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Antitrust Case Against Google: USA

Why in News

Recently, the **US Justice Department has sued Google**, accusing the company of illegally **abusing its dominance in internet search** in ways that harm competitors and consumers.

The lawsuit (or **antitrust action** against the company) comes after a **report by the US House of Representatives panel** that found **Google** and three other tech giants -- **Facebook Inc, Apple Inc and Amazon.com Inc** — all **abused their power as gatekeepers** in the digital economy to thwart competitive threats.

Key Points

- **US Government's Stand:**

- Google is **illegally protecting its dominant position in the market for search and search advertising with the deals** it has struck with companies like Apple.

Google pays Apple billions of dollars a year to have its search engine set as the default option on iPhones and other devices.

- **Challenges contracts** that Google has with smartphone makers that use Google's Android operating system, requiring them to install its search engine as the default.
- All this **stifles competition and innovation from smaller upstart rivals** to Google and **harms consumers** by reducing the quality of search and limiting privacy protections and alternative search options.

Many countries have broad laws that protect consumers and regulate how companies operate their businesses. The goal of these laws is to **provide an equal playing field for similar businesses** that operate in a specific industry **while preventing them from gaining too much power over their competition**. These are called **antitrust laws**.

- **Investigated Google's behavior and acquisitions in the overall market for digital advertising**, which includes search, web display and video ads.

Online advertising was the source of virtually all of Alphabet's USD 34 billion in profit last year. Alphabet Inc. is Google's parent company.

- **Most of Google's services are offered for free in exchange for personal information** that helps it sell its ads.
 - Goods that are free to consumers **are not exempt from antitrust oversight**.
 - In the **landmark Microsoft case of the late 1990s**, the software giant bundled its web browser for free into its dominant Windows operating system.
 - **Microsoft lost** because, using restrictive contracts, it bullied personal computer makers and others to try to prevent them from offering competing web browser software — competition that could have undermined the Windows monopoly.

- **Google's Defense:**

- The **deals** that the Justice Department is citing are **entirely legal**. Such company-to-company deals violate antitrust law only if they can be shown to exclude competition.

Users can freely switch to other search engines, like Microsoft's Bing or Yahoo Search, anytime they want. Google's search service is the runaway market leader because people prefer it.

- Further, its services have **helped hold down the prices of smartphones**.

- **Report by the US House of Representatives panel:**
 - **Big Tech Companies** like Google, Facebook, Amazon and Apple **act as a “gatekeeper”**, i.e. can control access to information.
 - Gatekeepers can also decide whether a message will be spread to a wider audience.
 - These companies **not only wield tremendous power, but also abuse it** by charging exorbitant fees, imposing oppressive contract terms, and **extracting valuable data from the people** and businesses that rely on them.
 - Companies ran the marketplace for their respective domains, while also competing in it and to ensure they retain the number one position, the companies have **restored to “self-preferencing, predatory pricing, or exclusionary conduct”**.
 - **Self-preferencing** involves actions by an undertaking which are designed to favour its own products or services over those of its competitors.
 - **Predatory pricing** is an act of setting prices low in an attempt to eliminate the competition.
 - **Exclusionary conduct** is a conduct that creates or maintains monopoly power by disadvantaging and harming competitors.
- **Significance:**
 - The step is a **response** to the policy question of what measures, if any, should be taken to curb today’s tech giants, which hold the power to shape markets, communication and even public opinion.
 - The US Justice Department has come up with the **possibility of structurally breaking up Google**, and not just imposing conditions on its behavior as has happened in Europe.
 - Critics contend that multibillion-dollar fines and mandated changes in Google’s practices imposed by European regulators in recent years weren’t severe enough and that structural changes are needed for Google to change its conduct.

Scenario in India

- **Various antitrust probes** are going on **against Google in India**. Google has had run-ins with regulators, especially the **Competition Commission of India (CCI)**.

- In the last two years, the **CCI has raised issues with Google’s commercial flight search option, its dominant position in the search marketplace, the abuse of its dominant position** in the Android phone and smart television market, and others.

In 2019, for example, **CCI had held Google guilty of misuse of its dominant position in the mobile Android market** and said the company had imposed “unfair conditions” on device manufacturers to prevent them from using other operating systems.

