to ensure sustainable growth of the same.
- FAME Phase-II: Government has approved Phase-II of FAME Scheme with an outlay of Rs. 10,000 Crore for a period of 3 years commencing from 1st April 2019.
- Out of total budgetary support, about 86 percent of fund has been allocated for Demand Incentive so as to create demand for EVs in the country.
- This phase aims to generate demand by way of supporting 7000 e-Buses, 5 lakh e-3 Wheelers, 55000 e-4 Wheeler Passenger Cars (including Strong Hybrid) and 10 lakh e-2 Wheelers. However, depending upon off-take of different category of EVs, these numbers may vary as the provision has been made for inter as well as intra segment wise f
- Incentives: Only advanced battery and registered vehicles will be incentivized under

the scheme.

- Coverage: With greater emphasis on providing affordable & environment friendly public transportation options for the masses, scheme will be applicable mainly to vehicles used for public transport or those registered for commercial purposes in e-3W, e-4W and e-bus segments. However, privately owned registered e-2Ws are also covered under the scheme as a mass segment.

## **Obstacles in electric vehicle mobility**

### **EV Cost and Battery cost:**

- The cost is the most concerning point for an individual when it comes to buying an electric vehicle.
- However, there are many incentives given off by central and state governments. But the common condition in all policies is that the incentives are only applicable for up to a certain number of vehicles only and after removing the discount and incentives the same EV which was looking lucrative to buy suddenly becomes unaffordable

### **Beta version of vehicles:**

- Right now, both the technology and companies are new to the market and the products they are manufacturing are possibly facing real costumers for the first time.
- It's nearly impossible to make such a complex product like an automobile perfect for the customers in the first go, and as expected the buyers faced many issues. Vehicles like RV400, EPluto 7G, Nexon all them has to update their vehicle up to a very high extent after customer feedback and reviews.

### **Poor Infrastructure and range anxiety:**

- Poor infrastructure is among the most pressing issue among people thinking to opt for electric vehicles.
- Poor infra doesn't only include a lack of charging stations but also the lack of proper charging set up in their home.

### **No Universal charger and Ecosystem (Lack of standardization):**

- Every second electric vehicle-making company has its own different charging port which is becoming a hurdle to setting up a proper charging ecosystem.
- Also, many EV users complained about facing moral trouble for charging their vehicle in different EV-making Company's charging stations which can impact the growth of the EV industry.

### **Temperature Issues:**

- Temperature can affect the performance of an EV battery at a large extent which makes EV's inappropriate for too cold (Uttarakhand, Meghalaya) or too hot regions like (Rajasthan, Kerala). The battery can give its ideal performance when it's in use under the temperature range of 15-40 degrees.

### **Environmental concerns:**

- The EV revolution is necessary for the most populated and polluted parts of India like Delhi, Mumbai, etc. but in such cities the major chunk of electricity is generated through burning fossil fuels which are equivalent to spreading the pollution through the ICE vehicle smoke, even most of the charging stations are reportedly operating upon diesel-driven electricity generator.



## NEELAKURINJI

### In News:

Social media in India has been awash since the past three days with photos of a 'Neelakurinji' bloom in the Bababudangiri range of the Western Ghats in Karnataka's Chikkamagaluru district.

### Analysis of Background:

#### More details about Neelakurinji:

- The Neelakurinji is a shrub of the Acanthaceae family that famously blooms once every 12 years.
- Researchers who work in the Western Ghats were of the view that while some of the photos did show Neelakurinji flowers, others showed the Topli Karvy, another shrub of the Acanthaceae
- Strobilanthesis a genus of about 350 species of flowering plants in the family Acanthaceae, mostly native to tropical Asia and Madagascar.
- The Topli Karvy (*Strobilanthes sessilis*), the Karvy (*Strobilanthes callosa*) and the Kurinji (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*), all belong to the Strobilanthesgenus
- The external resemblance of these flowers being taxonomically related, is very similar. People can often get confused.
- The Topli Karvy is found more in the northern section of the Western Ghats in Maharashtra. It is called so since it resembles an inverted basket
- The Karvy (*Strobilanthes callosa*) grows on the steepest cliffs where trees can't grow.
- The Topli Karvy grows on the plateaus of the northern Western Ghats on the other hand.
- The Neelakurinji on the other hand grows in the shola grasslands of the southern Western Ghats, which are not found in Maharashtra
- Neelakurinji was endemic to the southern Western Ghats and higher reaches of the Eastern Ghats.
- The shola forests are patches of stunted tropical montane forests surrounded by grasslands in the high elevations of southern India spread over the states of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- These shrubs expend a lot of energy to flower once in 12 years (or in the case of the Topli Karvy once in 11 years). These shrubs die after that.
- The shola forests and grasslands were facing grave threats at the moment largely from anthropogenic activity as well as invasive species and climate change
- Be it any of these shrubs, they are very important for pollinators such as honey bees.

