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Australia Suspends Extradition Treaty with Hong Kong

Why in News

Recently, Australia has **suspended its extradition treaty with Hong Kong** in response to a **new national security law** imposed by China.

The extradition treaty was in place **since 1993**.

Extradition

- Extradition is the formal process of one state surrendering an individual to another state for prosecution or punishment for crimes committed in the requesting country's jurisdiction.
- It is generally enabled through a bilateral or multilateral treaty.
- The legal basis for extradition with countries with whom India does not have an Extradition treaty is provided by Section 3 (4) of the Indian Extradition Act, 1962.

Background



- Hong Kong was formerly a British colony and was handed over to mainland China in **1997**, becoming one of its **Special Administrative Regions (SAR)**.
- It is governed by a **mini-constitution** called the **Basic Law**, which affirms the principle of “**one country, two systems**”.
- The constitutional document is a product of the **1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration**, under which China promised to honour Hong Kong’s liberal policies, system of governance, independent judiciary, and individual freedoms for a period of 50 years from 1997.

Key Points

- **Issues With National Security Law:**

- China **bypassed Hong Kong's Legislative Council** to impose the **national security law** which **prohibits activities which are viewed by China** as secessionist, subversive or terrorist activities or foreign intervention in Hong Kong affairs.

- Under the law, police have sweeping powers to conduct searches without warrants and order internet service providers and platforms to remove messages deemed to be in violation of the legislation.

Thus, the law is considered as an attack on **human rights especially freedom of speech and freedom of assembly** of the people of Hong Kong.

- It also violates the **basic law of Hong Kong** which suggests that no central government agencies can interfere in the functioning of the Special Administrative Region (Hong Kong).

Article 12 under the basic law suggests that there will be a **high degree of autonomy** for administration of Hong Kong.

- **Global Response:**

- **Australia:** It has also announced a range of **visa extensions** from two to five years and pathways to **permanent residency visas**.

- Earlier, Australia had offered “**safe haven**” **visas to Chinese** people after the crackdown on pro-democracy protesters around **Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989**.

- More than 27,000 Chinese students in Australia at the time were allowed to stay permanently.

- **Britain:** It has **declared** that it is extending residency rights for up to 3 million Hong Kongers eligible for British National Overseas passports, allowing them to live and work in the U.K. for five years.

- **Canada:** It has suspended its extradition treaty with Hong Kong and is looking at other options including migration.

- **India:** India is expecting relevant parties would address the concerns **properly, seriously and objectively**.

The large Indian community makes the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China its home and thus India has been keeping a close watch on recent developments.

- **China's Response:**

- China has warned Australia against **interfering in China's internal affairs with Hong Kong**.

- It has also indicated that such steps will cause a **huge negative impact on the Australian economy** making the issue more serious.

- The enactment of the national security law could undermine Hong Kong's position as an East Asian trading hub, and invite global disapproval for Beijing, which is already being accused of withholding key information related to the **Covid-19 pandemic**.
- It becomes crucial to see how Hong Kong deals with the situation. The freedoms granted to it under the Basic Law will expire in 2047 and it is not clear what Hong Kong's status will be.

Source:TH

USA, China Visa Curbs Over Tibet Issue

Why in News

Recently, China has announced visa restrictions on people from the USA for **behaving badly on Tibet-related issues**.

- It is considered a **retaliatory step by China** over USA's visa restrictions for a certain group of Chinese officials.
- The moves come as relations between China and USA deteriorate over trade, technology, the **coronavirus pandemic** and the **national security law of Hong Kong**.

Tibet

- Tibet is a region on the Tibetan Plateau **in Asia**, spanning about 2.4 million km²—nearly a **quarter of China's territory**.
- It is the traditional homeland of the Tibetan people as well as some other ethnic groups.
- Tibet is the **highest region on Earth**, with an average elevation of 4,900 metres. The highest elevation in Tibet is Mount Everest, Earth's highest mountain, rising 8,848 m above sea level.