- Recently, Google has also been **accused of following a high and unfair commission mechanism for apps listed on its Play Store.**

Antitrust Laws

- Antitrust laws are **regulations that monitor the distribution of economic power** in business, making sure that **healthy competition is allowed** to flourish and economies can grow.
- Antitrust laws **apply to nearly all industries and sectors**, touching every level of business, including manufacturing, transportation, distribution, and marketing.
- These **prohibit a number of business practices that restrain trade.** **Examples** of illegal practices are **price-fixing conspiracies, corporate mergers** that are likely to cut back the competitive fervor of certain markets, and **predatory acts** designed to gain or hold on to **monopoly power.**
- In India, **competition policy** has been implemented via the **Competition Act, 2002** which alongwith its amendment, establishes a **Competition Commission of India** to prevent anti-competitive practices, promote and sustain competition, protect the interests of the consumers and ensure freedom of trade in the markets in India.

Way Forward

- With this lawsuit, the big tech companies are likely to come under more scrutiny from regulators including the CCI in India.
- In coming years, as India plans to regulate the use of **personal** and **non-personal data**, these tech companies could face scrutiny over how they manage and use the data they collect from users in India.

Source: TH

FDI Inflow

Why in News

During **April to August, 2020**, total Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow of USD **35.73 billion** was received. It is the **highest ever for the first 5 months of a financial year**.

FDI inflow has increased **despite Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth contracted 23.9%** in the first quarter (April-June 2020).

Key Points

- **Recent Increase in FDI Inflows:**

- FDI (USD 35.73 billion) received in the first 5 months of 2020-21 is **13% higher** as compared to the first five months of 2019-20 (USD 31.60 billion).
Total FDI inflow **grew by 55%**, i.e. from **USD 231.37 billion in 2008-14** to **USD 358.29 billion in 2014-20**.
- **FDI equity inflow** (one of the three components of FDI) received during April to August, 2020 was USD 27.10 billion. It is **also the highest ever for the first 5 months** of a financial year and **16% more** compared to the first five months of 2019-20 (USD 23.35 billion).
- **Measures taken by the Government** on the fronts of **FDI policy reforms, investment facilitation** and **ease of doing business** have resulted in increased FDI inflows into the country.

According to the **World Investment Report 2020 by the UNCTAD**, **India was the 9th largest recipient of FDI in 2019**.

- **Government Measures to increase FDI:**

- In 2020, schemes like **production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for electronics manufacturing**, have been notified to attract foreign investments.
- In 2019, the Central Government **amended FDI Policy 2017**, to permit **100% FDI under automatic route in coal mining activities**.
- Further, the government **permitted 26% FDI in digital sectors**. The sector has particularly high return capabilities in India as favourable demographics, substantial mobile and internet penetration, massive consumption along with technology uptake provides great market opportunity for a foreign investor.
- **FDI in manufacturing** was already under the **100% automatic route**, however in 2019, the government clarified that **investments in Indian entities engaged in contract manufacturing is also permitted under the 100% automatic** route provided it is undertaken through a legitimate contract.

Contract Manufacturing: Production of goods by one firm, under the label or brand of another firm.

- **Foreign Investment Facilitation Portal (FIFP)** is the online single point interface of the Government of India with investors to facilitate FDI. It is **administered by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

- **Increase in FDI Inflows is further Expected:**

- As foreign investors have indicated interest in the **government's moves to allow private train operations and bid out airports**.

In March 2020, Government **permitted non-resident Indians (NRIs) to acquire up to 100% stake in Air India**.

- Valuable sectors such as **defence manufacturing** where the government **enhanced the FDI limit under the automatic route from 49% to 74%** in May 2020, could also attract large investments going forward.

Foreign Direct Investment

- FDI is the **process** whereby residents of one country (the home country) acquire ownership of assets for the purpose of controlling the production, distribution and other activities of a firm in another country (the host country).

It is **different from Foreign Portfolio Investment** where the foreign entity merely buys stocks and bonds of a company. **FPI does not provide the investor with control over the business**.

- **Flows of FDI** comprise capital provided (either directly or through other related enterprises) by a foreign direct investor to an enterprise.