## CHEETAH REINTRODUCTION

### In News:

African cheetahs from Namibia will arrive in India September 17, 2022. This is the world's first intercontinental translocation of a carnivore. It is even more unique because this is the first time cheetahs will be reintroduced in an unfenced protected area (PA).

**The Indian EXPRESS**

# THE CHEETAHS ARE COMING



**HOW MANY?**

**20**  
8 from Namibia  
+ 12 from SA

**WHERE?**

Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh  
(Kuno National Park will have a 600-hectare fenced enclosure to house the Cheetahs)

What is the long-term population size expected? **50+**

Are there similar relocation programmes? South Africa to Malawi, Mozambique

What is the carrying capacity of Kuno?

**21**  
Cheetahs

Could it share its space? Yes, with Asiatic lions

Are there threats? Yes, with Kuno's existing leopard population

### Analysis of Background:

#### About Asiatic Cheetah

- Feature: Cheetah, the world's fastest land animal was declared extinct in India in 1952.
- Status: The Asiatic cheetah is classified as a "critically endangered" species by the IUCN Red List, and is believed to survive only in Iran.
- Reintroduction: It was expected to be re-introduced into the country after the Supreme Court lifted curbs for its re-introduction.
- Extinction: From 400 in the 1990s, their numbers are estimated to have reached to 50-70 today, because of poaching, hunting of their main prey (gazelles) and encroachment on their habitat.

#### Distribution of cheetahs in India

- Historically, Asiatic cheetahs had a very wide distribution in India.
- There are authentic reports of their occurrence from as far north as Punjab to Tirunelveli district in southern Tamil Nadu, from Gujarat and Rajasthan in the west to Bengal in the east.
- Most of the records are from a belt extending from Gujarat passing through Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha.
- There is also a cluster of reports from southern Maharashtra extending to parts of Karnataka, Telangana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- The distribution range of the cheetah was wide and spread all over the subcontinent. They occurred in substantial numbers.

- The cheetah's habitat was also diverse, favouring the more open habitats: scrub forests, dry grasslands, savannahs and other arid and semi-arid open habitats.

#### **Causes for the extinction of cheetahs in India:**

- Reduced fecundity and high infant mortality in the wild
- Inability to breed in captivity
- Sport hunting and
- Bounty killings

#### **Issues in re-introduction**

- Experts find it difficult whether the African cheetahs would find the sanctuary a favourable climate as far as the abundance of prey is concerned.
- The habitat of cheetahs is needed to support a genetically viable population.

#### **Why reintroduce Cheetahs?**

- Reintroductions of large carnivores have increasingly been recognized as a strategy to conserve threatened species and restore ecosystem functions.
- The cheetah is the only large carnivore that has been extirpated, mainly by over-hunting in India in historical times.
- India now has the economic ability to consider restoring its lost natural heritage for ethical as well as ecological reasons.

### **BAN ON SINGLE-USE PLASTICS**

#### **In News:**

Since July 1, 2022, India has banned the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale, and use of single-use plastics (SUP) items with low utility and high littering potential.

#### **Analysis of Background:**

##### **About single-use plastics:**

- Single-use plastics, often also referred to as disposable plastics, are commonly used for plastic packaging and include items intended to be used only once before they are thrown away or recycled.
- These include, among other items, grocery bags, food packaging, bottles, straws, containers, cups and cutlery.

##### **Why are single-use plastics harmful?**

- The purpose of single-use plastics is to use them once or for a short period of time before disposing of them. Plastic waste has drastic impacts on the environment and human health.
- There is a greater likelihood of single-use plastic products ending up in the sea than reusable ones.

## **SUP ban in India**

- India has taken resolute steps to mitigate pollution caused by littered single-use plastics.
- A number of items are banned, including earbuds with plastic sticks, balloon sticks, plastic flags, candy sticks, ice cream sticks, polystyrene (thermocool) for decorations, plates, cups, glasses, cutlery such as forks, spoons, knives, straws etc.
- India has also banned plastic or PVC banners less than 100 micron, stirrers, etc.