Key Points

- **Background:**

- China insists Tibet has been part of its territory for centuries. Also, it has barred foreign journalists from visiting **Tibet since 2008**, when the region experienced a wave of **protests**.
 - From 1912 until the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, **no Chinese government exercised control** over what is today China's Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).
 - Many Tibetans insist they were **essentially independent** for most of that time and have protested what they regard as China's rule imposed after the People's Liberation Army occupied TAR in 1950.
 - Since the 1959 Uprising, the central government of China has been steadily tightening its grip on Tibet.
 - The **14th Dalai Lama**, continues to head the **Tibetan government-in-exile** from McLeod Ganj, a suburb of **Dharamsala, India** which coordinates political activities for Tibetans in India.
- China has also **not responded** to USA's requests to set up a consulate in the **regional capital Lhasa**.
- The access to tibetan region is vital to keep track of **human as well as environmental abuses by China**. Also, **stability of the region** is important as it is the **source for major rivers of Asia** supporting civilisationa for the time immemorial.

- **USA's Stand:**

- China has continued systematically to **obstruct travel to the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and other Tibetan areas** by USA diplomats and other officials, journalists, and tourists, while Chinese officials and other citizens enjoy far greater access to the United States.
- USA announced **visa restrictions on Chinese government and Chinese Communist Party officials** determined to be substantially involved in the formulation or execution of policies related to access for foreigners to Tibetan areas, pursuant to the **Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018**.
 - The Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018 promotes access for diplomats, officials, journalists and others from the United States to China's Tibetan areas.
- Furthermore, the USA has also committed to work to **advance the sustainable economic development**, environmental conservation, and humanitarian conditions of **Tibetan communities** within China and abroad.
- The USA's funding for the **Tibetan issues** for the fiscal year 2021 has been proposed to be **\$17 million and \$1 million for the Special Coordinator for Tibetan issues**.

- **China's Stand:**

- China has expressed firm opposition to the USA's visa restriction move and urged the USA to immediately stop **interfering in China's internal affairs** through Tibet-related issues.
- China has also suggested the USA **to avoid further harming China-USA relation, communication and cooperation** between the two countries.

Way Forward

- China-USA relations have been deteriorating over a number of issues but the world needs peace and collaborative efforts during this wave of pandemic .
- Thus both the countries need to adopt ways like conciliation, diplomatic talks to create and maintain peace between two countries.

Source: TH

Rewa Solar Project

Why in News

Recently, the Prime Minister has inaugurated the 750 MW (Mega Watt) **solar** project set up in **Rewa, Madhya Pradesh**.

It is in line with India's commitment to attain the target of **175 GW of installed renewable energy** capacity by 2022 including 100 GW of solar installed capacity.

Key Points

- **Features:**

- It is **Asia's largest solar power project**.
- It comprises **three solar generating units of 250 MW** each located on a 500 hectare of land situated inside a **solar park** (total area 1500 hectare).
- **Solar Park:**
 - It was developed by the **Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited (RUMSL)**, a Joint Venture Company of Madhya Pradesh UrjaVikas Nigam Limited (MPUVN), and **Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI)**, a Central Public Sector Undertaking.
 - Central Financial Assistance of Rs. 138 crore was provided to the RUMSL for development of the Park.

- **Significance:**
 - **Grid Parity Barrier:** It is the **first solar project** in the country to break the grid parity barrier.
 - **Grid parity** occurs when an alternative energy source can generate power at a cost of electricity that is less than or equal to the price of power from the electricity grid.
 - Further, compared to prevailing solar project tariffs of approx. Rs. 4.50/unit in early 2017, it achieved a first year tariff of Rs. 2.97/unit with a tariff escalation of Rs. 0.05/unit over 15 years.
 - **Risk Reduction:** Its **payment security mechanism for reducing risks** to power developers has been recommended as a model to other states by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
 - **Renewable Energy Project:** It is the **first renewable energy project** to supply an institutional customer outside the state, i.e. Delhi Metro, which will get 24% of energy from the project with the remaining 76% being supplied to the state **DISCOMs** of Madhya Pradesh.
 - It is also **India's first solar project to get funding** from Clean Technology Fund (CTF), which is available at a rate of 0.25% for a 40-year period from the **World Bank**.
 - The **CTF** promotes scaled-up financing for demonstration, deployment and transfer of **low carbon technologies** with a significant potential for long-term greenhouse gas emissions savings.
 - **Carbon Emission Reduction:** It will help in **reducing the carbon emission** equivalent to 15 lakh ton of CO₂ per year.
 - **Global Appreciation:** It has also received the **World Bank Group President's Award** for innovation and excellence and was included in the book 'A Book of Innovation: New Beginnings'.

Source: PIB

Infant Mortality Surged in Madhya Pradesh

Why in News

According to the Office of the Registrar General India, the **Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)** in Madhya Pradesh has surged by a single point over the previous year to 48 in 2018.

- IMR is the **number of deaths of children** under one year of age **per 1000 live births**.