- FDI has **three components**, viz., equity capital, reinvested earnings and intra-company loans.
 - **Equity capital** is the foreign direct investor's purchase of shares of an enterprise in a country other than its own.
 - **Reinvested earnings** comprise the direct investors' share (in proportion to direct equity participation) of earnings not distributed as dividends by affiliates, or earnings not remitted to the direct investor. Such retained profits by affiliates are reinvested.
 - **Intra-company loans or intra-company debt transactions** refer to short- or long-term borrowing and lending of funds between direct investors (or enterprises) and affiliate enterprises.
- **Routes through which India gets FDI:**
 - **Automatic Route:** In this, the foreign entity does not require the prior approval of the government or the RBI.
 - **Government route:** In this, the foreign entity has to take the approval of the government.

The **Foreign Investment Facilitation Portal (FIFP)** facilitates the single window clearance of applications which are through approval route.

Way Forward

- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is a **major driver of economic growth** and an **important source of non-debt finance** for the economic development of India. **A robust and easily accessible FDI regime, thus, should be ensured.**
- Economic growth in the post-pandemic period and India's large market shall continue to attract market-seeking investments to the country.

Source: TH

Punjab Assembly Rejects Centre's Farm Laws

Why in News

Recently, Punjab became the first State in the country to formally reject the Central government's **three Farm Acts** by passing three Bills to negate the Union laws.

It also rejected the proposed **Electricity Amendment Bill** and demanded their immediate annulment.

Key Points

- **Punjab State Bills:** The Punjab assembly introduced **three farm Bills:**
 - The **Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) (Special Provisions and Punjab Amendment) Bill, 2020.**
 - It seeks to ensure that sale or purchase of wheat or paddy in Punjab is not allowed below the **Minimum Support Price (MSP).**
 - It also seeks to provide for **punishment for harassment of farmers** or payment of less price to the farmers.
 - The **Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services (Special Provisions and Punjab Amendment) Bill, 2020.**

It provides for **imprisonment of not less than three years and fines** for sale-purchase of wheat or paddy under a farming agreement below the MSP.
 - The **Essential Commodities (Special Provisions and Punjab Amendment) Bill, 2020.**

It **prevents hoarding and black-marketing** of agricultural produce and seeks to ensure status quo ante with regard to implementation of the Central Act namely, ‘The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020’.
 - While the central law **abolished any market fees or licences for private players outside the APMCs**, the **Punjab bills have reintroduced it.**

These fees will go towards a fund for the welfare of small and marginal farmers.
 - The Assembly also introduced **Code of Civil Procedure (Punjab Amendment) Bill, 2020.**
 - It seeks to **exempt agricultural land not exceeding 2.5 acres** from **Section 60 of The Code of Civil Procedure, 1908**, which provides for attachment of various properties - moveable and immovable in execution of decree (judgement).
 - It also seeks to **exempt the Properties of the farmers** such as cattle, implements, cowsheds, etc from attachment.
 - These exemptions are provided, given the **farmers’ apprehension about attachment-decree of their land as a consequence of enforcement of farming contracts.**

- **Rationale:**

- The **Central laws were aimed to do away with government interference in agricultural trade** by creating trading areas free of middlemen and government taxes **outside the structure of Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs)**.
- This according to **farmers was giving preference for corporate interests** at the cost of farmers' interests and a lack of regulation in these non-APMC mandis were a cause for concern for farmers.
- The absence of any regulation in non-APMC mandis was seen as a **precursor to the withdrawal of the guarantee of MSP-based procurement**.
- **To annul the apprehensions of farmers**, the Punjab government has **changed the application of central laws to the state**. It will **restore the agricultural safeguards** for the farmers through the regulatory framework of Punjab Agricultural Produce Markets Act, 1961.

However, there are apprehensions that this step taken by the Punjab

Government may discourage private players to buy at rates less than MSP.

- The Punjab government states that **86.2% of farmers in the state are small and marginal**, with the majority owning less than two acres of land. Consequently, **they have limited access to multiple markets, and lack the negotiation power needed to operate in a private market**.
- The Bills also point out that **agriculture, agricultural markets, and land is the primary legislative domain of the state**.