## **What is the impact on the environment?**

### **[A] Solid Waste generation**

- The disposal of plastics is one of the least recognized and most highly problematic areas of plastic's ecological impact.
- Ironically, one of plastic's most desirable traits: its durability and resistance to decomposition, is also the source of one of its greatest liabilities when it comes to the disposal of plastics.
- A very small amount of total plastic production (less than 10%) is effectively recycled; the remaining plastic is sent to landfills.
- It is destined to remain entombed.

### **[B] Ecological Impact**

#### **(i) Groundwater and soil pollution**

- Plastic is a material made to last forever, and due to the same chemical composition, plastic cannot biodegrade; it breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces.
- When buried in a landfill, plastic lies untreated for years.
- In the process, toxic chemicals from plastics drain out and seep into groundwater, flowing downstream into lakes and rivers.
- The seeping of plastic also causes soil pollution and have now started resulting in presence of micro plastics in soil.

#### **(ii) Water Pollution**

- The increased presence of plastic on the ocean surface has resulted in more serious problems.
- Since most of the plastic debris that reaches the ocean remains floating for years as it does not decompose quickly, it leads to the dropping of oxygen level in the water.
- It has severely affected the survival of marine species.
- When oceanic creatures and even birds consume plastic inadvertently, they choke on it which causes a steady decline in their population.
- In addition to suffocation, ingestion, and other macro-particulate causes of death in larger birds, fish, and mammals.

### **[C] Health Hazards**

- Burning of plastic results into formation of a class of flame retardants called as Halogens.
- Collectively, these harmful chemicals are known to cause the following severe health problems: cancer, neurological damage, endocrine disruption, birth defects and child developmental disorders etc.

## **Ban:**

- India is not the first country to ban single-use plastics.
- Bangladesh became the first country to ban thin plastic bags in 2002; New Zealand banned plastic bags in July 2019.
- China had issued a ban on plastic bags in 2020 with a phased implementation.
- As of July 2019, 68 countries have plastic bag bans with varying degrees of enforcement.

## **What are the plastic waste management rules in India?**

- With effect from September 30, 2021 India has the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021.
- It prohibited the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale, and use of plastic carry bags whose thickness is less than 75 microns.
- From December 31, 2022, plastic carry bags whose thickness is less than 120 microns will be banned.
- It means that the ban does not cover all plastic bags; however, it requires the manufacturers to produce plastic bags thicker than 75 microns which was earlier 50 microns.
- As per the notification, the standard shall be increased to 120 microns in December this year.

## **What is the role of the manufacturer?**

- In addition, the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2022 on February 16, 2022.
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is the responsibility of a producer for the environmentally sound management of the product until the end of its life.
- The guidelines provide a framework to strengthen the circular economy of plastic packaging waste, promote the development of new alternatives to plastic packaging and provide the next steps for moving towards sustainable plastic packaging by businesses.

## **Various steps taken**

- The Indian government has taken steps to promote innovation and create an ecosystem for accelerated adoption and availability of alternatives across the country.
- To ensure the effective enforcement of the ban, national and State-level control rooms will be established, as well as special enforcement teams for the purpose of checking the illegal sale and use of single-use plastics.
- To prevent the movement of banned single-use plastic items between States and Union Territories, border checkpoints have been established.
- In an effort to empower citizens to help curb the plastic menace, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has launched a grievance redressal application.

## **What are the challenges?**

- The ban will succeed only if all stakeholders participate enthusiastically and engage in

effective engagement and concerted actions.

- However, if we look back at our past, almost 25 Indian States previously banned plastic at the state level.
- However, these bans had a very limited impact in reality because of the widespread use of these items.
- Now the challenge is to see how the local level authorities will enforce the ban in accordance with the guidelines.
- Banned items such as earbuds with plastic sticks, plastic sticks for balloons, etc., are non-branded items and it is difficult to find out who the manufacturer is and who is accountable.

## TOPIC: SCIENCE AND TECH

### LUMPY SKIN DISEASE IN INDIA

#### In News:

The Mumbai Police have ordered the prohibition of cattle transportation in the city to prevent the spread of the lumpy skin disease (LSD).

#### Analysis of Background;

##### About Lumpy Skin Disease:

- Lumpy skin disease is caused by the lumpy skin disease virus (LSDV), which belongs to the genus capripoxvirus, a part of the poxviridae family.
- Smallpox and monkeypox viruses are also a part of the same family.
- The LSDV shares antigenic similarities with the sheeppox virus (SPPV) and the goatpox virus (GTPV) or is similar in the immune response to those viruses.