- The Office of the Registrar General is under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**. It issues the **Sample Registration System bulletin**, which provides estimates of birth rate, death rate and infant mortality rate for states.

Key Points

- **Data Analysis:**
 - The country's average **IMR stands at 32 per 1,000 live births** which includes an average 36 deaths for rural and 23 for urban areas.
 - In Madhya Pradesh it is 52 children in rural areas and 36 in urban areas. Madhya Pradesh has the highest IMR (48) in the country.
 - The IMR for boys in the State stood at 51, while for girls it was 46 in 2018.
 - As many as 26 infants of 1,000 live births in Madhya Pradesh died within the first seven days constituting more than half the infant deaths.
 - **Uttar Pradesh** has the **next highest rate of 43** and Kerala has 7, the lowest among the bigger States.
- **Causes:** Increasing premature deliveries, infections, birth asphyxiation (lack of oxygen in blood) and delay in securing treatment which lead to complicated deliveries.
- **Concerns:**
 - **Birth Spacing:** In most cases two children were born within one-one and a half years as against the advocated gap of around three years.
This may result in premature deliveries of low birth weight babies.
 - **High Malnutrition:** High malnutrition levels in pregnant as well as lactating mothers often result in the death of infants.
 - **Maternal Health:** It also has a bearing on the IMR. In 2015-2017, Madhya Pradesh registered a maternal mortality ratio of 188 per 1 lakh live births, against the country's average of 122.
 - **Antenatal Care:** According to the **National Family Health Survey -4** (2015-16), only 11.4% mothers received full antenatal care. So, when pregnancy is not monitored properly it leads to complicated deliveries despite a high claimed **institutional deliveries**.

- **Solutions:**

- **Response of States: Health** being a state subject, puts the onus of patient's effective care on State government. Hence, there is a need for strong commitment from the states in relation to availability of the human and financial resources.
- **Antenatal and Postnatal Care:** It is an important aspect in bringing down infant mortalities. There is a need for sufficient health checkups, institutional deliveries and medication in Antenatal and Postnatal Care.
- **Revamping of Primary Health Care:** The primary health system needs to be ramped up in terms of facilities, trained medical professionals and medical equipment.
- **Paediatric Intensive Care Units:** To bring down the IMR, ICUs should be set up to take care of inborn children.
- **Enhancement of Manpower:** Enhancement of manpower e.g. Doctors, skilled **ASHA workers** and nurses at the primary health especially in **rural areas** would aid to institutional deliveries.
- **Digitisation:** The **National Health Portal** has been used as a single point access for institutional deliveries through Janani Suraksha Yojana.

Government Initiatives

- **National Health Mission:** The National Health Mission (NHM) encompasses two Sub-Missions, the **National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)** launched in 2005 and the **National Urban Health Mission (NUHM)** launched in 2013.
It envisages achievement of universal access to equitable, affordable & quality health care services that are accountable and responsive to people's needs.
- **India Newborn Action Plan:** It was launched in 2014 to make concerted efforts towards attainment of the goal of “Single Digit Neonatal Mortality Rate” and “Single Digit Still-birth Rate”.
- **Other Schemes:** Schemes like Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), **Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram (JSSK)**, **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)** etc. were started to promote institutional deliveries so as to reduce the prevalence of IMR.

Way Forward

- Efforts are being made to bring down the infant mortality rate to the levels of **Sustainable Development Goals** i.e. **23 per 1,000 live births by 2025**.
- However, there is a need of preventive rather than only curative care.
- The **availability of funds** (from Centre) as well as its judicious use by the States is vital in effective implementation of the framed policies and overhauling of the required health infrastructure.

- Concerned ministries can **collaborate with each other** to ensure better coordination, convergence and holistic integration of different schemes, as done in **POSHAN Abhiyan**.

Source: TH

India Global Week 2020: India Inc.

Why in News

Recently, the Prime Minister of India has addressed the inaugural session of a three-day virtual conference of **India Global Week 2020** organised in London, United Kingdom by **India Inc.**

It also marks the **100th birth anniversary of Pandit Ravi Shankar**, a great Indian musician (**Sitar player**, composer and singer).