Constitutional Issues

- Earlier three **Farm Acts were passed** by the Central government under **Entry 33 of the Concurrent List**. Entry 33 of the Concurrent List mentions trade and commerce, production, supply and distribution of domestic and imported products of an industry; foodstuffs, including oilseeds and oils; cattle fodder; raw cotton and jute.

However, if foodstuffs are considered synonymous with agriculture, then all the powers of states in respect of agriculture, listed so elaborately in the Constitution, shall become redundant.

- States have **no authority to overrule** the legislations passed by the Centre **except under Article 254(2)**.
- Article 254(2) **enables a State government to pass a law, on any subject in the Concurrent List, that may contradict a Central law**, provided it gets the President's assent.

In 2014, the Rajasthan government took this Article 254 (2) route to make changes to the central labour laws — the Factories Act, the Industrial Disputes act, and the Contract Labour Act — which subsequently got the President's assent.

- However, the **Parliament is not barred from enacting at any time any law with respect to the same matter** including a law adding to, amending, varying or repealing the law so made by the Legislature of the State.
- **Article 257(1)** also states that the executive power of every State shall be so exercised as **not to impede or prejudice** the exercise of the executive power of the Centre.

It authorises the Centre to impose **President's Rule** in case when the State is exercising its executive power prejudicial to Centre's executive power.

- Apart from the Governor, the Punjab government's new farm Bills need the assent of the President since they seek to amend laws passed by the central government. If not, they can at best serve as a symbolic political statement against the Centre's farm laws.

Source: TH

Taiwan Insecurity of China

Why in News

Recently, China has objected to any official exchanges between India and **Taiwan**.