#### How does it spread?

- It is not a zoonotic virus, meaning the disease cannot spread to humans.
- It is a contagious vector-borne disease spread by vectors like mosquitoes, some biting flies, and ticks and usually affects host animals like cows and water buffaloes.
- Infected animals shed the virus through oral and nasal secretions which may contaminate common feeding and water troughs.
- Thus, the disease can either spread through direct contact with the vectors or through contaminated fodder and water.
- Studies have also shown that it can spread through animal semen during artificial insemination.

#### How does it affect the animal?

- LSD affects the lymph nodes of the infected animal, causing the nodes to enlarge and appear like lumps on the skin, which is where it derives its name from.

- The cutaneous nodules, 2–5 cm in diameter, appear on the infected cattle's head, neck, limbs, udder, genitalia, and perineum.
- The nodules may later turn into ulcers and eventually develop scabs over the skin.
- The other symptoms include high fever, sharp drop in milk yield, discharge from the eyes and nose, salivation, loss of appetite, depression, damaged hides, wasting of animals, infertility and abortions.
- The incubation period or the time between infection and symptoms is about 28 days according to the FAO, and 4 to 14 days according to some other estimates.
- The morbidity of the disease varies between two to 45% and mortality or rate of date is less than 10%.
- However, the reported mortality of the current outbreak in India is up to 15%, particularly in cases being reported in the western part (Rajasthan) of the country.

### **What is the geographical distribution and how did it spread to India?**

- The disease was first observed in Zambia in 1929.
- Subsequently it got spread to most African countries, followed by West Asia, Southeastern Europe, and Central Asia, and more recently spreading to South Asia and China in 2019.
- As per the FAO, the LSD disease is currently endemic in several countries across Africa, parts of the West Asia (Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic), and Turkey.
- Lumpy in India
- The spread in South Asia first affected Bangladesh in July 2019 and then reached India in August that year, with initial cases being detected in Odisha and West Bengal.
- The long porous borders between India, Nepal and Bangladesh allow for a significant amount of bilateral and informal animal trade, including cattle and buffaloes.
- This may have contributed to the spread of LSD in July-August 2019 between Bangladesh and India.

### **Economic implications of Lumpy on Dairy Sector**

- Milk reduction: Lumpy leads to reduced milk production as the animal becomes weak and also loses appetite due to mouth ulceration.
- Animal wasting: The income losses can also be due to poor growth, reduced draught power capacity and reproductive problems associated with abortions, infertility and lack of semen for artificial insemination.
- Impact of trade ban: Movement and trade bans after infection also put an economic strain on the whole value chain.

### **Why India is at higher risk?**

- India is the world's largest milk producer at about 210 million tonnes annually.
- India also has the largest headcount of bovines
- In Rajasthan, which is witnessing the worst impact of LSD, it has led to reduced milk production, which lessened by about three to six lakh litres a day.
- Reports indicate that milk production has also gone down in Punjab owing to the



spread of the disease.

- According to FAO, the disease threatens the livelihoods of smaller poultry farmers significantly.
- Notably, farmers in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab have incurred losses due to cattle deaths and are seeking compensation from their State governments.
- How bad is the current spread in India?
- Lumpy has infected over 16 lakh cattle in 197 districts as of September 11.
- Of the nearly 75,000 cattle that the disease has killed, more than 50,000 deaths, mostly cows, have been reported from Rajasthan.

#### **Remedies available in India**

- The Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying informed that the 'Goat Pox Vaccine' is very effective against LSD.
- It is being used across affected States to contain the spread.

### **NASA'S DART MISSION PREPARES FOR AN ASTEROID DIMORPHOS COLLISION**

#### **In News:**

In the first-of-its kind NASA's DART Mission is about to hit a small, harmless asteroid millions of miles away.

#### **Analysis of Background:**

##### **About DART Mission:**

- The main aim of the mission is to test the newly developed technology that would allow a spacecraft to crash into an asteroid and change its course.
- It is a suicide mission and the spacecraft will be completely destroyed.
- The target of the spacecraft is a small moonlet called Dimorphos (Greek for "two forms").
- It is about 160-metre in diameter and the spacecraft is expected to collide when it is 11 million kilometres away from Earth.
- Dimorphos orbits a larger asteroid named Didymos (Greek for "twin") which has a diameter of 780 metres.