India Global Week

- It is an **annual flagship event** organised by **India Inc.**, a **London based media house** to re-energise and ignite optimism at global level.
- It brings about an **action-oriented focus by giving a forum to global deliberations** from geopolitics to business, arts & culture to emerging technologies, banking and finance, pharma, defence and security, social impact and the diaspora dividend.
- India Inc. also produces incisive contents and events on **investment, trade and policy matters related to India's** increasingly globalised economic and strategic agenda.
- Its **flagship publication: India Global Business.**
- Diaspora news network: **iGlobal.**

Key Points

- **Theme:** Be The Revival: India and a Better New World.
- **Objective:** Explore business, strategic and cultural opportunities, understand the challenges and make informed decisions as the world looks ahead to a better, brighter future beyond **Covid-19**.

- **Significance for India:**

- **Global Revival:** As India is playing a leading **role in the global revival**, it has brought India's ancient culture (**AYUSH**), universal, peaceful ethos and the beauty of classical music to the world.
 - **Global Audience:** The event as a forum has helped to **bring the opportunities in India to a global audience** and made the links between India and UK stronger.
 - **Trade and Investment:** It would focus on India's **trade and foreign investment processes** as it has done many reforms e.g. **private investment in the space sector**.
 - Reforms in agriculture would provide an opportunity to invest in storage and logistics.
 - **Invest India Programme:** It will help in improving the **Invest India programme**. India has recently been reviewing 50 investment proposals from China under its new screening policy which is being done under the new rules.
 - New rules:** India announced new investment rules in April 2020. Under the new rules, all the investments by the entities based in neighbouring countries have to be approved by Indian Government. This was introduced to curb opportunistic takeovers during Covid-19-period.
 - **Battle against the Covid-19:** As India is fighting a strong battle against the global pandemic it would recognise **India's efforts towards revival** with care, compassion and sustainability - both for the environment and the economy.
- **Initiatives to fight Covid-19:**
 - **AtmaNirbhar Bharat Initiative:** It is about being self-sustaining and self-generating. **AtmaNirbhar Bharat** merges domestic production and consumption with global supply chains.
 - **Economic Relief Packages:** The **package** has been targeted to help the poorest with aid of technology and providing free cooking gas, cash in the bank accounts, free food grains to millions.

Source: PIB

Capital Infusion for the Insurance Companies

Why in News

Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the **capital infusion of Rs.12,450 crore in the three Public Sector General Insurance Companies (PSGICs)** namely **Oriental Insurance Company Limited (OICL), National Insurance Company Limited (NICL) and United India Insurance Company Limited (UIICL).**

The primary regulator for insurance in India is the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)**.

Key Points

- **Capital Infusion:**

- The capital infusion of **Rs. 3,475 Crore** will be allocated to three PSGICs as the **first tranche** in the current financial year and the balance amount will be released in one or more tranches.
- To give effect to the infusion, the authorised capital of NICL has been increased to Rs. 7,500 Crore and that of UIICL and OIICL to Rs. 5,000 Crore respectively.

- **Impact:**

- The capital infusion will enable the three PSGICs to improve their financial and solvency position.
- It will also help to meet the insurance needs of the economy and enhance the capacity to raise resources and improve risk management.

- **Background:**

- The government has **dropped the process of merger**, which was proposed, in the 2018-19 Budget, of these three PSGICs in view of the economic crisis created due to **Covid-19 pandemic**.
 - Instead, it has decided to focus on the profitable growth of these three PSGICs.
 - The **aim of the merger was to augment capital by listing the merged entity on stock exchanges**, which would have brought down government equity (share).
- The firms were also not in good shape.
 - As of the third quarter of 2019-20, NICL had a **solvency ratio** of 1.01, against the regulatory requirement of 1.5.

The solvency ratio examines a company's ability to meet its long-term obligations.
 - Its **combined ratio** stood at 173%. If the ratio is below 100%, it indicates that the firm is making underwriting profits.
 - The combined ratio is a measure of profitability used by an insurance company to gauge how well it is performing in its daily operations.
 - **Underwriting profit** consists of the earned premium remaining after losses have been paid and administrative expenses have been deducted.
 - OIICL had a solvency ratio of 1.54 and reported a combined ratio of 132%.
 - UIICL had a solvency ratio of 0.94, much below the regulatory requirement, with combined ratio at 127.62%.

Note:

Public Sector Insurance Companies are under the **Department of Financial Service, Ministry of Finance**. **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)** is the largest insurance company in India.

Source: PIB

Digital Accountability and Transparency Act: DATA

Why in News

Recently, the **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)** has suggested **three-phase transition to mandatory digital payments, accounting, and transactions** for the Central government under a proposed project and law called **Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA)**.