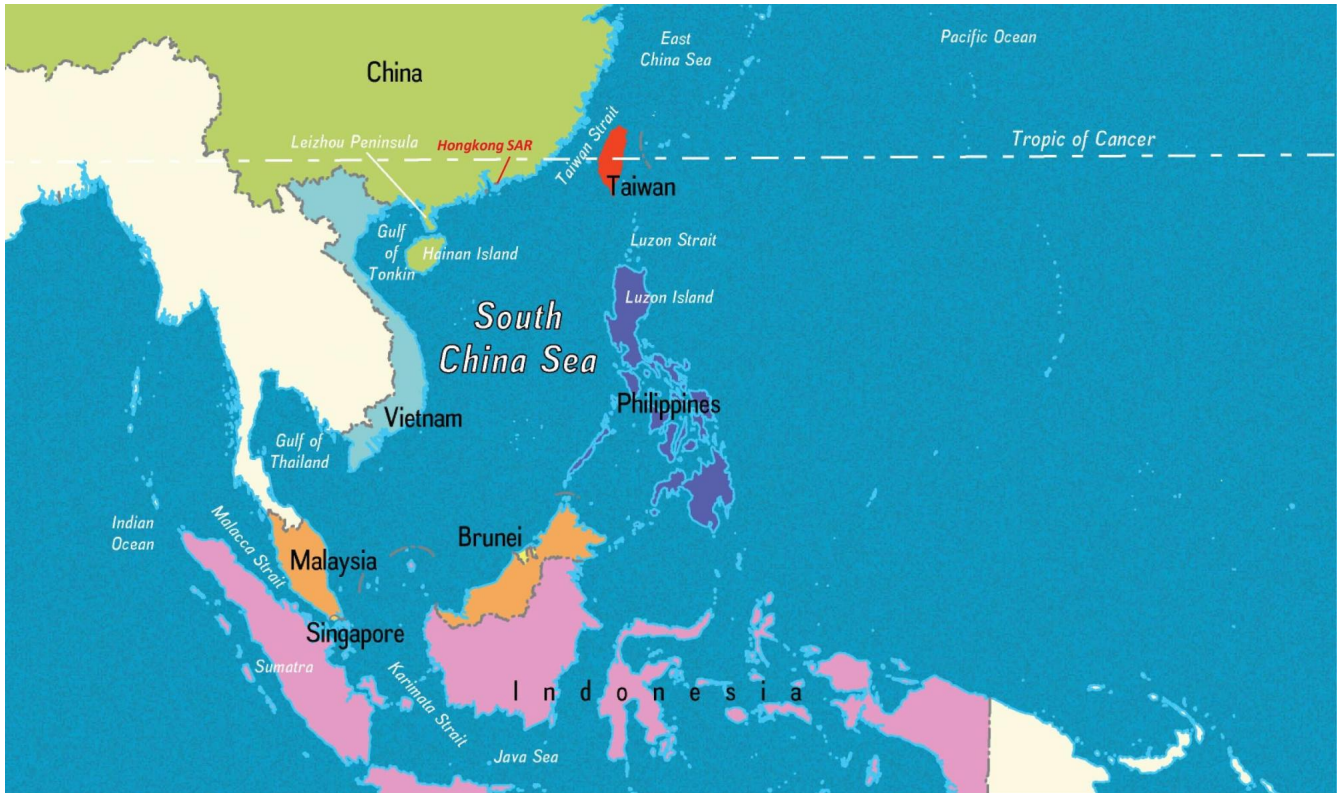
Key Points

- **Chinese Concern:** The statement from China came in response to reports that India and Taiwan were considering going forward with **talks on a trade deal**.
 - China believes the **'One-China principle'** is a universal consensus of the international community, including India.
 - China also objected to the recent **campaign (posters and social media)** in India **wishing Taiwan "Happy National Day"** (October 10) and referring to it as a **"country" or a "nation"**.
 - China is also opposing inclusion of Australia in the upcoming **Malabar naval exercise** with India, Japan and the United States.

- **India-Taiwan Relations**

- India and Taiwan do not maintain formal diplomatic relations. The areas of cooperation between India and Taiwan have been limited due to negligible political relations.
 - **From** 1995 to 2014, the bilateral trade turnover has grown manifold from just \$934 million to \$5.91 billion.
 - **Technology:** In the field of science and technology, there are more than thirty ongoing government-funded joint research projects.
 - In August 2015, the Taiwan-based Foxconn, one of the largest hardware manufacturers in the world, announced an investment of \$5 billion in India.
 - India and Taiwan **in 2018** signed a **bilateral investment agreement**. India-Taiwan trade ties have been **expanded** and Taiwanese firms are **prominent investors in India**,
 - Taiwan has for long been a world leader in high-tech hardware manufacturing, and can contribute much to the “**Make in India**”, “**Digital India**” and “**Smart Cities**” campaigns.
 - Taiwan’s agro-technology and food processing technology can also be very beneficial for India’s agriculture sector.
 - Both sides have also expanded **educational exchanges** after a mutual degree recognition agreement in higher education was **signed in 2010**.
- **Challenges:**
 - **One China policy:** India finds it difficult to realise the full potential of its bilateral relationship with Taiwan. At present, about 16 countries worldwide continue to recognise Taiwan as an independent state. India is not among the sixteen countries.
 - **Trade & Investment:** The economic exchange is still relatively insignificant. Taiwan’s share of trade with India is around 1% of its global trade.

Taiwan



- Taiwan - the Republic of China (ROC), home to **twenty-three million people**, is an island **off the southern coast of China** that has been governed independently from mainland China since **1949**.
- Its neighbours include China (officially the People's Republic of China, PRC) to the west, Japan to the northeast, and the Philippines to the south.
- Taiwan is the most populous state that is not a member of the United Nations and the largest economy outside the UN.
- Taiwan is Asia's 5th largest economy.
- It is a global leader in chip manufacture and the second-largest manufacturer of IT hardware, etc.
- **China's Claim:** The People's Republic of China (PRC) views the island as a province, while in Taiwan—a territory with its own democratically elected government—leading political voices have differing views on the island's status and relations with the mainland.

China and Taiwan maintain a fragile relationship, which has improved during the past seven years but is periodically tested.

Way Forward

- Taiwan has invested heavily on China studies. India should take advantage of this fact. Resource rich India can benefit from Taiwan's technology. For instance, India has abundant natural bamboo resources while Taiwan owns the world-class bamboo charcoal technology. With this sort of technology, India can make use of its bamboo resources to produce high value-added goods.

- With the recent appointment of a senior diplomat to serve as the **new envoy to Taiwan**, India has signalled a shift in its One-China policy (although not officially abandoned) a clear indication of taking forward the diplomatic relationship with Taiwan.

Source: TH

Environmental Clearance to Kaleshwaram Project Invalid

Why in News

Recently, the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** has declared that the environmental clearance (EC) granted to the **Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project** in Telangana was ex post facto (i.e. granted after completion of substantial work) and illegal.

Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project

- It is a **multi-purpose irrigation project**, on the **Godavari River** in Kaleshwaram, Bhupalpally, Telangana initiated in 2016.
- The project starts at the confluence point of **Pranahita River and Godavari River**.
- Originally called **Dr. B R Ambedkar Pranahita Chevella Sujala Sravanthi Project** in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, it was redesigned, extended and **renamed as Kaleshwaram project in Telangana in 2014**.

Key Points

- **Issues in the Project:**

- The **petition filed in 2018** stated that while the **Kaleshwaram Project** was a **lift irrigation system**, the **state government wrongly claimed, until the grant of environmental clearance (EC)**, that the project was not for lift irrigation, but **only for drinking water supply**.
- Substantial work of the project had already been undertaken before granting of EC in December 2017. Thus, the EC was ex post facto, in violation of the **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006**.
 - The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) had published the **draft Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) notification 2020**, with the intention to replace the existing EIA Notification 2006 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
 - The draft notification **has provisions for post facto project clearance**, reiteration of a March 2017 notification for projects operating without clearance.
- The Project also underwent change by increase in capacity and inclusion of **Mission Bhagiratha** to provide drinking water to Hyderabad and certain villages of Telangana.
 - However, the pre-feasibility report submitted in January, 2017 and draft of EIA report submitted in July, 2017 did not mention the Mission Bhagiratha **which involved interlinking of the two projects**.
 - Feasibility of the changed project was never evaluated while granting EC.

- **NGT's Observation:** There are **two legal issues confronting the Project:**
 - **One**, Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation **Project was functioning without requisite prior environmental clearance** under **EIA Notification, 2006, until 2017**, when the EC was granted.
 - **Second**, project contractor L&T was alleged to have cleared large areas of forest land for construction of quarters for its employees, **without requisite forest clearance** under the **Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980**.
 - The **NGT directed** that until the Telangana government obtains final forest clearance, it should **stop all work except the drinking water component**.
 - It has further asked MoEFCC to consider measures to prevent recurrence of such violations where EC is sought ex post facto.
 - It is particularly required when the projects are multi-purpose and part of it requires EC, so that such requirement is not defeated on specious plea that the project was partly not covered by the schedule Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification as has happened in the present case.
 - It observed that **accountability of the responsible person needs to be fixed and remedial measures has to be taken**.
 - For that purpose, it has directed the MoEFCC to **constitute a seven-member expert committee**.
 - The expert committee could assess the extent of damage caused in going ahead with the project without EC – the period from 2008 to 2017 – and identify the necessary restoration measures.
 - The expert committee must be constituted within a month and needs to complete its exercise within six months.

Mission Bhagiratha

- It is a **project for safe drinking water** for every village and city household in Telangana State.
- It **aims to provide piped water** to 2.32 crore people in 20 lakh households in urban and 60 lakhs in rural areas of Telangana.
- The project will supply clean drinking water to all households in the state through **water sourced from River Godavari and River Krishna**.

Source: IE

Extending New START Treaty

Why in News

The **Russian President** has proposed extending by one year the **New START**

(Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) between the USA and Russia expiring in February 2021.

Key Points

- **The New START Treaty:** It is a treaty **between the United States of America** and the **Russian Federation** on measures for the further reduction and limitation of **strategic offensive arms**.
 - It entered into force on **5th February, 2011**.
 - New START has replaced the 1991 START I treaty, which expired December 2009, and superseded the 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT), which terminated when New START entered into force.
 - It is a **successor to the START framework of 1991** (at the end of the Cold War) that limited both sides to 1,600 strategic delivery vehicles and 6,000 warheads.
 - It continues the **bipartisan process** of verifiably reducing the USA and Russian strategic nuclear arsenals by limiting both sides to 700 strategic launchers and 1,550 operational warheads.
 - It will lapse in February 2021 unless extended for a five-year period.
- **Recent Proposal:** Russia has extended the proposal along with concerns of lack of interest from the United States.
 - In 2019, the United States has also suspended the **Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force Treaty** (INF Treaty) with Russia.
 - It was a nuclear arms-control accord reached by the United States and the Soviet Union in 1987 in which the two nations agreed to **eliminate their stocks of intermediate-range and shorter-range (or “medium-range”) land-based missiles** (which could carry nuclear warheads).
 - The **United States withdrew** from the Treaty on 2nd August 2019.
 - **USA’s Stand:** The USA wanted any replacement treaty should include China and to encompass all of Russia’s nuclear weapons – not just the **“strategic”** weapons covered under New START but also Russia’s sizable stockpile of smaller, **“tactical”** nuclear weapons that fall outside the treaty.
 - Russia rejected the demands, and China has refused to take part in negotiations.
 - The USA has agreed to negotiate the extension.