##### **Why Dimorphos?**

- Didymos is a perfect system for the test mission because it is an eclipsing binary which means it has a moonlet that regularly orbits the asteroid.
- It is observable when it passes in front of the main asteroid.
- Earth-based telescopes can study this variation in brightness to understand how long it takes Dimorphos to orbit Didymos.

##### **Collision course**

- At the time of impact, Didymos and Dimorphos will be relatively close to Earth – within 6.8 million miles (11 million kilometers).

- The spacecraft will accelerate at about 24,140 kilometers per hour when it collides with Dimorphos.
- It aims to crash into Dimorphos to change the asteroid's motion in space.
- This collision will be recorded by LICIACube, or Light Italian CubeSat for Imaging of Asteroids, a companion cube satellite provided by the Italian Space Agency.
- Three minutes after impact, the CubeSat will fly by Dimorphos to capture images and video.

### **Why such mission?**

- Dimorphos was chosen for this mission because its size is relative to asteroids that could pose a threat to Earth.
- The spacecraft is about 100 times smaller than Dimorphos, so it won't obliterate the asteroid.
- The fast impact will only change Dimorphos' speed as it orbits Didymos by 1%, which doesn't sound like a lot — but it will change the moon's orbital period.

## **ISRO TESTS SYSTEM RECOVERABLE ROCKET 'INFLATABLE AERODYNAMIC DECELERATOR (IAD)**

### **In News:**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully tested a technology that could aid the cost-effective recovery of spent rocket stages and safely land payloads on other planets.

### **Analysis of Background:**

#### **What is IAD?**

- IAD is a technique used for an atmospheric entry payload.
- An inflatable envelope and an inflatant (anything that inflates the envelope, like air or helium) make up the inflatable aerodynamic decelerator.
- While entering the atmosphere, it inflates like a balloon and decelerates the lander.
- The inflatant is designed to fill the inflatable envelope to a condition such that it surrounds the payload meant to enter the atmosphere of a planet or satellite and causes aerodynamic forces to slow it down.
- In simpler words, IAD is designed to increase drag upon entering the atmosphere of any planetary body, like Earth, Mars, or even Moon.
- Its shape is maintained by a closed, gas-pressured body and the inflatant gas is also generated internally. Some versions also use ram air or both.

#### **How significant is this IAD?**

- Some space agencies, including NASA, have already successfully tested advanced versions of the technology, including the supersonic and hypersonic variants.
- However, for near future missions of ISRO, the current version that it tested is perfect.
- Its use was first proposed by NASA more than 50 years ago for planetary entries.

#### **Minuscule of ISRO's IAD**

- The IAD tested by ISRO was inflated at an altitude of around 84 km and the sounding

rocket's cargo dropped through the atmosphere on it.

- It is fitted with a booster motor. It also has a spin rocket that is ejectable.
- The inflatable structure is made out of Kevlar fabric, which is a very strong synthetic fibre and also heat resistant to withstand atmospheric pressure and temperature changes.
- On top of it, it's coated with polychloroprene, an oil and wax resistant rubber, to withstand extreme temperatures.
- In the inflation system, it uses compressed nitrogen stored in a bottle.
- It has consistently decreased the payload's velocity through aerodynamic drag while maintaining the expected trajectory during the test flight.

#### **Where does ISRO intend to use it?**

- The IAD will help ISRO in performing many space tasks effectively including recovery of spent stages of rockets, for landing payloads on missions to other planetary bodies.
- This is the first instance where an IAD has been specially created for spent stage recovery.
- So inter-planetary missions are certainly one aspect that ISRO wishes to explore.

### **INDIA'S FIRST DARK SKY RESERVE TO COME UP IN LADAKH**

#### **In News:**

In a first-of-its-kind initiative, the Department of Science & Technology (DST) has announced the setting up of India's first dark sky reserve at Hanle in Ladakh in the next three months.

#### **Analysis of Background:**

##### **What is a Dark Sky Reserve?**

- A dark-sky reserve is an area, usually surrounding a park or observatory that is kept free of artificial light pollution.
- The purpose of a dark sky preserve is generally to promote astronomy.
- Because different national organizations have worked independently to create their programs, different terms have been used to describe the areas.

##### **How is it designated?**

- A dark sky reserve is a designation given to a place that has policies in place to ensure that a tract of land or region has minimal artificial light interference.
- The International Dark Sky Association is a US-based non-profit that designates sites as international dark sky places, parks, sanctuaries and reserves, depending on the criteria they meet.
- Several such reserves exist around the world but none so far in India.