Key Points

- The suggestions recognise the need of **digital public utilities**. It not only includes e-services but makes all government revenue and expenditure data electronic, machine-readable, purpose linked, non-repudiable, reliable, accessible and searchable.
- **Requirement for Digitisation, i.e.** 100 % end-to-end **electronic data capture**. This includes all receipts and expenditure transactions including demands, assessment, and invoices should be received, processed, and paid electronically.
- **Data governance** for standards across all government entities. Data standards are rules for describing and recording data elements with precise meanings and semantics that enable integration, sharing, and interoperability.
- **Technology architecture:** Under this all IT government systems should conform to a **prescribed open architecture framework** while ensuring robust security and maintaining privacy.

- **Benefits of Digitisation:**

- It has many advantages, it recognises off-budget transactions, business continuity (e.g. electronic records cannot be lost or misplaced like files or paper records), and an incontrovertible audit trail.
- It will also **enable Parliament and legislatures** to draw assurance that each rupee due to the government has been collected, and each rupee has been spent for the purpose it was allocated.
- Prescribing data elements for all transactions will **ensure standardisation, clarify ambiguity, minimise redundant data, and create protocols** for integration across different databases.
- It will enable the **use of cognitive intelligence tools** like analytics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, which in turn will support the establishment of budget baselines, detecting anomalies, data-driven project costing, performance comparisons across departments and agencies, and benchmarking.

Source: IE

Draft Rules for Code on Wages Act 2019

Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Labour and Employment** has published the draft rules framed for the implementation of the **Code on Wages Act, 2019**.

The new draft rules have been circulated afresh for **public comments and suggestions for a period of 45 days** from the date of publishing, 7th July 2020.

Key Points

The latest draft rules are **similar to the preliminary draft published in November 2019** with **one major change**.

- The Ministry has **changed the work requirement for eligibility for minimum wages and other benefits from nine hours to eight**.
- The latest draft clarified the issue as the nine hours mentioned **earlier included one hour of rest**, which has **now been mentioned separately** from the eight working hours.

Code on Wages Act 2019

- Aims to **transform the old and obsolete labour laws** into **more accountable and transparent** ones and seeks to pave the way for the **introduction of minimum wages and labour reforms** in the country.
- **Removes the multiplicity of wage definitions**, which can significantly reduce litigation as well as compliance cost for employers.
- **Regulates the wages and bonus payments** in all employments where any industry, trade, business, or manufacturing is being carried out.
- **Links minimum wage** across the country to the **skills of the employee** and the **place of employment**.
 - It simplifies the methodology to fix minimum wage by **doing away with the ‘type of employment’**.
- It seeks to **universalise the provisions of minimum wages and timely payment** of wages to all employees irrespective of the sector and wage ceiling.
 - It seeks to ensure **‘Right to Sustenance’** for every worker and intends to **increase the legislative protection of minimum wage**.
 - Employees getting **monthly salary** shall get the salary by **7th of next month**, those working on a **weekly basis** shall get the salary on the **last day of the week** and **daily wagers** should get it on the **same day**.
- The **Central Government is empowered to fix the floor wages** by taking into account the living standards of workers. It may set different floor wages for different geographical areas.
 - The **minimum wages** decided by the central or state governments **must be higher than the floor wage**.
 - Under the Constitution of India, **labour** is a subject in the **Concurrent List of the Seventh Schedule** where both the Central and State Governments are competent to enact legislation.
- **Calculation of Minimum Wage:**

According to the draft rules, the **basis for calculating the minimum wage** would be a standard working-class family of one earning worker, a spouse and two children, a net intake of 2,700 calories per day each, 66 metres of cloth per year, rent expenditure equal to 10% of the food and clothing expenditure, fuel, electricity and other miscellaneous expenses of 20% of minimum wage and expenditure on children’s education, medical care, recreation and contingencies amounting to 25% of the minimum wage.
- It subsumes the **following four labour laws**:
 - The Payment of Wages Act, 1936.
 - The Minimum Wages Act, 1948.
 - The Payment of Bonus Act, 1965.
 - The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.

- The Centre shall constitute a **technical committee** which would **advise on the skill categories**, while an **advisory board may recommend the minimum wage**.