Way Forward

- Negotiators would still need to work out a **verification system** and agree on the detailed definition of a warhead. Failure to do so would remove the main pillar maintaining the nuclear balance between them.

- If the treaty is not extended or replaced, the world's two biggest nuclear powers will return to an era without substantive restraints on their arsenals for the first time in decades.
- An extension would mark a rare bright spot in the fraught US-Russian relationship. The time bought by extending New START can be used for conducting comprehensive bilateral negotiations on future control over nuclear missile weapons.

Source: TH

Nazca Lines: Peru

Why in News

Recently, a giant cat geoglyph was discovered on a hill at the famous **Nazca Lines site** in Peru.

Key Points

- **The Nazca Lines:**



- These are a group of geoglyphs known for the **depictions of larger-than-life animals, plants and imaginary beings.**
 - Geoglyphs are the **large designs made on the ground** by creators using elements of the landscape such as stones, gravel, dirt or lumber.
- These are believed to be the **greatest known archaeological enigma**, owing to their **size, continuity, nature and quality.**
- The site is **around 450 km away from capital Lima.**
- **Drawn more than 2 millennia ago** on the surface of southern Peru's arid Pampa Colorada, the geoglyphs feature different subjects, but mainly plants and animals.
 - The figures include pelicans (the largest ones sized around 935 feet long), Andean Condors (443 feet), monkeys (360 feet), etc.
 - **Variety of geometric shapes** such as triangles, trapezoids and spirals, and some have been associated with astronomical functions.
- **Discovery and Heritage Site:** The Lines were **first discovered** in **1927**, and were declared a **World Heritage Site by UNESCO** in **1994.**

- **The Cat Geoglyph:**



Cultural Linkage: It dates from 500 BC – 200 AD (**Paracas age**). The cat geoglyph is believed to be older than the ones previously found at Nazca.

- The **Paracas culture** was an Andean society existing between approximately 800 BCE and 100 BCE, with an extensive knowledge of irrigation and water management. It was in present day Peru in the Paracas Desert region.
- Representations of felines of this type are frequent in the iconography of ceramics and textiles of the Paracas society.

Source: IE

India International Science Festival 2020

Why in News

The 6th edition of the **India International Science Festival (IISF)** will be held virtually in 2020.

The **5th edition** was held in Kolkata in 2019.

Key Points

- **IISF:** It is a festival to **celebrate the achievements of India's scientific and technological advancements** with students, innovators, craftsmen, farmers, scientists and technocrats from India and abroad.
 - It was **launched in 2015** to **promote Science and Technology** and demonstrate how science could lead India towards a developed nation within a short span of time.
- **Aim:** To **engage the public with science** and celebrate the joy of science and show the ways how science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) provide solutions to improve people's lives.
- **Organising Agencies:** **Ministry of Science & Technology** and **Ministry of Earth Sciences** in association with **Vijnana Bharati (VIBHA)** organise IISF every year.

- **IISF 2020:** The **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** will spearhead the IISF 2020 with support of all other concerned ministries and departments.
CSIR is **funded by the Ministry of Science and Technology.**

Vijnana Bharati

- **Swadeshi Science Movement** was started in **Indian Institute of Science-Bengaluru** by a few eminent scientists under the guidance of **Prof. K I Vasu.**
This movement gradually gained momentum and emerged as an organization with national presence.
- In **1991**, it was decided to launch the Swadeshi Science Movement at all India Level and named it Vijnana Bharati.
- It's one of the **objectives** is to motivate young scientists towards greater creativity and originality.
- It is headquartered in **New Delhi.**

Source: PIB