##### **Dark Sky Reserve at Hanle**

- Hanle, which is about 4,500 metres above sea level, hosts telescopes and is regarded as one of the world's most optimal sites for astronomical observations.

- However, ensuring that the site remains well-suited for astronomy implies keeping the night sky pristine, or ensuring minimal interference to the telescopes from artificial light sources such as electric lights and vehicular lights from the ground.
- The site will have activities to help in boosting local tourism and economy through interventions of science and technology.

## **TOPIC: DEFENSE AND SECURITY**

### **LEFT WING EXTREMISM**

#### **In News:**

The Maoist movement is on the ebb on the Andhra Pradesh-Odisha boundary, with its cadre and militia strength heavily depleted.

#### **Analysis of Background:**

##### **Who are the Maoists?**

- Maoism is a form of communism developed by Mao Zedong.
- It is a doctrine to capture State power through a combination of armed insurgency, mass mobilization and strategic alliances.
- The Maoists also use propaganda and disinformation against State institutions as other components of their insurgency doctrine.

##### **Maoists and Maoism in India**

- The Communist Party of India (Maoist) is a Marxist–Leninist–Maoist banned communist political party and militant organization in India.
- It aims to overthrow the “semi-colonial and semi-feudal Indian state” through people’s war.
- Confused between Maoists and Naxalities?
- Usually, people confuse themselves over Maoists and Naxalities and cannot exactly trace the difference between the two terminologies.
- Media seems to be confused with the terms and uses Maoists and Naxalities quite inter-changeably.
- This creates confusion in the readers’ minds over the actual meaning of individual terms.

##### **The actual difference between the terms is as follows:**

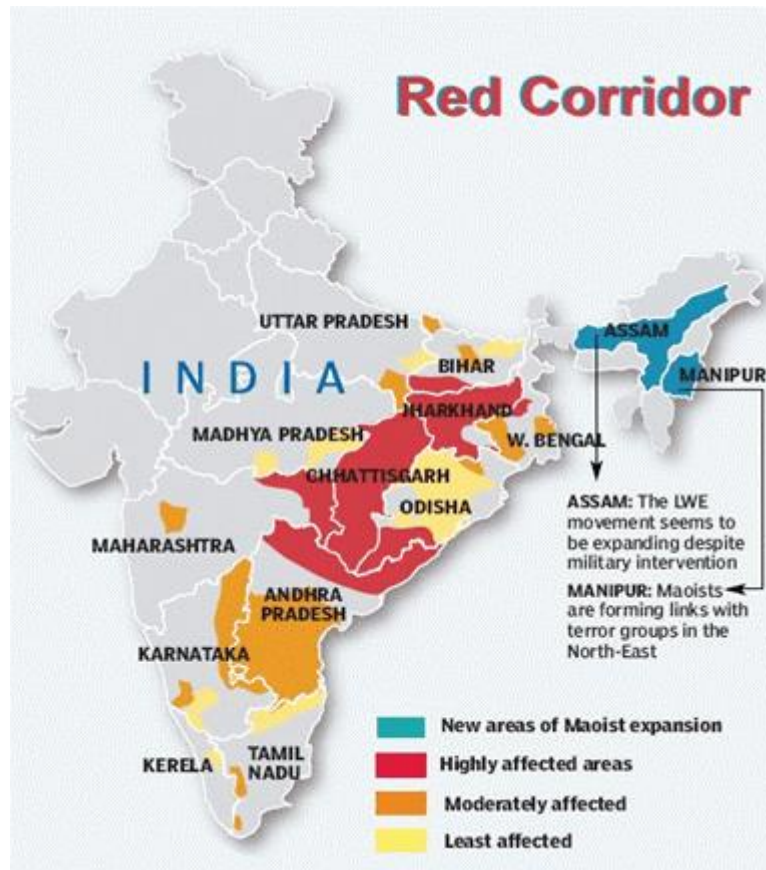
- The difference between Maoists struggle and the Naxalite movement is that both trace their origin to the Naxalbari uprising of 1967.
- But while the Naxalite movement thrives on the original spirit of Naxalbari; the Maoist struggle is an outcome of the 1967 uprising.
- Maoists work with an agenda and use weapons to achieve their aims.
- Naxalism focuses on mass organisations while the Maoism relies mainly on arms.