Types of Wages

- **Minimum Wage:** International Labour Organisation defines it as “the minimum amount of remuneration that an employer is required to pay wage earners for the work performed during a given period, which cannot be reduced by collective agreement or an individual contract”.
The minimum wage includes the bare needs of life like food, shelter and clothing.
- **Living Wage:** It is the wage needed to provide the minimum income necessary to pay for basic needs based on the cost of living in a specific community.
In addition to bare needs, a ‘living wage’ includes education, health, insurance, etc.
- **Fair Wage:** A ‘fair wage’ is a mean between ‘living wage’ and ‘minimum wage’.
- **Starvation Wage:** It refers to the wages which are insufficient to provide the ordinary necessities of life.

Source: TH

Rabari, Bharvad and Charan of Gujarat

Why in News

Recently, the **Gujarat government** has decided to form a **five-member commission** to identify members of **Rabari, Bharvad and Charan** communities, who are eligible for benefits of **Schedule Tribe (ST) status**.

Key Points

- **Issue:**
 - In **October 1956**, the **central government conferred ST status** on people of **Rabari, Bharvad and Charan** communities, living in **nesses** (tiny, oval-shaped hutments made of mud) of **Gir, Barda and Alech areas** of Gujarat.
 - However, it has been alleged that a number of **people not living in nesses** have managed to **get ST certificates** and are **enjoying undue reservation benefits**, mainly in government jobs.
 - Leaders of these three communities and other communities as well, have been **protesting** for quite some time against this.

- **Objective of the Commission:**
 - To **resolve this issue and identify the legitimate beneficiaries** of ST status among the members of the three communities.
 - To **ensure** that the eligible members of the tribes are **not devoid of their right** and the **others do not get an undue benefit** in their names.
- **Composition:**

The five-member commission will comprise a retired judge of the high court as the head, two district judges, one retired forest officer and one retired revenue officer.

Rabari

- They **migrated from Rajasthan** via Kutch and now most of them live in the Okhamandal region of Jamnagar district.
- They speak '**Bhopa**' which is a **mixture of Gujarati, Kachchi, Marwari words and Pharasi** (Persian) and use **Gujarati script**.
- **Women stand in almost equal status** to that of men.
- The main economic activity is **sheep breeding and selling of milk**. Only a few of them own cultivable **agricultural land**. Recently, they have started engaging as **wage labourers in industrial establishments** both as skilled and unskilled labourers.
- They profess **Hinduism** and are followers of **Shiva and Shakti**.
- Their folk songs are called '**Siya**'.

Bharvad

- The term Bharvad is a modified form of the word '**Badawad**'.
'Bada' means sheep and 'Wada' refers to compound or enclosure. The person who possesses compounds or pens is known as Badawad.
- They **communicate in Gujarati** and use **Gujarati script**.
- Bharvad **women have a lower status**.
- The Bharvads are **pastorals** who are permitted to graze their sheep and cattle in certain demarcated areas of the reserved forest. Some of them **possess dry agricultural land** and earn their livelihood as **agricultural labourers**.
- They profess **Hinduism** and **Krishna** is considered the supreme God.

Charan

- The Charan, also called **Gadhvi**, is a small tribe in Gujarat and the name Charan is derived from the word '**Char**' which means **grazing**.
- They **speak Gujarati** and use **Gujarati script**.
- They **marry within their community** and **practice monogamy**.

- The Charans are traditionally **cattle breeders**. They have also **adopted agriculture as their secondary occupation**.
- They profess **Hinduism** and the main deity is **Pithorai Mata**.

Scheduled Tribes

- As per **Census 1931**, Schedule tribes are termed as **'backward tribes'** living in the **'Excluded'** and **'Partially Excluded'** areas.

The Constitution **does not define the criteria for recognition** of Scheduled Tribes and hence the definition contained in 1931 Census was used in initial years after independence.

- The **Government of India Act, 1935** called for the first time for representatives of 'backward tribes' in provincial assemblies.
- **Article 366 (25)** of the Constitution **only provides a process to define** Scheduled Tribes:
 - Scheduled Tribes means such tribes, tribal communities, parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under **Article 342** to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of the Constitution.
 - **Article 342 (1)**: The President may with respect to any State or Union Territory, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor, by a public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within tribes or tribal communities as Scheduled Tribe in relation to that State or Union Territory.
- The category of **'tribe'** entails a **social and cultural dimension** but the **'schedule tribe'** category has **political-administrative implications**.
- A majority of the ST population is **concentrated in the eastern, central and western belt** covering the nine states of **Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal**.

About **12%** inhabit the **North-eastern region**, about **5%** in the **Southern region** and about **3%** in the **Northern states**.
- The **Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019** will amend **Part VI of the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950** that specifies the tribal and tribal communities which are deemed to be Scheduled Tribes.