## **History and evolution**

- Russian Revolution: Naxalism in India, like any other leftist movement around the globe draws its ideological basis from the Russian revolution.
- Overthrowing Tsarist Regime: Lenin successfully fought against the Czarist Rule through a combination of peasant movement and an armed struggle.
- Marxian ideology of class struggle: The prime intent was to bestow power in the hands of the exploited and marginalized and enforce societal control over governance and nation building.
- Neo-Marxism: After the success of the Lenin-led revolution in Russia, the intellectual class in many countries got inspired. Prominent amongst them were Fidel Castro and Mao Zedong.

## **Root cause of origin in India**

- Corporate exploitation: Since Eastern India is rich in natural resources including forests, minerals and mines, tribal face exploitation and harassment from government and corporate bodies targeting to extract those resources.
- Tribal alienation: Tribal communities have been systematically alienated from their traditional rights over natural resources after independence.
- Livelihood losses: Tribal livelihood is at stake due to depletion of natural resource base.
- Forceful displacement: Forceful displacement from their homeland destroys their traditional governance system.
- Absence of governance: In such exploited areas, the absence of governance becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy since the delivery systems are extinguished through killings and intimidation.
- Foreign provocations: Many of LWE outfits are supported by external forces inimical to India and the Maoists consider such alliances as strategic assets.



### Impact of LWE

- Romanticism without a cause: Some sections of the society, especially the younger generation, have romantic illusions about the Maoists, arising out of an incomplete understanding of their ideology of Class –Struggle.
- Extreme violence: Their doctrine glorifies violence as the primary means to overwhelm the existing socio-economic and political structures.
- Destruction of governance mechanism: LWEs aims at creating a vacuum at the grassroots level of the existing governance structures by killing lower-level government officials, police personnel of the local police stations and the people’s representatives of the PRIs.
- Radicalization of youths: After creating a political and governance vacuum, they coerce the local population to join the movement.
- Urban-Maoism: Many extremists have facilitated mass-mobilization in semi-urban and urban areas through ostensibly democratic means often led by well-educated intellectuals.

### Outcomes of perpetrating LWE

- The Leftist organizations skilfully use state structures and legal processes to further the Maoist agenda and weaken the enforcement regime through:
  - Recruitment of ‘professional revolutionaries’
  - Raising funds for the insurgency
  - Creating urban shelters for underground cadres
  - Providing legal assistance to arrested cadres and
  - Mass- mobilization by agitating over issues of relevance/ convenience



## **Govt initiatives for LWE-affected areas**

- Aspirational Districts: The MHA has been tasked with the monitoring of the Aspirational districts programme in 35 LWE affected districts.
- HRD measures: Building of schools under the Eklavya model.
- Road Connectivity Project for LWE affected areas (RRP-II): This aims for improving road connectivity in LWE affected States. Under this, 9279 km of roads and 392 bridges are sanctioned.
- Naxal Surrender Policy: It aims to wean away misguided youth and hardcore naxalites who have strayed into the fold of the naxal movement and cannot find a way back.
- National Policy Action Plan: To address Left Wing Extremism approved in 2015, has development as one of the most important component.

## **EXERCISE VOSTOK-22**

### **In News:**

Russia is holding Vostok exercises. However, India has only sent its army contingent of the 7/8 Gorkha Rifles, and will not take part in the maritime section of the two-part event.

### **Analysis of Background:**

#### **Vostok-2022**

- It is an annual, multilateral, strategic and command exercise hosted by Russia.
- This year it will see the participation of more than 50,000 troops from 13 countries such as India, China, Algeria, India, Laos, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Syria and many more.
- While the exercises in Vostok-2022 are routine, they are the first such multilateral exercises to be held since the Russian war in Ukraine began.

### **Why in news now?**

- India has only sent its army contingent and will not take part in the maritime section of the two-part event.
- This is because the maritime part of the exercises would be held in the Sea of Okhotsk and the Sea of Japan.
- These are near the disputed South Kuril Islands.
- India's decision not to take part in the naval exercises is believed to be in deference to Tokyo's sensitivities.

### **What does India's participation mean?**

- By sending an army contingent to join Russian and Chinese troops in the exercises at this time, New Delhi is aiming to send a four-pronged message:
- Continuing relationship with Russia despite the Ukraine war: The Modi government has decided not to join the Western sanctions regime, or to curb oil imports and other economic engagement with Moscow.
- Signal balance and non-alignment in the current crisis: India has mostly abstained from



votes at the United Nations seeking to criticise Russia.