- **Other Constitutional Provisions:**

- **Article 15 (4):** Special provisions for advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes (SCs) or the STs.
- **Article 16 (4):** Enables the state to make any provision for reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the state, is not adequately represented in the services under the state.
- **Article 46:** Promotion of educational and economic interests of SCs, STs and other weaker sections.
- **Article 330 and 332:** Provides for specific representation through reservation of seats for SCs and STs in the Parliament and in the State Legislative Assemblies respectively.
- **Article 338 A:** Gives powers to the **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)** to oversee the implementation of various safeguards provided to STs.

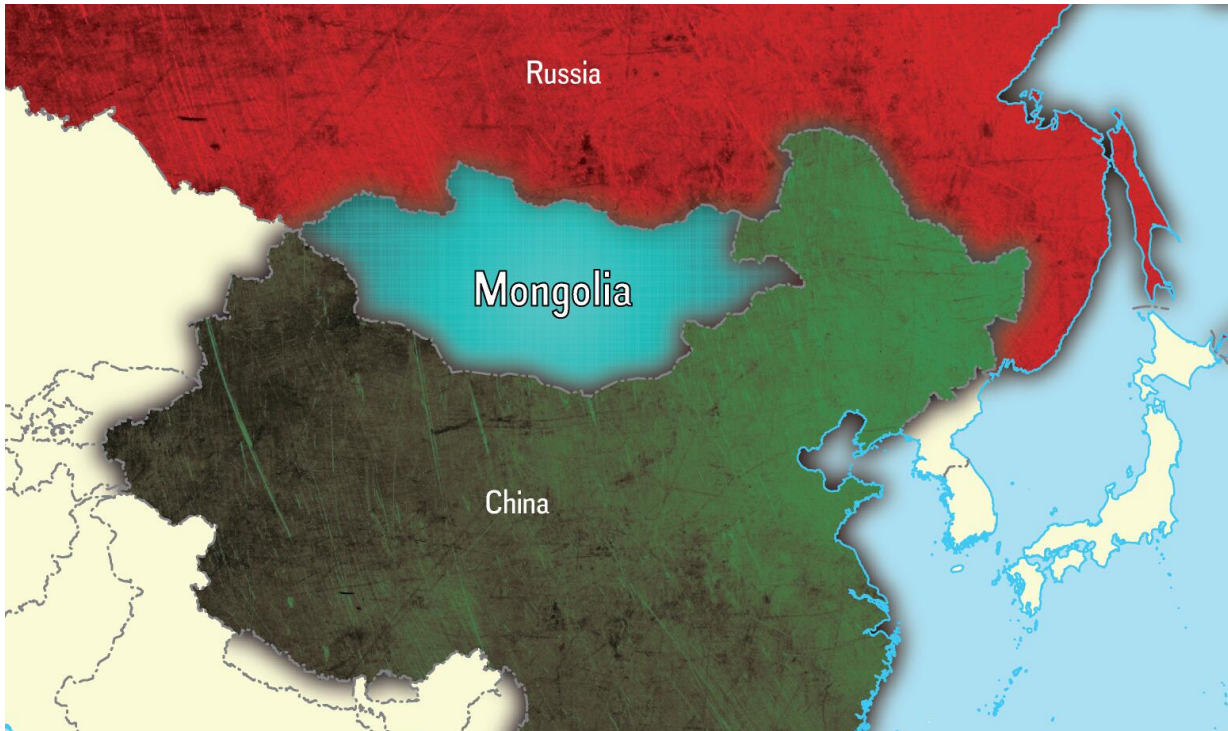
Source: IE

Mongolian Kanjur Being Reprinted

Why in News

The **Ministry of Culture** has taken up the project of reprinting **108 volumes of Mongolian Kanjur** by March 2022 under the **National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM)**.

Some copies were presented to the government of Mongolia on the occasion of **Guru Purnima**, also known as **Dharma Chakra Day**, on 4th July, 2020.