- India also takes part in routine Indo-Pacific exercises: This is with its Western partners including the Quad, as well as in bilateral exercises, like the India-US Ex. Yudh Abhyas.
- Willingness to conditional engagement with China: The message the government continues to give is that it is willing to engage with China on a number of fronts, even as military talks at LAC (Line of Actual Control) remain stuck.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### TOPIC: INDEX/ REPORT

#### INDIA RANKS 132 IN HDI AS SCORE DROPS

##### In News:

India ranks 132 out of 191 countries in the Human Development Index (HDI) 2021, after registering a decline in its score over two consecutive years for the first time in three decades.

##### Analysis of Background:

##### About Human Development Index (HDI):

- The HDI combines indicators of life expectancy, education or access to knowledge and income or standard of living, and captures the level and changes to the quality of life.
- The index initially launched as an alternative measure to the gross domestic product, is the making of two acclaimed economists from Pakistan and India, namely Mahbub ul Haq and Amartya Sen.
- It stresses the centrality of human development in the growth process and was first rolled out by the United Nations Development Programme in 1990.

##### Dimensions of the Human Development Index – HDI

- The idea that progress should be conceived as a process of enlarging people's choices and enhancing their capabilities is the central premise of the HDI.
- Since its launch, the HDI has been an important marker of attempts to broaden measures of progress.
- The HDI considers three main dimensions to evaluate the development of a country:
  1. Long and healthy life
  2. Education
  3. Standard of living

##### Significance of HDI

- It is one of the few multidimensional indices as it includes indicators such as literacy rate, enrollment ratio, life expectancy rate, infant mortality rate, etc.
- It acts as a true yardstick to measure development in real sense.
- Unlike per capital income, which only indicates that a rise in per capital income implies

economic development; HDI considers many other vital social indicators and helps in measuring a nation's well-being.

- It helps as a differentiating factor to distinguish and classify different nations on the basis of their HDI ranks.

## GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX

### In News:

India, for the first time, made it to the top 40 countries at the Global Innovation Index (GII).

### Analysis of Background:

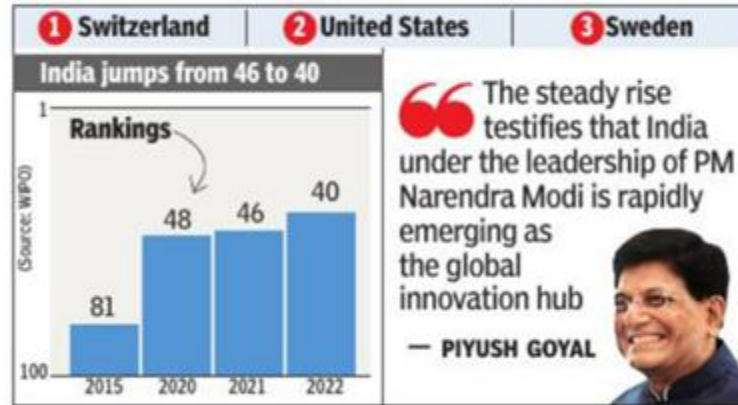
#### GII:

- The Global Innovation Index is an annual ranking of countries by their capacity for, and success in, innovation. It was started in 2007 by INSEAD and World Business- a British magazine.
- It is published by the World Intellectual Property Organization, in partnership with Cornell University, INSEAD, and other organisations and institutions.
- It is based on both subjective and objective data derived from several sources, including the International Telecommunication Union, the World Bank and the World Economic Forum.
- The GII reveals the most innovative economies in the world, ranking the innovation performance of 132 economies.
- The 2022 edition of the GII tracks the most recent global innovation trends against the background of an ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, slowing productivity growth and other evolving challenges. Theme: What is the future of innovation-driven growth?

### India's ranking in GII 2022

- India, for the first time, made it to the top 40 countries at the Global Innovation Index (GII). This was led by improvement in information and communication technologies (ICT) services exports, venture capital recipients' value, and finance for startups.
- India's ranking made it to the top most innovative lower middle-income economy in the world, overtaking Vietnam.
- In Central and Southern Asia, India ranked highest among three in the "most innovation economies" followed by Iran and Uzbekistan.

## TOP OF THE CHARTS



### Indicators

India continues to lead the world in the ICT services exports indicator with the first rank while holding top rankings in other indicators, including

1. Venture capital recipients' value (6th),
2. Finance for startups and scale ups (8th),
3. Graduates in science and engineering (11th),
4. Labor productivity growth (12th) and
5. Domestic industry diversification (14th).



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