Key Points

- **Mongolian Kanjur:**

- It is a **Buddhist canonical text in 108 volumes** and is considered to be the most important religious text in Mongolia. It is a source of providing a cultural identity to Mongolia.
- In the Mongolian language 'Kanjur' means '**Concise Orders**'- the words of Lord Buddha in particular.
- It has been **translated from Tibetan and is written in classical mongolian.**

- **Cultural Relations Between India and Mongolia:**

- Buddhism was carried to Mongolia by Indian cultural and religious ambassadors during the early Christian era. As a result, today, Buddhists form the single largest religious denomination in Mongolia.
- India established formal **diplomatic relations** with Mongolia in 1955. The publication of Mongolian Kanjur by the Government of India for the Government of Mongolia will act as a **symbol of cultural harmony between India and Mongolia** and will contribute to furtherance of bilateral relations during the coming years.

National Mission for Manuscripts

- The National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) was launched in **February 2003** by the Government of India with the mandate of documenting, conserving and disseminating the knowledge preserved in the manuscripts.
 - A **manuscript** is a handwritten composition on paper, bark, cloth, metal, palm leaf or any other material dating back at least seventy-five years that has significant scientific, historical or aesthetic value.
 - Lithographs and printed volumes are not manuscripts.
 - Manuscripts are distinct from historical records such as epigraphs on rocks, revenue records which provide direct information on events or processes in history.
- One of the objectives of the mission is to **publish rare and unpublished manuscripts** so that the knowledge enshrined in them is spread to researchers, scholars and the general public at large.
- It is under the **Ministry of Culture**.

Source: PIB

Digital India Atmanirbhar Bharat Innovate Challenge

Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** and the **Atal Innovation Mission** (initiative by **NITI Aayog**) have launched the **Digital India Atmanirbhar Bharat Innovate Challenge**.

- This move comes after the Central government's decision to **ban 59 Chinese apps**.
- Further, the **Covid-19** pandemic has brought about a big disruption in the day-to-day lives, which is being tackled through the use of technology.

Key Points

- The challenge would **encourage Indian application developers and innovators** and facilitate their ideas and products.
- It will be **jointly hosted** by the **government** and **members of the tech community** to make it more holistic.
- **Objectives:**
 - To help create an **Atmanirbhar (self-reliant) app ecosystem**.
 - To give **better visibility and clarity to existing apps** to achieve their goals.
 - To **create tech products helpful in finding solutions to tech problems**, with the help of mentorship, tech support and guidance during the entire life-cycle.

- The challenge will run in **two tracks**:
 - **Track-01: Promotion of existing apps.**
 - For the promotion of existing apps and platforms across the categories of e-learning, work-from-home, gaming, business, entertainment, office utilities and social networking, the government will provide mentoring, hand-holding and support.
 - It will work in mission mode for identifying good quality apps for the leaderboard and will be completed in around a month.
 - **Track-02: Development of new apps.**
 - For incubating new apps and platforms, the initiative will work to help create new champions in India by providing support in ideation, incubation, prototyping, roll out and market access.

Source: TH

Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve

- **Description:** Ranthambore National Park was established initially as **Sawai Madhopur Game Sanctuary in 1955** by the Government of India.
 - In 1973, it was declared as a Tiger Reserve under **Project Tiger**.
 - In 1980, Ranthambore was declared a national park, while the forests located beside it were named **Sawai Man Singh Sanctuary & Keladevi Sanctuary**.
- **Location:** Ranthambore Tiger Reserve lies in the eastern part of Rajasthan state in Karauli and Sawai Madhopur districts, at the junction of the Aravali and Vindhya hill ranges.
- The **vegetation includes grasslands** on plateaus and dense forests along the seasonal streams.
 - The forest type is mainly **tropical dry deciduous with 'dhak'** (*Butea monosperma*), a species of tree capable of withstanding long periods of drought, being the commonest.
 - This tree is also called as '**Flame of forest**' and is one of the many flowering plants that add colour to the dry summers here.
 - **Other Common Names:** Battle of Plassey tree, Bengal kino, Palash tree, parrot tree, etc.

Note:

The tree is also known as the “**Battle of Plassey**” tree because Palashi was the scene of the Battle of Plassey, a decisive victory of British forces under Robert Clive over those of the nawab (ruler) of Bengal, Sirāj al-Dawlah, in 1757.



- **Wildlife**
 - The park is rich in wildlife with tigers at the apex of the food chain in mammals.
 - Other animals found here are leopards, striped hyenas, common or hanuman langurs, rhesus macaques, jackals, jungle cats, caracals, blackbuck, Blacknaped hare and chinkara, etc.
 - The park is rich in birds with about 272 species recorded so far.
- This area with tigers in it represents the **north-western limit of the Bengal tiger's distribution range** and is an outstanding example of **Project Tiger's** efforts for conservation in the country.

Source: TH
